

SALAFIST JIHADISM IN GERMANY

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ABSTRACT

This article describes the development of Germany's homegrown Jihadist scene. It focuses on the two stages, which have to be crossed before a group of individuals can perpetrate an attack: Radicalization, which here means the adoption of a Salafist Weltanschauung and Jihadization, describing the process by which an individual comes to accept violent Jihad as his individual obligation .

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Introduction

During the past decade the overall situation of Islamist-terrorist activity in Germany has profoundly changed. While until 9/11 Germany has served mainly as a logistical base and refuge for militant Islamists it has now become a target for attacks itself.[2] This fact can be attributed to two main factors: the rapidly growing Salafist network in Germany and the military engagement of Germany in Afghanistan. Since 2000 at least nine plans for attacks on German soil have been registered[3] and about 350 legal proceedings related to Islamist-terrorist offenses are currently under way.[4]

In recent years Germany has seen a growing number in cases of radicalized German Muslims willing to take up arms. Those Jihadists are German citizens of Turkish, Arab and German origin. They are overwhelmingly not foreign born immigrants.

This paper frequently uses the terms "Islamism," "Salafism" and "Jihadism". In common usage terms like "Islamic fundamentalism", "political Islam" or "Islamism" are often applied interchangeably without giving account to the semantic differences. The history of labels for Islamic movements and their protagonists has been written in some detail and shall not be repeated here.[5] But certain terms deserve an explanation, as they are vital for understanding the issue at large.

Two reasons suggest to discard the term of fundamentalism for the studies of Islamic movements. The label "Fundamentalism" originates in the 1920's in the USA and was used for Protestant Christians trying to reaffirm the literal text of the Bible against scientific theories and philosophical skepticism.[6] These Christians lived in an already secularized society. The first Islamist mass movement, the Muslim Brotherhood, emerged around the same time but in a very different social constellation, characterized by centuries of stagnation and resistance to the deep social changes, with which the developing market society had swept over the Western hemisphere.[7] The second argument against the term is of religious nature. A "fundamental

institutional tension“[8] runs through Western history. In Christianity the division between the worldly and the sacred can be traced back to Jesus’ caution in Mark 12:17 to “Give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's.“ In contrast Islam since its inception proclaimed the unity of religion and rule.[9]

This leads to a problem when trying to study Islamist movements. They are distinct from Islam but not simply for the reason that they have a political agenda. The International Crisis Group tried to solve this issue by changing its definition of “Islamism“ from “Islam in political mode“ to the more general “Islamic activism“ meaning “the active assertion and promotion of beliefs, prescriptions, laws, or policies that are held to be Islamic in character.“[10]

This notion solves one problem but creates another. It does not suppose anymore that Islam is per se apolitical. But in the same time it dispenses with the difference to Islam.

Roy argues that Islamists make a distinction between a society that is composed of Muslims and a society that is Islamic in its foundation and its structure, which legitimizes the use of the term Islamism.[11] This focus on the self-understanding of Islamists helps to appreciate the difference of Islam and Islamism just as the previous focus on the political nature of Islam helps to avoid the pitfall of creating artificial distinctions.

In mainstream Islam religion is an intrinsically public concern.[12] Yet Islamists criticize that the Ummah has deviated from the Islamic ideal. Despite being predominantly Muslim state and society are supposedly not truly Islamic. To rid this error Islamists advocate a return to the Qur’an, the Sunna and the example of the first Muslim community as the only sources for a life according to Islam.

Therefore the term Islamism, as it is used here, is necessarily iridescent. It refers to a political activism that is Islamic by its ideology and at the same time distinct from most Muslim communities and states.

“Salafism“ can be considered a sub-set of Islamism. The word derives from the Arabic word for the pious forefathers (al-salaf al-salih), the first three generations of Islam, which Salafists glorify as a pure community and role model for the future.[13] Salafists reject what they call the blind following of the traditional schools of Islamic law (taqlid) and advocate a return to the sources of Islam, particularly emphasizing the importance of the canonical hadiths for a right understanding and pure praxis of Islam.[14] This focus on the individual interpretation of the sources of Islamic law (ijtihad) sets Salafists apart from other Islamists. There seems to be unanimous agreement amongst Salafists concerning the strict Islamic monotheism (tawhid) and a rather wide consensus about legal theory and practice. However, there are serious divisions between different Salafist streams as to how to apply the teachings in the political sphere (manhaj).[15]

In this paper most attention is given to the stream of Salafism that argues such application includes violent struggle against the contemporary enemies of Islam. Its followers who decide to take up arms themselves are commonly referred to as “Jihadists“, giving this particular Salafist current its name – “Jihadism“. The term derives from the Islamic concept of “Jihad“. It can refer to an internal struggle against the sinful self or denote the act of physical warfare in the name of Islam.[16] The term Jihadism is a neologism. It is consequently applied to describe militancy in the name of Islam. As this paper deals with Salafist militancy, wherever Jihadism or Jihadists are mentioned a Salafist ideology is already implied. This is not to say that all of the German Jihadists that are discussed below were thoroughly familiar with Salafist doctrine. It does say, however, that the Salafist discourse provides the single most important source of legitimization for this form of violence.

The German Muslim Community

A thorough discussion of the Muslim community in Germany would go far beyond the scope of this paper, whose focus is on Germany’s Salafist network and, more specifically, its links to the Global Jihad. However, a basic understanding of the overall situation of Islam in Germany is necessary to better appreciate the role of Salafism within it.

In 2008 the “German Islam Conference” (DIK), a permanent platform for major Muslim organizations and the German State[17], commissioned an important research on Islam in Germany. The study “Muslim Life in Germany” (MLD) has brought up new insides into Germany’s Muslim community.

At the date of the study Germany was home to a highly heterogeneous community of about four million Muslims – about one million more than had been anticipated before. This amounts to around 5% of Germany’s total population of 82 million people. 74% of the Muslims are Sunni, 7% Shiites, 13% Alevites and 6% of other denominations. With over 60% most of German Muslims originate from Turkey. More than 10% are descendants of Muslims from Southeast Europe, and about 15% from the Middle East and North Africa. A substantial number of migrants from predominantly Muslim countries are not affiliated with Islam, such as about 40% of the Iranian immigrants.[18] Similarly it is a given that not every German citizen with Muslim parents cherishes his religion as an important part of his identity or, for that matter, does not consider himself Muslim at all. This needs to keep in mind who talks about the “Muslim community”.

