

From Entebbe to Mogadishu: Terrorism in the 1970s and its History, Memory and Legacy

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The experience of terrorism in the 1970s was for many years mainly perceived in a national framework. West Germany, for example, diminished at first Palestinian terrorist activities on German soil as „foreign“. However, terrorism was already in the 1970s a transnational phenomenon and a product of a network of different, partly competing, partly cooperating cells and factions that comprised even contradicting ideologies. The international symposium „From Entebbe to Mogadishu: Terrorism in the 1970s and its History, Memory and Legacy“ was organized by TOBIAS EBBRECHT-HARTMANN (Jerusalem), an assistant professor at the university's DAAD Center for German Studies in the European Forum. It aimed to commemorate the hostage crises first in Entebbe 1976 and a year later in Mogadishu and to present and discuss new research on the historical background, as well as the multiple interrelations between both incidents.

Observing in retrospect various sessions and debates, it can be said that the symposium has foregrounded three distinct clusters of themes: the historical perspective on terrorism and its connection to political policies in and outside of Germany, the role of various media (news, visual culture, documentary and fictional cinema), and forms of commemorating the terrorist attacks including different angels within German collective memory in comparison to the Israeli commemoration.

In his keynote lecture, which opened the symposium, MARTIN JANDER (Hamburger Stiftung zur Förderung von Wissenschaft und Kunst) reviewed the political atmosphere in East and West Germany, which lead to the involvement of German terrorists from the right and the left in the events of Munich (1972),

Entebbe (1976) and Mogadishu (1977). He pointed out that though anti-Western, anti-Semitic, anti-Zionism and anti-Democratic ideologies were very clear and outspoken ideas of right and left movements in the FRG, the GDR and the PLO, German historians mostly failed from mentioning this fact. Furthermore, Jander emphasized the key role of, on the one hand, the hostile policy of East Germany after 1967 towards Israel and, on the other hand, the 'neutral' policy of the Federal Republic. These two factors also contributed to the creation of cooperation between German right and left extremists and the PLO. For those reasons, Jander argued, the terror attacks of Entebbe and Mogadishu were not surprising in light of the shared aim of Palestinians and German terrorists to destroy Israel's legitimacy to exist and the use of old anti-Semitic as well as new anti-Zionists arguments. Yet, their legacy is much more remembered in Israel than in Germany.

Similar ideas were discussed in the keynote lecture given by JEFFERY HERF (University of Maryland). He referred to the social developments and ideas that, as he explained, had led German terrorists, activists of the West-German left, to hijack the airplane in Entebbe. The terrorists of Entebbe did not act in a vacuum. Their actions, he argued, were the result of ideological ideas, that framed Zionism as racist and fascist. These ideas, that were extremely popular among the West-German left after 1967, as well as within East Germany, have built an 'Anti-Zionism bridge' to liberalism and its dominant idea of anti-Fascism. Thus, the German left redefined anti-Zionism and anti-Israeli ideologies as liberal and anti-Fascist. This legitimized unconditional support of the PLO (including its armed struggle against Israel), which let not only to the hijackings in 1976 and later in 1977, but also to the murder of the athletes in the Munich Olympics games in 1972.

IDO ZELKOWITS (Max Stern Academic College of Emek Yezreel), added new research to this analysis by outlining the creation and development of Palestinians students' organizations and their support of the Fatah organization's armed struggle from 1962 to 1972 within German universities. 1967 was a turning point for the Palestinian course that

changed its struggle from political and diplomatic, to militant attacks. Speaking the local language, Palestinians within the German academy have gained diplomatic support and experience. European Leaders, and more precisely, the way they dealt with terroristic threats influenced as well the wave of terror events in the 1970s. DANIEL ASCHEIM (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem) concluded that despite Willy Brandt's critical declarations regarding terrorism, he adopted, in fact, a 'neutral' policy to keep the status quo, while Austrian chancellor Bruno Kreisky, although he implemented a similar policy, demanded a softer policy facing international terrorism groups including Palestinian, in order to protect human lives. OMRI ADOMI (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem) finally reviewed the military and security cooperation between Germany and Israel that was a response to the terrorist attacks but explicitly interrelated Entebbe and Mogadishu.

