Competing Victimizations or Multidirectional Solidaties? Politics of Collective Memory and Solidarity in the Post-National Socialist and Post-Colonial Austrian Left

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Abstract: **In this article I illustrate "competing victimizations" and propose possible "multidirectional solidarities" regarding inner-left debates about the Middle East conflict, anti-Semitism and racism in Viennese left-wing contexts. The illustrated conflict is specific for radical left-wing politics in a post-National Socialist and post-colonial setting. Debates initially revolve around Israel versus Palestine solidarity. In the wake of the Second Intifada and the September 11 attacks they partly divide anti-fascist and anti-racist political stances. While the pro-Israeli camp focuses on the Holocaust, Austrian guilt-deflection and current anti-Semitism, the pro-Palestinian side condemns the Israeli occupation and fights growing anti-Muslim racism. In this context, opposing perspectives on the relation of new anti-Semitism and anti-Muslim racism are articulated. Such competing dynamics and their interrelation with Austrian memory politics and global politics are illustrated. Subsequently, they are discussed as being related to conflicting memories and interrelated competing victimizations in migrant societies with a National Socialist history, such as in Austria and Germany. Concluding, the concept of "multidirectional solidarity" is proposed as an alternative approach, transcending competitive views on past and current victimizations.**

I. INTRODUCTION

On the 9th of November 2003, Jewish and non-Jewish anti-fascist groups gathered together for a commemoration ceremony in the second district of Vienna. This part of the city had been inhabited by a quite big Jewish population until the Nazi-era and was one focus of the November pogrom in 1938. The so-called "November pogroms" took place on the 9th and 10th of November in many places throughout Germany and Austria and marked the beginning of the National

Socialist persecution and extermination policies against the European Jewry. Jewish stores, flats and synagogues were looted and burned, most often accompanied by the applause of "Aryan" neighbors. Within a few days, more than 6500 Jews were arrested in Vienna, 4500 people were deported to the concentration camp Dachau and nearly nobody came back. One important memorial site in the second district is Zirkusgasse No. 22, where the so-called Turkish Temple existed until 1938. The temple was a Sephardic synagogue that had been destroyed during the pogrom – and with it the whole Sephardic community in Vienna perished. Today, it is only recalled by a small commemoration plaque beneath the entrance of the new building at No. 22, which is now a social housing project built by Vienna's social-democratic government during the 1980s.

Fig. 1 Left side: The "Turkish Temple" in 1910. Right side: Commemoration Plaque at Zirkusgasse No. 22 "*At this place the "Turkish Temple", the synagogue of the Sephardic Community, was located. It was built from 1885-1887 by the architect Hugo von Wiedenfeld and destroyed during the »Crystal Night« on the 10th of November 1938*"

At the commemoration ceremony in 2003 the anti-fascists gathered at Zirkusgasse 22. A representative of the Jewish religious community was talking, when the event was suddenly interrupted and attacked by a group of anti-imperialist activists swaying Palestinian flags and chanting paroles against Israel and the United States. When the anti-fascists started to force back the anti-imperialist group, in order to prevent them from interrupting the memorial, a scuffle broke out and had to be dealt with by the police. The incident evoked major discussions about anti-Semitism within the pro-Palestinian radical Left and represents one *caesura* in a harsh inner-left struggle about competing Israel- versus Palestine-Solidarity, articulating against the background of the Austrian migration society with post-National Socialist and post-colonial history.

In the wake of the Second Intifada in September 2000 and the attacks on the World Trade Center in the following year, the Austrian Left is riven with debates over the Israel versus Palestine solidarity and the relation of anti-Semitism and anti-Muslim racism, which partly split anti-fascist and anti-racist political stances. Principally, inner-left struggles relate to different "political framings" (Benford and Snow 1988) of the Middle East conflict and geo-political shifts after the turn of the millennium. Concrete political debates thereby include several points of contention. Basically, struggles occur between political groups and actors expressing Israel or Palestine solidarity. In this context, the rise of a "new anti-Semitism" (Rabinovici, Speck and Sznaider 2004) is debated. "New anti-Semitism" thereby denominates two things: the blurring of anti-Zionism and anti-Semitic resentment, and its increasing "islamization" via the adoption of European anti-Semitism in Arab countries. Opposed to such views are positions that criticize radicalizing "Orientalism" (Said 1978) in light of rising anti-Muslim resentment. Consequently, contentious debates over the relation of

