

In Its Failure to Ban Hezbollah, Germany Undoes Itself

by Hugh Fitzgerald



Several years ago, Thilo Sarrazin, a former executive with the German central bank, wrote a book detailing the catastrophic effect of mass Muslim migration on his country; he called it "Germany Undoes Itself" (*Deutschland schafft sich ab*). Sarrazin described how Muslims who had migrated to Germany from Turkey and other Muslim countries had failed to assimilate into German society, and lived culturally separate lives in densely Muslim neighborhoods; he also noted that two-thirds of Germany's Muslim immigrants were on welfare. The book was a spectacular success, with 1.5 million copies sold. But instead of engaging with Sarrazin's arguments, Germany's elite either denounced or ignored him.

Sarrazin examined the political, economic, and social all consequences of the large Muslim presence. Politically, he noted the increasing appeasement of Muslims by politicians afraid to recognize the folly of what they had inflicted on their own people (could Merkel, for example, ever publicly admit that "I was wrong, terribly wrong, to allow two million Muslims into our country"?), and also aware of the increasing political clout of Muslims as their numbers, and the numbers of those Muslims who became citizens, have skyrocketed. Economically, Muslim migrants have placed enormous burdens on German taxpayers, who have had to pay for the generous support lavished upon these economic migrants who claimed they were entitled to "refugee status." That support includes free or greatly subsidized housing, free medical care, free education, generous family allowances and unemployment benefits without the need to have been employed; free language and "acculturation" classes. Socially, the unwillingness of Muslim migrants to integrate into German society has led, according to Sarrazin, to the creation of a parallel society, one hostile to that of Germany itself.

Germany also has undone itself morally, in failing to adequately protect both the Jewish people in Germany from the new antisemitism that has been brought into the country by these Muslim immigrants, and by being insufficiently attentive to the Muslim threat to Israel's existence.

The latest lamentable example of this moral failure is the vote taken in the Bundestag in early June on a resolution to ban both wings of Hezbollah, the "political" as well as the "military" wing, from the country. It ought to have passed without much trouble. Hezbollah is a terrorist organization whose main goal is to destroy Israel. It currently has 140,000 rockets and missiles in Lebanon, more than are possessed by 95% of the world's armies, all intended for use against Israel. Its leader, Hassan Nasrallah, routinely threatens that Hezbollah now has the ability to hit targets anywhere in

Israel and can “destroy” the Jewish state. Aside from Israel and the United States, many governments, including those of the U.K., Canada, Australia, the Netherlands, and the Arab League states (Syria, the only Arab state that has not denounced Hezbollah, is no longer a member of the League), have recognized that Hezbollah is a terrorist organization and banned it completely. The E.U. banned Hezbollah’s “military wing” in 2013 and is now discussing whether to ban the “political wing” as well.

Recently the Alternativ fur Deutschland (Alternative for Germany) Party, usually described, formulaically, and quite inaccurately, as “far-right,” introduced a proposal to ban Hezbollah as a terrorist organization from Germany. That is, the AfD wanted the “political wing” of Hezbollah to now be banned along with the “military” wing. The evidence of Hezbollah’s terrorism has long been recognized. Its deadliest single attack was that on the barracks of American Marines in Beirut in 1983, which killed more than 300 Marines and French military. Hezbollah has been responsible for bombing sites in Kuwait, Egypt, Lebanon. Between 1982 and 1986, there were 36 suicide attacks by Hezbollah in Lebanon alone, directed against American, French and Israeli forces by 41 individuals, killing 659. Hezbollah attacked an American Embassy annex, hijacked TWA Flight 847, blew up a Jewish community center in Argentina, attacked the Israeli embassies in Buenos Aires and London, bombed a bus carrying Israeli tourists in Bulgaria, bombed the Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia (killing 19 U.S servicemen), and attacked many more Israeli, American, and European targets, too numerous to list here.

Many in the Bundestag continue to believe the fiction of a separation between the “political” and “military” wings of Hezbollah. They are, in fact, joined at the hip. The attacks by the military wing help the political wing to gain prestige, and thus to attract members and raise money. These fundraising and membership drives by the “political wing” are, in turn, of

immediate and indispensable help to the “military” wing.

But apparently the Bundestag was unable to recognize that symbiotic relationship. German M.P.s from left to right refused to ban, as constituting a single terrorist organization, both wings of Hezbollah. *The Jerusalem Post* has the disturbing story [here](#).

Germany’s Bundestag rejected a bill on Thursday[June 6] to outlaw the Lebanese terrorist organization Hezbollah in the federal republic.

