



OSCE Meeting in Paris on the relationship between racist, xenophobic and anti-Semitic propaganda on the Internet and hate crimes

The discussion should not aim on what is morally desirable, but should instead focus on what can actually be done

17 June 2004 - Session 4 - David Gall, haGalil onLine

Mr. Ferraris, Ladies and Gentlemen, haGalil onLine is a German-Israeli webmagazine, published since 1995, and since then holding a central position in the fight against hate-speech.

Many speakers already mentioned the tension between freedom of speech and control of incitement. I think it became clear, that we cannot perceive the internet primarily as a threat, but much more should use the chance it offers to promote understanding and dialogue in a pluralistic and global society.

Of course it is true, anti-Semitism holds a more and more dominant and aggressive position on the internet, and the World Wide Web is the most effective tool of distribution of such propaganda. Since it reaches not only those in search for incitement, but also those in search of neutral information, it is the most dangerous tool to articulate and inseminate resentment, prejudice and hate. But it is the fact, that most people (at least in Germany) know so very little on Jewish life and Judaism, that makes it quiet easy for anti-Semites to spread their message of hate.

Anti-Semitism is the distinguishing feature of fundamentalist and nationalistic ideology, and as such is linking rather different movements, such as Pamjat in Russia, the Ku-Klux-Klan in America, Christian Arian Alliances and Islamistic fanatics.

It took nearly ten years, until the danger became recognized by a broader audience, and we are very happy, that this OSCE-Conference focuses especially on hate and incitement in the Internet. I do hope, that it will not take another ten years, from recognizing the problem to not only understanding but also supporting effective ways of solution.

It is understandable, that demands for a worldwide binding consensus of values and legislative efforts to strengthen such consensus are often made. These demands might even be praiseworthy initiatives, but they are not realistic.

They presume, that it could be established what can be said and circulated about Jews and Israel and this not only in Germany or Europe, but also in Malaysia, in Durban, in Riad and Teheran.

With regard to the oldest and most aggressive stereotype of human history,

combined with an international and constantly developing decentralized and open media, strategies mainly trusting on controllability are not only illusive, but in regard to the seriousness of the problem we are dealing with, even dangerous.

They are a threat to contemporary European society, which depends on mutual respect for the cultural and religious diversity of it's inhabitants. Thus the discussion should not aim on what is morally desirable, but should instead focus on what can actually be done.

Since 1995 we developed a rather simple model, which can be used in various manners and in different countries. Possibly it is this successful, for it has been created *for* something and not *against* something. We have worked much less *against* the lies, as *for* the truth.

Our major strategy is to create a massive counterbalance of detailed information. If we publish 100 of our pages on let's say the Jewish holiday of Purim, the chance that a student in search for information on this subject will end up at our site is a hundred times higher then coming up at a site promoting anti-Semitic slander. The continuing improvement results in high positions in search engines.

Our second approach uses the communicative means of an active and lively online service. Anti-Semitism is often the stronger the less Jews are present. For many teenagers for ex. in East-Germany, the first and only option to establish contact with Jews is through haGalil onLine.

Out of a total of 220.000 readers a month, we receive numerous e-mails or phone-calls with queries from journalists, pupils and teachers everyday. Boards and chat rooms offer the possibility for further communication and discussion. Here it has not been a surprise, when a Nazi dropout met the chairwomen of a Jewish community in Bavaria. They created a series of lectures at schools and youth centres.

We do not solely trust on legislative measures, but our third approach uses juridical means as another effective way in the battle against hate speech. In 1997 after massive attacks on our discussion-boards, we introduced the first form to electronically report on hate-incidents. About 1000 charges are being reported yearly. We do not only pass on the observations of our readers, but conduct our own investigations. One of these investigations led to the exposure of an anti-Semitic speech held by Martin Hohmann, member of the German Parliament, the Bundestag in Berlin. Since we made this finding public in November 2003, he is not a member of his former fraction anymore.

Thank you very much for your attention.

Ce qu'on peut faire doit enfin être soutenu :

[Des contre-mesures contre l'antisémitisme sur Internet](#)

Was getan werden kann, muss endlich unterstützt werden:

[Gegenmaßnahmen zum Antisemitismus im Internet](#)

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