

Foreign Policy's Daniel Altman On Trump's "Disgusting Racist Alt Right Retweets"

by Hugh Fitzgerald



Daniel Altman, the editor of *Foreign Policy*, recently delivered himself of an article, "[This Is How Every Genocide Begins](#)," in which he claims that President Trump's retweeting of three "anti-Islamic" videos reminds him of the years leading up to the Holocaust. Many absurd remarks have been made about these videos, but none as hysterically absurd as this. According to Altman, these videos of Muslims behaving badly are just the kind of thing that prepared the German people to accept Hitlerian antisemitism, and the concentration and death camps for the Jews. These videos, then, in Altman's mental universe, are preparing the ground for the mass roundup of Muslims in the United States, then the concentration camps, and then the extermination camps for those Muslims. This not only seems preposterous; it is preposterous.

Let's start with Altman's claim that "the videos he [Trump] shared purportedly portray outrages committed by Muslim migrants in Europe, yet in reality they may be nothing of the sort." First, Trump never said that these three videos were committed by "Muslim migrants in Europe." Two of the three are clearly identified as taking place outside Europe. One of the videos has been on YouTube since France 24 put it up in 2013, when it was originally shot, and it was long ago identified as showing pro-Morsi – that is, Muslim Brotherhood – Egyptians in Alexandria, chasing down and throwing a young man, presumably anti-Morsi, off a building (and then beating him to death). Whether taken by a photo-journalist or by an amateur cameraman who sold it to France 24 hardly matters. No one denies its authenticity.

A second video shows a Dutch boy, identified as a "Muslim migrant," severely beating another Dutch boy on crutches. The video has now been misidentified – twice. First, by Trump, when he retweeted it, with the vicious bully described as a "Muslim migrant." Second, by all those who were quick to scornfully proclaim that "the boy was neither a migrant nor a Muslim." It turns out that the boy was not a migrant himself, but almost certainly the Dutch-born Muslim son of Muslim migrants. How can we say that? The Dutch police know the identity of the attacker. But the statement they released only said that he was "born in the Netherlands." Had he not been a Muslim – the son of Muslim migrants – they would certainly have said so: "President Trump described the boy as a Muslim migrant. He was neither." But that "correction" was never made. The fact that the Dutch police were silent on the boy's religion means that he must have been Muslim.

Trump was closer to the truth than his rush-to-judgment detractors. But don't look to the anti-retweeters for any retractions or apologies. In fact, they continue to insist that the boy "was neither a migrant nor a Muslim," even though neither the Dutch police, nor anyone else in authority, has

testified that he was not a Muslim. It was clearly not the boy's Dutch nationality, but his Muslim upbringing, that help us to comprehend his gleeful malevolence in attacking a helpless Kuffar, and his desire to ensure that his attack would be widely seen. Before launching his assault, he arranged for a friend of his (another Muslim? We don't yet know, but what do you think?) to videotape the whole thing. He wanted his deed of derring-do, beating up an Infidel, to be recorded. Something to put on YouTube, to make him the cynosure of a great many admiring Muslim eyes. And to scare other Infidels. We're taking over. Just look at what we can do. That'll show Geert Wilders who's boss!

A third video shows a bearded man, speaking Arabic with a Syrian accent, smashing a statue of the Virgin Mary. He says, as he completes his task, that "Allah willing, Allah alone, will be worshipped in the Levant." A blow against those cursed Christians in Syria, protected by those Alawites, and by Bashara. An Iranian website claims that the man in the video belongs to the al Qaeda affiliate Al-Nusra, that the video dates from 2013 and was taken in a church in a northwestern Syrian town. MEMRI further identifies him as Sheik Omar Rhagba.

A great many silly things have been said by people who were outraged by what Trump has retweeted. Why, we are told – as if it were of great significance – were two of the videos from 2013? So what? Does anyone think there haven't been hundreds, even thousands, of videos of Muslim attacks since then, just as disturbing or even far worse than what Trump retweeted? Some of them show Muslims from Al Qaeda beheading journalists and aid workers; others show whole rows of Christians or Yazidis being decapitated by ISIS. The Christian schoolgirls beheaded in Indonesia? The priest, Jacques Hamel, decapitated at the altar? The two little Jewish children in Toulouse killed in front of the father? The murder of pedestrians, mowed down by cars driven by Jihadis, in Nice, in New York, in

Barcelona? The more than 32,000 terrorist attacks by Muslims since 9/11? When it comes to such atrocities, there is an embarrassment of riches.

