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Anti-Semitism of the Muslims in France: the case of the prisoners

A fact within the French prisons is that Muslims, mostly from North African origin, are becoming the most numerous group in it¹. There are grounds to believe that this phenomenon is akin to the problems of the Black in the United States. The same kind of socio-economic and cultural problems are met by the North African people in France² and the United States: both are segregated, exposed to racism and represent a much higher proportion in the prison system than their statistical groups within the real society. In France, the prison inmates of North African origin are almost ten times more numerous in the prison than within the society³.

Another fact, again resembling the situation of the Blacks in the US seems to happen in France, namely the anti-Semitism of the French people of North African origin, mostly excluded, stigmatized and exposed to racism on the part of the “White” people within the society.

This paper intends to describe the anti-Semitism of the Moslem inmates of the prisons in France, most of whom of Maghreb origin (North Africa, Algerian, Moroccan and Tunisian).

The internal and external dimensions of the « Arab » identity

In a study of anti-Semitism in France, one can stress the historical and cultural continuity in the country or underscore the new situation (globalization and other changes within the French society like the advent of a new Arab and Muslim minority) which gives birth to it. In the recent years, most of the anti-Semitic misdeeds in France have been committed by a new type of individual. Indeed, the new actors of anti-Semitism are part of the male French citizens of North African descent who mostly live in the poor suburbs, more or less segregated within these “banlieues”, from the rest of the society.

There are two sides to Muslim anti-Semitism in France concerning these new types of actors⁴. The first one is the image of the Jew as someone who is economically and culturally integrated into the French society, whereas the “Arabs” (that means the North Africans living in France and having, for most of them, the French citizenship) do not benefit from the same privileges. The second point is that the Jew is seen as someone who holds to his religion and culture and in spite of that, is being looked at as French, whereas the Arabs are rejected due to their religion (Islam) and their culture (the Arabic one). The French culture postulates that the citizen has to give up any “particularistic” approach to social and cultural problems in the public sphere in order to espouse the role of the secular individual in it. One can hold to one’s

¹ See Farhad Khosrokhavar : *L’islam dans les prisons*, Editions Balland, Paris, 2004.

² These people are called “Arabs”, “Beurs”, “Maghrebins” by the others and sometimes, by themselves. We use these words interchangeably, without any derogatory or positive connotation, as a statement of fact, meaning that they are from the former French colonies in North Africa. Many have the French citizenship, some don’t. This does not mean that they have a different culture. Sometimes some members of the same family have the French nationality and some others not, due to negligence or problems of offence with the Judiciary.

³ See the indirect statistics concerning the birth place of the parents of the prison inmates in *L’islam dans les prisons*, op.cit.

⁴ See Michel Wieviorka (editor), *L’antisémitisme en France aujourd’hui*, Balland, forthcoming, 2005, in particular the contribution of the present author in it.

religious or cultural identity in the private sphere but not in the public. This imperative of the French citizenship is not respected, many young “Arabs” believe, by the Jews who proclaim their religion and their cultural traits proudly and without restraint, being not rejected by the French for that, contrary to the “Arabs”, despised for their culture and rejected for their religion by the French.

There is a deep feeling of stigmatization on the part of the “Arabs” in France. Due to the colonial past and the dramas of decolonization (particularly the Algerian case) and the situation in the Western world which has turned against Islam after the September the 11th, the “Arabs” consider themselves as being stigmatized as “non French” by the other Frenchmen. On top of that, many North Africans from the poor suburbs (the so-called *banlieues*) are in a situation of economic exclusion and social marginalization: their parents are jobless and themselves, without a job and any future prospect. This makes them angry and full of hatred towards a society which leaves them alone and at the same time, lays claim to citizenship as adhesion to a nation without any community other than the national one. They feel betrayed by the promise of integration and the cruel reality of their being abandoned to their own lot. The Jews, contrary to them, are perceived as being fully integrated in economic and social terms without giving up their specificity. And yet, both, Arabs and Jews are minorities in France and both have a religion that is different from the dominant catholic one with a strong secularization within the framework of *laïcité*. There is a double standard for the Muslims, compared to the Jews, in terms of integration, recognition and respect, according to many ‘Arabs’. The Jews are integrated due to their community links and their privileges inside and outside France, contrary to the Arabs who are denied any community links in the name of the French conception of citizenship and who, as a matter of fact, have very few links to the outside (this being much more true of the Algerians who are the absolute majority than of the Moroccans⁵). The Jews are hated for their so-called unjust success in front of the Arabs who are suffering from their unjust failures within the French society.

This situation of a denied citizenship (the Arab case) in regard to an unduly privileged one (the Jewish case) is concomitant to another problem from the “Arabs” point of view: the Jews repress the Muslims in the World through Israel and this is true of them not only in the Jewish state, but also in France. Many of them contend that there is an indefectible bond among the Jews in the world that makes every one of them accountable for the Israeli mistreatment of the Palestinians in the occupied territories. This view regards every French Jew as a staunch supporter of Israel and a person who acts against the Arabs in general. The people from the “banlieues” are mostly Arabs in an imaginary way: they do not speak Arabic or when some of them do, it is not the literary Arabic but the “dialectal” one, oversimplified and most of the time, without any capacity to read or write it. “Arabness” defines this population according to its origins, but certainly not in regard to their impregnation with the Arab culture. The “Jewishness” they imagine is in its turn as imaginary as their Arabness: they are not real people. Many French Sephardic Jews are supporters of the Likoud party and in particular, the Prime Minister Sharon. But not all of them can be considered as such. And there are differences of opinion among them as well, between the Sephardic and Ashkenazi Jews, between the conservatives and the liberals. There is no “essence” of the Jew, in the way represented by many young males of North African origin in France and their inclination towards Israel does not exclude critical attitudes towards the latter’s politics as such by many of them, among whom some notorious intellectuals.

⁵ There are some 1,5 million Algerians and some 700000 Moroccans, around half of which being French citizens.

The Palestinian issue and beyond that, the problems facing the Muslim world in general have convinced many French Muslims that the West epitomized by America is against Islam and that the Jews are an eminent part of it. There is a vast conspiracy against the Muslims in which the Jews play the principal role. Muslims are being cowed by the entity: “The West under the Jews’ domination”.

The hatred towards the Jew by some French people of North African origin, particularly those from the poor suburbs is, therefore, occasioned by this double consideration:

- the disparity between the Arab and the Jew in the French society (one is, in the French Muslims' imaginary, the inverted image of the other in terms of economic success, cultural integration and social recognition);
- the disparity between the Arab and the Jew in the world, the first being oppressed by the second worldwide. The Palestinian case exemplifies this cruel reality in the eyes of many French Muslims.

