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ISLAMIST OR PIETIST? MUSLIM RESPONSES TO THE GERMAN SECURITY FRAMEWORK

Is German society ready to digest religious "offerings" (*da'wa*) that aim at solving its problems from a Muslim point of view? Can it recognize these for what they are? Or has the distinction between religion and politics now become a "no-go area" in this time of international terrorist threat? In this contribution, I cross-reference the political discourse in Germany *on* Muslims with the religious discourse *in* different Muslim communities. Between these two worlds there exists a remarkable asymmetry that can be conveyed through two observations: First, policymakers consider the phenomenon of Muslim terrorists to be a consequence of the Islamic religious tradition and to be part of Muslim identity. The majority of Muslims in Germany have furiously denied this imputation. Second, policymakers demand answers from the Muslim communities that could help to enforce security. These Muslim communities have not responded in a direct way, but instead have resorted to issues of religious conduct and ethics.

Since the attacks on New York and Washington, an alternating current exists between policymakers and Muslim communities in Germany. The former responded to imminent threat with security measures that took all Muslims in Germany into consideration. The latter denied the perpetrators the right to call themselves Muslims and protested that the security measures were unjust because they focused on the wrong actors. It is my argument that the resultant interaction took the form of a process of translation. Muslim communities rendered political signals into religious ones, and policymakers (re-)translated religious gestures and other expressions into the language of politics. In the highly sensitive climate that currently surrounds Muslims and Islam, the borders between religion and politics are being redefined. Some hundred years ago, Max Weber pointed out the basic tensions between politics and religion. The question now is how, in the present situation, this tension is given shape.

To outline the scope of these tensions I focused on two Turkish religious communities. One is the Jamaatunnur, a pious Sufi lay community that embraces a politics of improving European society through the reformulation of Muslim conduct as a universal value. The other is the Islamic Community of Milli Görüş, an Islamist organization that tries to realize its social concerns

through legal and political claims-making (see also the chapter by Gökçe Yurdakul in this volume).

Several reasons back up this choice. A focus on Turkish communities that settled down in the 1960s and look back on a history of some forty years allowed me to weigh continuity against change. It also enabled me to depict the religious framework and to lay out the diversity of religious propositions that respond, however indirectly, to the pressure and demands from outside the community. The choice of two Turkish rather than, for instance, two Arabic communities is not haphazard. Muslim organizations in Germany are dominated by Turks (75 %) and characterized by an intense struggle between laic and religiously organized Turks, on the one hand, and between (Turkish) state-controlled and independent religious organizations, on the other.

The two communities have in common that they organize independently of the Turkish state and over the last thirty years have developed their own Western European profile. For that reason they are attractive to young Turks. The anguish that laic Turks in Germany experience vis-à-vis their religious compatriots accounts for the fact that religious Turks attract negative attention more readily than do Muslims in other religious organizations.

Both Milli Görüş and Jamaatunnur members shape their personal conduct with the help of shari'a rules and regulations. What they share is the attempt to consolidate strict religious conduct while observing the German constitution, for example by holding on to gender segregation and the covering of women—to mention only the most visible aspects of a social order based on shari'a. However, Jamaatunnur translates the keyword of Muslim religious participation, jihad, into a process of inner discovery and a culture of ascetic religious conduct, whereas Milli Görüş translates this keyword into political engagement. Due to these different aims, the two differ dramatically in the way they make their entrance on the public stage. Jamaatunnur opts for a religious politics that aims at the implementation of Muslim ethics and addresses colleagues, neighbors, and the workplace. Milli Görüş opts for a religious politics that aims at political change and addresses actors in the legal and political spheres. Their different politics have made Jamaatunnur almost imperceptible. By contrast, they have rendered Milli Görüş glaringly visible.

The interaction between policymakers and Muslim communities will be set against the backdrop of the violent events that, over the last few years, have influenced the public perception of Muslims and "Islam." Focusing on Germany, I first recount the particular scenario in which young Arab students in Hamburg planned "the legitimate defense" of the Islamic moral and legal order, which culminated in the massacre of 9/11. I then outline the German political reaction that introduced a new discourse on Islam. The bulk of this chapter then describes the different strategies with which young people in the Islamic Community of Milli Görüş and in Jamaatunnur presently counteract both policymakers and jihadis. Finally, I sum up the reciprocities between terrorism, political pressure, and the recent changes in the two communities and draw a number of conclusions. These conclusions touch upon internal

differentiation and the tension between religion and politics, the diversity of Muslim views on the "secular world," and the task that young Muslims have set for themselves.

Several questions helped me to select my material and to think through the details of my narrative. For example, what do young believers do when they represent a religious tradition which, in another corner of the world than they happen to be in, sanctions and generates violence? How do they measure the distance? How do they advance their own religious vision? Which *voices* become audible? Which *faces* represent the promotion of the religious vision? Who opts for what, and why?

Jihad as "Legitimate Defense"

The German scholar of religious studies Hans G. Kippenberg recently advanced the theory that free global markets diminish the power of the nation-state and stimulate new forms of religious solidarity (Kippenberg 2005; Kippenberg and Seidensticker 2004, 85). Islamic organizations such as Muslim Brothers, Hezbollah, Hamas, and al-Qaeda must be viewed as outcomes of this development. Combining a high level of solidarity with the inside—even the willingness to sacrifice oneself for one's community—with a rigorous and violent policy of separation from the outside, these organizations regard violence as a necessary form of defense that is supported by the Quran and a long political history (Krämer 2005; Malik 2005).[1] In their particular worldview, non-Islamic values and norms presently beleaguer the Islamic world: a threatening situation resembling the *jahiliyya* of the time of the Prophet has arisen. Therefore, they have taken it upon themselves to "free" Islamic norms and values. This scenario also legitimized the attacks on New York and Washington. The documents that the perpetrators left behind prove beyond a doubt, Kippenberg argues, that the attacks were religiously motivated.

His analysis is based on the contents of the so-called spiritual manual, a document that was found in the luggage of the perpetrators and that apparently guided them through the different stages of preparation. The text makes abundantly clear that the attacks were considered a *ghazwa,* a "raid," and were staged as a meticulous imitation of the historical raid that Muhammad once fought at Badr. Without ever mentioning the deed itself, the stages that led to its performance were embedded in asceticism. They involved purity of

1 Jihad means "effort on the road to God." The Quran uses the term thirty-five times, twice with the meaning of "peaceful struggle" and twenty-nine times as "warfare." Beginning in the eleventh century, the Sufi tradition gave the term the spiritual dimension of "inner struggle, inner growth" (Malik 2005). The history of Islamic political governance is rich with examples in which the concept of jihad is used as a political instrument to justify military attacks, predominantly against "unbelievers" (Krämer 2005).

intention, worldly denial, sincerity, and the high consciousness of ritual re-enactment, ritual cleansing, fasting, and the constant recitation of prayers. The instructions were designed to turn "ordinary young Muslims into warriors and martyrs" (Kippenberg 2005, 30), convinced of the need to perform a legitimate jihad, a military act for the benefit of the Muslim community. In accordance with this logic, the young men were to neither feel hatred nor turn their raid into an act of personal vengeance. Rather, their role was to be that of the seclusive executor, soberly performing a painful but necessary deed. The result of this painstaking preparation was that, on the morning of September 11, seventeen young men simultaneously boarded three planes in Boston in order to in all probability cut the throats of the flight personnel and to aim themselves as flying bombs at their targets, causing the death of some thirty-five hundred people. The careful instructions in the "spiritual manual" indicate that the ascetic preparation was not simple embellishment but a central component of the perpetrators' activities. Their aim was to turn the massacre into an act of worship (Kippenberg 2004; Scheffler 2004).

