Muslims in Global Societies Series

Günther Jikeli
Joëlle Allouche-Benayoun *Editors*

Perceptions of the Holocaust in Europe and Muslim Communities

Sources, Comparisons and Educational Challenges

Muslims in Global Societies Series

Volume 5

Series Editors
Gabriele Marranci
Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia; Cardiff University, Wales, UK

Bryan Turner
The Graduate Center, CUNY, New York, USA

For further volumes:
http://www.springer.com/series/7863

Günther Jikeli • Joëlle Allouche-Benayoun
Editors

Perceptions of the Holocaust in Europe and Muslim Communities

Sources, Comparisons and Educational Challenges

Editors
Günther Jikeli
International Institute for Education and Research on Antisemitism
London, UK

Joëlle Allouche-Benayoun
Groupe Sociétés, Religions, Laïcités - Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique
CNRS, Paris, France

ISBN 978-94-007-5306-8 ISBN 978-94-007-5307-5 (eBook)
DOI 10.1007/978-94-007-5307-5
Springer Dordrecht Heidelberg New York London

Library of Congress Control Number: 2012952933

© Springer Science+Business Media Dordrecht 2013
This work is subject to copyright. All rights are reserved by the Publisher, whether the whole or part of the material is concerned, specifically the rights of translation, reprinting, reuse of illustrations, recitation, broadcasting, reproduction on microfilms or in any other physical way, and transmission or information storage and retrieval, electronic adaptation, computer software, or by similar or dissimilar methodology now known or hereafter developed. Exempted from this legal reservation are brief excerpts in connection with reviews or scholarly analysis or material supplied specifically for the purpose of being entered and executed on a computer system, for exclusive use by the purchaser of the work. Duplication of this publication or parts thereof is permitted only under the provisions of the Copyright Law of the Publisher's location, in its current version, and permission for use must always be obtained from Springer. Permissions for use may be obtained through RightsLink at the Copyright Clearance Center. Violations are liable to prosecution under the respective Copyright Law.
The use of general descriptive names, registered names, trademarks, service marks, etc. in this publication does not imply, even in the absence of a specific statement, that such names are exempt from the relevant protective laws and regulations and therefore free for general use.
While the advice and information in this book are believed to be true and accurate at the date of publication, neither the authors nor the editors nor the publisher can accept any legal responsibility for any errors or omissions that may be made. The publisher makes no warranty, express or implied, with respect to the material contained herein.

Printed on acid-free paper

Springer is part of Springer Science+Business Media (www.springer.com)

Acknowledgements

The cooperation with the authors included in this book has been exceptional. We are grateful for their distinguished papers and for their patience during the review process. We would like to thank our friends and colleagues who have read portions of this manuscript and provided us with the benefit of their insights. Most of the papers were presented and discussed at a conference on "European Muslims' Perceptions of the Holocaust", in Paris in 2010, which was organised by the Groupe Sociétés, Religions, Laïcités – CNRS, Paris, the International Institute for Education and Research on Antisemitism and the Netherlands Institute for War Documentation, supported by the Fondation pour la Mémoire de la Shoah, the Mémorial de la Shoah, the Foundation "Remembrance, Responsibility and Future" and L'Ecole pratique des hautes études (EPHE, Paris-Sorbonne). We are especially grateful to Philippe Portier, Kim Robin Stoller, Rita-Danielle Breseghello and Bérénice Benayoun.

Contents

Introduction 1
Joëlle Allouche-Benayoun and Günther Jikeli

History Aside? 13
Georges Bensoussan

Antisemitism and Holocaust Remembrance 19
Juliane Wetzel

Participation of European Muslim Organisations in Holocaust Commemorations 29
Michael Whine

The Evolution of Arab Perceptions of the Holocaust 41
Esther Webman

Perceptions of the Holocaust in Turkey 61
Rıfat N. Bali

Antisemitism and the Politics of Holocaust Memorial Day in the UK and Italy 71
Philip Spencer and Sara Valentina Di Palma

'Hamas, Hamas, All Jews to the Gas.' The History and Significance of an Antisemitic Slogan in the Netherlands, 1945–2010 85
Evelien Gans

Perceptions of the Holocaust Among Young Muslims in Berlin, Paris and London 105
Günther Jikeli