The conference's main event did not include merely lectures, but also a roundtable discussion with those, who were personally involved in the events of Entebbe and Mogadishu. The 'Die Zeit' journalist, GISELA DACHS (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem), interviewed 'The Angel of Mogadishu', Gabriele von Lutzu – a flight attendant from the ejected Lufthansa flight in Mogadishu who survived the hijacking, Matan Vilnai – deputy commander of 'Operation Thunderbolt' (Entebbe), Benny Davidson – a survivor of Entebbe, who was back then only 13 years old, and Avner Avraham – curator and expert on 'Operation Thunderbolt'. In addition, she spoke with Dieter Fox, the special mission team leader and deputy commander of the GSG-9 unit that stormed the hijacked plane in Mogadishu, about his experiences before and during the operation. Their stories, which revealed new information about the events, as well as visual documents from both terrorist attacks, emphasized the different meaning of these events in Germany and Israel, their effect on the Israeli-German relationship and the significance for personal memories as well as the collective memory and legacy of the two attacks and operations in both countries.

Another group of presentations during

the conference dealt specifically dealing with commemoration, visual memory and media, had challenged the standard perspectives on cinematic documentation, media representations and means of commemoration. TOBIAS EBBRECHT HARTMANN (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem) described the interrelation between memory and legacy of Entebbe and Mogadishu, as well as between these events and the memory of the Holocaust. Asking how far the terror attacks are part of a complex history of violence, media and memory, he argued that both visual images from the airplanes' hijacking from 1976 and 1977, as well as the ones that were created later by Hollywood and Israeli cinema, are resonating Holocaust memories. Furthermore, the similarities between both hijackings, Ebbrecht-Hartmann claims, may raise the notion that the hijacking of the Lufthansa airplane to Mogadishu in 1977 was, in fact, a strange form of commemorating the terrorists from Entebbe as „martyrs“. TONY SHAW (University of Herdforthshire) and GIORA GOODMAN (Kinneret College) dealt as well with the cinematic legacy of Entebbe, and analyzed three films telling the story of 'Operation Thunderbolt', all of which were screened only a few months after the attack. They revealed the films' strong tendency to highlight the separation between Jews and non-Jews and, therefore to frame the Israelis and the Israeli army as the heroes the terrorists as the anti-heroes. Through Entebbe, the studios continued what was already a strong relationship between Hollywood and Israel. ANNETTE VOWINCKEL (Zentrum für Zeithistorische Forschung Potsdam) reviewed the hijackings from a cultural historical perspective and situated Mogadishu and Entebbe in the tradition of „airworld narratives“, while MARC BRÜGGEMANN (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem) evoked the Munich Olympic Attack from 1972 as a case study to analyze collective memory of terrorism in a comparative German-Israeli perspective.

Hence, how did Israel and Germany frame and commemorate Entebbe? Israel created a myth telling a very specific and heroic story that, according to Eyal Boers, an Israeli cinematographer, overlooked some of the Israeli victims that were killed during the raid. How-

ever, telling the story of one of these victims' families, he argues, does not weaken a national myth, but adds more layers to the story. Yael Ben Moshe (University of Haifa), challenged concepts of memory, legacy and trauma through German films on terrorism. Unlike most other traumatic events, in which the source of the trauma lays in the past, terrorism creates a trauma that echoes in the form of a future fear. Ben Moshe also analyzed the trans-generational changes within the collective memory of the traumatic events of Mogadishu, and the way they are being processed within the German society.

The concluding debate looked back to memory and legacy of the 70s, in order to analyze documentation and media discourse in terrorism in contemporary times. Although terrorism seems to be an unending story, Raya Morag (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem), claimed that contemporary cinema broke a taboo by not presenting terrorists as evil and heartless, but as complex human beings with different beliefs. Fiction films, as well as documentaries follow a narrative which asks why do terrorists choose this path, and dare to give controversial answers. The difference between Israel and Germany was again a crucial topic in this discussion, when refereeing to news coverage of terrorist attacks. While the Israeli news focus much more on the victims and their personal stories, in Germany the attention lately focused on the reasons for the attacks and on the perpetrators' stories – which emphasize the self-historical perception of the two cultures.