Although in the course of 2002 it was firmly established that, of the 3.2 million Muslims in Germany, fewer than three hundred were in some way or another involved in the al-Qaeda network, the perpetrators conferred a terrible heritage on the remaining Muslims. Their response took the form of the asymmetry that is the subject of the following pages.

Political Perceptions

On Tuesday, September 11, 2001, when the planes crashed into the twin towers in New York City and the media images of their collapse caused a global chain of reactions, a sequence of events also was set off in Germany. It pushed the political perception of who Muslims are and what they stand for in the direction of security. Observers were quick to notice that the change in perception caused "a general suspicion of Islam."[2] However, it was not the suspicion but the acute interest that was new. A climate of mutual indifference had characterized the relations between Muslims and non-Muslims in Germany. German policymakers took no great interest in migrant groups and for a long time did not attempt to integrate them. Most scientific studies in the field of Islam concentrated on historical and philological research. Whenever media attention turned to the Muslim world, it employed the old binary construction of "Oriental (Muslim) culture" versus "Western enlightenment" (Rotter 1992).[3] For their part, Turkish and other Muslim migrants did not take much interest in their host country. Most of the migrants came from rural

2 Matthias Geis, "Vom Gastarbeiter zum Schläfer," *Die Zeit*, April 15, 2004; "Eine Religion unter Verdacht," *Stern*, April 8, 2004.

3 In 1992, the German Islam specialist Gernot Rotter (1992) analyzed the way in which the media, with the help of the Middle East "specialist" Rainer Konzelmann, produced distorted images of the Islamic world.

areas and had had very little education; they had to struggle to make a living in Germany and, for the most part, were content to live their lives according to their own rules. In terms of visibility, neither German society nor Muslim migrants took much notice of each other.

This state of affairs changed radically after 9/11. The absence of reliable data—for instance on the number of organized Muslims or the way they were represented—caused an information vacuum. Yet information was the first commodity that policymakers were in need of. As long as this vacuum existed, it caused a structural uncertainty that had to be dealt with. Speculations and suspicions emerged as the natural mechanisms to fill the gap. They offered, at least, answers in a situation in which previously no questions had been asked.

Actual information on Muslims in Germany was also substituted by the stream of information on violence, mismanagement, and terrorism in the Islamic world. Together with the media coverage of the actions of terrorist organizations, this indeed conveyed a threatening picture of Muslims and their religious traditions. Through this change of perspective, Muslims in Germany, who for so long had remained invisible, were suddenly set in a blazing light. Having allowed them to develop religious structures in Europe was soon judged to be "a deadly tolerance."[4] Consequently, Islam became "a religion under suspicion."[5] With each attack on the global stage, fear of the three million Muslims in Germany grew.

Rabei Osman Sayed Ahmed, the Egyptian who is said to have been responsible for the "raid" in Madrid on March 11, 2004, accurately identified that fear and used it in the global battle on Islamic visibility. In a telephone call to a young recruit shortly before the deed, he toyed with its more worldly options:

> "We are migrants of God. We believe in God and [therefore] everything is permitted to us, also that we marry Christian women, because the papers are useful. We have to be present everywhere, in Germany, in Holland, in London. We dominate Europe with our presence. The women find us the necessary documents because we represent God's business." (lead article, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, March 18, 2004)

This is not the voice of asceticism. Rather, the speaker shrewdly mixes the religious and the political realm. In his narrative, "migrants" become divine messengers: "migrants of God" who are freed from legal forces and given religious authority instead, through which "everything is permitted." The mixture of religion and political claims-making encourages deception: "we marry Christian women" as a means to reach the ultimate goal, to "dominate Europe with our presence." The mass murder in Madrid which followed one

4 Mechtild Küpper, "Worte zum Opferfest," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, January 23, 2005; "Eine Religion unter Verdacht," *Stern*, April 8, 2004.

5 "Eine Religion unter Verdacht," *Stern*, April 8, 2004, 49.

week later drove the message home. It also functioned as yet another piece in the security puzzle about "what Muslims think." The merging of religion, migration, and infiltration was exactly what scared the German public most. The spelling out of key elements of infiltration—the misleading of women, unlawful access to documents, and domination—provoked deep fears about fifth columns. Osman Ahmed's justification of the murder of hundreds of people by declaring "we believe in God," "we are migrants of God," and "we represent God's business" conjured up the image of a ruthless religious activist. His words were considered to be yet another indication of the type of covert political activities that Islamic organizations were suspected of.

In an interview on the state of security, granted some days after the attack on Madrid, the German minister of the interior, Otto Schily, expressed this sentiment: "All Muslims living in our country must ask themselves why their communities produce such furious fanatics."[6] With these words he implicitly expressed security agencies' beliefs about Islamic communities in Germany: "their communities" produce terrorists—"such furious fanatics." Neither the media nor policymakers questioned the equation. In the absence of information other than the current news items, they had associated Islam with a dangerous form of political Islam, so-called Islamism. As a consequence, the insufficient transparency of Islamic organizational structures, the absence of Muslim spokesmen, the insistence on wearing headscarves, and the institutionalization of Muslim conduct through German legislation were all read as signs of the same persuasion that had engendered al-Qaeda cells and death pilots (Breuer 2003).[7]

These are the components, then, which in recent years have framed the visibility of young Muslim men and women making their entry in the German public agora: acts of global Islamic terrorism, demands for clarification, and a political discourse that equates Islamic religious diversity with Islamism. To enable the development of appropriate political responses, policymakers adopted a well-known German rhetoric of connecting the present security threat with earlier periods of crisis. They recalled the popular student protests of the 1960s and 1970s, which culminated in isolated terrorist acts against the German state. As will be shown, this rhetoric heightened the political perception of Muslim activists as belonging to the extreme right and of Islam as a right-wing ideology. The presence of a strong Turkish political Islam, embodied by the Islamic Community of Milli Görüş, made people in Germany aware of the potential politicization of Islam. It functioned as a *pars pro toto*, as a part that, in the eyes of the general public, represented the whole. In line

6 Konrad Schuller, "Wir leben in Zeiten epochaler Bedrohung," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, March 21, 2004.

7 In September 2003, in line with this development, public opinion polls reported that 93 % of the German population thought of "oppressed women" upon hearing the word "Islam"; 83 % associated the word with "terror"; and 82 % thought that Muslims were "fanatical and radical."

with this perception, Muslim visibility itself already functioned as a sign of threat.

One did not have to go all that far to understand how this master narrative was adapted to the German context. It was enough to read the dailies in the morning and zap through the many talk shows at night. On these well-visited German stages, now paralyzed by fear of international terrorists, phrases popped up that reminded Germany of its own terrorist past. It did not take long before a scenario had been set up in which "terrorist cells," "sleepers," a "milieu of sympathizers," and "naive do-gooders" played the main roles. The vocabulary evoked the German past: some of it went back to the crisis of the 1970s, when student protests rocked the country; some of it went further back to the Nazi period. The chain of associations itself was hardly a subject for contemplation; rather, it offered a quick and therefore welcome means to identify the enemy within and launch upon a well-trodden political path of action.[8]

One particular occurrence helped to set the train in motion. Soon after the airplanes had crashed into the twin towers, it was discovered that one of the traces left behind by the suicide pilots led to Hamburg. Here, unnoticed by security forces, scholars, neighbors, church dialogue partners, or anyone who had been in regular contact with the Muslim community in Hamburg, an '*ashira*, a cell belonging to al-Qaeda, had been formed. The leader of the group, Muhammad Atta, even appeared to have been a well-respected student at the Technical University of Hamburg.[9] From this city, more traces led to inconspicuous provincial towns such as Bochum and Osnabrück, where equally young and unsuspected Arab students had been preparing for the attack. To its horror, the German population realized that the terrorists of New York and Washington had been planning in its midst without attracting the least attention. As long as they did not commit any crimes, these young men had been literally invisible.