This predicament is at the origin of the deep envy and hatred of the Jews due to the dramatic situation of the “Arabs” in France, with their problems of integration and stigmatization, on the one hand, the problems facing the Palestinians and more generally the Muslims in the world, on the other.

Even in the 1980s, “Arab” communities in France felt uneasy about the Jewish communities⁶. Their perception was that the Jews would not allow them to benefit from the same privileges in France and that they dominated so firmly the public opinion and the institutional mechanisms in the French society that there would not be any place for them on a par with the Jews⁷. This feeling of not having the same place and competing on a losing ground with the Jews was entrenched in the minds of many migrants who envied the Jews and regarded them as obstacles to the full integration of the Arabs in France. Nowadays, as the interviews will show, this implicit idea has become explicit and has been strengthened due to the economic exclusion of many Arabs and the relative integration of the Jews. But there are still some changes with the past, namely the emergence of the World politics (especially the Palestinian question) in the identity of many Arabs and the role of Israel not only as a Jewish state, but also as the bulwark of Jewish domination in the world, including France.

One factor contributing to anti-Semitism in France is the lack of real community among many ‘Arabs’ and the image of the Jew as someone who has a strong community protecting him, not only in France, but worldwide. The French paradox is that imaginary communities that supply much of the newspapers headlines simply do not exist: there is no such thing as an Algerian community in France. The Moroccans, although more cohesive than the Algerians, do not constitute concrete communities marked by strong solidarities and a solid identity against the others. The real communities are those which are not talked about in the media: the Turkish, the Portuguese or the “Chinese” communities. All of them have bonds that protect them through their solidarity against the outside world and there is a “We” defining them towards the “Them” in rather strong terms. The North Africans do not have these protective relations and they are much more “individualised” than the others. Therefore, they do not have the same strong feeling of common identity as such and cannot count on solidarity networks to provide them with jobs and opportunities. The only feature that defines

⁶ See Rémi Leveau, Gilles Kepel, *Les Musulmans dans la société française*, Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, Paris, 1988.

⁷ See Rémi Leveau, Gilles Kepel, *op.cit.*

them as a group is rather a negative one, that which characterizes them as “Arabs” through their rejection by the society, through racism and stigmatization. More recently, this qualification as “Arabs” has been replaced by that of the “Muslims”. This negative feature is rather a burden than a positive feeling of belonging to a close knit community. The racism towards the Jews is the stronger as they are thought to have sturdy ties linking them together and protecting them collectively in a French society that opens them large vistas, contrary to the Arabs who are victims of racism and stigmas. The injustice of this dual treatment between the former (the Jews positively appreciated although they are a community that contradicts the French ideal of an individual citizenship) and the latter (Arabs as being despondent individuals whose only real link together is the collective stigma they bear as North Africans or Muslims) makes them hate the Jews. The more so, as the Jews prevent them from opening up new vistas for their social promotion in the society at large. There is a firm belief among many Frenchmen of North African descent that the Jews prohibit them from climbing the ladder of social promotion: they occupy all the good places and leave no room for Arabs to take them. Jews hinder them because they want to be the only minority that reigns supreme in France and more generally, in the world, according to this view. This supposedly strong communal identity of the Jews is an imaginary trait construed by many ‘Arabs’ as a justification of their failure to insure upward mobility in France. Therefore their hatred towards the Jew, this imaginary stumbling bloc for the full recognition of the Arabs in France and of the Arabs in general in the World, encompassing all the Muslims. Being an Arab or a Muslim signifies therefore being repressed by an imaginary Jew who humiliates the Arabs in Palestine and demeans their brothers in religion in France. This capacity to be dominant as well in France as in the Muslim world gives the Jew a potential for action that has nothing to do with his real economic or political power. The imaginary dimension is ubiquitous and scarcely needs any evidence as a proof for its claim of righteousness. The Jew is imagined in a peculiar way, not abstractly, without any concrete knowledge of him. Paradoxically, in many cases, there is some knowledge of him, particularly the Sephardic Jews from North Africa. In many cases, within the country of their parents in North Africa, and even in France, Arabs know Sephardic Jews or have been in touch with them. In the cities they have many occasions to have relations with them, in some suburbs or small towns like Sarcelles near Paris, the Jewish people are geographically close to the Arabs. In this case, anti-Semitism is based on the fact that those who used to be equals or even inferiors are now superiors. Some Arab intellectuals quote as well the colonial powers in Algeria who accorded the French citizenship to the Jews in the 1870s (the so-called Crémieux decree), denying it to the Muslims in that country. This feeling of non equal handling by the French of the Jews on the one hand and the Muslims on the other hand (stretched back in the colonial history by some Arab intellectuals) is one of the bases of anti-Jewish feeling among the North Africans in France. Still, many refuse to subscribe to it and proclaim their rejection of any antagonistic relation with the Jews as well as the Christians, as will be shown by the interviews.

In some cases, the imaginary construction of the Jew attributes all the mischief of the world to the latter. It is not any more a question of rancour towards the Jews as the consequence of the Palestinian or other Muslim problems, but the projection onto an imaginary Jew of all the problems of the Muslims and the Arabs. We are facing a social paranoia, an attitude which consists in not seeing the reality otherwise than as a pretext for the confirmation of the Jews faults in all the ills suffered by the Muslims in France and elsewhere. In this case anti-Semitism becomes autonomous from the Palestinian or the Arabs’ problems and is identified as the mythical origin of the failures in life of all those Muslims from North Africa and elsewhere who feel victimised just because they are ‘Arabs’ or ‘Muslims’ in a country where Jews have supposedly everything and the Arabs, nothing.

The Palestinian case and the strong American commitment on the side of the Israeli government under the Presidency of Georges Bush Junior have created a new phantasm, namely the identical identity of Israel and America and their conspiracy to bring the Moslems to their knees. This idea can cope very well with that of the victimisation of the Moslems in France and all over the World. The Jews dominate the Muslims in Palestine with the complicity of the US in the same fashion as they dominate the Muslims in France with the complicity of the Frenchmen.