Both from before and after 2013, we have videos of Muslims destroying not just a single small religious statue, but blowing up churches, and massacring Christian worshippers, in Egypt, Iraq, Syria. And before there were videos, or any visual record of destruction as it occurred, we could see the ruins that were left, read the accounts set down over 1400 years, about Muslims destroying tens of thousands of Christian icons, paintings, frescoes, statues, monasteries, churches. We also have 700-800 years of Muslims destroying Hindu and Buddhist temples and temple complexes throughout India. No videos are necessary to prove this history: the evidence of such colossal ruin could and can be seen in all the lands that Islam conquered. The small statue of the Virgin Mary reminds us of that long history of destruction. That little Christian statue in Syria was destroyed for the same reason that Muslims blew up the huge Bamiyan Buddhas in Afghanistan. The small Virgin Mary and the giant Buddhas were religious artifacts; Islam was not the religion to which they belonged; therefore, they deserved to be destroyed. The video of the man destroying the statue, and intoning his message of Islamic supremacism ("Allah alone, Allah alone can be worshipped in the Levant"), was hardly a unique event. It was, rather, tellingly representative of one of the most important aspects of Islam, the physical destruction of anything connected to other faiths. Does Daniel Altman not know of this aspect of Islam? Does he know why the Muslim in the video said that "Allah alone can be worshipped in the Levant"? Or does he know about it all too well, and thinks it should not be publicized, lest people get the wrong idea about peaceful tolerant Islam? Isn't it important for Infidels to learn about, and understand the reasons for, the mass destruction of non-Muslim religious art and artifacts by Muslims, destruction that has been going on ever since the first century of Islam? Or is that

impermissible, because it shows Islam in a bad light? Show Islam in a bad light, and the next thing you know, you'll hear the Gestapo kicking down the doors of every mosque, looking for innocent Muslims to drag away. Just ask Daniel Altman.

The third video shows a group of men, including one who seems to be wearing the flag of the self-described Islamic State, throwing another man off a roof. France 24 shared the video in 2013, saying it appears to show a mob of angry men chasing down a teenager in Alexandria, Egypt, during a spasm of violence following the ouster of then-President Mohamed Morsi. Many critics of Trump have again said, accusingly, that this "video comes from 2013," as if that somehow made it outdated or irrelevant, or possibly was posted because Islamophobes like Trump and Fransen couldn't find any more recent "outrages." And that's all Trump's critics had to say about it: the tape is four years old, and besides, Trump is a "racist"; they said nothing about the contents of the videos.

Again, who cares if this video, like the one of the Muslim destroying the statue, is from 2013? We recognize the murderous hatred of this crowd of Muslims for someone they deem less Muslim than themselves, in this case someone who deserves death for opposing Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood. We've seen similar atrocities many times both before and since 2013, in the reports, and sometimes the pictures, of Sunnis killing Shi'a, Alawites, Ahmadis, Sufis, for the crime of being heretics or Infidels, that is, of not being mainstream Sunni Muslims at all. And we've seen Sunnis killing other Sunnis, as in this third video retweeted by Trump, for being insufficiently islamic. These killings have taken place recently in Syria, Iraq, Pakistan. The retweeted video shows us an example of a Muslim mob in Egypt murderously chasing someone down and killing him, for not being fanatical enough. Is it unfair to Muslims? Are such Muslim mobs a figment of the islamophobic imagination? Have we not seen other such mobs in Muslim lands, running after their human prey? What is unfair

about showing what some Muslims – a not inconsiderable number – are capable of doing? Would it be better not to show these things, in order to protect the image of Islam? Why do we want to protect the image of Islam? How does that promote a real, and not a dangerously illusory, peace?

Two of the videos – those of the Dutch Muslim boy beating up another boy, and that of the Syrian Muslim man with the statue – were recorded expressly by accomplices of the Muslims involved. They were proud of these videos. They wanted them made, and widely seen and disseminated through YouTube. How then can these be called “anti-Islam” videos? Or do we label as “anti-Islam” any video which would cause non-Muslims to think less well of Islam? Isn’t that reason enough to show these videos – to show the world’s Infidels here is what some Muslims do and are proud of doing?

Daniel Altman claimed that “the videos he [Trump] shared purportedly portray outrages committed by Muslim migrants in Europe, yet in reality they may be nothing of the sort.” But they are indeed very much something of the sort. These videos do not “purportedly portray outrages,” but clearly show three types of outrages committed by Muslims: 1) Murderous mob violence, of Muslims against other, less fanatical Muslims. 2) Muslim destruction of artifacts belonging to other religions. 3) Unprovoked Muslim violence against Infidels.