To grasp this extraordinary fact, the term *Schläfer* (sleepers) made its (re-) entry.[10] Originally, the term had been used in bacteriology to indicate carriers of infectious diseases. Nazi Germany borrowed it to label "asocial elements"—men and women who acted against the ruling ideology (Briese 2003). In the 1970s, it was again used to describe the cells of leftist activists.[11] Schläfer called up the image of a hidden threat "sleeping" in the bowels of society. It suggested the presence of an invisible enemy within, waiting for its chance to strike. It also aptly conveyed people's feelings of helplessness.

8 Peter Homann, "Terrorismus und RAF," *Der Spiegel*, February 21, 2002.

9 Niklas Maak, "In einer kleinen Stadt," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, September 19, 2001.

10 "Behörden kündigen gezielte Suche nach 'Schläfern' an," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, September 21, 2001; Anne Zielke, "Import, Export, Mord: War Mohambedou Ould Slahi der Mann, der die Schläfer weckte?" *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, October 30, 2001. .

11 Peter Homann, "Terrorismus und RAF," *Der Spiegel*, February 21, 2002.

Several markers helped to identify the new "sleepers." The first set combined "male," "Muslim," and "student." For some time, the application of this set of markers turned a substantial portion of the male Muslim population into potential suspects.[12] The next marker to be added was "religious," rerouting the search to Germany's twenty-four hundred mosque organizations. Excerpts from the "spiritual manual" and the testament of Muhammad Atta appeared in the papers.[13] From these could be gleaned that Muhammad Atta and his crew apparently had been pious Muslims who turned to a rigorous form of asceticism in order to fulfill their death mission. The trail they left behind seemed to indicate that "religious" would be the most promising marker.

In line with Germany's recollections of the Rote-Armee-Fraktion (the Red Army Faction), in which sleepers had entertained stable connections with a "milieu of sympathizers," the Hamburg mosques came under suspicion. But suspicion did not limit itself to Hamburg alone. Unlike the German terrorists of the 1970s, who had maintained connections to a limited number of supporters only, the Muslim terrorists appeared to be backed up by masses of people all around the world. Television viewers could witness, in the first media images after the attack, large crowds in Indonesia, the Middle East, and some African countries applauding the suicide bombers. A story emerged that in a Milli Görüş mosque in Berlin spontaneous applause broke out during Friday congregation and sweets had been handed around to celebrate.[14] Whether fact or rumor, this story awakened another misgiving that took hold of politicians, opinion-makers, and the general public: Muslims all over the world apparently rejoiced in the death of thousands of people. From here, the transition to a general suspicion of all mosque organizations in Germany was no longer all that great. Muslim organizations were accused of cooperating with the extreme-right neo-Nazi scene. Although there was a lack of proof and the accusation was dropped after some time, the accusation pushed the perception of religious Muslims into a corner from which German politicians and journalists necessarily had to distance themselves.[15]

12 Lutz Schnedelmann, Franziska Köhn, and Christine Richter, "Nach den Terror-Anschlägen: Polizei überprüft arabische Studenten," *Berliner Zeitung*, September 19, 2001.

13 "'Leben im unendlichen Paradies': Der in Boston gefundene Leitfaden für die Attentäter," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, September 29, 2001; "'Beten, daß ich bei den Engeln bin': Das in Boston aufgefundene Testament des mutmaßlichen Terroristen Atta," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, October 1, 2001.

14 A German convert and imam of the German-speaking Muslim community in Berlin broadcast the story. In an interview with the *Berliner Zeitung* (September 20, 2001), he stated, "I have been a Muslim for twenty-one years; I am familiar with the scene and know where the terrorists are." Other witnesses still maintain that an old man gave sweets to some children to keep them quiet during sermon.

15 "The World Crisis," *Focus*, September 21, 2001; "Islam – Eine Religion im Visier," *Stern*, September 17, 2001; Anne Zielke, "Allah ist mit den Springerstiefeln," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, September 15, 2001.

As stated earlier, suspicion as such was not a novelty. In some ways the public had always observed Muslims through the frame of Orientalism: exotic at its best, untrustworthy at its worst. In the past, however, this suspicion was coupled with indifference, in the sense of "we don't care what they do." New was the vehemence with which the old binary construction of "Oriental culture" and "Western modernity" was expanded into a narrative that held Islam to be a threat to the constitution. New also was the polarization that marked off religious Muslims in Germany as right-wing and legitimized the full force of the state. The phrases and metaphors that were used to identify them helped to accelerate this process.

The spotlight on sleepers incidentally illuminated another group of persons, the so-called *Gutmenschen* (do-gooders), who were accused of being blauäugig (literally, "blue-eyed"; figuratively, "naive"). The word Gutmenschen carries with it a complex nexus of accusation and self-hatred and betrays an instance of suppressed German collective memory.[16] First, it conjures up memories of blond and blue-eyed Nazi soldiers and denotes people who seemingly are all right but in the end prove to be malicious. In reference to this usage, the term has been used, in the context of the protest movement of the 1960s and 1970s, to accuse leftist students of "naive" phantasmagoria. Applied in connection with Muslim "sleepers," Gutmenschen comprised a group of professionals, scholars, churchmen, and social workers who had had regular dealings with Muslims. They were scolded as Gutmenschen because they, whenever dealing with Muslims, supposedly had ignored "the dark sides of Islam." In retrospect, it seemed almost incredible that these men and women had not noticed any impending danger. They were suspected of both "shutting their eyes" and being dangerously "naive," that is, of talking something straight that was very clearly wrong. Above all, they were considered "door openers" because their work had provided Islamists and terrorists with a large window of opportunities (Kandel 2002).

The political decision-makers reacted with extensive security measures and with a political redefinition of Muslims and their religious traditions which equated Islam with Islamism (Bundesministerium des Innern 2003). This step entailed the homogenization of a group of people with an otherwise high level of differentiation. It also set into motion a polarization between "us" and "them" which turned Muslims—whether migrants or converts, religious or laic, pious or politically oriented—into suspect outsiders and potential troublemakers. Islam was declared "potentially dangerous" and

16 Dictionaries point to two different origins. One is the dictum of Friedrich Nietzsche that "perhaps there is no ideology more dangerous, no mischief in psychological matters more grave than the intention to be good: it has engendered the most repulsive type of human being, the toady" (Nietzsche 1873, part 3, 798; my translation). The other goes back to the Nazis' corruption of the Yiddish expression "a gutt Mensch" in order to ridicule German church officials who opposed their euthanasia program (Droste and Bittermann 1998; Schmidt 2004).

young women with headscarves "political weapons" (Haug and Reimer 2005; Kandel 2004).

Not only religious activists but also Turkish laic Muslims opposed the sweeping gesture with which their religion was condemned and their integrity questioned. Muslim members of Parliament, trade unionists, writers, and scholars wrote vociferous letters of protest to the papers.[17] Mehmet Daimagüler, a German politician of Turkish descent and a member of the executive board of the liberal party (the Freie Demokratische Partei), summarized the situation thus:

> "All of us, more than three million Muslims in Germany, are held in suspicion. This is not just a vague feeling but harsh experience: I was born and raised in this country; nonetheless, the word 'sleeper' is being written all over my election posters. Most of us came from Turkey, and we have lived here for forty years or more. By comparison, the Hamburg terrorists were all Arab students, not really at home in this country. But nobody seems to notice the difference. We pay for the crimes of others and we are powerless." (Daimagüler, "Wort zum Freitag," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, June 23, 2004)

Daimagüler, a laic Turk who is a fully active citizen in German society, is light years removed from that little group of Arabic students in Hamburg that secretly planned a terrorist act. Yet he too became part of the vicious circle that associated Muslims with internal foreigners, with sleepers, with hidden threats, with extremists, and with terrorist deeds. The adoption of a rhetoric that called up old fears from the German past helped to set the wheel in motion. With the help of "sleepers," "do-gooders," "sympathizers," and "terrorist cells," the political perception managed to reduce a large and highly differentiated group of people to a mere security risk.