The new Anti-Semitism finds some echoes in the traditional sentiment of the Muslims towards the Non-Muslims, that is, principally the Jews and the Christians: they are “impure” (*najis*) and as such, inferior to the Muslims. But this attitude can be found as well in the traditional Jews for whom the Non-Jews (the *goy*) are impure as well. The difference resides in the fact that the secularisation among many Moslems still remains to be achieved whereas among the two other monotheistic religions, this is more largely advanced and the feeling of “impurity” has accordingly receded. This “impurity” goes hand in hand with the inferiority of the Non Muslim (and particularly, the Jew). There are remains of it in the attitude of the Muslims in France. The classical problem is in this situation how inferior people can become superior in military or technological terms. Some Muslims, as we’ll see in the interviews, bring an answer which is classical in these matters: the Muslims have not been faithful to their religion and therefore, they find themselves in a situation of inferiority. The hatred of the French Muslim targets the Jews (rather than the Christians) because both are minorities in France and due to the fact that the Palestinian Israeli conflict play a major role in the radicalisation of the ‘Arabs’ attitude towards the Jews.

Affects that play a fundamental role regarding the Jews are humiliation of the Muslims by the former, denial of dignity to them and their loss of honour in a predicament in which they are reduced to inferiority. The interviews with prisoners are full of remarks in this sense.

Another case can be made about the hatred of the Jews among the French Arabs. As the life within the poor suburbs deteriorates as a result of a widening gap between these districts and the other parts of the French society, a new ethnicizing trend sets in: all those who do not belong to the district or to the “in group” are rejected and the “Whites” (*les “Blancs”*, that means the French) against the “Greys” (*les “Gris”*, that means Arabs) are stigmatized. The Jew is the major cause for the stigmatization of the Arabs because he combines many hated features: he belongs to the group of “winners” (while the Arabs are the “losers” in the game of social and economic integration), he is the one who does not need the assistance of the government agencies and their restrictive rules (in order to benefit from their financial facilities) does not apply to him. And he seems to be anywhere: on the TV or in the media, many rumours designate Jews as the ubiquitous intellectuals who shape the public opinion and the prejudices against the Arabs. In summary, the Jew is the agent of the stigmatization of the Arabs in France and as such, he combines the external traits (the Palestinian case) and the internal causes (the racism against the Arabs) of the Arabs’ humiliation in France⁸.

The ‘Arabs’ in prison

In prison, most of the people of North African origin define themselves as Muslims. This does not necessarily mean the observance of the Islamic rituals. Many do not pray systematically,

⁸ See Jean Renaud, Annick Germain, Xavier Leloup, *Racisme et discrimination*, Les Presses de l’Université Laval, 2004.

many ignore the Arab words of the daily prayers and their codified gestures (*salat*), some do not fast during the Ramadan, some do eat forbidden meat (not *halal* meat) and many define themselves loosely as believers of Allah, with no necessary regard to the accomplishment of the religious duties.

Nonetheless, they feel they are denied the right to practice their religion in French prisons. The interviews with the inmates in three French jails show how deeply they resent the dual attitude of the French authorities towards them and the imaginary Jew they figure out to be an unduly privileged citizen.

Few sets of attitudes can be distinguished. Some resent the differences in the treatment of the religious problems in prison regarding the Jews and, to a lesser extent, the Christians. They deduce that there is favouritism for the Jews and racism for the Muslims. They develop this feeling as a kind of denied citizenship to them and an unjustly easy recognition of their identity to the Jews. The question of the Ministers of cult goes in the same direction. Why there are so many rabbis and priests for the Jews and the Catholics whereas there are so few for the Muslims who are, by far, the majority group in the prisons where the interviews were carried? Because the Jews, as a minority, are privileged and the Muslims, mistreated⁹. Here,

⁹ Ali, 32 years, of Algerian origin makes a statement accordingly:

“Question: What about the practice of Islam in prison?”

Ali: Islam, here, it is very difficult. We have racism. There are 17 imams in France⁹ for all the jails and 11 of them are not legalised. It is disturbing; the prisons are filled up with Muslims. Here, in this prison, we have 5 Christian ministers and 2 for women, one Jewish rabbi for very few Jews. The only Imam here does everything he can for the Muslims... This bothers me, it is disturbing. If enough people are motivated, we can make us heard as Muslims.”

For Abdullah, 30 years old, a Moroccan who lives between France and Holland, there is injustice towards the Muslims, in comparison to the Jews in prison:

*“It is unjust in the prison supermarket for the meat (there is no halal meat but you’ll find kosher meat). Moreover, for their fasting the Jews have the right to receive a parcel (**colis**) in their religious feasts. The Christians have the same right for Christmas. The prison authorities recognize them as well as the Christians, but not the Muslims.”*

Ahmed, of Algerian origin denounces the unequal way the Islamic and Jewish traditionalism are handled in the French society. In the first case, it is not tolerated, it is even rejected. In the second case, it is largely accepted. If a mosque is smeared or otherwise Muslims are mishandled, nothing is done, but if it is the case of a synagogue, it becomes a public outrage:

*“The militants of Tabliq move around Paris with their traditional dresses and people feel it as a provocation. But if the Jews have their hair in **tresses** and exhibit publicly their religion in an “ostentatious” way, nobody tells them anything because they are organised. Among the Muslims, this is missing. If a mosque is shot at, the media do not even mention it but if a synagogue burns, the Crif (French Jewish organisation) is on the alert. This is a discriminatory attitude towards the Muslims... Here in prison the Jews can bring in their food for the Shabbat. They even can buy kosher food in the prison supermarket (cantine) but I cannot do that (as a Muslim for the halal food).”*

He believes that there are many Jewish prison officers and he tries not to attract their attention:

*“There is no respect for the people of Arab origin. There are many Jewish officers (**feuj**, the inverted word for **juiif**, Jew). I try not to attract anyone’s attention.”*

Fathi is 24 years old. For him, being Jew means having no respect for Islam. To say that his sister in law is not a practicing Muslim he refers to her as a Jew:

“My wife is a French of Tunisian descent, she is born in France. Her family doesn’t give a damn for Islam. You could call them Jews, they care so little for Islam: no daily prayer, no Ramadan. I told them in her presence that I respected the Ramadan but I do not impose it on her because she has health problems. I would like her to be more in Islam, at least she should know something about it. My younger brother is married as well. Sometimes he goes to the mosque and follows a bit the religion. His wife knows Islam a bit more, she observes the Ramadan and has respect for the religion.”

For Nabil, 31 years, there is favoritism towards the Jews and Islam is “forgotten”, the case in point being the halal meat. The Jews can buy kosher meat in the prison’s supermarket (cantine), not the Muslims:

the internal problems within prison (absence of halal meat and the existence of kosher meat in the prison Canteen, for example) are more or less stressed.