18

anti-Semitism and anti-Muslim racism in the wake of the "War on Terror" arouse. The two antagonistic poles of the struggle are Palestine-solidary anti-imperialist groups on the one hand and so-called anti-German (*antideutsche*) contexts, expressing solidarity with the Israeli side, on the other. Anti-German is a general term for specific theoretical and political tendencies within the radical Left in Germany and Austria. They are a unique feature of inner-left debates in post-National Socialist countries such as (West) Germany and Austria. Inner-left contentions are entangled with national memory politics, in which Israel plays a major role as it is regarded as historical consequence of the Holocaust (Assmann 2006). In light of growing anti-Muslim racism, they furthermore reflect processes of "competing victimizations" (Messerschmidt, 2008) in a post-National Socialist migration society. Since such debates are a quite unique feature of current leftist debates in "perpetrator societies", their historical roots and basic keystones are introductorily illustrated.

II. THE ROOTS OF POST-NATIONAL SOCIALIST ISRAEL-SOLIDARITY: LEFT-WING PERSEPCTIVES ON BEING A "PERPETRATOR COUNTRY" AND ON THE MIDDLE EAST

Anti-German criticism of left wing anti-Semitism nowadays is mostly affiliated with anti-fascist leftist contexts. Historically, it has its roots in the specific West German post-war memory political setting. In contrast to the German Democratic Republic, which regarded anti-Semitism and fascism as overcome in an emancipated communist society, West German post-war politics were shaped by efforts to come to terms with the immediate past. On grounds of the German

role as the main perpetrator country, a lasting process of de-nazification, public persecution and punishment of the perpetrators took place in the first decades of the newly established Federal Republic of Germany. In this memory political setting, the ideological support of the Israeli nation state not only turned into a hegemonic state project, but also into an anti-fascist "common courtesy". This was reflected not least in pro-Israeli stances of the radical Left in West Germany. The clearly pro-Israeli stance of the German radical Left is thus rooted in post-war memory politics until its rupture in the late 1960s. It is the Six-Day War in 1967 that brings into light the first subcultural precursors of the current conflict over the blurring of anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism. Prior to this date, the West German Left had been in favor of the Israeli state; it was regarded as a historical outcome of the Holocaust and thus as a legitimate state for the survivors of the European catastrophe. In the aftermath of the Six-Day War however, the pro-Israeli orientation of the Left in Germany rapidly transformed into a harsh anti-Zionist stance. The abrupt and extreme turnaround is, in turn, also linked to past politics. It is analyzed as "secondary anti-Semitism", or "anti-Semitism after Auschwitz", serving as a social psychological "tool" for the deflection of guilt in perpetrator societies (Bergmann 2004). Extreme positions indeed blur their criticism of Zionism and "secondary anti-Semitism" in following the logics of perpetrator-victim-reversal. Most prominent in this context is the framing of Jewish victims of the Holocaust as "new Nazis" responsible for the threatened extinction of the Palestinian people. In the 1960s, it was primarily Jewish positions within the Left who

19

criticized such biased viewpoints and the named blurring of anti-Zionism and anti-Jewish resentment. From an experience-oriented theoretical perspective, like the one expressed by Walter Benjamin (1984), this is easily explained by the fact that Jewish intellectuals at that time still grapple with their personal experience of annihilating anti-Semitism and thus acknowledge anti-Israeli attitudes as a "placeholder" for anti-Jewish resentment. Theodor W. Adorno, for example, is shocked by what he describes as "fascist tendencies" within radical left-wing anti-Zionism (Adorno 1969, cited in Kraushaar 1998: 652). Another early critic is the Austrian Holocaust survivor Jean Améry, who talks of a new, "respectable anti-Semitism", camouflaging anti-Jewish resentment behind anti-racist and pro-Palestinian stances (Améry 2005 [1969]: 131).