One circumstance that favored this change in perspective was the lack of representation on the side of Muslims. On October 3, 2001, during the official act of national celebration, and for the first time since migration started, a religious Muslim representative spoke in public and was listened to by millions of people. Contrary to official expectations, however, Dr. Nadeem Elyas, president of the Central Council of Muslims in Germany (Zentralrat der Muslime in Deutschland), did not represent all religious Muslims in Germany but only his organization, which counted some twenty thousand members. Here, then, was another point of irritation that the new visibility of Muslims revealed. It had been expected that, in line with civil society, one representative would now step forward and gain visibility on behalf of all others. But the organization of Islamic devotion was scattered, or so it appeared. If anyone ventured to speak out at all, Muslim actors acted on behalf of small factions or as individuals, speaking just for themselves. In this

17 Mehmet Daimagüler, "Wort zum Freitag," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, June 23, 2004; Navid Kermani, "Feindliche Übernahme," *Tageszeitung*, October 9, 2003.

respect, too, the political demand and the Muslim supply did not fit. A politician skilled in returning the inquisitive gaze, Daimagüler chose the word "powerless" to capture the situation.

For the two religious communities discussed in the following sections, the discourse of security sets the stage for asymmetrical communication. Whereas policymakers claimed that "the whole of Islam is a mistake,"[18] and treated Muslim activists as "a potential threat," the two communities contrasted their strategies in order to find acceptance for their own interpretation of jihad.

"Like Greenpeace": Milli Görüş and German Society

In the course of 2002, a young spokesman of the Islamic Community of Milli Görüş—I shall call him Mehmet—started to notice severe changes in the way he felt treated in public. For years, Mehmet had represented his organization at public occasions, and because he was a pleasant, communicative fellow he had been treated with respect. In September 2002, he related to me the details of a roundtable that for some time had already been dealing with plans for Islamic religious instruction in public schools.[19] Although the curriculum had been discussed in great detail and had already been agreed upon, the participating policymakers suddenly expressed severe misgivings about the hidden intentions of his organization, Milli Görüş. Refusing to acknowledge the difference between his person and his organization, he reacted pretty much like Susanna in *Les Noces di Figaro* and took their doubt for personal defamation. Referring to his discussion partners, he remarked to me, "How long have we already been speaking with one another? Five years? Seven years? Why should they cast old doubts over and over again?" A churchman present at the same meeting recalled him exclaiming, "If I have explained my view on a subject, say ten times or a hundred times, that must be enough. When do you start to believe me, then? Always you hark back!"[20]

Glimpses like this one illustrate a clash of entirely different frameworks. The young man still counted on the commitment that springs from personal involvement. He called up as his witnesses his personal integrity and the sheer length of time that he had discussed his plans with policymakers. Against their professional doubts he employed the experience of shared communication and the context of everyday trust. He realized that "the other side" possessed a power of definition against which his personal weight could not compete. Instead of acknowledging the trouble that his local Milli Görüş peers had been provoking at that time (see below), he reacted with a generali-

18 In an interview with the journalist Konrad Schuller, Otto Schily, the minister of the interior, stated, "To our understanding of religious freedom must belong the possibility to argue that the whole of Islam is a mistake" (Schuller, "Wir leben in Zeiten epochaler Bedrohung," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, March 21, 2004).

19 Interview with M. T., September 17, 2002.

20 Telephone call with H.–H. W., September 20, 2002.

zation: "Somehow it is like this. If one holds onto a different view, one is sure to be chopped up in this city."[21] Mehmet presents one aspect of the Milli Görüş relationship with the outside world, but presently not the one that dominates. To understand the community's predominant view of—and its communication with—the world around, it is helpful to first consider the internal communication of the movement.

Mehmet's career resembles that of many young men in the Milli Görüş organization. As a child left to himself for the larger part of the day, the Milli Görüş youth organization took care of him, provided him with a view on the world, and gave him something to do for the weekend. The community supported him in school and organized a grant for him, enabling him to go to university. After finishing his studies at the age of 26, he was already considered one of Milli Görüş's elite and given a responsible post. Back then, I knew him as a humorous fellow who believed in the force of personal encounter and always looked at the bright side of things. Seven years later—and the same goes for many of his peers—he made the sickly impression of being just short of a heart attack.

The Milli Görüş community started as a social movement that catered to poor, uprooted, and illiterate Turkish peasants (Seufert 1997; Hermann 1996). This was back in the 1960s, when Turkey's rural inhabitants started to move to the big cities and challenged the city dwellers with their conservative outlook. The name Milli Görüş itself is a pun that blends a national with a religious view and, moreover, mixes religious with political interests. What the movement proposed to the Turkish nation was a religious alternative. It preferred the fruits of Islamic civilization over those of Western modernity and proclaimed the fusion of religion and the state (*din ve dawla*) in opposition to the Turkish secular order, which actually keeps religion tightly under control.

From the start, Turkey's policymakers and elite suspected that these demands threatened the republic's principles. And, indeed, the emerging religious-political movement pushed towards a conception of society with a revolutionary potential, one that had to be realized here and now. In the early 1990s, its political claims-making culminated in the manifesto "The Right Order" (*Adil Düzen*), a mixture of communist and religious ideals to realize social justice with the help of religious rule based on shari'a. In the manifesto, "the right order" was contrasted sharply with the Western or "the wrong order" (*batil düzen*). The manifesto also contained outspoken anti-Western sentiments.

The shift of generations began in Hamburg in the late 1990s.[22] The aftermath of 9/11 accelerated the retreat of the founding generation; the national

21 Interview with M. T., September 17, 2002.

22 The following is based on a series of interviews and informal conversations in the period between October 2001 and March 2005. Among the interviewees and discussion partners were Ali Kizilkaya, secretary general of the organization at the time of the interview and around thirty years old; Mustafa Yeneroglu, head of

steering group in Cologne was restructured and revitalized, and other cities soon followed suit. However, many features typifying the old community structure remained. The organization continued to be dominated by men, for instance. As before, there exists a national women's organization that caters to the religious needs of women, and locally one can find large women's congregations that engage in prayer sessions and handicrafts. All the decision-makers, however, are male (Jonker 2003a, 2003b). The new elite also consciously held on to the distinguishing features of a social movement. In this respect, they stayed in line with the founding generation as well. In 2004, the secretary general acknowledged:

"We are a movement, no question! We insist on personal responsibility. That's what we stand for. That makes us different from [other Turkish communities such as] Süleymanci and Nurcu. […] One should leave the people their freedom. That's how we can reach more people than we have members. What we do, we set out a general direction and leave it up to them to take responsibility." (interview with Oguz Üçüncü, May 7, 2004)

In their refusal to exercise control and to instead stress personal responsibility, in their preference to set out "a general direction" for like-minded people who are not necessarily a member, the younger generation follows in the footsteps of its fathers. By holding on to the distinguishing features of a socioreligious movement, the community is guaranteed a dynamic character. Like all social movements, it aims to create a strong collective identity, a broad network, and a strong potential for mobilization. Various initiatives "from below" that do not fall under the leadership's responsibility should follow from these efforts. The new leaders opened up new avenues for others to take up, avenues that the founding fathers had not even fathomed would exist. One of these is the introduction of new legal interpretations of shari'a that have the capacity to "zip up" Islamic law with the German constitution:

"If one begins to take this seriously—integration, to become integrated—then we want to be taken seriously as partners as well. We represent the largest Islamic community in this country. If we want to succeed, we have to find new interpretations for shari'a regulations, not only for those that make Islamic life possible but also for the hard spots [*hudud* punishments for *fitna*, theft, and adultery]. We want to become accepted with our rough edges and likewise build up solidarity with the whole *umma*. We want to become a partner of the state." (interview with Mehmet Yeneroglu, April 16, 2004)

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the legal department, and Oguz Üçüncü, secretary general, both in their late twenties and members of the steering committee at the time of the interviews; Mustafa Yoldash and Ramazan Yazici, both in their thirties and responsible for the Hamburg community at the time of the interviews; Mehmet Gül, head of the local community in Berlin and 61 years old at the time of the interview; Nail Dural, head imam of the Berlin community and in his late fifties at the time of the interviews. In addition, I regularly spoke with younger members and activists holding lower positions. I cite them with their initials only for several reasons.

The speaker, who is head of the legal department, demanded integration through partnership. This approach must be understood in two ways. The notion of "partners" implies a claim to the legal status of a "Church," the so-called corporation of public law, which in Germany only the churches and the Jewish community possess—none of the Islamic organizations possess this status (Jonker 2002). It also lays claim to the right to political participation, with or without that status. The word "partners" indicates a shift between religion and politics, one that is to be realized through existing legal means. For the movement, this discourse signaled a new self-confidence. In passing, it broke with the conservative spirit of the older generation. What his legal department tried to discover, my discussion partner explained to me, were brand new possibilities for the legal interpretation of shari'a that could be accepted by German legislators. His department was busy adapting central shari'a regulations to a secular framework: "In Germany, Islamic law has been interpreted within the context of German law for a long time already. All we want is to smooth up the process a bit." Central religious regulations that secured an Islamic life in Germany included halal slaughtering, Islamic cemeteries, the wearing of headscarves in state-run institutions, access to religious education in public schools, and the aforementioned status of a corporation of public law. At the time, these regulations were still treated under Article 4 of the constitution, freedom of religion. In the future, or so my discussion partner speculated, they would be reinterpreted in the context of different constitutional articles:

"Take the headscarf. Right now it is being treated [in court] in the context of an individual right. Or take slaughtering: it also touches upon articles that deal with the protection of animals. If we succeed in its transference, Muslim concerns can be better understood by secular society." (interview with Mehmet Yeneroglu, April 16, 2004)

The key term on which everything hinges is "secular society." By transferring religious concerns into central values, Milli Görüş tries to "zip up" with German society. It aims to convince others that its concept of "jihad equals political engagement" is a general concern comparable with other forms of participation:

"What matters is that one does more than the daily prayers and the *zakat*. That's what everybody does. What matters to us is engagement. To engage is the same as jihad. Jihad includes just about everything; it means that one engages politically, like Greenpeace." (interview with Mustafa Yeneroglu and Oguz Üçüncü, May 7, 2004)

"Like Greenpeace." This approach is at the core of Milli Görüş's response to security measures and political pressure exactly because it promises understanding. My discussion partner felt certain that, some day, even the "hard" bits of shari'a—the hudud punishments in the case of adultery, theft, or anarchy—could receive some new interpretation in the context of German

law and become recognized as a "secular" (universal) concern. But that, he acknowledged, was still a long way off.

For the moment, this approach was difficult to stomach for at least part of the community. When, in June 2003, the new head of the European community of Milli Görüş, Yavuz Karahan, spoke in front of the general assembly in Cologne for the first time, he bluntly stated, "The Quran and Sunna present no obstacle to our integration into the existent [German] juridical system." In reaction, around half of the imams and other representatives rose from their seats and left the meeting hall in protest.[23] Karahan's words were judged an intolerable provocation. The protest made clear that, within the organization, reformers stood against conservatives and both sides could count supporters from all generations. However, the demonstration did not split the organization. Political participation being the ultimate aim, the very last thing anyone wanted was a cleavage. The younger generation had taken over and continued in ways that were far more challenging than the revolutionary ideas of the older generation, which had, after all, produced nothing but ideas.

What made an impression was the fact that the new generation had begun to employ legal means to defend the organization against critics. In 2002 and 2003, the legal department of the Milli Görüş organization deluged administrators, policymakers, and the federal agency for internal security with legal charges. Anyone who wrote or spoke about the Milli Görüş community in a derogatory manner, or who distorted the image nurtured by the community, could reckon with charges. The charges against the agencies for internal security in Bavaria, Baden-Württemberg, and North Rhine-Westphalia especially caused commotion.[24] In 2002, for instance, the North Rhine-Westphalia report on Milli Görüş appeared under the heading "Extremism of Foreigners." It quoted from the revolutionary manifesto *Adil Düzen* and suggested that this organization was based on authority and obedience, that members nursed undemocratic and anti-Zionist sentiments, that the organization intended to Islamize Germany, and that, for these reasons, it presented a natural habitat for extremists (Verfassungsbericht NRW 2002, 167–175). Through the use of legal charges, the Milli Görüş steering group tried to break the federal agencies' power of definition. The charges were also intended to rid the organization of close observation by the authorities as soon as possible. In reality, however, scrutiny of the organization had just begun in earnest. In the years to come, although the charges of extremism or of relations with terrorists were withdrawn, the federal agencies continued to make accusations against the organization. Structures that were not sufficiently transparent,

23 Konrad Schuller, "Von der Demokratie verführt? Die Islamisten von Milli Görüş erwägen eine Abkehr von ihrer strikt antiwestlichen Linie," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, April 18, 2004.

24 On September 12, 2002, against the federal agency of Bavaria; on February 5, 2003, against North Rhine-Westphalia; and on April 12, 2003, against Baden-Württemberg (VG Stuttgart 18 K 41 79/02).

attempts to legalize shari'a rule, and proof of anti-German sentiment were considered sufficient to justify the accusations.

The Islamic Organization of Milli Görüş in Germany is currently in trouble. It has been under constant surveillance by the federal agencies for internal security since the 1980s. The social seclusion, the revolutionary sympathies, and the hostile language of the parent generation gave rise to serious doubts about its intentions. The strategy embraced by the present generation has strengthened the suspicions of the security agencies. The employment of legal means to sanction religious conduct and ward off unwanted critics has invited even more observation. The youngest generation is already objecting to this treatment and showing signs of impatience: "When can we finally say what we think in this country?" they asked Mehmet.[25] The old men, less concerned that they might be overheard, vent their emotions in public. Yakup Tashi, who has been a preacher in one of the Milli Görüş mosques in Berlin since 1979, remembered in one of his Friday sermons in November 2004:

> "When we came here, these Germans gave us no toilets. There were no toilets in the apartments when we came. One had to go five flights down to use a bucket. They had put together four or five boards for us to use as a toilet." (Verwaltungsgericht 2005, 4)

In that sermon, knowing that he was touching upon a shared sentiment, the preacher expressed his frustrations. What he told his audience came down to this: Some Germans are all right, but most stink because they do not shave under their armpits; they are atheists, good-for-nothing. Eventually, they will end up in hell (Verwaltungsgericht 2005, 4). These words were taped in secret and broadcast on television some days later. Policymakers considered the animosity of his words to be "hate speech." In the trial that followed, security agents also brought proof of the preacher's sympathy with "Iraqi martyrs" and his conviction that the death of a martyr ranked among the most beautiful. In actuality, he expressed this sentiment not in a sermon but in a prayer that was recited at the end of a pro-Iraq demonstration. The prayer contained the word "ghazi" (freedom fighter), which erroneously was translated as "martyr" (Schiffauer 2005). But this is a detail. Anti-German sentiments linked to sympathies with suicide bombers proved to be too much. The events fuelled public suspicions that Milli Görüş, despite its repeated denials, shared the worldview of terrorists. After reflection on the consequences of such leadership, the city of Berlin started a procedure to obtain a deportation order and have him expelled.