Besides the internal problems, there are the external ones that confirm the Jews' unjust privileges over the Muslims. The international factors play a major role in the rejection of the Jews by the Moslems within prison and more generally, in the so-called poor suburbs in France (*banlieues*). The Palestinian problem is the major element but there are others, like the Bosnian situation or the Iraqi predicament. The Jews and America are closely identified with each other, even considered as the two sides of the same coin. Americanophobia and Judeophobia¹⁰ go hand in hand in the denunciation of the close links between the Jews and the Americans in the Israeli case. The role of America in this whole picture is a relatively new one. Before September the 11th, the idea of *Americans* siding with Israel was a common theme in Europe and particularly in France, but after the September the 11th, the French Arabs see an essential tie between America and Israel, and more generally, the US and the Jews. This allows them to relate almost invariably the September the 11th to the Israeli Palestinian problem, not as a regional and more specifically Middle Eastern question but as *the* symbol of American antagonism towards Islam¹¹.

“Question: do you eat meat here, in prison?”

Nabil: It is not halal, I don't eat it. I sometimes eat kosher food, like the Jews, but I prefer our own (halal) meat. This (situation) is the evidence that we are simply forgotten. The Jews, they (the Authorities) take care of them. This is perhaps the Muslims' fault. It is even sure that it is.”

¹⁰ See Pierre-André Taguieff, *La nouvelle judéophobie*, Paris, Fayard, 2002.

¹¹ Some prisoners like Allal, 23 years, denounce the lot of the Palestinians and their repression by the Israeli army, but state clearly that their major preoccupation is their own life, everything else being marginal:

“Question: What is your observation about the September the 11th?”

Allal: Bin Laden has made many people happy on the September the 11th. The United States are the most powerful (in the world) but there are people there who live in the ghettos, it is really impressive (the discrepancy). Many people are happy because it touches the Jews regarding the Palestinian problem and other injustices towards Islam. But it is too much for me! I have had enough with my own concerns and I don't give a damn about other things: each one with his own concern!”

Benamar, 26 years, believes that the media grossly exaggerate the September the 11th. For him, the Israelis are behind the September the 11th attacks:

“Question: What do you think about the September the 11th?”

Benamar: It was a shock. One becomes fearful. It was as if we were at the end of times! The media exaggerate it. They say there are Islamic radicals behind it, without proof. Bin Laden is an idol, a star at this moment among the young people in the poor suburbs (banlieues), due to the media. But the Americans deserve it. They believe they are the king of the world, and they have been humiliated. Nobody should obey anybody else. But it is not good for the innocent people who are dead, it would have been better if they attacked the Government. All of it is rooted in the Israeli Palestinian problem. The Jews hold the media and the Justice (institutions) and they do what they want.”

For Moussa, 28 years, of Moroccan origin, the Palestinian problem is the most important one in his eyes and the United States are faulty for the prevailing situation in the occupied territories and their staunch support of the Jews:

*“The United States hold Bin Laden for a Devil (sheytan), but attacking the innocents... You can't do anything. They did it because Bin Laden is a Saudi prince and the United States have soiled (souillé) his country which is the sacred land of Islam with their military bases there... The United States support the Jews, only God knows why. There is a problem of oil in this, or the diamond mines... This is a story of money. Bin Laden, I envy him because he is on the side of the poor people. And the Palestine (looms large). The Israelis shoot at the Palestinians. When I see this on the TV, I am wounded to death, as if I were myself wounded by the bullets. They prevent the Palestinians from praying where the Prophet David prayed. It is a war of stones against the tanks. As it is said in the Koran, they are afraid of dying. The Jews are wrong, they want to **calumniate** us. I don't accept that.”*

Here the famous view that the Palestinians are not afraid of death whereas the Jews are and in spite of their undeniable military inferiority, the Palestinians can get the upper hand because they can put at stake their life is formulated in an explicit way.

The numerous 'Arabs' without anti-Semitic inkling

It is misleading to identify the French Arabs as being monolithically anti-Semitic. Many have a moderate view of the Palestinian problem which is close to that of the European public opinion and for many, being a Jew is not a derogatory feature. Many reject the total war of the Jews against the Arabs and the Muslims and stress the need for a peaceful solution to the Palestinian problem¹².

Omar, 40 years old, is of Algerian descent. All the other members of his family have been socially and economically integrated within the French society, except him. He identifies the Jews with the power of the money and would like to help the Palestinians:

"I am 40 years old, I was born in Algeria and I came to France in 1963 (2 years old). My father was a mine worker and then, he worked in the textile industry. My brothers and sisters work and have stable jobs. I have a "tooth" against the Jews on the Palestinian question. I would like to help the Palestinian cause. I can say that the Jews are money and profit, and that's it."

For him, Bin Laden is someone who has awakened the people by leading the fight against the Jews and the Israeli Prime Minister Sharon:

"I feel abandoned by everyone. Nothing retains me anywhere. It is injustice everywhere. We should wake up the people. Bin Laden has woken them up with what he did in September the 11th. Israel and America, wallah, they deserve what happens to them. I hate the Jews. Sharon waits for erasing the Palestine, he has a good strategy for that, he wants to destroy all the Infrastructures of the Palestinians and then, put into profit the time."

¹² The 34 year old Kamel tells the attempts at recruitment by the Islamic radicals in the 1990s, their ideology being imbued with the hatred of the Jews. His father saved him by stressing the dangers of these people who looked for young, unmarried people, to send them to Afghanistan or elsewhere and teach them an extremist view of religion:

"When I was 13, I went to a jama'a (mosque) in Roubaix, Archimede street. I made the ablutions, I wanted to pray. They talked about politics there. It is there that the terrorists of Lilles came from. They talked about the martyrs and that one should go and help the Muslims and so on. It was barbarian. A bearded man (un barbu) talked to me. I went back to the mosque to listen to him the next week but then, I flee."

Question: Why did they want to recruit you?

Answer: I wasn't married, it was something positive for them, they wanted to place bombs. Two inhabitants of Roubaix were involved, Dumont and another, I don't remember, who went through the mosque of the Archimedes street. Their slogan was that one should kill the Jews (Ihudis, the Arabic word for Jew) and the Kuffar (the heretics). I am glad that my father felt they were not good and told me not to go there anymore and that I should pray for myself and not for the others and not do anything in that respect: religion is between you and your God. These people focus on the young people of 19, 20s to move them and make them do what they want. They recruit people who are disaffected and have difficult times. They send them in Afghanistan and make them do illegal things. For me, the reference in Islam is my father."

The father's influence averted his becoming involved with radical Islamic groups. The broken families, the poor ones and many other problems like racism and the lack of dignity and the refusal by the larger society to accept this youth as "French" are the breeding ground for radicalism and anti-Semitism.