An array of parties comprising the Christian Democratic Union, Christian Social Union, the Social Democratic Party, the Left, the Greens and Free Democrats opposed an anti-Hezbollah bill authored by the far-right party Alternative for Germany party.”

The bill authored by the Alternative for Germany Party (note the Homeric epithet “far-right” in the report) garnered only a handful of votes outside those from the party itself; everyone else in the Bundestag was opposed to the total ban on Hezbollah, relying on the supposed separation of its “military” (i.e. terrorist) wing (bad) from its “political” wing (acceptable).

The mainstream German parties’ rejection of the motion to ban Hezbollah comes a week after an urgent appeal from the Central Council of Jews in Germany to outlaw Hezbollah amid rising Jew-hatred in the federal republic. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo requested last Friday that Chancellor Angela Merkel’s administration proscribe Hezbollah as a terrorist entity.

The Jerusalem Post reported on Wednesday that a German intelligence report from the state of Lower Saxony asserts the number of [known] Hezbollah members and supporters in Germany has climbed from 950 in 2017 to 1,050 in 2018.

“For a long time we have been calling for a ban on the antisemitic terrorist organization #Hezbollah,” the American Jewish Committee’s Berlin office tweeted on Thursday. “It is regrettable that this topic is now being taken up by the right-wing populists. We hope that all democratic parties will finally seek this prohibition. #Bundestag.”

What is regrettable is that the American Jewish Committee saw fit in its tweet to repeat the dismissive characterization of the Alternative for Germany Party, which is the only one standing squarely on the side of Israel and German Jews as “right wing populists.” The AfD party is routinely called “right-wing” because it is opposed to Muslim immigrants. Who decided that this position made a party or a person “right-wing”? Should the late Oriana Fallaci, for half a century the most famous left-wing journalist in Italy, who had interviewed many Muslim leaders, (e.g., Khomeini, Qaddafi, Arafat) and spent long periods in Muslim lands, come to despise Islam and was infuriated by the Muslim immigrants who, she felt, were ruining her own country, now to be called “right-wing”? And what makes the AfD party “populist” – a word that is now often used to denigrate anti-Islam politicians and parties, implying that their support is to be found among the less educated, easily whipped-up masses? Is Thilo Sarrazin, a senior-level financial mandarin, who has written critically of the effect of Muslim migrants in Germany, one of those “populists”? The American Jewish Committee ought to be grateful for the support Israel receives from the Alternative for Germany. It ought to have issued a different statement: “We are grateful for the support for the ban on Hezbollah that the Alternative for Germany Party has proposed. We hope that others who did not support the ban this time will study more closely the group’s methods and eliminationist goals, and in the future see the legitimacy of such a ban.”

Kathrin Vogler of the Left Party – widely considered an anti-Israel party – spoke against the anti-Hezbollah bill during

the debate. The Left party's MP Christine Buchholz has defended the "legitimate resistance" of Hezbollah against the Jewish state. Buchholz has also shown support for the EU and US designated terrorist entity Hamas."

The Left Party in Germany has long been unsympathetic to the Jewish State in its fight for survival against its implacable Muslim enemies Hezbollah and Hamas. What "legitimate resistance" to the Jewish state does Hezbollah offer? Hezbollah is a Shia terrorist organization based in Lebanon. It has engaged in terrorism against American, French, and Lebanese as well as Israeli targets. Is Israel a threat to the existence of Lebanon, or is it Hezbollah that threatens the existence of Israel? In the past Israel has attacked Hezbollah sites in Lebanon only in response to Hezbollah's initial aggression. The 2006 Israel-Hezbollah war was begun by Hezbollah on July 12, 2006, when its fighters fired rockets at Israeli border towns as a diversion for an anti-tank missile attack on two armored Hums patrolling the Israeli side of the border fence. The ambush left three soldiers dead. Two Israeli soldiers were abducted and taken by Hezbollah to Lebanon. Five more Israelis were killed in Lebanon in a failed rescue attempt. Hezbollah demanded the release of Lebanese prisoners held by Israel in exchange for the release of the abducted soldiers. Israel refused and responded with airstrikes and artillery fire. The original aggressor, keep in mind, was Hezbollah, with its attack on July 12, 2006.