During the 1970s, wider parts of the German radical Left reacted to this blurring of anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism and increasingly called for inner-left self-reflection; but it lasted until the late 1980s that such criticism gained enough weight to make itself heard within radical politics. In the wake of German re-unification after the collapse of the communist systems and the fall of the Berlin Wall, the so-called anti-Germans arrived on the leftist scene and changed inner-left discourse. They emerged in the light of growing nationalism, pogrom-like race riots directed against refugees and rising anti-Semitism. Their radical perspective had its roots in communist political groups, first and foremost the Communist Alliance (*Kommunistischer Bund - KB*). The KB formulated harsh criticism concerning the past politics of the German radical Left and it distinguished itself from other extra-parliamentary groups with the analysis that in Germany (and Austria) the endemic crisis of capitalism would inevitably lead to a move towards the right and to a new fascism. Theoretically, the anti-German perspective combines Critical Theory and Psycho–Analysis with Marxist Criticism of Value (*Wertkritik*). It focuses on commodity-fetishism and its interlink with the function and mechanisms of "-isms" within capitalism as structurally necessary ideological tools for outsourcing alienation, as well as for the sub-ordination and exploitation of human labor. In this context, the concept of "structural anti–Semitism" (Postone 1988) is elaborated and used as a critical tool for the analysis of modern anti-Semitism within left-wing discourse. Above all, it stresses "conspiracy theoretical" elements of anti-capitalist discourse, like the personalization of capital and capitalist exploitation and its projection onto the imagination of "Jewish puppet masters", such as "the Rothschilds".

Since the end of the 1990s, anti-German critique predominantly focused on anti–Semitic frames within anti-imperialist anti-Zionism and harshly criticized exuberant hostility and demonization of the Israeli state as well as conspiracy theoretical views on the state as being "installed" by a world dominating neo-colonial "US-raeli power system" that also includes transnational bodies such as the United Nations. It indeed got adopted and induced processes of inner-left self-reflexion. After the Second Intifada and the September 11 attacks, however, left-wing perspectives completely drifted apart and split the scene into a pro-Israeli and a pro-Palestinian camp. In this period, anti-German radical perspectives eventually diffused to Austria and soon turned into highly disputed topics in

inner-left debates. Prior to this rupture however, the Austrian New Left was unanimously dedicated to anti-Zionist struggles.

III. THE AUSTRIAN HISTORICAL CONTEXT: THE "VICTIMIZATION MYTH", THE "ERA KREISKY" AND RADICAL LEFT SOLIDARITIES

Traditionally, Austrian radical politics has been strongly oriented on the anti-imperialist framing of the Middle East conflict. Ever since, the most important radical camps opposed Israel as an oppressive colony, installed with the help of US hegemony, and supported the Palestinian national liberation struggle. In this context it is important to stress that the memory political setting differs fundamentally between Austria and Germany and that this impacts the Austrian political discourse. The main difference between the Austrian and the German political setting is Austria´s successful avoidance of coming to terms with the past resulting in an official memory politics based on a historical lie. Until the late 1980s, Austrian memory politics were shaped by the so-called "victimization myth". This term denominates the Austrian post-war narrative as having been Nazi-Germany´s "first victim" and thus not to be blamed for National Socialist crimes. This memory political context impeded a serious de-nazification of the Austrian society and allowed for the preservation of a – mostly latent, but periodically quite openly articulated – anti-Semitic consensus in Austrian social and political discourse up to the 1980s (Uhl 2001). Albeit official Austrian politics did not take a particular stand on Israel up to the 1970s, Austrian post-war society therefore articulated dynamics of perpetrator-victim-reversal (Weiss 1983: 48ff).

Regarding leftist politics, however, the picture is quite an anti-Zionist one: the radical Austrian Left expressed, nearly unanimously, critical views on Israel. In the immediate post-war period the most important leftist political actors have been the left-wingers of the Austrian Social-Democratic Party (*SPÖ*) and the Austrian Communist Party (*KPÖ*). Up to the 1970s, Austrian leftist post-war positions on the Middle East were dominated by these traditional left-wing political actors – most prominently by the former one, which is the bigger and more influential party. The Social Democrats initially expressed solidarity with the Israeli state and framed their support as an anti-fascist duty, especially in the face of the immediate past. Some party-affiliated organizations such as the Austrian Federation of Trade Unions (*ÖGB*), the Austrian Israeli Society (*ÖIG*), or single voices within the socialist youth organization the Red Falcons (*Rote Falken*) are even known as "Israel-friends", but such direct solidarity soon became a minority position.