Kamel denounces the Palestinian predicament but for him the solution is not war and radical attitudes but dialogue. He stresses the fact that the warders in prison mistreated him as an Arab for the September the 11th, contributing thus to an anti-Arab racism:

*"Immediately after September the 11th, I felt deeply sorry for the poor victims. They should have attacked the politicians or the military, not the civil people. But it is done, it is done! The children, the women and the elderly people had nothing to do with that, I am sorry for them. What is shocking to me is the Palestinian question as well. It is a problem to solve without weapons, with words. To see people throwing stones on one side and the tanks on the other, it makes me feel bad and the Occupation of Jerusalem by Israel? They could share, Jews, Christians and Muslims. The Christians, nobody hears them. But this is not my only problem as well! I live in France before anything and I cannot do so much there... After the September the 11th I was beaten by the prison officers. Some **drunken** officers hit me in the face, telling me: "This is your Bin Laden, you see?" These guys are racist, September the 11th has been marked in their head. To bother us, they shut up the electricity to stop the news on the TV. For us the news are very important, they let us know what is going on outside. This is nothing but racism."*

Abel has the same attitude towards the Palestinian problem: violence is not a solution. He stresses the fact that another type of racism, namely anti-Arab, has been reinforced after the September the 11th:

"Question: What do you think about the September the 11th?"

Some of the Muslims understood, as they said, the Palestinian violence although they did not condone it. Some would even accept to have a Jewish girlfriend¹³.

Answer: This is politics. Islam is not this. Islam means being quiet, working and being pure and not making harm to the others. I hope peace will prevail everywhere on earth. In Palestine, it is a sorry state and it is not normal. Palestinians and Israelis should make peace, it is to no one's profit, what is happening there. That should stop. They should have a single country, mix up and be quiet. Islam says that you should be straightforward with the others, respect your neighbour, Jewish, Christian or other. One should be in the right path in Islam. Everyone has a mother and father and we are all the same. After the September the 11th life has been more difficult for the Muslims, it was already difficult but it is worse now."

For Abdelhafid, 23 years, Moroccan residing in France, the reciprocal violence is no solution for the Palestinian question and Bin Laden will not solve the problem. There should be mutual respect and he asserts that he observes it with his Jewish friends:

"Question: What do you think of September the 11th?"

Abdelhafid: I have no idea, it goes beyond me. Israel and Palestine should make peace. Nobody should help them. It is not Bin Laden that is going to tell what is holy war (jihad). I have Jewish friends and among us there is respect. We are relaxed between us."

What is symptomatic in his answer is that the question about the September the 11th is immediately followed by the Israeli-Palestinian problem, as if these two (Bin Laden's terrorist acts in the US and the Palestinian-Israeli problems) were closely linked.

Hamid, 36 years, is against the September the 11th attacks and thinks that this type of act is not authorized by Islam. Concerning the Palestinian issue, it should be solved between the Palestinians and the Israelis. He too, connects September the 11th and the Palestinian problem:

"Q: In regard to September the 11th, what is your idea?"

Hamid: It is simply disgusting! This is not Islam even though some people can revolt. Islam doesn't say that. Unless someone comes and throws you out of your own home, you shouldn't attack him. The Palestinians have the right, the Israelis have the right. If you don't respect the other one's religion, you aren't a good Muslim. It is written black on white in the Koran."

Habib, 34 years old, a Tunisian citizen living in France for a long time, is deeply secularized and defends the idea of a spiritual Islam, respecting other religions, Christendom and Judaism. There is no sign of anti-Semitism in his words:

"Question: Did you begin to pray under the recommendation of a friend? What pushed you to pray?"

Habib: Nobody influenced me. God belongs to no one. Islam is a philosophy for me and a way of life. I don't know if I'll keep on praying but all of this is the result of my personal reflections. You know, bearded people (barbus, a pejorative word for the Islamic radicals or the fundamentalists) who sell the hashish, I know lot of them. I won't be bluffed by them. I love Islam for its cleanliness, to begin with. We purify ourselves five times a day (the ablutions of the daily prayers)... There are different types of monotheism but there is a single God with different ways of relating to him. I love my religion by respecting the others', the Jews, the Christians... I don't like the revengeful side of the religion. I don't want beard, I want to remain discreet and without ostentation. Islam is a philosophy of life."

¹³ Omar sees September the 11th as the worst for the Muslims. He understands the Palestinian attitude, although he does not caution it:

"Since September the 11th, it is much for difficult for us. I don't know who did this: the Taliban, Bin Laden... But the media amplify the facts. I don't caution this either!... The Americans are arrogant and people perceive them that way. And what about Palestine, in this case? It is tied to that affair because of the situation. The Palestinians did not know what to do to attract the world attention to them. I personally support a Palestine in peace with Israel. The peace is the necessary condition. What is the solution to this problem? I have no idea. But I do not support the kamikaze attitude, though somehow, I understand it. The arrogant states are not good for the peace in the world. The Jewish lobby in the US is very powerful and contributes largely to it (the war). The extreme is a way of existing for these people (in Palestine), they see that the international law does not apply, the peace plans the UNO resolutions among others..."

He would accept to have a Jewish girlfriend and believes that the hatred of the Jews is due to the fact of a "culture des banlieues", the culture of the poor suburbs:

"I have friends from many races, it is typical of Paris, contrary to the poor suburbs where there are prejudices: the Arabs are with Arabs, the Blacks with Blacks. It is why I don't like the poor suburbs. In fact, I have always felt myself different from the inhabitants of the Banlieues. I have cousins who have succeeded in Nanterre but those of Seine-et-Marne have succeeded and have this kind of closed mentality, each being with his own group. I have had relations with a Jewish girl and I don't think I am going to be damned to Hell for that reason."

There are those who denounce the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian land but they refuse to subscribe to the acts of Bin Laden¹⁴.

Many establish, though, a direct link between what happened in the US on the September the 11th and the fate of the Palestinian people.

In summary, in order not to become an anti-Semite the French Muslim has to dissociate many registers. In the first instance he has to distinguish between the Israeli and the French Jew and not consider them as being the very same persons with the same identity. Second, he has to dissociate the Jew from the American government. In the third place, he has to put into question the idea that the repression of the Palestinians by Israel is equivalent to that of the French Arabs by the Frenchmen, in particular the French Jews. These sets of ideas work more or less in many interviews in which the interlocutors put into question those equivalences or subscribe to them. When the image of the Jew is built up as someone who, by essence, is against Muslims and works to destroy them either in France or through the Palestinians with the support of the US, the chances are great that some groups within the French Muslims show to some extent “Judeophobic” features.