History and Memory of the Other: An Experimental Encounter-Programme with Israeli Jews and Palestinians from Israel 133
Monique Eckmann

Speech Acts. Observing Antisemitism and Holocaust Education in the Netherlands 153
Remco Ensel and Annemarike Stremmelaar

Challenges and Opportunities of Educational Concepts Concerning National Socialist Crimes in German Immigration Society 173
Mehmet Can, Karoline Georg, and Ruth Hatlapa

Contributors 189

Index 193

Introduction

Joëlle Allouche-Benayoun and Günther Jikeli

The way people think and feel about the systematic murder of European Jewry – today commonly termed as the Holocaust or the Shoah – is changing over time.[1] The erosive effect of time seems unavoidable, but, as Alvin Rosenfeld has accurately demonstrated in his recent book "The End of the Holocaust", perceptions of the Holocaust are often distorted by certain cultural pressures and values (Rosenfeld 2011). They are also influenced by the collective identity and, particularly in Europe, by the role the respective country played during the Holocaust. Among other factors, the forms of commemoration of the Holocaust differ depending upon whether major segments of the society were perpetrators, bystanders or victims; whether the country collaborated with National Socialism in the murdering of Jews or not; or if the country fought against Germany. The same is true on an individual level: even distant family members who had a role in the Holocaust can have a significant impact on how their children and grandchildren think and talk about the Holocaust. However, there is a particular culture of remembrance and even to some degree "Europeanisation" concerning the commemoration of the Holocaust (Leggewie 2009).

[1] In the French-speaking sphere, the term Shoah is usually used to designate the Jewish genocide perpetrated by the Nazis. The term Holocaust is preferred by most scholars in the English-speaking sphere with all of its implicit religious meanings regarding sacrifice for and to God. Both terms are alternately used throughout this collection, depending upon the respective origin of the author of each article. In September 2011, the term Shoah was the focus of an intense polemic in the French media: is it or is it not the right word?

J. Allouche-Benayoun (✉)
e-mail: joelle.allouche@gsrl.cnrs.fr

G. Jikeli
e-mail: g.jikeli@iibsa.org

G. Jikeli and J. Allouche-Benayoun (eds.), *Perceptions of the Holocaust in Europe and Muslim Communities*, Muslims in Global Societies Series 5,
DOI 10.1007/978-94-007-5307-5_1, © Springer Science+Business Media Dordrecht 2013

Today, the Holocaust is condemned in the public discourses in European countries and blatant Holocaust denial is generally discredited and even illegal in some European countries (Bazyler 2006). Holocaust education is part of the curriculum in many countries, and Holocaust memorials and commemorations are given importance by the political and intellectual elite (OSCE/ODIHR 2010, 2006). However, some developments concerning the remembrance of the Holocaust give cause for concern. For example, Yehuda Bauer expressed his "deep concern about repeated attempts to equate the Nazi regime's genocidal policies, with the Holocaust at their centre, with other murderous or oppressive actions; an equation that not only trivialises and relativises the genocide of the Jews perpetrated by the Nazi regime, but is also a mendacious revision of recent world history." (Bauer 2009). He did so on the occasion of a resolution passed on 2 April 2009 by the European parliament recognising a day of remembrance for victims of both Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union on the anniversary of the infamous Ribbentrop-Molotov agreement. In private discourses, the trivialisation of the Holocaust is often more bluntly expressed, partly motivated by the wish for "normalisation" and by secondary antisemitism.[2] However, the comparison of the Holocaust to other genocides is legitimate and even deepens our understanding of the Holocaust. As a matter of fact, biased views begin with equating rather than comparing. Or when "the fact, scope, mechanisms (e.g. gas chambers) or intentionality of the genocide of the Jewish people" are denied, as noted in the 'Working Definition of Antisemitism' EUMC/FRA 2005). Surveys indicate both a lack of knowledge about the Holocaust[3] as well as widespread biased views of the Holocaust and Holocaust remembrance. According to a 2009 European survey, in Germany, 48.9% believed that Jews try to take advantage of their having been victims during the Nazi era, 32.4% in France and 21.8% in Britain. And 45.7% of Europeans in 7 countries agreed with the biased analogy between the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the Holocaust, namely that "Israel is conducting a war of extermination against the Palestinians." (Zick et al. 2009, 2011).