In Germany almost all Muslims (98%) live in the states of the former West Germany and East Berlin.[19] Home to the most Muslims is the state of North-Rhine Westphalia with 33.1% of Germany’s total Muslim population. It is followed by Baden Wurttemberg (16.6%), Bavaria (13.2%) and Hesse (10.3%).[20]

The reasons for the concentration of Muslim communities in the West of the country and for the predominance of Muslims with a Turkish background within these communities date back to the 1950’s and 60’s. Only about a decade after the Second World War a shortage in the labor force threatened to hamper the burgeoning post-war economy of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG). In order to support the domestic work force temporarily with foreign workers the government signed so-called “Anwerbeverträge” (recruitment agreements) with foreign countries. The first agreement was reached with Italy in 1955. Other countries followed including such with large Muslim populations like Turkey in 1961, Morocco in 1963, Tunisia in

1965 and Yugoslavia in 1968. The agreements were originally designed to rotate the foreign workers after some years back into their home countries. Nonetheless, many stayed and their families followed. In 1973, after the economic boom was over, the government stopped the recruitment of foreign labor. But many of the workers had already settled in the country and so the immigration of family members continued.[21] Interestingly, the motive of family re-union is the prevalent cause for Muslim migration to Germany unto this day.[22]

Next to the Muslim migrant workers and their families the second group of Muslims, who migrated to Germany, came since the mid 1970's as refugees. Their countries of origin were mainly Lebanon, Iran, and Afghanistan. Since the mid 90's the disintegration of Yugoslavia drove also residents from Bosnia Herzegovina and Kosovo to emigrate. Many of them decided to permanently stay in Germany and keep away from the politically unstable and crisis-ridden countries they came from.[23]

The third group of Muslim immigrants came to Germany to study. Even though there are no exact figures on Muslim students in Germany it is known that the group of students and scholars from Muslim countries was the most active to establish Islamic centers in the country, laying the fundamentals for much of today's Muslim community infrastructure.[24]

The influx of immigrants and their decision to stay in Germany has not only helped the economy but also raised the issue of integration – especially of the Muslim community. For decades the problem had been widely ignored by German politicians. Chancellor Merkel publicly acknowledged that fact in October 2010, when she declared the “multiculti” approach has “absolutely failed”.[25]

Amongst Germany's Muslim community there exist serious deficits in integration. Especially the Turkish community lacks behind in education and employment. Even though the younger generations show signs of improvement the high figures of school drop outs and low representation in universities indicate ongoing problems.[26] It is particularly the Turkish segment of the Muslim community, which ranks below the average. 27.5% of the Muslim

community with a Turkish background has obtained a higher school education, 33.5% have a low education and 16.5% have not completed any school at all. Yet, these educational deficits do more reflect the origin of German's Turkish community from poorly educated migrant workers than religious factors on education.[27]

Another important finding is the low degree of formal organization within the Muslim community. Only 20% of Germany's Muslims are member of a religious association or are officially registered in their community. In fact, less than 25% of all Muslims feel represented by the Muslim umbrella organizations present in the German Islam Conference. [28] This raises the question whether the approach to engage Muslims in Germany via the established Islamic organizations is adequate or if other ways should be explored.

An earlier study from 2007 has examined integration, barriers to integration, and attitudes towards democracy, rule of law, and politico-religious violence amongst German Muslims.[29] The findings came as a wake up call for policy makers in Germany. The study shows widespread attitudes of glorification of Islam and derogation of Christian and Western society. 26% absolutely agreed with the idea "Only Islam is able to solve the problems of our time" and another 19% rather agreed, which amounts to almost half of German's Muslim population being at least open to ideas that Islam should play a political role in Germany. The topic sexuality is the strongest indicator of contempt for Western values. Almost half of the Muslim community absolutely agrees, "The sexual morals of the Western societies are entirely corrupted". A total of 71% support the notion at least to some extent.[30] Accordingly, 71.9% of Turkish parents see the German society as a threat to the religious and cultural development of their children.[31] Similarly alarming were the findings on attitudes towards violence. 17.9% absolutely confirmed the statement "The threat the West poses to Islam legitimizes that Muslims defend themselves with violent means." Another 20.4% rather agreed with it.[32] An item measuring the condonation of suicide bombings found still 8.7% of German Muslims absolutely or rather not objecting to suicide attacks.[33] To what extent these attitudes are the result of the activities of Islamist organizations in Germany is hard to determine. It must be recognized though that Islamist ideas are dominant amongst a significant part of organized Muslims in Germany. This

becomes clearer by looking at the major Muslim organizations in Germany.

There are five large umbrella organizations of different Muslim groups: The Turkish-Islamic Union for Religious Affairs (DITIB), the Federation of Alevi Communities in Germany (AABF), the Islamic Council for the Federal Republic of Germany (IRD), the Association of Islamic Cultural Centers (VIKZ), and the Central Council for Muslims in Germany (ZMD). Three out of those five organizations are heavily influenced if not controlled by Islamist actors.

The IRD is dominated by its largest member organization, the Islamic Community Millî Görüş (IGMG), which is also the biggest Islamist organization in Germany. Because of criminal proceedings against leading figures in the IGMG the IRD's participation in the German Islam Conference was discontinued in 2009.[34]

Also the VIKZ has repeatedly been accused of promoting an Islamist and anti-democratic ideology. According to police reports students in the VIKZ's Qur'an schools were beaten, and Jihad glorified. Several of the organization's facilities have in the past been misused as religious boarding schools and consequently closed by the authorities.[35]

The ZMD is platform to several important Islamist organizations in Germany, most notably the Islamic Community Germany (IGD) and the Islamic Center Hamburg (IZH). The IGD is the main representation of the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) in Germany. A number of other organizations associated with the MB are also organized in the ZMD.[36] The IZH, however, is controlled by the Iranian Islamic Republic. The head of the IZH, currently Dr. Reza Ramezani, is appointed by the Iranian foreign ministry and serves as the official representation of Iran's Supreme Leader in Europe. The IZH is also a meeting point for Hizbullah members in Germany. It dominates Germany's Shia-community.[37]

In 2007 the VIKZ, DITIB, ZMD and the IRD jointly established the Coordination Council of Muslims in Germany (KRM), which claims to represent the majority of Sunni and Shiite Muslims living in Germany. It strives to become a centralized contact for the state.[38] Thus

judging by its membership, also the KRM is dominated by Islamist actors. On the other hand most of the German Muslims have not even taken notice of the KRM. According to the MLD study less than 10% have heard of the KRM, out of which almost 60% do not feel represented at all by Germany's latest and largest Muslim umbrella organization.[39]

Every generalization of ideas prevalent in Muslim organizations in Germany must take this fact into account. That is not to say Germany's Muslim community was immune to anti-liberal, anti-Western and Islamist ideas. Indeed, respective ideologies seem to be well rooted in at least parts of the community.

The exaltation of Islam and contempt for Western culture give reason for serious concern. Yet, they still say little about the dissemination of Salafist beliefs among the Muslim community. Unfortunately, there is no reliable data on the size of the Salafist scene in Germany. This is also a major weakness of the MLD study. It not only lacks any data on Salafists in Germany but also completely disregards the issue of converts to Islam. Despite their growing importance the subject of German converts is chronically understudied. There are only estimates regarding their numbers ranging from 10,000-100,000 in total.[40] The same holds true for the lack of scholarly publications on Salafism in Germany. This is regretful as it is but additionally it makes it difficult to understand the disproportionate representation of native Germans in the ranks of Al Qaeda and its affiliate organizations.

This paper will explore the most prominent cases of homegrown radicalization and Jihadization in Germany during the past two decades. It will connect these cases to describe the growth of Germany's Salafist network and the way it functions as a conduit for recruits to the Global Jihad.

Christian Ganczarski – An early case of Jihadization in Germany

Back in the 1990's little attention was paid to militant Islamism in general and homegrown, militant Salafism in particular. Only a few cases brought it to some prominence, which corresponds to the very limited influence of Salafism in Germany at the time. This is not to say

that there were no cases of radicalization and Jihadization. In fact, one of Germany's oldest cases of homegrown radicalization began in the early 90's in Duisburg and came to an end only in 2009 before a court in Paris.