The Jew as the scapegoat and the September the 11th

One of the major ideas underlying the rejection of the Jews by the French Muslims is their so called worldwide networks and their close relationships with the West, particularly the United States. The reasoning is most of the time based on the feeling of despondency of the young Arabs in France who are exposed to racism, lack of social integration, strong feeling of not being recognized as French citizen and so on. The sentiment of victimisation is very potent in this case. They are mistreated by the crude racism of many individuals and by the more subtle racism of the institutions. But they greatly exaggerate this and develop a deep feeling of victimisation. The result is that they do not have any hope of being integrated within the French society and they harbour the feeling of being a “non French” as well as “non Arab”. Becoming a Muslim is in many cases a way of finding out a new Self between two denied identities: as a Frenchman and as an Arab (most of them do not speak anymore Arabic and when they go to their native land, they are treated as “dirty Frenchmen”). Islam becomes a new identity, freeing them from the double impasse into which they feel involved. The desperate feeling of belonging to nowhere and of having no positive identity and community leads them to develop a deep hatred of those who oppose their integration. The Jews become an imaginary but paradigmatic figure, a scapegoat in the full sense of the word. Through them, many Muslims find a justification to their rancour against an opaque society which denies them real access to the benefits of citizenship and social recognition. Through the imaginary Jew the diffuse feeling of malaise and discomfort finds an outlet: hitherto someone is responsible for the distresses the Muslims suffer from. The victimisation feeling has another feature as well. The Palestinian and to a lesser degree the Bosnian, the Chechen or the Iraqi to whom the Muslim refers in order to justify his resentment are not concrete groups or individuals with whom his sympathy is assured as such. They are the projected malaise of the ‘Arabs’ in France who build up their ideal picture of the Palestinian alike to their own

¹⁴ Hassan, 20 years, disapproves in an ambivalent manner the September the 11th attacks but he is quick to denounce the Jews who eat up the Palestinian territory, even though what Bin Laden did was not Islamic:

“Question: What is your impression about the September the 11th ?

Hassan: On the one hand, it is good, on the other, it is more than bad. Bin Laden is a Muslim but if he were a good Muslim, he wouldn't have done it, as it is written in the Koran. The Palestine is awful. There is a problem. The Jews want to take away their land and swallow it up, that is forbidden.”

malaise. In this case, empathy with the Palestinians or the Chechnians extends the personal malaise of the inhabitants of the poor French suburbs to the Palestinians rather than showing any real compassion with the Palestinians in front of the Israeli army, or the Chechnians in front of the Russian army. The Palestinian or the Chechnian becomes most usually a locus for the projection of the French Muslim's malaise and has very little to do with the real Palestinian or Chechnian in their respective concrete situations. That is why when it comes to legal demonstrations in favour of the Palestinians organised by recognized intellectuals or political leftist groups (to which some Jewish intellectuals participate), many of those French Arabs who commit sacrilegious acts against the synagogues do not take part in them. Living in the "banlieues" and being filled with a feeling of victimisation disables them from any concerted action. Their rage against the "Jew" is the reverse side of their victimisation feeling and they hate the more so this imaginary Jew as they harbour a sentiment of despondency in their daily life, beset by joblessness and lack of any prospect for the future. In this way, the real sufferings of the Palestinians or Chechnians are covered up by the victimisation feelings of the French Arabs who refer to themselves rather than the others in their hatred against the Jews. This mental projection is based on false premises. First of all, if it is true that racism is one of the stumbling blocks for the full recognition of the French Arabs, it has nothing to do with the concrete hardships endured by Chechnians in their confrontation with the Russian army or the Palestinians in their fight with Tsahal. The analogy is purely imaginary and in many ways averts the concrete understanding of the Palestinian or Chechen problem. Since the Palestinian is the image of the 'Arab' (encompassing the French Arab), therefore the French Jew is the same as the Israeli Jew and this equivalence justifies exerting violence against the former by attacking those who wear the heads Culp (kippa), by desecrating the Jewish cemeteries and by burning synagogues. The equivalence between the French and Israeli Jews is based on the gratuitous idea that the humiliation suffered by the Palestinian is of the same substance as that endured in France. In this case, fraternity with the Palestinian is not based on the real understanding of his problems and a reasoned attempt at helping him. It is much more the scapegoating of the Jew by the extension of the personal malaise as a falsely universal 'Arab'. The Muslim world becomes thus the amplifying mirror of one's own sufferings. It is a narcissistic picture of the Self (as the French Arab) and the Other (as a Palestinian Arab) and the hatred of an abstract Jew built into it rather than any concrete idea about the Palestinian and the Israeli as such (this can be extended to the Chechnian as a Muslim and the French Muslim and their common enemy as the Russian and by extension, the Westerner). This picture of the Self based on self-pity does not entail any real sympathy with the real Muslim but operates within the Narcissistic image of the Self as unjustly victimised by the hated Other (the Jew).

The same type of imaginary homology can be set between the Israeli Jew and the Americans who support them. This equivalence justifies the Attack on the World Trade Centre and the killing of the innocent people who died there.

For many, the hatred towards the Jews and Americans alike has its roots in the attitude of the US vis-à-vis the Palestinians and the Afghan people. They do not necessarily approve of what Bin Laden did but they are very much critical of the American foreign policy towards Muslims all over the world. They directly connect the American and the Israeli repression of the Palestinians to the "Arabs" in France and believe that being attacked, the Arabs do nothing else than retaliating in a legitimate way against those who desecrate their religion, Islam.

Moussab, a 25 year old French of Algerian origin mixes up the idea of the equivalence (between the Jews and the Americans this time) and an insightful analysis about the influence exerted by the TV in France on young Arabs:

“Question: What is your feeling about the September the 11th ?

Answer: One should not, of course, kill the innocent people. But the Americans do it with the OPL (Organisation of Palestinian Liberation) and in Afghanistan. They sell their tanks to the Israelis, to kill the Palestinians. Bin Laden does not act for the sake of money, he is already rich. With their politics, the Americans install the hatred in the minds of the people and what Bin Laden does is not good, but he pays for it. It would be better to attack the government (instead of the people). The US do wrong things everywhere, on the sly. One should awaken the world in order for them to know the truth and the fact that those who are supposed to be kind are nasty, or even worse than that. They left the Muslims die in Bosnia, just for the sake of earning money! After that, when people of Maghrebin origin go to Afghanistan, I find it normal. The youth have no project in life, they have nothing... Some people come to recruit them, they talk to them well, promise lots of things and this is it (they go). They sacrifice themselves. It is religion. You are attacked, you should attack back. They kill us bit by bit. It is a bit of religion there but it is much more the “hatred” of these young people which ends up with their sacrifice in Afghanistan. The hatred is born on the TV. They show every day the injustices: politicians are never put in jail, bad images, all this is not good. Myself, I am here (in prison) for nothing and I have the hatred, a gross hatred (of the society). I hope that it will disappear, otherwise, I might become violent.”