As in the German case, the Six-Day War marks an important historical turning point. Post-67 discourse within social-democratic contexts became harsher and by the mid 1970s, anti-Zionism finally turned into an important marker of being socialist or generally leftist (Reiter 2001: 193ff). Probably even more than the events in the Middle East, a major domestic political shift influences this development: In the year 1971 the Social Democratic Party won the absolute majority under Chairman Bruno Kreisky and a decade long sole-ruling era that brought about major changes followed. During his long-lasting term, Chancellor Kreisky also exercised major influence on Austrian Middle East politics and he clearly supported the Palestinian cause.

Being of Jewish descent and a socialist, Bruno Kreisky had to escape Nazi persecution and was forced into exile in Sweden, from where he returned immediately after the war. In his time as chancellor, he was one of Austria's most prominent critics of Israel. The ambivalent and contradicting positioning of this Jewish post-war politician, being aware of anti-Semitism on the one hand, but simultaneously refuting to put the "Jewish Question" on the political agenda, is an ambivalent chapter in Austrian post-war politics. Critical voices point out problematic implications of Kreisky´s political orientation in reminding that anti-Zionism always can function as vehicle for "projections" - in this case most probably serving the deflection of Austrian guilt. Although it is not to be blamed on Chancellor Kreisky that Left-wing discourse gradually changed in a more hostile direction towards Israel, the fact remains, that he significantly contributed to the development of a broad anti-Zionist common sense within Social-Democratic politics during the 1970s (Bischof & Pelinka, 1994).

In contrast to the Social Democrats, the Austrian Communist Party (*KPÖ*) took a straight anti-Zionist stance from the very beginning of the conflict. The party followed the Soviet Union´s political orientation and after a very short period of solidarity and acknowledgment of post-Holocaust entanglements of the Israeli state, it turned radically anti-Zionist in the early 1950s. From this period on, the Israeli state was no longer framed as a legitimate state of survivors of the European catastrophe, but as a condemnable settler colony. However, singular voices in the Austrian communist camp expressed opposition to excessive demonization of Israel and stressed the fact that such

biased views usually go hand in hand with a of its "right to exist". Such voices, however, were marginal and did not change the general communist policy regarding the Middle East (Reiter 2001: 194ff).

During the 1970s, the Austrian New Left developed and new actors arrived. Predominantly Trotskyist and Marxist-Leninist radical groups such as the Communist bund (*Kommunistischer Bund - KB*) or the Group of Revolutionary Marxists (*Gruppe Revolutionärer Marxisten - GRM*) appeared on the scene; they joined debates about the Middle East and pushed forward the radicalization of anti-Zionist discourse. In the wake of the Yom Kippur War the Trotskyist GRM, for example, published prominent anti-Israeli pamphlets and interpreted the attacks on Israel as a legitimate "resistance of the Arab people against the escalating Zionist-imperialist aggression" (GRM leaflet on Yom Kippur, 1973, cited in Reiter 2001: 189). The criticism expressed within this newly formed radical spectrum exceeded the traditional left-wing actors by far. But also generally, the leftist framing of the Israeli nation-state remained a colonial one, instead of emphasizing the anti-fascist perspective and frame the state as a historical consequence of the Holocaust, as it happened in Germany in the same period. In the late 1980s and following the outbreak of the First Intifada in 1988, Palestine solidarity eventually turned into a pivotal element of Austrian radical Left politics. Besides the traditional actors of this anti-imperialist stance, namely Trotskyist and Marxist-Leninist political groups, the 1980s showed an overarching wave of solidarity including new actors from the "unorthodox" and "autonomous" radical Left emerging during the 1980s. Towards the end of the decade, and especially

following the collapse of Communism, the traditional Marxist Left was gradually replaced by autonomous contexts which gained weight during the 1980s, when a vivid squatters´ scene developed (Foltin 2004: 170ff). In conclusion, up to the 1990s Austrian radical left-wing politics was characterized by an exclusively anti-imperialist and anti-colonial framing of the conflict, by considerable hostility towards Israel and by a strong criticism of Israeli neo-colonial oppression of the Palestinian people. As already mentioned, however, it is autonomous radical contexts that turned into the main actors of Palestine solidarity within the radical Left by the beginning of the 1990s (Reiter 2001: 351ff).