Over the course of time, the Holocaust has become a symbol of absolute evil, of barbarity, and at the same time Jews have become the symbol of the absolute victims. But in anti-Zionist discourse, Zionists and Zionism (and sometimes "the Jews" by proxy) are portrayed as the absolute evil, which explains such widespread equations between the Holocaust and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. However, the conception of the Shoah as both the absolute evil and the European evil explains the pedagogical will across all of Europe to provide a translation for "never again".

[2] Secondary antisemitism is a term coined by Peter Schönbach (1961) which is understood as the psychological phenomenon that the mere presence of Jews can remind non-Jews of the Holocaust and their feelings of guilt which then in turn produces negative sentiments against Jews. The Israeli psychiatrist Zvi Rex is often quoted with the phrase, "The Germans will never forgive the Jews for Auschwitz" (Broder 1986).

[3] In Germany, 39% of the general population said in 2005 that they are not well informed about "the time before 1945", 40% said so in the UK and 24 % in France (IMAS International 2005). A poll commissioned in 2009 by Miramax and the London Jewish Cultural Centre showed that only 37% of 11–16year olds in Britain knew that the Holocaust claimed the lives of six million Jews, with many drastically underestimating the death toll. Some of the results were published by *The Telegraph* on March 9, 2009.

School trips and other pilgrimages to Auschwitz are the most concrete illustration of this; and yet, aren't these journeys just fulfilling a self-satisfying compassionate impulse instead of engaging in a real social, historical and contextualised analysis?

The history of the Shoah remains challenging for humanity and for European societies in particular. However, a new challenge has been discussed in recent years. Some migrant communities which are now part of European societies although they do not share the European history of the Shoah, seem to be reluctant to remember the murder of European Jewry as one of the greatest crimes of humanity. Teachers have reported difficulties teaching about the Holocaust, particularly with some Muslim students (Brenner 2004).[4] The reluctance of European Muslim organisations to participate in Holocaust commemorations, or their boycotting of such events, is another indication of the problematic views of the Holocaust held by some European Muslims.[5]

Some surveys point in the same direction. In Germany in January 2010, *Die Zeit* published a survey of 400 people of Turkish origin concerning their views of the Holocaust. Sixty-eight percent admitted that they know little about the Holocaust and 40% said that people of Turkish background living in Germany should not be concerned with studying the Holocaust (*Die Zeit* 2010). While this hints at an identitarian approach to remembrance (possibly adopted from the identitarian approach observed in many people within German mainstream society[6]) and a denial of its significance for all members of humanity, other polls reveal attitudes of "soft-core" Holocaust denial, to use a term coined by Deborah Lipstadt. A poll of Muslims in the UK from 2006 showed that only a third believed that the Holocaust happened as it is taught and 17% said that it has been exaggerated (GfK NOP 2006).

However, one should be careful not to essentialise such views; being Muslim does not lead to biased views of the Holocaust or of Jews.[7] But then, what does influence Muslims' views of the Holocaust? European Muslims are largely migrants or their descendants who arrived in Europe after the Second World War. Are they also influenced by the collective identity of their country of residence? How strong is the influence of their ethnic and religious identities? What is the role of private and public discourses about the Holocaust in the countries of origin? Muslims are the largest religious minority in Europe today. European societies such as Germany, France and Britain include increasing numbers of immigrants, many of them with Muslim background. Estimations fall between 13 and 20 million Muslims in the European Union (European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia

[4] A report for the French government for 2010 confirmed that antisemitic attitudes are often voiced by Muslim students and "can be manifested during lessons about the genocide of Jews" and are often related to anti-American attitudes (Haut Conseil à l'intégration 2011, 94). Difficulties of Holocaust Education due to antisemitic attitudes among Muslim students were also mentioned in a study in Britain (The Historical Association 2007, 15).

[5] The Muslim Council of Britain has repeatedly and explicitly boycotted the national Holocaust Memorial Day commemoration in the UK. See Michael Whine's chapter in this volume (Chap. 4).

[6] See Mehmet Can's, Karoline Georg's and Ruth Hatlapa's chapter in this volume (Chap. 12).

[7] Such an essentializing and effectively racist view is conveyed by a few authors such as Hans-Peter Raddatz (2007), see Widmann 2008.