What is important in this interview is the direct relationship he establishes between the different global problems he describes (the US, Israel, the repression of the Muslims all over the world), all this giving birth to hatred against the Americans, the Israelis and the Jews on the one hand and his own “hatred” that is born of injustice towards him, on the other hand. The very same affect is at the root of his “Judeophobic” attitude, his rejection of America and his grudge against the French society as a whole: his feeling of victimisation and the hatred that it leads to. What is external (the attack against the Muslims in the world) and what is internal (the injustice towards him) are united by the single feeling of “hatred” (*la haine*). The word has acquired a specific meaning in the context of the French poor suburbs (“*les banlieues*”), namely an intense feeling that society rejects you and that you can, in your turn, act against it by directing your hatred towards it. It is a mixture of counter-racism, victimisation and a hateful reaction against the society, turning social and economic exclusion and cultural stigmatization into a violent attitude against the society as a whole in an indiscriminate manner. By so doing, he shows how the Jew is no one else but the epitome of a mythified French society within a global world which is regarded as inimical towards the Muslims. The microcosm in which he lives and the world at large are thus unified through the seminal figure of the Jew, associated with America on the one hand (the external bond), with the French society on the other (the internal bond), humiliating the Muslims and denying them dignity. A sense of wounded honour is at stake here, Muslims being denied dignity and honour, contrary to their glorious past when both Jews and Christians respected them, more so, were subservient to them. Humiliation entails hatred which justifies, in turn, retaliatory acts like September the 11th against those who refuse to recognize Muslim dignity.

For many, the injustices committed by the US against the Muslim world in general and the Palestinians in particular end up in violence. The US humiliates the Muslims and September the 11th, although some might disapprove of its violence, restores the balance by humiliating

the US in its turn. Here the Jews are not directly mentioned, the problem being not Jews versus Palestinians but Muslims versus an anti-Islamic America in which the Jew play a major role¹⁵. The Islamic world, humiliated and mistreated, finds solace in the September the 11th.

Some think of the September the 11th as the legitimate reaction of the Muslims against the Palestinians undue sufferings by the Jews and other Muslims sufferings in Bosnia and elsewhere¹⁶. Others, like Lotfi, 31 years, develop the idea that September the 11th was perhaps made by the Jews themselves. But he shifts to his own problems in life, his problems with the immigration office and his existential problems. For him, Israel is the author of many attacks, like the one against Arafat in Tunisia:

“Question: What do you think of September the 11th?”

Lotfi: It is perhaps the Jews who did it. Or Al Qaida ? I don't know. I don't want this to happen in Tunisia where Israel bombed Arafat in Tunisia. Those who are powerless can only shut up their mouth, that's life. Sometimes, I would like to die because I have lost my strength... I give advices to the young people (in prison) but myself, I cannot get out of the trouble, I see life in black colours because of my administrative papers here.”

He swings from world problems to those of his own. Either he believes they are the same (like some others), or he feels his problems loom sufficiently large to eclipse any other consideration.

Some reproaches to the Jews their capacity to do what they want in a country where the Arabs are not at home and cannot do what pleases them. This can be seen in the fact that Jews can eat kosher food by buying it in the prison market (cantine) whereas Muslims, much more numerous, are denied this possibility with the halal meat. This dual attitude towards the Arabs and the Jews can be extended into international relations: this is the rationale why no one lifts a finger to defend the Palestinian cause against the Jews¹⁷.

¹⁵*“Question: What inspires you the September the 11th?”*

*Nabil: I was doing a state paid program in electronics in prison. Some friends received a phone call and they, in their turn, called us. This is the way the news reached me. I don't think Muslims did this. The US are strong and can defend themselves but the Palestinian problem is **grave**. Injustice entails attacks. The Palestinian kamikaze, I understand them. I wouldn't do it myself but I understand them and the guilt lies on those who pushed them to act that way (the Israelis). For the September the 11th, I regret the loss of life of innocent people but it is good for the humiliation of Americans. By the way, I don't think Bin Laden did it. What he said is not a proof, he never directly said that he did it.”*

¹⁶ Hocine is explicit in these matters:

“Question: What is your sentiment about the September the 11th in America?”

*Hocine: It is shocking (silence). But in this shock, one should open a parenthesis. On the moral level it is hard for the innocent (victims) but on the other hand, frankly speaking, compared to what do the Americans in a year, it is nothing! 3000 deaths in America in September the 11th... In Palestine what is happening is unbearable, it is **grave**. In the Balkans, in Bosnia, Muslims are oppressed as well...”*

¹⁷ Hasan, of Lebanese origin states:

“Question: What was your offence?”

*Hassan: For peanuts. I needed money, I stole. I entered the house (of someone) and stole the gold. It was in 2001 and it was the house of a Jewish thief (juif receleur) whom I know in Paris... Nobody makes any move to defend the Palestine. The Jews do whatever they like... Here, I do not eat meat, I buy **tins** of tuna fish. We have a choice with vegetables, salads, fries, it is sufficient. Here we are in Europe, we are not at home here. As Muslims, we do not have the same rights as the other religions. The rabbi brings what he wants to the Jews in prison and for the prayers it is true as well... I met the Muslim minister only once and he told me that he was alone. It is not the same for the priests and the rabbis. A single Muslim minister, it is not enough, we need many... The other*

Some sincerely believe that the September the 11th was not an act of the Muslims but of the Jews who did not show up for work that day. For some of them, the only legitimate way to react against injustice towards the Muslims is the Jihad, particularly against few millions of Jews who are making a mock of the Muslims in the world. It is true that there are some acts of vandalism against the synagogues but beside few Muslim youth who are acting in a comprehensible way against the Jews, most of them are not perpetrated by Muslims¹⁸.

Some prisoners are delighted about September the 11th. For them, Bin Laden restored the Muslims' dignity, lost with the Israelis repressing the Palestinians with the help of the Americans¹⁹.