In the same period, another political event entangled with Austrian memory politics and its problematic omissions influenced the radical Left in Austria: in 1986, anti-fascist criticism gained weight in the light of the so-called Waldheim-affair. This event's international repercussions revealed Austria's involvement in National Socialism and marked a turning point regarding official Austrian memory politics. In 1986, former General Secretary of the United Nations, Kurt Waldheim, ran for presidential election as a candidate of the conservative People's Party (*ÖVP*). During the electoral campaign, the Austrian news magazine *Profil* and the World Jewish Congress (*WJC*) revealed that Waldheim had been a member of the National-Socialist Student League and a member of an SA-Cavalry Corps. The following public debate brought to light that he also had concealed his service in "Army Group E" of the German army in Saloniki, which had played a major role in the deportation of the Greek Jewish population. Waldheim's National Socialist past and above all his involvement in the Holocaust became central themes

of the political debate in Austria and abroad. Due to the affair, official Austrian memory politics changed essentially, because the incident lead to the erosion of the Austrian "victim myth".

The official acknowledgment of the Austrian participation in National Socialism and thus also in the annihilation of the European Jewry followed in 1991 when the then Federal Chancellor Franz Vranitzky apologized in front of the Israeli parliament for the Austrian involvement in National Socialism and the Holocaust (Uhl 2001: 28).
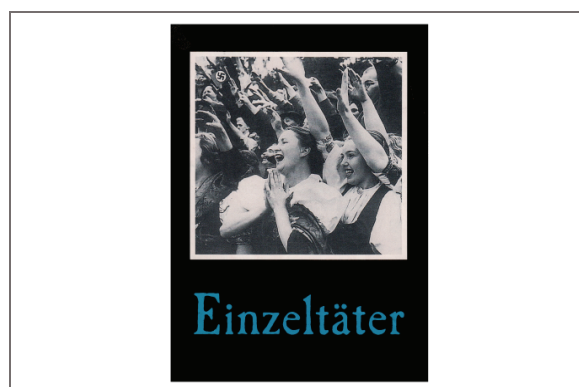

Fig. 2: Anti-fascist leaflet reminding of Austria´s past and symbolically deconstructing the Austrian "victimization myth" in displaying a picture of the "Austrian Anschluss" in March 1938 captioned with the title "*Single Perpetrators*" (Einzeltäter)

Left-wing reactions to the affair and its aftermath led to the strengthening of anti-fascist politics - mostly located within social democratic affiliated organizations, but also within autonomous contexts. During the 1990s, anti-fascist and anti-imperialist actions and solidarities within the radical Left mostly ran parallel

without major references to each other. This phase of political "co-existence", however, terminated by the end of the decade with a growing inner-left criticism regarding problematic features of anti-Zionism articulated by the newly rising anti-German perspective.

IV. 9/11 AND BEYOND: LEFT-WING DEBATES ON "NEW ANTI-SEMITISM", "ANTI-MUSLIM RACISM" AND THE MIDDLE EAST IN THE WAKE OF THE "WAR ON TERROR"