Christian Manfred Ganczarski was born in Gliwice, Poland, to strictly Catholic parents of German origin. In 1976 the family relocated to Mülheim, Germany[41] – a city of some 170,000 citizens located in the industrial Ruhr region of the country. It was the first city in the area to become free of coalmines and to successfully diversify its economy. By the mid-80's Ganczarski had grown apart from Catholicism, got involved in petty crime and was convicted for thievery and drug-abuse.[42] He found a job at the DUEWAG Company in nearby Krefeld. Here for the first time he got in contact with Islam, when a Tunisian co-worker encouraged him to read the Qur'an.

He became active in a local mosque of Mülheim[43], finally converted in 1986 and adopted the name „Ibrahim“.[44] In his new community he met another German convert, Nicola „Maymuna“ Garbrecht, and married her in 1990.[45] Both followed the strict dress code of Salafism, Ganczarski wearing traditional Islamic clothes and his wife wearing a Niqab.[46]

Around the same time he met the Saudi gynecologist, Dr. Nadeem Elyas, from the Bilal mosque of Aachen. Dr. Elyas had been asked by the Saudi royal family to target German converts and to send them to Islamic studies in Saudi Arabia, where they should be won over to the Wahhabi interpretation of Islam. The Saudi doctor was well connected in Germany's Muslim communities. He was founding member and between 1995-2006 head of the ZMD, one of the important umbrella organizations of the Islamic community. He first contacted Ganczarski's imam in Mülheim asking for suitable candidates for the Saudi program. The imam recommended Ganczarski for the scholarship and with Dr. Elyas' permission, in 1992 Ganczarski moved to Saudi Arabia. A year later Saudi funding allowed his wife and young daughter, who suffered from diabetes, to join him in the kingdom. Yet his studies seem to have been less of a success, as he was forced to drop out of the program in 1994 due to his insufficient level of Arabic. He and his family consequently returned to Germany and settled in Duisburg not far from Mülheim.

Upon his return he was increasingly inspired by a religious fervor and fascination for Jihad. Later he declared that he had an awakening experience during his stay in Saudi Arabia. His thoughts started to rotate around a more adventurous life and the struggle for „the good cause“.[47] He became a frequent visitor of the „Al Taqwa“ mosque in the neighborhood of „Hochheim“[48], where he made an important contact for his later Jihadist career: Mohamedou Ould Slahi.

The Mauretanian citizen had come to Germany in 1988. He studied at the Gerhard-Mercator University in Duisburg. Through the internet he had first established contact with Islamist groups in Chechnya but then decided to join the Jihad in Bosnia. His brother was the close Bin Laden associate Abu Hafs al Mauretani, who had helped to prepare the U.S. embassy bombings in 1998 in East Africa. Ould Slahi also had set up an import-export company, the „Ould Slahi GmbH“, which mainly served as a cover for financial activities of Al Qaeda. Much of the money going through his accounts came from his brother in law Al-Shanquiti, aka Abu Hafs al Mauretani[49], a senior Al Qaeda operative, who allegedly has been heading the religious committee of Al Qaeda and who, at that time, lived in Khartoum, Sudan.[50]

Ould Slahi recruited Ganczarski and other Muslims from the Duisburg area including Karim Mehdi, who was convicted in 2003 for a bombing plot on the French island La Reunion.[51]

In mid-August 1999 Ganczarski traveled for the first time to an Al Qaeda camp in Kandahar to undergo military training.[52] He then supposedly worked as computer specialist for Al Qaeda's leadership in the Middle East and served as courier between Osama bin Ladin and Khalid Sheikh Mohammed. It is said that Ganczarski helped with the supply of insulin to treat Bin Ladin's diabetes. In the spring of 2001 Georgian border guards stopped him and two British comrades, when they attempted to cross into Chechnya.[53] By the end of 2001 he went five more times to Afghanistan.[54] Apart from smuggling precious stones from the region[55], Ganczarski has allegedly been in contact with the founding father of Al Qaeda himself. The British witness and former Al Qaeda member, Jack Roche, testified that on one occasion Ganczarski sat next to Bin Laden in a dining room, conversing with him for an extended period of time. A document found in Kandahar in 2002 provided more evidence to Ganczarski's Al Qaeda connection, identifying

him under his combat name „Abu Mohammed al-Almani“ as contact for the recruitment of new fighters.[56]

Despite all that evidence and attentive observation by state security of multiple countries, German authorities had nothing to put forward against Ganczarski, as support or membership in a foreign terrorist organization was made punishable offense only with the implementation of Sect. 129b in the German Criminal Code on August 30, 2002.

This changed with the bombing of the Ghriba synagogue on the Tunisian island of Djerba on April 11, 2002. Twenty-one people died in the attack, including 14 Germans, two French and five Tunisians.[57] It appeared that the suicide bomber, Nizar Nawar, who had driven the explosive laden truck, had called Ganczarski at 6:18 am just before the attack. Both men knew each other from Afghanistan. Now Nawar asked the friend for his blessing, before setting the synagogue on fire.[58]

Ganczarski was arrested in Mülheim shortly after the bombings. Yet German authorities considered the evidence against Ganczarski as still being too weak and released him a few days later. So, in November 2002 he and his family left on a pilgrim's visa for Saudi Arabia. Meanwhile the CIA had put pressure on Germany. Then Minister of the Interior, Otto Schily, wanted Ganczarski arrested but the general attorney, Kay Nehm, argued that there was not enough evidence to put Ganczarski behind bars. The French side saw things differently. Thus, a deal between the U.S., France, Saudi Arabia and Germany was coordinated. Ganczarski was put on a return flight to Germany via Paris. As soon as the plane touched down for the layover French intelligence officers arrested him.[59]

Ganczarski was convicted on February 5, 2009 to 18 years in prison.[60] He can be considered to be the first prominent Muslim convert, who rose through the ranks of Al Qaeda to become a senior level operative of the organization.

His is an early case of a German convert to Islam, who became radicalized in Germany, Jihadized with Saudi Arabian support and trained for Jihad in Al Qaeda camps in Afghanistan. Although Ganczarski's biography seems to develop since the early 90's already towards a militant Salafist career, there was no one single organization or individual, which led him through the whole process from his conversion to the recruitment for Jihad.

His first interest in Islam was aroused within the circle of his immediate daily life, a colleague from work. His conversion to Islam and his radicalization can be attributed to the same Muslim milieu of his hometown Mülheim. Yet his pre-occupation with Islam reached a new quality, when he was sent with royal funding to study in Saudi Arabia. Hereafter the idea to participate in the Global Jihad became a determining factor in his life. However, it was not until he met Mohamedou Ould Slahi that he gained access to an operational training in Al Qaeda facilities and access to its senior leadership. In its annual report for 2009 the LfV Schleswig Holstein underscored the crucial significance of the status and reputation of the respective Al Qaeda instructor for the future possibilities of the Jihadist trainee, especially in view of relations to Jihadist operatives and access to existing affiliate networks once the trainee has returned home.[61] Although the recruiter Mohamedou Ould Slahi did not train Ganczarski, his high level contacts throughout Al Qaeda were certainly conducive for Ganczarski's quick career.

The study of this early radicalization case reveals a steady development towards Global Jihad. However, Ganczarski's development from conversion to the attendance of a Jihadist training camp stretches over more than a decade. This seems exceptionally long compared to more recent cases of radicalization and Jihadization, which at times happened in as little as a few months.