For many Muslim prisoners, Palestine is not a case far afield. The honour of the Arabs and Muslims is at stake. The "hagra" (oppression) by the Israelis makes this case a model for all the other similar cases. Bin Laden has given the Muslims a sense of honour and pride by fighting against the oppressors. Here the Jews and the Americans are united in their quest for universal domination on the Muslims and the latter have every right to attack them everywhere, in order to wash in blood the dishonour caused by them. This sense of recovered honour through violence against an omnipotent enemy is the background against which Muslim violence can find its justification in France against the Jews as well as elsewhere against the Americans. The Jew can be attacked everywhere because he is acting worldwide,

*religions have all the rights and we have none. There are some Muslim prison officers but they do nothing for us. They only think of themselves. We need a prayer room in prison. The halal meat once or twice a year in prison (in the Islamic feasts) is not enough. We should be able to buy it in the **Cantine**. It is not normal that Jews have all the Saturdays (their religious rights) for the Shabbat and not us."*

¹⁸ "Question: What do you think of the September the 11th?"

*Hassan: It is not the Muslims who have done it. 400 Jews did not show up at work that day. They say there are the Saudis, the Moroccans of France... It is not true, I don't believe in what the TV says. They **besmear us** (ils nous salissent) because of the Palestinian issue. They want the Arabs to react in order to invade and create the Greater Israel, that is what the Jews want, that is their project. That is the same as the US who want the entire world for themselves. We should not fall into their **nets** (piège). In the World Trade tours there were Muslims as well, who fell as innocent victims. How could a Muslim do that, it is not normal, not logical. Bin Laden, the poor guy, it is not him (who has done it)... Some people here would like to go to Afghanistan. Myself, when I see on the TV the bombings, I am enraged, I would like to go there (to fight the Americans).*

Question: Go for a Jihad?

Hassan: Why not? We are fed up, my brother, the Palestine, the Chechnya.... The Taliban are good, they wanted to impose the shariah (Islamic law)... My wife did not let me go (to Afghanistan) but we cannot stand anymore these injustices. The Muslim countries do not help, the Arabs too, talk rather than act, that's all... When I passed for my verdict I was ashamed. A policeman told me that the Arabs do nothing against 5 or 6 millions Jews. He is right, the Arabs do nothing because America supports Israel. Here, we have Jews in prison. I look at them very often. I sometimes would like to beat them... But I say to myself, they play no role in this whole matter. They live here. Do I talk to them? No. And those who burn the synagogues, outside, it is not us (the Muslims), it is to make us guilty of that. Some youth are perhaps engaged in that but they are enraged : no school, no work, problems of a difficult life (galère) : they want to take revenge... There is the extreme right, violent Jews. They have done it perhaps."

¹⁹ Yahya, 31 years

"Question: What do you think of the September the 11th attacks in the US?

*Yahya: It is simply magnificent! The United States deserve that. The Palestine, why? No Muslim country helps them, they kill the babies, the mothers and America can stop it all, but it helps Israel and blocks any solution. America is the accomplice of Israel. And the Muslim countries which do nothing, they are of the race of damned dogs! My heart is aching, it is the hagra, the oppression. When I see this, it makes me so nervous that I would like to go there (to fight). Bin Laden, I tremendously respect him, I'll shake his hands if I meet him. He restored the honour of the Muslims. The innocent people (who died), I don't care... Did anyone care about the dead Muslims? God will handle the case of this damned race. It is so **grave**, it is a hagra without any pity! The Jews, one should cut off their throat - but I feel I am having a nervous breakdown."*

on the side of America, against the Muslims. As oppressors, they can endure the worst violence in retaliation against their oppression. It is not anymore the imaginary Jew playing in the two levels of internal and external situations that should be brought to his knees. It is a universal conspiracy against Muslims which should be neutralised by furthering violence against the Jews and Americans alike. Both try to humiliate the Muslims. Both should be treated as harshly as they do, in an attitude that legitimizes the recourse to extreme forms of violence in the name of the attacked honour and the humiliation endured.

The hatred against the Jew operates in this way in a twofold ways. In the internal register, the Jew is supposed to rob the French Arab of his capacity to become a full fledged citizen and therefore, he is hated. In the external register, the Jew is equivalent to the American in the same fashion as in the internal register he is the equivalent of the French repressing the 'Arabs' within France. In that case, the Israeli Jew and the American citizen are set as equivalent and the World Trade Centre attack is understood as a right answer against the violence exerted on the Palestinians by the Israeli Jews backed by Americans. The two registers are closely linked through the self-image of the victimised Arab or Muslim in France: in the same fashion as the latter are denied dignity and honour by the Frenchmen and the Jews alike, the Palestinians suffer from the Israeli and the American repression. These equivalences based on the feeling of despondency of the 'Arabs' in France construct an imaginary Jew who can be mistreated in order for the Muslims and the Arabs to restore their lost dignity and their jeopardized honour.

The converts

There are some 50 thousand converts to Islam, according to informal statistics in France. Out of them, some 1200 seem to have developed a tendency towards radical Islam²⁰. In prison, there are demands for conversion almost every week, according to the Muslim ministers. Many perceive in Islam a way of constructing their own salvation. Four types of converts could be distinguished, according to their attitude towards anti-Semitism. There are individuals who embrace the religion of Allah for the sake of their own soul. For them Islam is a matter of personal choice and a spiritual factor in their lives. Nothing resembling the hatred of the Jews is visible in their utterances. The second group is composed of those who join close-knit communities. They develop a feeling of rejection towards the Jews but their major concern is the welfare of their communities and their internal relations with other Muslims belonging to the same group. They are introverted and even though they might dislike Jews, they do not act against them or even underscore it. The third group becomes anti-Semitic because of its ties with other Muslims or due to its need to show its genuine adherence to Islam. In a way, by stressing their anti-Semitism, these people display the purity of their own faith, being thus more royalist than the King. The fourth group becomes virulently anti-Semitic by espousing a radical Islamic credo. Its hatred of the Jews might end up in violent actions against the latter. At least one case of this type could be identified within one of the prisons. For this category of converts, Jews become the major enemies of Islam. The same mottos as those developed by the Islamic radicals are mentioned: the Jews are against Islam; they are the accomplices of the Christian Crusaders against the religion of Allah; they impose humiliations on Muslims in order to avert Islam's progress in the world... Parroting the radical Muslims is here of tantamount import. The humiliation by proxy plays a major part: the Palestinian humiliation felt at the Checkpoints is transferred to an abstract Muslim who suffers by mere identification with Palestinians or Chechnyans. This suffering by proxy is very much encouraged by the TV and the images one sees in the news.

²⁰ See Le Monde &&&