Following the Second Intifada and the September 11 attacks, the Austrian radical political landscape was shattered by anti-German criticism, which opposes anti-Zionism and addresses anti-Semitic elements. Globally, leftist politics is decidedly anti-Zionist and, as mentioned before, left-wing support for Israel is a unique phenomenon in "perpetrator societies". Concrete debates, however, reached far beyond and were related to diverging perspectives on geo-political and discursive shifts in the wake of the "War on Terror". Quarrels thus must be seen as left-wing reactions to global political upheavals after the turn of the millennium, when the long-predicted "clash of civilizations" (Huntington 1993) seemed to come true via "globalizing Islamist terrorism" and newly forming antagonisms between the (Christian) "Okzident" and the (Muslim) "Orient". In line with this, initial sparks for the Viennese debates not only arose with regard to the Al-Aqsa Intifada, but rather interconnected it with the events of Nine Eleven, the attacks on Iraq and Afghanistan, and the development of the Austrian peace movement. On the other hand, the debates were related to memory politics and thus interlinked with anti-fascist political discussions. Eventually, anti-racist and anti-fascist political perspectives partly blundered into antagonistic positions and competitive debates. As the introductorily mentioned heckling of the commemoration event for the November pogrom indicates, struggles thus should be read as articulations of conflicting memories (Diner 2007) and interrelated competing victimizations and solidarities (Messerschmidt 2008) in a post-National Socialist and post-colonial migration society. After a brief introduction of the opposed political actors, the main conflicting political arguments are outlined in the following.

At the beginning of the millennium, new political actors emerged within the Austrian radical Left. Autonomous anti-imperialists took over from the traditional communist-internationalist Left and radicalized anti-Zionism in their support of the Palestinian uprising. They condemned Israeli policies as "neo-colonial oppression", criticized "US-raeli imperialism" and "world domination" via the so-called "War on Terror" and called for unconditional solidarity with the "Palestinian national liberation struggle". In the wake of Bush's "War on Terror" they joined the Austrian peace movement protesting against the "imperialist wars" in Iraq and Afghanistan and growing anti-Muslim racism. Anti-imperialist stances, thus, partly fell into place with anti-racist action. The most exposed anti-imperialist groups were founded at the beginning of the decade and some of them directly related their foundation to the intifada. The transnational alliance Anti-imperialist Coordination (*Antiimperialistische Koordination – AIK*) for example was founded in 2000 in Italy and since 2007 it has published the monthly journal *Intifada*. It is dedicated to national liberation struggles generally and the Palestinian one in particular. The Trotskyist Revolutionary Communist League (*Revolutionär Kommunistische Liga*

– *RKL*) was one preceding organization with a similar political background. Originally founded in the autonomous political spectrum, the Stalinist Communist Action – Marxist-Leninist (*KOMAK-ML*) was another exposed anti-imperialist organization with a clear anti-Zionist stance. Finally, the political action group *Sedunia* [Indonesian for: *international*, J.E.] played an important role. Although very small in numbers, it was this group, which organized and led the heckling of the commemoration ceremony in 2003. *Sedunia* was originally founded as an anti-racist and anti-imperialist political context and changed its name to *Dar-Al Janub* [Arab for: *House of the South*, J.E.] in October 2003. It related its re-foundation as *Dar-al Janub* directly to the Second Intifada and its entanglement with geo-political shifts after the September 11 attacks and the following "War on Terror". In summary, anti-imperialist framing of international politics in general and the Middle East conflict in particular can be described as following a post-colonial interpretation of geo-politics. However, as will be shown below, extreme anti-imperialist articulations indeed blur with structural anti-Semitism as it was criticized by anti-German contexts.

Anti-German critique is quite a new phenomenon in Vienna's political action scene. Emerging at the beginning of the 2000s, it was adopted first within Marxist value critical contexts like the Critical Circle (*Kritischer Kreis*). After antagonistic discussions about anti-Semitic implications of the September 11 attacks, the Critical Circle split in the same year. One outcome of the cleavage was the political context *Café Critique*, which found its basis at the department of political science and its student representation group Base Group Political Science (*Basisgruppe Politikwis-*

senschaft). Soon, harsh criticism on anti-Semitic projections within anti-Zionist discourse was induced. First, the abovementioned processes of "perpetrator-victim reversal" were exposed and anti-imperialist framing of Israel as "new Nazi-State" rightly criticized as "secondary anti-Semitic". Furthermore, "structurally anti-Semitic" elements - like the imagination of a "Jewish world conspiracy" - were exposed. Anti-imperialist propaganda against "Jewish puppet masters" pulling the strings behind the US government backing up the "evil colonizer Israel" was criticized. In this context, also the attacks on the World Trade Center were analyzed as "structural anti-Semitic", which was basically due to the terrorists´ framing of a homogenous "imperialist and Zionist West" as main enemy. In opposing such stances, some anti-imperialists again referred to conspiracy views and framed the attacks as anti-colonial "self-defense" against "US-raeli domination".