It is Hezbollah that has remained the aggressor. Its officials continuously threaten to annihilate Israel, Hezbollah has steadily been adding to its gigantic arsenal of missiles; it now has 14,000 of them, many of high precision. In the north, Hezbollah has been building a number of very long and very deep tunnels extending from Lebanon deep into the Galilee, tunnels that the Israelis have recently been uncovering and destroying; these tunnels were intended to be used in a surprise attack by Hezbollah fighters; it was planned that in

the next large-scale conflict, the fighters would emerge from the tunnels to kidnap and kill Israeli civilians in the Galilee. Does the German Left Party think those 140,000 missiles aimed at Israel, or those tunnels dug from Lebanon to the Galilee, constitute a “legitimate resistance”? Is Nasrallah’s claim to be able to wipe out Israel an act of “legitimate resistance” or the act of an aggressor? In its conflicts with Hezbollah, Israel has never been the first to attack; Israel’s leaders never utter blood – curdling threats against Hezbollah as Hezbollah routinely does against Israel; Hezbollah is not the leader of a “resistance” – not a single Israeli is in Lebanon – but an aggressor that now possesses more missiles and rockets than 95% of the world’s armies. Does none of this give the German Left Party pause? Or is it so anti-Israel that nothing will convince it to support a total ban on Hezbollah?

The Green Party’s Omid Nouripour, who played a role in a Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions initiative against Israel in 2013, voiced his opposition to the anti-Hezbollah resolution.

No surprise here. Omid Nouripour, a Shi’a Iranian by birth, and a supporter of the anti-Israel BDS campaign, would certainly want to protect Hezbollah, the Shi’a terrorist group that, along with its ally Iran, now constitutes the chief military threat to the people of Israel.

A leading Green Party MP Jürgen Trittin, has shown sympathy for Hezbollah, declaring: “We must speak with Hezbollah.”

“We must speak with Hezbollah”? Why? What is there to talk about? Attempts have been made by Western countries before to speak with Hezbollah, which in response always returns to its anti-Israel script. Hezbollah is not, pace Jürgen Trittin, interested in a “dialogue” with German politicians or anyone else; it is interested only in furthering its goal of

eliminating Israel from the face of the earth. Neither Jurgen Tritten nor any other German politician ought to be encouraging the pursuit of that will-o'-the-wisp, "talking with Hezbollah." Let Hezbollah first stop threatening to destroy Israel, and then, just maybe, there might be something to talk about – such as a different, much more limited role for Hezbollah, as the protector of Shi'a interests in Lebanon

The Christian Democratic Union's Christian de Vries voiced his opposition to the anti-Hezbollah bill, saying there should be an "EU solution" for a ban of Hezbollah.

What Christian de Vries means in saying there should be an "EU solution" for a ban on Hezbollah is that Germany should follow the E.U. example of allowing the "political wing" of Hezbollah to continue to operate, but banning the "military wing," as the E.U. did in 2013. However, even the E.U. has been having second thoughts about allowing the "political" wing to continue to operate. This spring, at the instigation of 60 members of the European Parliament, the E.U. began working toward a ban on the political wing of Hezbollah as well. Perhaps Christian de Vries is unaware of this latest development. If the E.U. were to pass that complete ban, could Germany, as a member of the E.U., find it politically possible to opt out?

The German government, however, can unilaterally designate Hezbollah a terrorist organization, but Merkel has vehemently opposed a full ban of Hezbollah. The German government and the EU have merely outlawed Hezbollah's so-called military wing.

By admitting millions of Muslim economic migrants into Germany (with one million arriving in 2015 alone), Merkel has done great damage to the country she presumes to protect. It is particularly shameful that she has admitted people who, because of their faith, spread the virus of antisemitism; she

has thus contributed to endangering Germany's Jews. And her politicking on behalf of Hezbollah, a terrorist group intent on destroying the Jewish State, is even more intolerable.

Merkel has visited Yad Vashem twice, in 2008 and 2018. During her 2018 visit she wrote in the Yad Vashem Guestbook:

"Nearly eighty years ago, during the Kristallnacht pogroms on the 9th of November, the Jewish people of Germany were confronted with hate and violence in an unprecedented manner. What followed was the unparalleled crime that ruptured civilization, the Shoah. It is from this point that Germany's everlasting responsibility to remember this crime and oppose antisemitism, xenophobia, hate and violence arises."

Does Merkel oppose the murderous antisemitism, the hate and violence toward Jews Hezbollah? Apparently not, to judge by her deference of Hezbollah's "political wing." What do all those speeches about the need to atone for the Nazi genocide, those solemn visits to Yad Vashem, with those pledges written in the Yad Vashem Guestbook, to oppose antisemitism, those endless remarks about "Never Again" amount to, if Germany refuses to ban the terrorist organization that, together with its ally Iran, now constitutes the greatest threat to the well-being and survival of the people and state of Israel? Some atonement, some solemn promises, some "everlasting responsibility...to oppose antisemitism."