It is tempting to conclude that the radicalization process in the early 90's was simply longer because of 1. a lack of Salafist infrastructure, which integrates conversion, radicalization, Jihadization and recruitment within the same milieu and under the auspices of the same Islamic guides and 2. a lack of internet propaganda, which today serves as one main tool to attract young Muslims to join the Global Jihad.

Although both points seem plausible there have also been cases of accelerated radicalization outside a developed Salafist scene and previous to the era of Jihadist internet propaganda.[62] Nonetheless, the rise of organized Salafist structures in Germany did have an impact on radicalization and Jihadization, the most prominent case of which leads to the south of the country.

Multi Culture House and Islamic Information Center – The emergence of regional Jihadist networks with international outreach

Ulm and Neu-Ulm are two small cities situated right at the border between two southern states. Ulm, home to 120,000 citizens, is situated north west of the Danube river and is part of Baden Wurttemberg. Facing it from the other side of the river lies Neu-Ulm with about 50,000 inhabitants, belonging to the state of Bavaria.

The „Multi Culture House“ (MKH) was founded in 1996 by Ramez Aly. It was mainly active in Bavaria yet officially registered in Baden Wurttemberg. About 40 individuals were counted as core membership.[63] Next to a mosque the MKH included a grocery store, an extensive library, accommodation for guests as well as several class- and prayer rooms. The MKH held Qur’anic lessons for adults and children.[64]

The Bavarian LfV described the core personnel of the MKH in its annual report of 2007 as having „a hostile, aggressive attitude towards democracy, the Jewish people and generally the whole Western hemisphere.“[65]

The property of the MKH was raided three times by police officers during the year 2005. On January 12 an inter-state group of criminal investigators searched MKH buildings under suspicion of the formation of a criminal organization, punishable under Sect. 129 of the German Criminal Code. A second raid was conducted on February 18 and the last on September 23, in which the MKH main building, its head office in Neu-Ulm as well as five apartments of MKH functionaries were searched. The police found an abundance of publications and recordings

promoting Islamism and armed Jihad. Also public announcements by MKH officials and Friday prayers were characterized by „massive, repetitious incitement against the parliamentary democracy, people of other religions, Jews and the state of Israel. Jihad was perpetually propagated as individual duty of every Muslim.“[66]

Considering the incriminating evidence the Bavarian State Ministry of Interior banned the MKH on December 28, 2005.[67]

One of the founders of the MKH was Egyptian Jamaah Islamiyah member, Dr. Aldy el-Attar, a close acquaintance of one of the founding members of Al Qaeda, Mamdouh Mahmud Salim. Salim was arrested 1998 in Germany and extradited to the United States for his involvement in the East Africa Embassy bombings.[68]

A few years later another important figure came to the MKH. Dr. Yahia Yusuf, who arrived 2001 in Neu-Ulm and soon became the informal leader of the center.[69] Yusuf was born on April 9, 1958 in Alexandria and holds Egyptian citizenship. He is alleged to have been a member of the Egyptian Islamic Jihad in the 70's while he was still a student. After the assassination of president Anwar Sadat in 1981 Yusuf spent several months in prison for his membership in the Muslim Brotherhood. In 1988 he relocated to Freiburg, Germany, where he finished his PhD at the Institute for Medical Microbiology and Hygiene of the Albert-Ludwig University. He graduated with summa cum laude.[70]

In 1992 he met for the first time a fellow Egyptian expatriate, who had recently become more religious. During that time the Yugoslavian civil war was in full spate and the meetings in Freiburg were dominated by discussions about massacres of Muslims in Bosnia and the need to wage Jihad. The visitor to Freiburg was Reda Seyam – one of the high profile Al Qaeda affiliates, who to this day roams freely in the German Salafist scene.

Seyam was born 1960 in Egypt, where he became a teacher for mathematics. In 1987 he came to Germany and settled in Ulm. During that time he was Western oriented, drank, smoked and was

trying to integrate into society. Just before his residence permit expired he met his future wife, Regina Kreis, who today lives under a new identity. After only a few months both married. While Kreis tells in an interview that Seyam did everything to integrate into society, Seyam describes his life as „rotating around alcohol and non-sense“. Subsequently he became stricter in his Islamic believes. Regina Kreis also converted to Islam.[71]

Then in 1992 he oftentimes traveled to Freiburg, a way of about 150 miles, to meet fellow Muslims, among them Dr. Yahia Yusuf. He started to explain to his wife that it was the obligation of the Muslims closest to Bosnia to go and join the Jihad. Then indeed, in 1994 Kreis and Seyam left for the small city of Bocnia in Bosnia. Only a few months before his departure he and Dr. Yahia Yusuf had founded the charity „Relief Organization People for People“, which he subsequently used to support the Muslim militants.[72]

According to Kreis, Seyam transferred about DM1.5mio to the leader of the Bosnian Mujahideen, which allegedly stemmed from different countries across the globe, including Germany, Sweden, Albania, Saudi Arabia, and Syria and which was collected during the Friday prayers in these countries. Different sources claim that Seyam was also smuggling weapons and fighters to Bosnia and filmed the execution of prisoners by Muslim fighters and handpicked women.[73] But Seyam didn't only bring fighters inside Bosnia, he also helped a future Jihadist back into Germany. In late fall 1996, on one of his tours to Germany, next to him sat Ramzi Binalshibh,[74] who five years later would become known as the coordinator of the 9/11 Hamburg cell.

Seyam spent parts of his time in Bosnia living in the Guca Gora camp under the name Hans Kreis, where he probably got into contact with Al Qaeda operatives, as the camp was frequented by international Jihadists with ties to the organization.[75]

In 1999 he moved to Saudi Arabia, taking Regina Kreis and a second, Albanian born wife with him. While they stayed in Riyad[76], he produced religious movies for the Rawasin Media company. During this time he already stood in contact with senior Al Qaeda members.[77] Kreis

even claims that Osama bin Laden himself had visited Seyam not long before 9/11, while he was still in Saudi Arabia.

One day Seyam shoved a videotape into the recorder and explained to Regina Kreis that the city she would see was their next destination. Realizing that Seyam was about to move to Jakarta, she finally divorced him on January 28, 2001.[78]

More than a year later, August 02, 2002 Seyam finally boarded a flight to Indonesia.[79] Upon arrival he met an old comrade from the war in the Balkans – the Indonesian citizen Hambali[80], who at that time was the operational leader of Jamma Islamiya and member of Al Qaeda's shura council.[81] It appears that Seyam was the most senior Al Qaeda financier in Southeast Asia[82] and furthermore that he was directly responsible for the Bali bombings in 2002, which claimed 200 dead and more than 300 injured. He was arrested September 2002 in Indonesia, only a month after he had arrived. The Indonesian intelligence service found wage lists for known terrorists in Seyam's possession, including the name of Imam Samudra, the mastermind behind the bombings. Furthermore, two men convicted for the bombings testified that Seyam was their superior, who had financed the attack through two charities, handed Jamma Islamiya members \$74,000 for a speed boat and rented an apartment in Street Pulo Mas Raya Nr.44, Jakarta as a safe house. Despite all evidence he was convicted to only ten months in jail for violating immigration regulations. During his prison term he was allowed to continue his video production and even gave Islam courses to the other inmates.