Daniel Altman wants us to be alarmed, as he is, by the prospect that these apparently intolerable retweets – intolerable because they show us atrocious behavior by Muslims – could lead inexorably to genocide. That’s how it happened before, he tells us: a slow preparing of German minds so that they would come to accept the death camps for Jews. He mentions Jews, Nazis, the Protocols of the Elders of Zion. But the Protocols were a forgery. The hallucinatory antisemitic visions of Hitler, the antisemitism of the Nazi publication *Der Stürmer*, were full of lies. The retweeted videos – at least two of them proudly made by Muslims – do not lie; they

show truths about Muslims and Islam we need to understand. Such understanding might lead, for example, to support for greater limits on Muslim immigration. But there is quite a leap, way beyond Altman's poor power to add or detract, between setting limits on Muslim immigration, and the setting up of concentration camps.

If Daniel Altman wants to talk about his fears about Muslims "becoming the new Jews" because of Trump, he might consider that it's not Muslims who are the "new Jews" but, unsurprisingly...the Jews. Antisemitic attacks in Europe and the United States far outnumber those against Muslims, though Muslims are constantly claiming victimhood, and at times helping to create and sustain, through [fake hate crimes](#), that illusion. Furthermore, antisemitic crimes in Europe are now most often committed by Muslims. Think of the Jewish boy Ilan Halimi, held prisoner by a Muslim gang and tortured for three weeks in 2006, before finally dying from that torture. Mr. Altman might also remember the four Jews killed by a Muslim gunman at the Hyper Cacher kosher market in Paris, in 2015, or the Muslim terrorists who killed a young Jewish couple at the Chabad House in Mumbai, in 2008, or the three tiny Jewish children, and the rabbi who was the father of two of them, all killed in Toulouse in 2012, or the 65-year-old Jewish lady in Paris who was beaten to death by a Muslim neighbor and her body thrown off a building in 2017. Of course, not all of these attacks end in murder. Earlier this year, two French Jewish brothers were abducted and abused by a group of men in a Paris suburb, that ended with the brothers being beaten and attacked with a wood saw. One of the attackers sawed off the finger of one of the brothers. There have been many cases of Jewish children being beaten up in schools, subject to taunts and assaults on the streets, Jewish families terrified to walk outside, all the result of hostile Muslims. As a consequence, some of those Jewish children have had to change schools, or their families have even had to move. This has happened in France, in Germany, in Sweden, in Denmark. In many cities in

Europe, Jews either have stopped wearing the kippah in public, or cover it with a hat. Jews in Europe have been beaten, stalked, chased, harassed, spat on, insulted, and murdered for being Jewish...by Muslims. Some have been forced, for the safety of their families, to leave for Israel, or to the United States, or to go into internal exile, from one city to a safer one (as from Malmö to Stockholm) or from one part of a city to a safer part (as from Saint-Denis, with its large Muslim population, to Neuilly-sur-Seine).

But don't bad things happen to Muslims in Europe, too? Yes, but not with the same level of violence, nor with the same frequency, as Jews endure. Certainly nothing like the murders by Muslims of Jews in Paris, Copenhagen, Toulouse. Jews have been beaten, stalked, chased, harassed, spat on, insulted. For Muslims there have been the occasional ripping off of a hijab. Someone may – rarely – break a window in a mosque, or leave some bacon on a mosque's entry-way. Or a Muslim running a food-cart might be told "Get out of my country." But the numbers of serious crimes against Muslims are almost comically small. There are no Muslims now afraid, as many Jews, and many non-Muslim women and girls are, to go out after dark for fear of Muslims. No Muslims are moving because they "fear" their non-Muslim neighbors. There is both a qualitative and quantitative difference between the attacks in Europe on Jews (mainly by Muslims) and the attacks in Europe on Muslims (which are never by Jews).

Far from having to hide the outward symbols of their identity, as many Jews now must, Muslims en masse deliberately take over public spaces – parks, streets – for the Muslim prayer, demonstrating their numbers and power, and their willingness to flout the authority of the Infidel state. The police steer clear. No one – except for Daniel Altman – is talking about any roundups of Muslims. The questions are more like these: Must we give full welfare benefits to Muslims for each of their plural wives and households? How many more mosques must

we allow to be built in City X or Village Y? Can we prevent the early-morning call to prayer from being electronically amplified in our cities? Should Muslim children be excused from studying the Holocaust? Should Muslim-women-only pool times be instituted? Can we demand that Muslim prayers held outside not block major thoroughfares? Despite Mr. Altman's fears, these are not exactly the warning signs of an impending Bergen-Belsen or Dachau.

But maybe he's got a point. Maybe the Stormtroopers, the Gestapo, Der Stuermer, are just waiting round the corner, preparing to do to Muslims what the Nazis did to the Jews. We keep being told that "Muslims are the new Jews." We need to take a closer look, to see if Daniel Altman's fears are justified.

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