Hezbollah's "political wing" operates in Germany by raising funds, recruiting new members and spreading antisemitic and jihadi ideologies.

Without that foreign fundraising by the "political " wing, without its ability to recruit new operatives and to spread propaganda for the cause (including antisemitic propaganda worthy of the Nazis), the supposedly separate and distinct "military wing'" of Hezbollah could hardly exist.

Benjamin Strasser rejected the anti-Hezbollah bill on behalf of the Free Democrats. His Free Democratic colleague Frank Müller-Rosentritt tweeted on Saturday in response to the pro-Iranian regime, pro-Hezbollah al-Quds Day march: "Thousands demonstrate for the expulsion of the Jews from Jerusalem and the destruction of Israel. Hezbollah and Nasrallah are celebrated. Because Germany does not classify Hezbollah as a terrorist organization, it may continue to collect donations and propaganda. That must have an end."

The United Kingdom outlawed all of Hezbollah in February. The US, Canada, the Arab League, Israel and the Netherlands have classified all of Hezbollah a terrorist organization. The US Congress has called on Europe over the years to designate all of Hezbollah a terrorist entity.

The 192-page intelligence report authored by the intelligence agents from Lower Saxony's state security service noted 150 Hezbollah operatives are situated there. The report covering 2018 was released on May 22.

"Hezbollah denies the right of existence of the State of Israel and fights it with terrorist means," the intelligence report stated. "In Germany, the followers of Hezbollah maintain organizational and ideological and cohesion in local mosques associations that are financed primarily by donations. Hezbollah is against the idea of ??international understanding and the peaceful coexistence of peoples. The 'party' of Hezbollah was founded under the authority of the Islamic Republic of Iran, representing the most radical party of the Lebanese Shi'ite community.

Hezbollah is an organization with a single obsession, which it has repeatedly stated: the complete destruction of the Jewish state. It has been crystal clear about this goal; its leader Hassan Nasrallah repeats it on every conceivable occasion.

The banning of Hezbollah's "political wing" has not been a

merely symbolic gesture of disapproval. Such a ban has real consequences, preventing Hezbollah from conducting propaganda, planting operatives, gaining new members, and most importantly, raising funds, in the countries where it has been banned. Among those countries that have imposed a total ban – aside from Israel and the United States – are the U.K., Canada, Australia, the Netherlands, and the members of the Arab League. The E.U., having banned the military wing six years ago, is now discussing a total ban.

Because of Iran's economic woes, following the reimposition of American sanctions, And it has had to cut way back on aid to Hezbollah. A report in The New York Times this March painted a desperate picture:

Even employees of Hezbollah, the Lebanese group that has long served as Iran's closest Arab ally, say they have missed paychecks and lost other perks.

Iran's financial crisis, exacerbated by American sanctions, appears to be undermining its support for militant groups and political allies who bolster Iranian influence in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and elsewhere.

"The golden days are gone and will never return," said a fighter with an Iranian-backed militia in Syria who recently lost a third of his salary and other benefits. "Iran doesn't have enough money to give us."

This makes the terrorist group much more reliant on foreign fundraising. A total ban on Hezbollah by Germany – which might then convince the E.U. to do the same – would damage Hezbollah, already reeling from financial problems, still further. It also would make it harder for Hezbollah to recruit new members – who would have to be paid – among the Shi'a communities in Europe, and to spread its anti-Israel and antisemitic propaganda.

Hassan Nasrallah has always been clear about Hezbollah's intentions. He has said the "Israel is an illegal usurper entity, which is based on falsehood, massacres, and illusions." He considers that the elimination of Israel will bring peace in the Middle East: "There is no solution to the conflict in this region except with the disappearance of Israel." In an interview with the Washington Post, Nasrallah said, "I am against any reconciliation with Israel. I do not even recognize the presence of a state that is called 'Israel.' I consider its presence both unjust and unlawful." Apparently those remarks, and many others of that murderous ilk, were insufficient evidence for German politicians to ban the organization.

It is shameful and indecent that only one of Germany's political parties, the AfD, supported a complete ban on Hezbollah, a terror group dedicated to destroying the Jewish state. Those Yad Vashem remarks by visiting German politicians, their heads bowed in expressions of deep remorse, who then write in the Yad Vashem Guestbook about Germany's special responsibility to fight antisemitism, do not impress. If the Germans in the Bundestag cannot even bring themselves to ban Hezbollah, the terrorist organization that is the greatest current threat to the Jewish state, then they should at least have the decency not to pretend to care so much about what happens to Jews in Israel today and tomorrow, because of what happened to Jews in Europe yesterday, thanks to Mr. Hitler and his many enthusiasts.

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