On July 16, 2003 Seyam returned to Germany, accompanied by German police officers supposedly in order to deter a possible abduction by the CIA. Upon arrival the Federal Criminal Police (BKA) asked Seyam to settle in Neu-Ulm, where he could meet another old comrade – Dr. Yahia Yusuf. He stayed by the Danube for a little over a year. During that time he was a frequent visitor of the MKH. [83]

Reda Seyam may have been the best-connected Jihadist in the Ulm area, but he was certainly not the only one. Already by the end of the 90's the region of Ulm and Neu-Ulm had become a „focal point for Islamist extremism“ as a recent LfV dossier states.[84]

On February 1, 1999, the „Islamic Information Center“ (IIZ) was founded in Ulm, just across the Danube river. It would become the second hot spot of militant Salafism in the area. The fact that the two neighboring cities Ulm and Neu-Ulm were not only separate municipalities but parts of different states made it more difficult for local law enforcement and intelligence services to monitor the scene, as their area of responsibility ended at their respective side of the bridge.

As if to underscore the increasing diversity of the Salafist following, the first board of the IIZ included a Turkish chairman, an Arab vice-chairman and a German convert, David Mitterhuber, tasked to be secretary.[85]

During their inauguration meeting in February 1999 the IIZ founders also decided to form a Shura Council of 3 to 11 members, which would annually decide on the candidates for the board and also vote them into office. [86]

The scope of activity of the members and sympathizers of IIZ and MKH span from non-violent dawa efforts to militant Jihad abroad and on German soil. A few examples shall illustrate this point.

David Mitterhuber had converted to Islam only shortly before the IIZ opened. After graduation from high school in 2000 he enrolled into Medina University in Saudi Arabia, where he stayed two years to study Arabic and Sharia law. In 2003 he came back to Germany and joined a course in the „Academy for Islamic Studies in Aachen“, Germany. The academy is part of the „Islamic Center Aachen“, founded in 1981 by the former leader of the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood, Prof. Issam el Attar and is an offspring of the IGD, the representation of the Muslim Brotherhood in Germany.

Equipped with the religious armamentarium of Saudi Arabian Wahhabism and Muslim Brotherhood ideology Mitterhuber started preaching at the MKH in Ulm in Arabic and German. [87] Although he takes care to not publicly call for violence, a book about „Misconceptions on Human Rights in Islam“, whose German translation he helped editing, shows the proximity of his non-militant Salafist thought and the ideology of the Global Jihad. The pamphlet was originally written by the Saudi cleric Dr. Abdul Rahman al-Sheha from Riyadh. The German translation is poorly written and full of grammatical mistakes. Although the writing is meant to defend Islam as human and just way of life, the author condones corporal and capital punishment in the name of Islam: A thieves hands shall be chopped off and adulterers stoned.[88] Flogging is the appropriate sentence for the consumption of alcohol or other drugs.[89] Finally al-Sheha legitimizes the killing of apostates, if their rejection of Islam becomes public.[90] It is interesting to note that apostasy is identified as a critical threat to the whole Islamic society. This suggests that the constant moral threat of hell and satanic punishment, which is ubiquitous in Salafist thought, needs an earthly complement to keep vocal critics at bay, especially if they had been Muslims themselves:

Rejecting Islam as a way of life amounts to a malicious propaganda against Islam. Furthermore, rejection of Islam is also a disgrace to the Islamic society and the immediate community where the apostate lives. Such rejection will discourage people for (sic!) joining Islam as a way of life. The example of rejecting Islam indicates that the person who joined it was only testing it, but was not serious about his commitment to this way of life. Therefore, this rejection will tend to attack Islam and attempt to rebel from within. Therefore, such a punishment was prescribed, Allah (subhanahu wa ta'ala) knows best.“[91]

The two-time use of „therefore“ in the last part to indicate a logical conclusion is of course wrong, because from an insincere commitment to a faith does not self-evidently follow an attack on the religion as a whole. Indeed, this would only be the case if the cohesiveness of the religion was based on the premise that nobody can leave, as this would set a precedent for every member of the community and potentially destroy the aura of the looming punishment, which is needed to keep the Muslim community from falling apart.

Also remarkable is the proximity of the book's conception of Jihad to an Al Qaeda style ideology. According to Al-Sheha, Jihad is the highest and most important aspect of Islam and every Muslim should dedicate his life accordingly. Its aims are the abolishment of tyranny, whereby tyranny is defined as deviation from Islamic law. Jihad is furthermore legitimate to forbid the worship of other people or false gods, to lead all people to Islam, and to support the dissemination of Islam throughout the world.[92] This line of thought is very similar to the work of the founding father of Al Qaeda, Abdullah Azzam, as was rightfully pointed out in the current annual report of Baden Wurttemberg's LfV.[93]

Mitterhuber has, despite obvious sympathies for the Jihadist rhetoric, so far confined himself to the ideological struggle. He was arrested on January 12, 2005 for hate crime and membership in a criminal organization. The charges were dropped in June 2005 and Mitterhuber released. He is alleged to have left Germany.[94] While Mitterhuber apparently did not take up arms himself, other Salafists of the Ulm milieu have.

At least three of the IIZ's board and Shura Council members trained in camps of the Islamic Jihad Union (IJU): Tolga Dürbin, Attila Selek and Fritz Gelowicz[95] – the latter two both members of the infamous Sauerland cell, which had planned large scale bombing attacks against U.S. army bases and nightclubs in Germany. Another founding member of the IIZ did also join the militant Jihad. The German convert Thomas Fischer had done his military service in Germany and got radicalized in the Salafist scene of Ulm. He left for Chechnya in 2002 and was killed by Russian troops shortly thereafter.[96]

Also the son of Yahia Yusuf decided to undergo paramilitary training. In 2001 at the age of seventeen Omar Yusuf traveled to a camp of Lashkar-e-Taiba in Pakistan. Later German police found a manual for the manufacturing of bombs in his possession. He was arrested on November 30, 2004 and deported to Egypt on June 17, 2005.[97]

While most of the militants have been waging Jihad only abroad, the aforementioned MKH and IIZ alumni of the Sauerland cell had planned to bomb targets within Germany: the Rammstein Air Base of the U.S. army, Frankfurt Airport, American barracks and a night club.[98] It is the most prominent entirely homegrown Islamist terror plot in Germany. Its genesis reveals the importance of the growing Salafist network in Germany as breeding ground also for domestic attacks.

The Sauerland Cell – The emergence of homegrown terrorism and homegrown recruitment

The leader of the cell, Fritz Gelowicz, was born on September 1, 1979 into a well-to-do family of Munich, his mother being a physician and his father an economist. Early during his childhood the family moved to Ulm. Then in 1992 the parents divorced and Fritz and his older brother Max remained with their father. In Ulm's Kepler Gymnasium Gelowicz met Tolga Dürbin, whose father was a religiously conservative Muslim from Turkey. Soon Dürbin and Gelowicz became close friends. The German student felt attracted to the ordered and close family life of the Turkish family, especially in contrast to his own family relations, which he described as „shattered“ and as an „emotional and physical burden“.[99] Fritz Gelowicz converted to Islam in 1995 at the age of fifteen. Max Gelowicz adopted Islam and a Salafist life style, too. Because of his bad results the younger brother had to drop out of the school and change for the ninth grade to the lower level Ulrich-Ensingen secondary school. Only a year later he voluntarily left school altogether, after a friend of his had been dismissed for harassing a teacher. The school staff described Gelowicz as confrontational and in constant need for attention – a leader-type in class. Also his psychiatric assessment later attested for a narcissistic personality. After school Gelowicz lived from social services and off-the-book employment at his father's solar company, where Dürbin was one of his co-workers. He then admitted evening school, and upon graduation started a program in industrial engineering with business studies in 2003. According to Gelowicz it was around the end of the same year that he decided to join Jihad.[100]