25 The questions were posed in educational courses that Mehmet currently organizes. The aim of these courses is to introduce teenagers to Islamic thinkers like Qutb and Mauwdudi and to explain to them how "the West" thinks (informal conversation, February 3, 2005).

Having considered these different voices, it is time to ask what the Islamic Organization of Milli Görüş chooses. What is its religious framework, and what does it perceive through it? Having grown up as children of immigrant families in Germany, my discussion partners, once in power, started to turn the revolutionary Milli Görüş ideals into concrete demands for political, social, and legal incorporation. Words like *hizmet* and jihad became rites of passage from religious mobilization to political participation and legal partnership. What connects the new generation with the founder generation is a demand for social justice. In line with the older members, in line also with other protest and socioreligious movements, they want to inspire and mobilize people whom they do not necessarily know. The general aim should be democratic involvement, not acts of illegal resistance. Yet although the line between the two sometimes seems dangerously thin, they also know that creating control mechanisms and transparency would lead to a loss of mobilization capacity.

Unlike the experience of the founding fathers, the upbringing and self-image of the new generation suggested that it might be possible after all to be both a German and a Muslim. Nevertheless, at the back of their minds they held on to a deep resentment of German society, which, under the security pressures of the last three years, they increasingly referred to as "the West." Distrust of it remains an integral part of the Milli Görüş identity.

In this transition, the instructions that shari'a issues for personal conduct act as a compass for identity politics. "Zipping up" shari'a with the German constitution is presently considered a guarantee of partnership, political participation, and group rights. In the eyes of my discussion partners, the private religious conduct that other Islamic communities profess simply cannot be enough. What they wish to accomplish is the incorporation of Islamic regulations—those that "guarantee" a collective Islamic life—into the foundations of German legislation. It brings them into competition with politics: "Gaining political acceptance in Germany comes down to overcoming the legal system," is how the head of the legal department put it.[26]

His formulation holds the key to the lock. Like their fathers, this generation links political demands for social justice with religious revolutionary zeal; but unlike their fathers, they do this in the context of a nonreligious European society that currently feels threatened by Muslim terrorism. The founding generation still demanded *din ve dawla*, the fusion of faith and politics, in Turkey. The younger generation in Germany has modified this demand: it now seeks a fusion of religious law with secular law. It wants its concerns to be understood as a universal interest, something for the common good that transcends national borders.

In its attempt to make itself understood, the new steering committee began the transfer from religious to secular rights with the help of legal means. In other words, Milli Görüş responded to the political pressures telling them to

26 Interview with Mehmet Yeneroglu, April 16, 2004.

distance themselves from terrorist activism with a totally different kind of activism, namely, that of political claims-making. This strategy brought the organization into a deadlock with security agencies.

The ideal profile of a Milli Görüş activist, then, includes elements of social engagement, the voice of the oppressed, distrust, and a readiness to claim power. My interview partners denied having any association or sympathies with the worldview of hijackers and suicide bombers ("we cannot break with people we do not know"). Instead, they urged policymakers to accept them as partners with legitimate claims. As a result, they managed to make Milli Görüş glaringly visible.

"The Need for Translation": Jamaatunnur Reflects on Secular Society

In order to illustrate the breadth and scope of Muslim religious responses to German security pressures, in this section I provide a brief depiction of the Jamaatunnur, or "Nur community." This is a Turkish Muslim organization that shares the same religious compass as their Milli Görüş compatriots, but that embraces an entirely different approach to the public sphere. Its general direction is engaged asceticism, which is a combination of ascetic conduct and the introduction of ethical standards in the workplace.

The Nur community was founded on the writings of the Turkish philosopher and theologian Bediüzzaman Said Nursi (1878–1960; Mardin 1989; Vahide 2000; Abu-Rabi 2003). Unlike the founders of the Milli Görüş movement, who appeared in the public arena some forty years after the founding of the Turkish republic, Said Nursi opposed Kemal Atatürk's republican reforms from the very start. He inspired peaceful resistance that especially caught on among rural Turks. In the course of his life, he became the republic's most prominent religious opponent and certainly the most prolific: Said Nursi wrote sixty-five hundred pages of free Quranic interpretation (*tafsir manevi*, the so-called *Risale-i Nur*, or "Letters of Light," which were smuggled across the country and secretly copied by hand hundreds and thousands of times). Imprisoned by the republic for most of his life, he attained a level of popularity that was matched only by the founder Kemal Atatürk himself. Fear of his reputation ran so high that, when Said Nursi died, his body was abducted by the military in a covert action and buried in an unknown spot. Although he had appeared in public only to defend himself in one of his many trials, Said Nursi became the most visible and, because of his nonviolent resistance, most respected Muslim of the early Turkish republic.

Today his students still gather to study his writings. Said Nursi had claimed that every Quran reflection should also include the study of nature. He believed that the contemplation of nature provided a safe way to discover the miracles of God in the universe. It encourages students to fuse religious with scientific knowledge and to simply feel enchanted with the world

(Nereid 1997; Reed 1999). On a more practical level, Nur students search for ethical inroads into European society. They look for ways to share their brimming enthusiasm with others, both Muslims and non-Muslims, on an individual level. Editing and printing Said Nursi's words and furthering their reflection is considered the most important road towards that aim.[27]

From the start, the emerging community focused on collective reading as well as the interpretation of the *Risale-i Nur*. Because of the exegesis involved, this approach led to many competing groups (Yavuz 1997). Jamaatunnur claims to safeguard the core and manages to include a wide spectrum of followers, ranging from "traditionalists" who still copy the *Risale-i Nur* by hand to international scholars who compare Said Nursi's theology with relevant Christian thinkers. Up to now, only the Turkish preacher Fethullah Gülen, once a companion of Said Nursi, could seriously challenge this claim (Yavuz and Esposito 2003).

Community life centers first on the collective study of Said Nursi's texts and second on the discovery of new knowledge. Like Said Qutb and Hassan al-Banna, Nur students claim that all knowledge must be discovered rather than constructed. This means that the production of knowledge is considered a process in which the truth dawns upon one rather than a result of deconstruction or reconstruction. But unlike Qutb and al-Banna, who pursued the Islamization of science, Nur students fuse Western scholarship with love of nature, "the great book of the universe," which to them is the quickest road towards the discovery of divine love. All knowledge of the world, including the one that has not yet been discovered, has in principle been described in the Quran. They compare its text with seeds from which everything emanates. A correct Quranic interpretation occurs when the mind, the heart, and the spirit blend and infuse the reader with a range of intellectual and emotional insights. Said Nursi's inspired Quranic commentary serves as a compass in achieving such interpretation.

Nur philosophy is about localization. Like Milli Görüş, it deals with "communities of feeling" (Appadurai 1996) that try to create localities in a shifting world. Like Milli Görüş, Nur students in Germany struggle to make their religious concerns understood by "secular society." But unlike the former, they cultivate a culture of individual, peaceful conduct that is designed to be shared with people who do not belong to the Nur community or even to the Muslim community.