Traumatic events such as terror attacks were and remain a defining factor of a nation's history, legacy and cultural memory. Commemoration, re-telling of terrorist events from various perspectives and writing of an entangled history can be done in many ways, as it was reflected during the conference, referring to differences between the Israeli and German memory of the same events. This affects not only the public debate and perception. Although characterized by conflicts and controversial ideologies, the reflection of terrorist experiences from the past carries also the potential to influence responsive policies and actions in the future.

Conference Overview:

Keynote Lecture

Chair: Manuela Consonni (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

Martin Jander (Frei Universität Berlin/Stanford University): Open Secrets – German Historiography and Non-State Terrorism in Germany after 1945

Session 1: Historical Perspectives on Terrorism

Chair: Francesco Di Palma (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem / Freie Universität Berlin)

Ido Zerkowicz (Max Stern Academic College of Emek Yezreel): Palestinian Students in Western Germany 1962-1972 -The Creation of Armed Struggle in a Safe Academic Space
Daniel Aschheim (The Hebrew University Jerusalem of Jerusalem): European Leaders and the Terrorist Threat during the 1970s – The Case of Bruno Kreisky and Willy Brandt

Session 2: After Entebbe

Chair: Ofer Ashkenazi (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

Omri Adomi (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem): From Students to Partners – 1970's Counter-Terrorism and the Shift in the Military Relations between Israel and West Germany

Giora Goodman (Kinneret College on the Sea of Galilee); Tony Shaw (University of Hertfordshire): Cinematic Depictions of the Raid on Entebbe – Israel and Hollywood

Tobias Ebbrecht-Hartmann (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem): Entebbe after Entebbe – An Entangled History of Violence, Media and Memory

Conversation

Chair: Gisela Dachs (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

Dieter Fox (Germany), Deputy Commander of the German Counter-terrorist Unit GSG 9

Panel Discussion Memories from Entebbe and Mogadishu

Chair: Gisela Dachs (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

Gabriele von Lutzau (Germany) – Survivor from Mogadishu

Matan Vilnai (Israel) – Deputy Commander of Operation Thunderbolt
Benny Davidson (Israel) – Survivor from Entebbe
Avner Avraham (Israel) – Curator and Expert on Operation Thunderbolt

Keynote Lecture

Chair: Tobias Ebbrecht-Hartmann (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

Jeffrey Herf (University of Maryland, College Park): Munich, Entebbe, Mogadishu – The West German Radical Left, the „Jewish Question“, and Israel

Keynote Lecture

Chair: Moshe Zimmermann (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

Annette Vowinckel (Zentrum für Zeithistorische Forschung, Potsdam): Air world Narratives – Framing the History of Skyjacking

Session „Entangled Histories – Traumatic Memories“

Chair: Tobias Ebbrecht-Hartmann (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

Marc Brüggemann (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem): The Munich Olympic Attack in German-Israeli Collective Memory

Yael Ben Moshe (University of Haifa): The Concept of Terrorism and the Void of Trauma – Trans-generational Perspectives in Contemporary German Films

Panel Discussion „Commemorating Terrorism and its Victims“

Chair: Amichai Magen (IDC Herzliya)

Ankie Spitzer (Israel): Commemorating the Victims from Munich 1972

Avner Avraham (Israel): Commemorating the Entebbe Raid

Eyal Boers (Israel): Commemorating the Victims from Entebbe

Martin Rupps (Germany): Commemorating Mogadishu and RAF Terrorism in Germany

Panel Discussion „Entebbe and the „German Autumn“ in Israeli and German Visual Memory“

Chair: Tobias Ebbrecht-Hartmann (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

Paul Frosh (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

Raya Morag (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

Tony Shaw (University of Hertfordshire)

Gisela Dachs (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

Tagungsbericht *From Entebbe to Mogadishu: Terrorism in the 1970s and its History, Memory and Legacy*. 16.01.2017–17.01.2017, Jerusalem, in: H-Soz-Kult 26.04.2017.