The year 2004 brought decisive change to Ulm's Salafist scene. In July Gelowicz requested a semester off from university and traveled to Turkey the next month. Soon after legal proceedings under §129 StGB were launched against the MKH's spiritual mentor, Yahia Yusuf, and other members of the MKH, including Gelowicz and his friend and later accomplice in the Sauerland Cell, Atilla Selek. Avoiding prosecution, Yusuf returned to Egypt. The other well-connected Jihadist preacher, Reda Seyam, followed suit in November 2004 and left Ulm for the Charlottenburg neighborhood of Berlin, where he lives to this day. With the two main leaders gone, the younger generation in the MKH took over. The same month Yusuf's son Omar was arrested. Gelowicz got his computer on which they had produced the local Salafist newspaper „Denk mal islamisch!“. During a winter night a few weeks later Gelowicz and Selek were caught by the police trying to destroy evidence. Next to a burnt book the officers found one of Yusuf's propaganda CD's. A little thereafter, in early 2005, Gelowicz traveled with Selek and other MKH members on a Hajj to Mecca.[101] The Turkish Islamist organization Millî Görüş , with more than 29,000 members the largest Islamist organization in Germany, had organized the trip.[102] During the pilgrimage Gelowicz and Selek met Adem Yilmaz, another German Salafist. Yilmaz had arrived to Germany during the mid-80s at the age of seven together with his Turkish family. Upon graduating from middle school he took on an apprenticeship after which he first worked as a ticket collector with the German Federal Railways and then until 2002 as a security officer at Frankfurt Airport. Yilmaz had been radicalized in two mosques in the Frankfurt region: the Tawhid Mosque in Dietzenbach and the Ansar-Mosque in Frankfurt-Riederwald. His new Salafist religiosity led him to quit his job and to split up with his girl friend. He started to attend Islam Seminars, which are still held regularly by different Salafist preachers throughout Germany. Here he met other Salafist Muslims with whom he discussed the need to wage Jihad, one of them being Fritz Gelowicz. During the Hajj in February 2005 the two young men and Selek met again in Saudi Arabia. Gelowicz, Selek and Yilmaz realized their shared intention to learn Arabic and their general willingness to fight for Islam.[103]

The following summer Gelowicz, Yilmaz and Selek traveled to Damascus and enrolled in an Arabic course. The group planned on crossing the border into Iraq to fight the U.S. and her allies.

Unable to find a handler for that endeavor the three tried to find a way to wage Jihad in Chechnya. But this plan also came to nothing. Finally, Yilmaz made contact with a senior member of the Uzbek Islamic Jihad Union (IJU), Gofir Salimov aka Jafer, who is wanted in Uzbekistan since 2004 for several bombing attacks. Salimov recruited the young Salafists for the Uzbek group. Less than a year later, around March 2006, Gelowicz and Yilmaz traveled via Iran to the group's training camp by Mir Ali in North Waziristan, Pakistan. Shortly thereafter, Selek and the later fourth member of the Sauerland Cell, Daniel Martin Schneider, arrived to the camp.[104]

Schneider had been born in November 1985 to German parents. His parents had divorced when he was 11 of age and family problems had led him several times to break out from home, to get involved in petty crime and eventually to go backpacking in Brazil. A practicing Catholic until the age of 13 he had later become interested in Islam and converted in 2004. He had dropped out of school just before graduation in order to study Arabic in Egypt. While working for a cleaning company in Neunkirchen he had met the future militants Hussein al-Malla and Zafer Sari, with whom he went to the local Turkish-Islamic mosque Yunus Emre. Already radicalized he did his military service in 2004-05 at the airborne-company 260 in Saarlouis. Yet, due to his obvious Islamist views he had been exempted from handling explosives. This lack of military training was to be corrected in the IJU camp.[105]

The four young Germans were trained in light weapons, explosives and clandestine behavior. All of them except for Schneider had great difficulties to cope with the harsh reality of militant training in the new environment. None of the recruits had given medical preparation a thought. Selek became ill with Malaria and Hepatitis during the training. Gelowicz couldn't even stomach the bread and fell ill, too. The fact that the trainees seemed to be of little value for the guerilla war against the U.S. and her allies may have contributed to the plan of then IJU leader Najmiddin Jalolov to task the Germans with a bombing plot in Europe. Yilmaz later put it: „They don't need no wimps from Europe if they have people that can walk 30 km without a break.“[106] They soon decided that the operation could only be carried out in Germany, where they had sufficient contacts, a support network and first-hand knowledge of the country.

Gelowicz, Selek and Yilmaz returned to Germany. Schneider stayed until the next year with the IJU militants and joined also a patrol into Afghanistan.[107]

Meanwhile the other cell members began to prepare for the attacks – with the help of other Salafist friends. Most of the co-conspirators later left for training camps abroad, thus evading arrest. Not so the Iranian-Kurdish Dana Boluri from the Islamist scene of the Ansar Mosque in Frankfurt-Riederwald, who was introduced to the cell through Adem Yilmaz. On New Year's Eve 2006 Boluri drove to Frankfurt's main train station to pick up Gelowicz and Selek with his Honda. After a stop at the Ansar Mosque they drove to the U.S. army barracks in Hanau to case the facilities. The group, driving slowly several times around the military installation, was suspicious enough to be stopped and controlled by a police patrol. A week later Gelowicz apartment was searched. Selek too was already under constant surveillance by intelligence agents and the authorities. One night in January 2007 he approached one of his followers, shouting at him, and punctured a front tire of the agent's vehicle. Despite the obvious surveillance, however, the cell carried on with their plans.[108]

Daniel Schneider returned from Pakistan on February 12, 2007. Upon his arrival agents of Germany's domestic secret service approached Schneider and unsuccessfully tried to recruit him. He moved into the Omar mosque in Dudweiler-Herrensohr, living there with a new Salafist initiate, Eric Breininger, who only six months later would himself start his journey to the IJU camps.[109] In spring 2007 Selek left to Turkey. He had been tasked to obtain military detonators for the explosives. Later in court Selek remarked he would not have been able to fulfill his task without the help of Mevlüt K., another suspect already known to the police. K. was born in the late 70's, is of Turkish origin and lived until 2002 in Ludwigshafen, South West Germany. He is alleged to have been a follower of Al Qaeda leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. According to media reports after 2002 he was also working for the Turkish secret service and the CIA. Together with K. Selek managed to obtain 26 military detonators, 20 of which were smuggled in from Turkey and six from the Balkans, where K. apparently had contacts to other militants. August 2009 the Federal Supreme Court of Germany issued an arrest warrant against K. At the time of this writing he was still at large. During the trial Selek told the jury he already

had doubts about the plot but felt committed by his pledge to Gelowicz. So he remained in Turkey working on his part of the preparations.[110]