2006, 29; Open Society Institute 2010, 22). Surveys show that Muslims strongly identify both with their country of residence and with their religious identity (Gallup 2009, 19).

One can assume that European Muslims see the Holocaust as being less central to their history than other events. In comparison to the majority of other Europeans whose parents or grandparents lived in Europe during the Second World War, the discourses within Muslim families are generally less influenced by either their family history during WWII or by a collective feeling of guilt. However, the persecution of Jews by the National Socialists and their collaborators was not limited to Europe. The majority of European Muslims come from countries such as Turkey, or from North African and South-East Asian countries that only played a minor role in the Holocaust and from which no or relatively few Jews were deported to German death camps in Eastern Europe. Bosnia is the exception to this rule: most Bosnian Jews were murdered (Gilbert 2002, 75), often in collaboration with the Muslim population. However, the history of Albania shows that some Muslims played an extraordinary role in saving Jews from deportation despite the German occupation between 1943 and 1944 (Gershman 2008), while others collaborated with the National Socialists in the persecution of Jews.[8] Many Muslim countries in North Africa and South-East Asia were colonised by Great Britain or France. This had the effect of making Nazi propaganda partially successful as an ideology of resistance against the colonising powers. The case of European Muslims from North Africa and "their" history vis-à-vis Nazism and the Holocaust is complex. In fact, the four Maghreb countries were directly concerned with Nazism and the prolegomena to the Shoah, to varying extents. In Tunisia, a country which was occupied by the Germans for a few months in 1941–1942, forced labour camps for Jews were constructed and the deportations of Jewish Tunisians to extermination camps started during that period. This was met with complacency by the "indigenous" population. Being part of France. Algeria implemented antisemitic racial measures ordered by Pétain, as was the case throughout the national territory. This was actively supported by the local French population and passively by the Muslim population. Since the 1942 allied landing in Algiers prevented the German occupation, there were no deportations out of Algeria. However, Algerian Jews residing in France were deported and exterminated, in particular those living in the South (Marseille, Perpignan, Bordeaux). Many were taken because Muslim auxiliaries informed the national police or the military that they were Jews, just on the basis of distinguishing their family names from Muslim family names. On the other hand, the King of Morocco was commanded by the French protectorate authorities to distinguish the country's Jews by the use of some physical marker, but he refused. As far as Libya is concerned, it was the setting for very important military operations (for example, Tobrouk, El Alamein) and Libyan Jews were deported to different camps in and outside of Libya, under Italian occupation (Roumani 2008). Finally, the French

[8] For a debate on the role of Arab Muslims during the Holocaust, see: Satloff (2006), Cüppers and Mallmann (2006), Nordbruch (2009), Metzger (2007).

army for the liberation of the territory, commonly known as the "Army of Africa", counted many "indigenous" Muslims among its ranks,[9] most of whom originated from three of the Maghreb countries in particular. Therefore, the Muslim populations of the Maghreb, under French jurisdiction to varying extents, were all directly implemented in this world conflict for diverse reasons; some due to the fact that they were occupied by the Germans, and others had young men who were enlisted in the French army and/or were being held as prisoners in Germany (Allouche-Benayoun and Doris 1998; Borgel 2007; Ghez 2009).

Despite these historical ties, denial and minimisation of the Holocaust is widespread today in the mainstream of many of European Muslims' "home" countries, which is analysed in Chaps. 5 and 6 by Esther Webman and Rıfat N. Bali.[10] The Holocaust is often portrayed in an antisemitic way as a tool used by Israel; conspiracy theories about alleged Nazi-Zionist collaboration are widespread and Israel is equated with Nazi Germany.

The level of open Holocaust denial observed in some mass media in Muslim-majority countries is not accepted in European countries, as demonstrated by the case of the Turkish daily *Vakit*, which was printed and distributed in Germany until 2005 when it was banned by the German authorities for its denial of the Holocaust, as well as for its antisemitic propaganda.[11] The *Vakit* case also demonstrates that some European Muslims are influenced by biased views about the Holocaust propagated by media from their "home" country.