Fig. 3: Website-cover of the journal "Intifada", published by the "Anti-Imperialist Coordination" in Vienna

As an outcome of the struggle, a variety of activist settings within the autonomous political scene – above all the anti-fascist ones – adopted the anti–German critique of left-wing anti-Semitism. Anti-imperialist

hardliners, in contrast, rejected the criticism and started denouncing anti-German critics as "bourgeois political enemies" and "left-wing-betrayers". By the middle of the decade, the conflict escalated and split parts of the radical Left. This, however, was not only due to anti-German criticism of anti-Semitism, but also induced by political divergences regarding their critique of a "new", and "islamized anti-Semitism". In focusing on the "travelling" of European anti-Semitism into the Muslim world, extreme anti-German positions started to frame the Palestinian uprising exclusively as "islamist and thus anti-Semitic", whereas racist oppression was belittled. In this context, hardliners developed a biased and culturally racist "criticism of Islam", in which analysis blurred with orientalizing anti-Muslim resentment. Consequently, anti-German stances were criticized for being "islamophobic" not only by anti-imperialist, but also by a growing number of anti-racist contexts. Eventually, conflicts escalated, split parts of the Left and led to new political alliances: After the escalation by the middle of the decade, some anti-German activists abandoned left-wing politics and established the pro-Israeli campaign "Stop the Bomb". Founded in 2007, Stop the Bomb was a reaction to the menace of the Iranian religious regime towards Israel; the groups´ concrete aims were the prevention of investments in Iran (most prominently those of the Austrian energy corporation OMV), and the international isolation of the religious regime. However, so-called anti-German contexts differ considerably and anti-Muslim standpoints were also challenged from within. An example for such "multidirectional solidarity" (Rothberg 2009) within anti-German political contexts would be the anti-racist and anti-fascist political action group Ecological Left (*Ökologische Linke – ÖKOLI*),

which published the journal *Context XXI*. It took a quite unique position within the debates in so far as it equally focused upon Austrian National-Socialist past and current memory politics, problematic anti-Semitic features of anti-Zionist discourse, as well as the newly forming anti-racist struggles against the European migration system and growing anti-Muslim racism. It thus solidly correlated anti-fascist and anti-racist political stances and struggles at a time, when inner-left antagonisms emerged as a result of competitive perspectives on past and current victimizations.
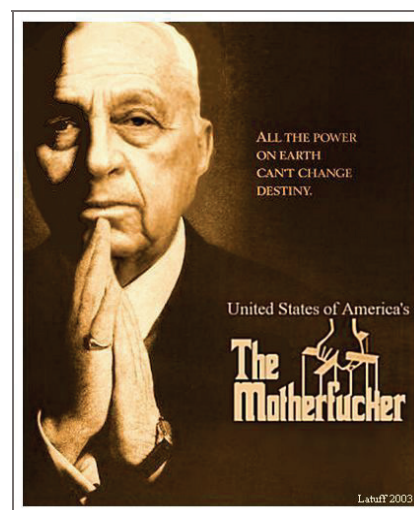

Fig. 4: Anti-Semitic cartoon of the former Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon by cartoonist "Latuff"

Concluding, such political struggles and opposed framings are discussed as articulations of conflicting memory and the concept of "multidirectional solidarity" is proposed as alternative approach.