Since his return to Germany Gelowicz had regularly been in contact with IJU leader Jalolov and his deputy Buranov. Under Gelowicz leadership the cell worked towards the attacks. Gelowicz himself purchased the hydrogen peroxide solution for the explosives in a chemical supply shop in Hodenhagen near Hannover and brought the canisters and other precursor materials to a vacation home in Medebach-Oberschledorn. Here the group wanted to manufacture the explosives. The preparations did not keep Gelowicz from private affairs. In January 2007 he married the Turkish born woman Filiz, with whom he lived in an apartment in Ulm-Böfingen. Adem Yilmaz was not solely occupied with the preparations either. He held regular meetings in his family's house with other Islamists from the region. Between BBQ and football matches in the garden the Salafists discussed their Islamic creed and the need for Jihad. In the course of these meetings Yilmaz recruited at least seven more Jihadists and facilitated the contact to militant training camps in the FATA area. One of those Jihadists became in March 2008 known as the ‚Bavarian Taliban‘, Cüneyit Ciftci, Germany's first suicide bomber.[111]

The pressure by the IJU leadership to launch the attacks increased steadily since fall 2006. An email sent to Gelowicz September 3, 2007 set a deadline of three weeks for the bombings, most probably in order to influence the German vote on the extension of the ISAF mandate, which had been scheduled for October that same year. A day later Gelowicz, Yilmaz and Schneider were arrested in a joint operation of the German Federal Criminal Police Office and the counter-terror unit GSG9 of the Federal Police. Selek, who at the time was still in Turkey, was arrested upon German request on November 6, 2007 and subsequently extradited. The cell members were put on trial and convicted March 4, 2010. The verdict was the first to employ Germany's new anti-terror legislation, §129b STGB. Thus the defendants were also found guilty for membership in a foreign terrorist organization, which would have been impossible prior to the amendment and which will help future prosecution for membership and support charges connected to the IJU and similar AQ affiliates.[112]

Taking a closer look onto the German Salafist network of the first years of this millennium, the scene around the MKH in Ulm appears a harbinger for developments, which continue to shape the landscape of radical Islam in Germany to this day: 1. The mosque and its attached facilities do not only serve a religious purpose but are a political nucleus and center of convergence. 2. It provides infrastructure for Salafist radicalization and facilitates active recruitment of new converts or re-awakened Muslims at the same time. 3. The center explicitly embraces Muslims of different origins and, therefore, conducts prayers, discussions and Islam courses in German. 4. Because of the independence from ethnic and cultural origin the center attracts native Germans as well as Muslims of Turkish and Arab descent. 5. The head of the center plays an important role as charismatic leader, who is able to gather and direct a larger following and who may even have ties to foreign and local elements of the Global Jihad. 6. The center usually publishes its own newspaper but relies more and more on videos, audio recording and other digital media as means of propaganda.

The MKH was a prototypical example of this new type of Salafist incubator as it combined all of the mentioned features. The MKH had with Dr. Adly el-Attar, Dr. Yahia Yusuf and, for a shorter period, Reda Seyam even three semi-charismatic leaders with contact to Al Qaeda and its affiliate organizations on different levels. Many of its alumni were or still are active as Jihadist militants. Others support militant groups and continue their Salafist dawa efforts. The MKH also stood in contact with a broad spectrum of legalist Salafist preachers all over Germany, some of whom have several times appeared in German TV talk-shows. The MKH was thus an important part of what can be called the „Continuum of Salafism“ in Germany.

However, most of the Salafist centers in Germany do show only some of those characteristics. Since the crackdown on the scene in Ulm and a generally increased sense of awareness for Islamism most preachers refrain from blatantly calling for Jihad or openly distributing Jihadist propaganda material. But it shall be shown that there is no clear line separating the different brands of Salafism – neither ideologically nor by the respective advocates, who are well connected with each other and whose influence and activities reach into the Muslim public at

large.

The analysis of the Sauerland case points yet beyond the development of Salafist centers as venues for radicalization and Jihadization. Although two of the cell members, Gelowicz and Selek, were part of Ulm's Salafist scene they met Yilmaz and Schneider during Islam seminars independent from the MKH. Equally important for the cell formation was the joint pilgrimage to Mecca, which was organized by the non-Salafist, Islamist Millî Görüş organization. The LfV of Lower Saxony suggested in its 2009 report that the group created their own ideology by using Salafist offerings from mosques, clubs, Islam seminars and internet pages. According to the agency, the importance of a „self-made-ideology“ was greater than had been anticipated.[113] Nonetheless, it was only during the military training in the IJU camp that the cell was formed and concrete plans for an attack were shaped. While the individual members were already committed to the idea to wage Jihad when they arrived to Waziristan, the process of operationalization, i.e. of training and capacity building, was dependent on a foreign Jihadist group.

Another point to be observed at the Sauerland case is the apparent ease with which cell-member Yilmaz became a recruiter himself after he had returned from Pakistan. Formerly the recruiters for Jihad tended to be veterans of the Global Jihad themselves, often with well established connections to the circle of senior Al Qaeda leaders. Since the Sauerland case this has changed. Once the contact to the IJU leadership was established it became significantly easier for German Jihadists to travel to the camps in Pakistan and undergo military training. This increased ease appears at the same time as a widely increased potential for the IJU and possibly other Jihadist groups to find new recruits on German soil and to use existing handlers and routes for transportation.

Perhaps most puzzling about the Sauerland group is the mix of naiveness and determination of its members. Obviously ill equipped and unprepared for the training and the harsh Pakistani environment the members had to concede that they were not suitable for the Jihad they had hoped for. Yet this only led them to agree to a more suitable Jihadist alternative: bombing attacks

in their home country. The group knew that they were under observation by German authorities. In the previous proceedings against Gelowicz and Selek the group did not abandon its plans, hinting that open surveillance is an insufficient deterrent against Jihadist plots because looming arrests are either discarded as unlikely or unimportant compared to the chance of a successful attack. Meanwhile there are whole German Muslim families migrating to train in the camps of IJU, IMU, AQ and Taliban groups. The following case studies will discuss how the German – Central Asian connection could grow within a few years to what it is today.

Aleem Nasir – Expanding networks, recruiting leaders

One important figure of the time pre-9/11 has not been mentioned, yet. Aleem Nasir was convicted on July 13, 2009 before the Higher Regional Court of Koblenz to 8 years in prison for membership in Al Qaeda. Perhaps even more important than his fundraising and procurement activities for AQ is his recruitment activity within Germany. Not only did he establish contacts in cities reaching from Ulm in the south, over Stuttgart, Bonn to Bremen at Germany's coast in the north. A number of his novices have become important figures for the German Salafist-Jihadist scene, some of who are active to this day. Three of them, Ömer Özdemir, Bekkay Harrach and Rene Marc Sepac are introduced below.