However, there are encouraging, new developments in some countries, particularly in Morocco. The Moroccan king publicly spoke of the importance of Holocaust commemoration for the first time in March 2009, and independent from the monarchy, a group of Moroccan educators and activists visited Yad Vashem in Israel for the first time in 2009 (Maddy-Weitzman 2010). Subsequently, in March 2011, teachers and educators from Morocco participated in a seminar at the Mémorial de la Shoah in Paris, led by Samia Essabaa, a teacher at a professional college in a suburb of Paris, and also the person who initiated a programme for college students with migrant backgrounds to take trips to Auschwitz (Essabaa and Azouvi 2009). Moreover, the Aladdin Project launched a first-time series of public lectures on the Holocaust in Muslim countries in 2010 (Projet Aladin 2010). Also, Turkish state television TRT started to air the film *Shoah* by Claude Lanzmann on 26 January 2012 in its entirety.

This volume focuses on perceptions of the Holocaust among Muslims in European societies; exploring sources, factors of influence and discussing the challenges for education and remembrance in Europe's increasingly multicultural societies.

---

[9] In le Monde.fr on September 27, 2006, Benjamin Stora estimated that there were 300,000 "indigenous" people in the Army of Liberation who landed in Provence, making up 23% of the total (Stora 2006).

[10] See also Litvak and Webman (2009) and Bali (2009).

[11] Some of the antisemitic articles and cartoons in *Vakit* have been documented in Kreuzberger Initiative gegen Antisemitismus (2004).

George Bensoussan opens up this collection with his essay on the development of perceptions of the Holocaust in Europe since 1945, when the "opponents of the Enlightenment" disappeared without a trace and were reduced to the Nazi Party and a group of criminals and psychopaths who had surrounded Hitler, obfuscating the fact that a major part of Germany shared their ideology. These initial false perceptions gave way to a number of myths that are still relevant today; Bensoussan names the myth of alleged victims' passivity, the narrative that the State of Israel was born out of the Shoah and the concept of totalitarianism which denies the specificity of the Shoah and Nazism. He describes the transition from silence about the Holocaust after the Second World War to the current centrality of the Holocaust. His particular French perspective, set against a laïc background, sharpens the problem of conceptualising the victim group as a result of the irrationality of antisemitism and the Holocaust: why were the JEWS persecuted? Due to the fact that, with only a few exceptions, the whole of Europe was involved in the crime of the Holocaust, this history contributes to European unity. The Holocaust is rejected, but it is also a source of secondary antisemitism. Bensoussan sees this as being one of the main sources of the vilification of Israel today. In the Arab world, however, empathy in regards to the Shoah is a source of frustration and seen as a concession to "the Jews", including Israelis. Bensoussan offers a number of explanations for the current ignorance and anti-Israeli and antisemitic sentiments among Muslims and Arabs.

Juliane Wetzel examines the relationship between the persistence of antisemitism after 1945 and Holocaust remembrance. She discusses that despite there being a taboo against open antisemitism, precisely because of Auschwitz, feelings of guilt led to the phenomenon of antisemitism – so called secondary antisemitism – exposing a failure to come to terms with the past and resulting in Holocaust denial and the minimisation of the Holocaust. The trivialisation of the Holocaust, demonstrated by the comparison of Israel to Nazi Germany and antisemitic tropes such as "Jews talk too much about the Holocaust", as well as the reversal of perpetrators and victims in relation to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, has become a widespread phenomenon across Europe. The Middle East conflict has become a backdrop for the projection of antisemitic sentiments, often related to the Holocaust. These feelings can be expressed even by those who present themselves as anti-antisemites and anti-racists. This leads to challenges in Holocaust education, even more so in classrooms with a significant number of students with migrant backgrounds whose parents came to Europe after the Shoah. Myths about the Holocaust are prominent not only in Arab media but also on the Internet. Wetzel highlights the difficulty of respecting the singularity of the Holocaust with regard to other atrocities and totalitarian regimes.

Michael Whine presents an overview of the participation of European Muslim organisations in Holocaust commemorations. The Holocaust is viewed by many Muslims, particularly Arabs, as a European tragedy which led to negative implications and suffering in the Arab world through the creation of the State of Israel. The Holocaust is therefore often related to the Nakba. Whine's analysis focuses on Muslims' participation in Holocaust commemoration on the Holocaust Memorial Day, local initiatives in schools, Jewish-Muslim dialogue and the reaction of Muslim students to Holocaust education in school. Whine acknowledges that Muslims played only a minor part as victims or perpetrators during the Holocaust, but he argues that