26

As shown above, the new millennium brought about radical struggles over Left-wing and "new" anti-Semitism in Viennas´ political action scene. Underlying these quarrels, however, is a second layer of contentions. It is related to "competing victimizations" and splits between anti-fascist and anti-racist stances, but also reaches far beyond as it relates to discursive shifts on a global scale. In this view, radicalizing leftist debates reflect transatlantic "culture wars" over "islamist terrorism", rising anti-Muslim racism or radicalizing anti-Zionism (Shohat & Stam 2012). In the Austrian context, debates basically regard opposing views on the relationship of anti-Semitism and anti-Muslim racism in light of the "War on Terror". While anti-German critics stress the fact that "new anti-Semitism" is an "islamized" one, anti-imperialist - but also anti-racist - contexts criticize this viewpoint as "islamophobic" projection of European Anti-Semitism onto "Muslim Others", be it Islamic countries or Muslim minorities in European migration societies. Likewise, perspectives on the Palestinian uprising differ completely: the anti-German camp emphasizes the constant threat of suicide bombings for Israeli citizens and criticizes the ideology of Hamas as anti-Semitic, whereas the anti-imperialist side justifies them as necessary self-defense against "creeping genocide" and in extreme cases establishes a hero cult around suicide bombers. At heart, the antagonistic camps thus debate the relation of anti-Semitism and anti-Muslim racism, whereby the underlying frame is one of competition (Messer-schmidt 2008). Extreme anti-German standpoints bluntly negate anti-Muslim resentment and develop a culturally racist "criticism of Islam", whereas anti-imperialists see anti-Semitism as being replaced by "Islamophobia".

In summary, the conflict encompasses several layers of racializations and victimization. On the one hand, anti-Semitic stereotyping within the radical anti-imperialist Left is criticized. Furthermore, increasing anti-Muslim resentment is discussed. Debates, however, are shaped by the logics of "competing victimizations", producing a zero-sum perspective on current and past victimizations and sufferings. Concretely, the "severity" of current anti-Semitism or "Islamophobia" is discussed. In this context, the suffering of Jewish people during the Shoah is „played off" against the suffering of colonized peoples and related to current politics when it comes to Middle East debates. Such processes are clearly mirrored in anti-imperialist political discourse and get explicitly expressed in the equation of racist Israeli politics with the Holocaust. In a post-National Socialist frame such equations are to be criticized as "secondary anti-Semitic". From a post-colonial perspective, however, they are also struggles over the meaning of victimization and racialization in a post-Holocaust society facing international migration in a post-colonial world.

Concluding, as such debates and contentions articulate in a migration society with National Socialist past and postcolonial present, they reflect entangled legacies of violence. Following Hito Steyerls (2003) "archival" approach, they are embedded in a "palimpsest" of past and current racializing discourses, traumata and experiences of victimization. When a pro-Palestinian group for example, interrupts a memorial for the November pogrom and does this at a site, where only a small commemoration plaque reminds of the com-

pletely perished Jewish community, it negates and thus symbolically perpetuates Jewish victimization and annihilation. When, on the other hand, anti-Germans downplay Palestinian suffering under Israeli occupation or deny contemporary anti-Muslim racism, they ignore current suffering and racialization as well as the century-old Austrian history of imperial "anti-Mussulman" discourse. Adapting a concept of cultural theorist Michael Rothberg, who works on the "multidirectional" meaning of the Holocaust in the age of decolonization, I thus propose to look at "multidirectional solidarities" in order to challenge such competitive views on suffering and violence.

The concrete meaning of such multidirectionality basically points to awareness and empathy for intersecting axis of violence. One example would be a famous essay by W.E.B. DuBois, who, after visiting the Warsaw Ghetto and getting confronted with annihilating European anti-Semitism, reconsidered his analysis that the "color line" would be the most important dividing line in terms of race relations (Du Bois 2004 [1952]). In post-National socialist contexts, a starting point could be the critique voiced by women of color and Black as well as Jewish feminists in the 1980s, which was directed at the exclusionary theory and practice of white German and Austrian women's movements (Hügel et al. 1994). A key point was the underdeveloped understanding of intersecting –Isms and own privilege of many white feminist activists, which led them to side-step a critical and comprehensive reflection of their political engagement in the light of national - postcolonial and anti-Semitic - pasts as well as current power relations. A multidirectional perspective would thus theorise racism and anti-Semitism as interdependent but different power relations and focus "remote lega-cies" (ibid.) of differing racializations, instead of playing them off. In this sense, Left-wing discourse could develop emancipatory politics from a post-Holocaust and post-colonial anti-racist perspective.

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28

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