In 2003, I was invited to participate in a youth seminar in which Nur students from different cities of Western Europe meet.[28] It is called the International Seminar Group and was first held in 2000. Over the last five years

27 Printed in the 1950s for the first time, the collection was translated into fourteen languages. There are thirteen publishers and distributors of the *Risale-i Nur*. I also counted seventy-three Web sites in twenty-two languages; see http://www.Ahmetberk.tripod.com/ and click on the "Risale-i nur" link.

28 On October 4–5, 2003, the International Seminar Group met in Ludwigshafen, Germany.

students have met every other month. The group is an outcome of a different effort to mobilize the Nur community, the so-called international symposia, which since 1991 have taken place in Istanbul.[29] Whereas the organizers of the symposia try to interest renowned Arabic and Western scholars in the writings of Said Nursi, the organizers of the seminar group encourage students to take steps on the path to intellectual independence—while staying within the religious framework set by their founder. In some cases, they are being prepared to join in the international scholarly exchange.

A word on my entrance in the Nur community: over the last ten years, I had known of the existence of the Jamaatunnur but had never succeeded in making any contact. Among Muslims in Germany, the community was disparaged as being of the intellectual type and renowned for minding its own business. It was my impression that this community shunned public debate related to Muslims to a degree that made it invisible. If it had any strategy for visibility, I had concluded, it must be the private politics of not being noticed at all. The first time I encountered the Jamaatunnur in public, it was in the form of a press release issued shortly after 9/11. It stated, among other things, the following:

> "We call upon the responsibility of the general public with a basic principle from the Quran: 'Partners, families, or their communities cannot be blamed for the faults and crimes of individuals or small groups.' Therefore, one should not confound a world religion, whose members sharply condemn these abominable terrorist acts, with those who misuse the name of this religion." (press release on September 13, 2001)

Here was the first explicit sign of a religiously based refusal to answer to the challenge of 9/11. When, in September 2003, the leader of the community approached me with a request for research, I was intrigued. Where did this community position itself? The answer I brought away from the meeting was that Nur students were changing their approach. Without so much as mentioning the "jihad equals legitimate defense" approach of their violent coreligionists, they actively promoted another view of jihad, one that equated it with intellectual discovery and spiritual growth.

Approximately fifty persons attended the seminar, and the majority seemed to be younger than thirty years old. Of the thirty men present, twelve worked in finance management, consultancy, or banking professions, six claimed to be scholars in the technical sciences (three professors among them), and the others were still university students. I counted sixteen women,

29 International symposia took place in 1991, 1992, 1995, 1998, 1999, 2001, and 2004 in Istanbul. The scholarly output is impressive: the organizers already have published ten thousand pages both in English and in Arabic. See, for instance, the proceedings of the 1995 symposium: The Third International Symposium on Bediüzzaman Said Nursi: The Reconstruction of Islamic Thought in the Twentieth Century and Bediüzzaman Said Nursi, ed. Nesil Foundation (Istanbul: Sözler Publications, 1997), which comprises some one thousand pages. All proceedings are printed in Istanbul and are widely distributed.

among them two doctors, one theologian, two business managers, two teachers, and a range of students in computer science and business information management. Men and women sat in the same room but kept different sides. All of the women had their heads covered.

The main subject of the seminars is the adaptation of *ahlaq*, Islamic ethics, to different professional situations. The working language is Turkish, but during break country representatives stood together and preferred to discuss the proceedings in their own European language. It struck me that the delegation from Holland had something unmistakably Dutch in the way they were dressed and in their facial expressions and body language. Looking around, I saw that the Swiss, the German, the Austrian, the French, and the English delegations equally bore a whiff of their respective European country.

On this particular weekend, the seminar concentrated on *hizmetkar liderlik*, or "leadership as a religious task." Important qualities such as mentorship, responsibility, and empathy were discussed, and the participants spoke at length about the necessity of showing one's spiritual roots and of "being different." As a matter of course, a *Risale-i Nur* text formed the basis for discussion. Said Nursi's free poetic style allowed the seminar participants to reflect together. From all sides of the room ideas were offered and new thoughts were developed quickly. Although the teacher remained standing on the male side of the room, the women freely and frequently contributed with questions and objections.

Later that day, a brainstorming on how to continue best in the near future took place. Suggestions included the encouragement of dissertations, the preparation of short PowerPoint presentations, and, above all, a selection of thoughts from the *Risale* that could answer to the pressing problems of European reality. The group especially stressed "the need to find translations." More important than anything else, Said Nursi's ideas should be made accessible to the larger public and "translated" into nonreligious thinking.

The Jamaatunnur does not want to impress with numbers but with quality.[30] As one of the more prominent participants remarked, "We are the yeast that makes the dough rise."[31] I came home with the impression that these

30 There seems to be an average of three Nurcu-run study centers or dormitories (*dershanes*) in fifteen German cities as well as in London, Vienna, Rotterdam, Luxembourg, Zurich, Brussels, Paris, Metz, and Strasbourg. Together, they add up to approximately sixty Nur centers in Europe. Each receives some one hundred participants on a regular basis (two to four times a week). Adding these numbers together, I count no more than six thousand active Nur students in Europe. As for the competition, most interviewees mentioned two to three centers in their town or its vicinity in which the writings of the preacher Fethüllah Gülen dominate. None of them, however, possessed a full overview of all Nur activities in Europe (results of a questionnaire issued to the participants of the seminar group in October 2003).

31 Faris Kaya, organizer of the international symposia in Istanbul and himself one of the original companions of Said Nursi.

people challenged the defensive and violent interpretation of jihad through the active promotion of a view that preached nonviolence and spirituality instead. They were, moreover, convinced that Said Nursi's writings held something in store for their Christian and nonreligious colleagues. But where were the words that might fit the lock?

There is still a large distance to be crossed from the local Nur study center in Europe to the international symposia in Istanbul. Local discussion circles revolve around Muslim devotion, enchanted visions of nature, questions of private conduct, and, above all, the desire "to look behind the curtain and realize, 'Ah, that's how it is!'"[32] The international symposia cater to the international standards of the scientific community while introducing a set of ethical standards. As one of the organizers, a philosophy professor, explained to me, "Our jihad is a jihad of pen and paper"[33] The material with which the Nur community wants to build a bridge is made of something far more comprehensive than the local political claims-making, partnership, or group rights of their Milli Görüş brethren: a universal language that touches upon matters of insight, inspiration, and a common, universal ethics.

The Jamaatunnur is, however, by no means a sect. Milli Görüş members view it as an orthodox and devoted community that does far more than is strictly necessary. As they see it, Nur members pray more, they pray longer prayers, and they meet more often to study religious texts. In the eyes of religious Muslims, Nurcus are religious virtuosi. The latter's efforts to translate Quranic values into universal values seems to escape them. During Ramadan I regularly saw Milli Görüş members make a "crossover" to join in the extra-long evening prayers of the Nur community. But, as these people told me, this was just to do something extra in an extraordinary time. To them, during the rest of the year, five times a day was more than enough.

These few glimpses must suffice to answer the question of what framework the Jamaatunnur employs and what it allows the community to see. How does it answer to the present situation, which is dominated by violence legitimized with the Islamic tradition and oppressive security politics? In comparison to Milli Görüş, Jamaatunnur does not present the fuzzy territory with unclear borders that typifies social movements. The community does not care about political claims-making. To the contrary, its borders are clearly defined by a corpus of texts and a method to deal with them. The Nur community is first of all a community that consumes meaningful texts. It busies itself with the copying, reading, interpreting, editing, printing, and distributing of the immense oeuvre of its founder. Moreover, the Nur community is a text-producing community. With the help of the international symposia in Istanbul, some ten thousand pages of commentary on the founder's oeuvre already have been published, and more is expected in the future. Their occupation with meaningful text also creates the framework for the mobiliza-

32 Group interview at the Islamic University of Rotterdam, January 8, 2003.
33 Group interview at the Islamic University of Rotterdam, January 8, 2003.

tion of that heady human potential located somewhere between enthusiasm, inspiration, and love. The expression that the heritage of Sufi devotion takes in this community comes close to the Pentecostal experience. Nur students brim with enthusiasm and they are willing to share it. But who is willing to be a recipient? At this point, Europe, or, more precisely, European nonreligious society, comes into view. What Nur students seem to perceive is a world that must do without inner experiences, a disenchanted and demoralized society that is badly in need of a spiritual infusion. To view Europe as a place for da'wa, as a place to bring the good message to those who are in need, is not unique to Nur students. But what sets them apart from other Muslim endeavors is their refusal to proselytize. Instead, they want to share universal essence, reaped from the Quran, discovered with the help of Said Nursi's inspired commentary, and processed through texts and individual encounters.

The profile of the ideal Nur activist, then, is that of the intellectual, well-trained, highly ethical, and engaged colleague and neighbor. Nur students want to convince through personal conduct. Its perception of German society, and the strategies that were found to cope with it, keeps the Nur community outside the spotlights of policy-making agencies, although not outside those of the media. Meanwhile, though still in need of finer translations, it already has managed to translate the current political signals—suspicion and pressure—into a pressing need on the part of "secular" society, to which it responds from its religious point of view.

Summary and Conclusions

In the course of 2000 and 2001, a small group of Arab students prepared to execute a massacre. Hamburg was the center of their preparations, New York and Washington their ultimate stage. From the documents left behind by the students, it can be concluded that they considered the massacre a necessity to free Muslim norms and values from what they deemed intolerable oppression. Among the documents left behind was a "spiritual manual," which the students in all probability used. The manual gave instructions for a rigorous asceticism that prepared them for and guided them through the deed. The careful ritual setting and the ritual re-enactment of a raid that the Prophet had once staged indicate that the perpetrators acted within a religious framework and that they were religiously motivated, deliberately turning the massacre into an act of worship.

The hijack bombers of 9/11 shocked German policymakers out of their disinterest in Muslims. They suddenly realized that Muslims also lived in Germany, but, in the absence of other information, they could not—or could only with great difficulty—distinguish them from Muslims all around the world. As a result, all Muslims were perceived through a security framework. What this framework allowed them to see was an amorphous group that shared religious claims, organizations without any transparency or representa-

tion, and individuals who seemed to sympathize with terrorists. Their response was a standard reaction that came out of Germany's historical experience with left- and right-wing terrorists, ranging from student protests to the extermination politics of the National Socialists. Part of this collective memory was recalled with the use of words like sleepers, sympathizers, and do-gooders. The rhetoric helped to shape a political response that seemed appropriate in similar situations. Whether the current situation was really comparable with those of the German past was a question that did not receive much attention. The approach simply pushed the perception of Muslims, in particular religious Muslims, into the corner of right-wing activism, from which German politicians necessarily had to distance themselves. Observed from this angle, Muslim holy texts seemed to speak against the basic rights as guaranteed by the constitution, in particular that of equality between the sexes. Islam appeared to embody a particular political interest that threatened democracy. It was thus equated with Islamism, which in its turn was considered a fertile ground for terrorists. At this turning point, the lack of transparency and representation of the religious organizations started to serve as proof that they indeed had something to hide. The accusation of being sleepers, of undermining and threatening the democratic order, was aspersed like dew on all 3.2 million Muslims in Germany.

The Muslim community in Germany reacted with repulsion and apprehension. Secular Muslim members of Parliament and writers admitted that they were "powerless," meaning that they were not able to turn the tide with the same means on the same level. Religious organizations denied that they shared a religious tradition with hijackers and suicide bombers. They felt that the ensuing political pressure had been wrongly addressed. Then, in a second step, they began a complicated shift in strategies that revealed a new scale of tension between religion and politics: first, within a few years' time, the younger generation replaced the older one; second, "powerless" was reformulated as "inner strength"; and third, the dominant perception of "Islam equals politics" was challenged with a view of Islam that underlined its divine origin and universal value. In a third step, different Muslim religious actors embraced different strategies to become accepted as a group. The two religious organizations that I have discussed, Milli Görüş and Jamaatunnur, are positioned at opposite ends of the scale. The former launched into political claims-making; the latter placed its trust in ethical involvement and the power of inspired words. The former wound up in a headlong clash with political interests; the latter escaped any specific political attention. Their different strategies brought Milli Görüş all the limelight that political Germany could muster. The Jamaatunnur managed to stay more or less out of focus.

What do young Muslim believers do when confronted with the fact that their religious tradition also sanctions and engenders shocking instances of violence, although they themselves do not? How do they counter the political pressure? How do they communicate their version of their religious tradition? In this chapter, I have tried to capture the reciprocity between terrorism,

political pressure, and the change of generations in two communities. To sum up my conclusions:

1. The groups under study positioned themselves in the German context differently. The distinction proposed by Max Weber can be applied: Milli Görüş actors moved towards the political sphere, whereas Nurcus laid claim to a shared professional sphere. Milli Görüş adherents, once they had taken over the positions of their fathers, intensified their political claims-making. Nur students reacted by linking spirituality with concrete instances of personal involvement. As a result, the former clashed with policymakers whereas the latter did not. These clashes, however, proved to be the decisive factor in gaining visibility.
2. This difference in approaches allows us to perceive Islamic groups that nurse distinct religious interpretations and embark upon divergent courses. This insight is of particular importance because the Islamic tradition allows for a multitude of interpretations, courses, and organizational forms, all of them considered to be equal to each other. It does not, however, allow for standardization—neither through a hierarchy nor through terrorist acts. Muslims who try to bomb themselves to the top count on achieving high visibility through the global media, something that is then counteracted with the silence of nonviolent Muslims.
3. Both groups are very much aware of the multitude of possible interpretations and the limits that this multiplicity sets on their own interpretation. Terrorist acts in the name of Islam forced them to act in a global context, but they rejected the idea of a theological discussion or direct confrontation with their extremist competitors. The terrorist attacks challenged them to actively promote a different interpretation of the Islamic tradition and to act out their beliefs in the German context. Both communities fostered a discourse on Islam which was based on nonviolence and social engagement, hoping that one day it would gain dominance again. In their local context, their respective discourse brought both groups only negative visibility: the signals that Milli Görüş sends are perceived as "dangerously close" to the worldview of extremists; the signals that Jamaatunnur sends are considered to be "missionary."
4. In both communities, the German context was captured with the word "secular," secular being the keyword with which the new generation perceives and reacts to its surroundings. For the one it stood for atheist and good-for-nothing, for the other it meant disenchantment. "Secular" also stood for the power to define values, to anchor them in the constitution, and to declare them universal. "Secular society" as perceived by young Muslims born and raised in Germany calls for the need to be different, to show one's religious roots, and to translate Muslim values into understandable principles that are equally universal.
5. For Nur students, the tension between religion and the world involves the entire social world. For Milli Görüş, it is limited to the political world.

The new Milli Görüş generation formulated the task of finding a compromise as a legal matter, transferring religious claims to secular rights as guaranteed by the constitution. Nur students formulated their religious claims in philosophical terms, embarking upon a translation of Muslim conduct as universal ethics.

6. In the highly tense political situation, their religious views on Germany offered both groups a means to translate political pressure into a basic human need. They drew their impulse from this change of frameworks. For the younger generation, it finally made Germany visible as a promising field to make oneself understood and to gain respect.

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