For long Nasir had alleged that his frequent travels to Pakistan were nothing but business trips, from which he brought semi-precious lapis lazuli to Germany. Nonetheless, his support activities for the Global Jihad reach back until at least 1999.[114]

Nasir was born 1962 in Pakistan. He trained to become a mechanical engineer and moved to Germany in 1987, where he married a German woman and finally became citizen in 1992. He settled in Germersheim, a town of 20,000 not far from the French border and about half way between the cities of Mannheim and Karlsruhe. He must have met Dr. Yahia Yusuf from the MKH sometime during the 90's and started to raise money with him for the Jihad in Afghanistan and Kashmir. He traveled to Pakistan himself to deliver 8,000€ to Sheikh Eisa al Masri, an AQ-affiliated Takfiri leader operating in Waziristan and his son Khalid.[115] Nasir was also well connected with the Pakistani Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) group. He was the one

who, upon request by his friend Dr. Yusuf, helped the junior, Omar Yusuf, to be admitted to one of LeT's training camps. Shortly after 9/11 Nasir predicted to co-workers terror attacks against Germany and was put on the state's watch list only to threaten a police officer shortly thereafter: „If you were in Pakistan, I might (sic!) kill you if you are abusing the prophet.“[116] A little later Nasir lost his job and in the first half of 2002 he decided to relocate to Pakistan. He did remain in close contact with the German Salafist scene though, especially with his confident Dr. Yusuf, who time and again visited Nasir in Pakistan to hand him money for Jihad, which he had collected in Germany. Nasir also traveled to Germany for his procurement activity for LeT in Kashmir. After in 2003 the Pakistani government ordered the LeT to stop its support for the Jihad in Afghanistan Nasir split with the group and contacted AQ leaders in Wana, South-Waziristan, to coordinate ways of raising and transferring money to the group. He returned to Germany in mid-2003. Before Dr. Yusuf disappeared to Egypt he visited Nasir once more and handed him 35,000€. Throughout the years Nasir did not only collect a total of about 78,000€ for Al Qaeda and equipment like armored vests, gun sights, binoculars and radio equipment for Jihad but he was also active in recruiting new fighters to join the cause. His main assistant in this endeavor was the Turkish born Ömer Özdemir aka Abu Jabir al-Turki. [117] Özdemir was born 1978 in Turkey but grew up in the small German town of Sindelfingen near Stuttgart. He made his living with the sale of used cars and mobile phones. Özdemir was recruited by Nasir but soon after assisted in the recruitment himself. Since around 2005/06 he pre-selected suitable young Muslims for further scrutiny by Nasir. In May 2007, with Nasir's help, he traveled to Pakistan for a military training in AQ's Abu Zubair compound in Mir Ali. Later he testified that he was unsatisfied with the training due to the „fast food mentality of the fat Saudis“ and switched to a Taliban camp in the SWAT area, where he also partook in attacks on Afghan troops. He returned to Germany and allegedly met Gelowicz several times in connection to the Sauerland bombing plot. During his second stay in Waziristan in 2008 he lived with a Pashtun doctor and experienced a scene of four dying fighters, amongst them a 15-year-old friend from his previous visit. This particular event triggered his return to Germany. Yet the whole Jihad experience had a profound psychological impact on him. After months of surveillance Özdemir was arrested September 12, 2008 in Sindelfingen. On July 19, 2010 he was convicted for AQ membership and support charges to six years in prison.[118]

Four years earlier, Nasir had already recruited many more young Salafists when he came closer to the senior ranks of AQ. In 2006 he traveled once again to Pakistan, where he met AQ member Abdul Rehman, who arranged a meeting with AQ's chief financier Mustafa Abu Yazid as well as other senior AQ leaders and probably also the IJU leader Jalolov. During his subsequent visits the same and the following year he continued to supply funds and technical equipment to AQ. January 2007 he met then AQ military chief, Khalid Habib. A few months later, in May 2007 and just before his arrest by the Pakistani ISI in June, he visited the Abu Zubair compound, where he met then AQ head of external operations, Abu Ubaida. He was offered explosives training and Abu Ubaida asked him to take notes on the course in German. During this last stay in Pakistan Nasir met one of his recruits again. The then 29 year old from Bonn received training at the same camp. At the beginning of 2009 he was to become the probably best-known face of Al Qaeda in Germany.[119]

Bekkay Harrach was born on September 04, 1977 in Berkane, Morocco. His family moved to Germany in 1981 and in 1997 Harrach received the German citizenship. He grew up in a tower building in the neighborhood of Bonn-Tannenbusch, a poor area in the former capital of West-Germany, which is today inhabited by 41% migrants, half of which live of social service payments. He attended the local Gymnasium but due to his low achievements he had to drop out in the 10th grade. He worked in different odd jobs: a junkyard in Bonn-Beuel, he also sold used cars and cell-phones and he ran his own call-shop „Casablanca“ near the subway station of his neighborhood. After an additional two years at Bonn's higher technical school Heinrich Hertz he obtained a vocational baccalaureate diploma, which allowed him in 2002 to enroll into a laser technology and business mathematics program at the university of nearby Koblenz. By that time he was a known Islamist already. His former classmates describe his religiosity as subject to change. While still young being a more conservative Muslim he radically changed as he grew up and started to regularly go to parties, smoked hashish and drank alcohol. After this phase he returned to a stricter interpretation of Islam. He moved to the neighborhood of Godesberg, married the German convert Elisabeth and became closer to a Salafist life-style.[120] Already as a teenager he stood in contact with the King Fahd Academy in Bonn, which probably had a first radicalizing impact on Harrach. The academy was founded in 1995 and is subject to

direct control of the Saudi Arabian embassy in Germany. At first the academy had been welcomed by the city as it gave Bonn some of the political prestige back, which it had lost when after the German reunification the government moved to Berlin. Therefore many Muslim migrants were given special permits so that their children could study at the Fahd Academy instead a German school. The situation changed only in 2003, when German security officials started scrutinizing the school curriculum and the Friday prayers and found an abundance of evidence that during prayers the imam called the audience to wage Jihad, that the school taught hatred against Jews, Christians and the West and encouraged the students to sacrifice their life for a world dominated by Islam. Although local officials tried to close the institute down, the foreign ministry wanted to avoid a negative impact on Saudi-German relations so that eventually the academy was only submitted to tighter controls and obliged to change its school books and curricula.[121]

Before Harrach began his Jihadist career he was already active in Islamic dawa activities. Due to his work in the call-shop he knew a lot of young people from the area. He rented a ground-floor apartment in Bonn-Tannenbusch and regularly invited about 30 young men to Qur'anic reading circles and Islamic discussions. The youngest participants were about 15 years of age. As a result of the meetings, Harrach converted many to Islam. His explicit anti-Israel attitude led him in 2003 to travel to the West Bank, where he got wounded in a clash with the IDF. In 2006 he publicly mobilized for a local demonstration against the Muhammad cartoons and between March 2006 and March 2007 he was even deputy head of the registered society German Muslims in Bonn Association. Harrach stood also in close contact with the local and national Salafist scene. He attended the notorious Islam seminars, which have recently attracted attention for being an important link between Salafist preaching and recruitment to foreign Jihadist organizations. At those seminars he was also given a platform to give lectures himself. Harrach regularly visited the Muhadjirin Mosque in the center of Bonn, the same place, which was frequented by the brothers Mounir and Yassin Chouka, who are now members of the IJU and have appeared in several of the group's German propaganda videos.[122] It was the Muhadjirin Mosque also, where he was approached by Aleem Nasir and his Jihadist apprentices Ömer Özdemir and a German convert from Bremen, Rene Marc Sepac. Before

pursuing Harrach's story in Pakistan, the case of the latter Jihadist shall shed light on one European center of Salafism in north Germany.

Rene Marc Sepac was born a Catholic German in 1980/81. He is married and has three children. During the first few years of the new millennium he converted to Islam. The Salafist scene in Bremen at that time was already dominated by the Islamic Culture Center Bremen e.V., an association which had been established in 2001 and which during the weekly Friday prayers caters around 250-350 Muslims from mostly north African countries as well as Turkey, the Balkans and different Russian speaking countries. It is well connected to the German Salafist scene and in 2009 even extended its cooperation with Salafist preachers from Braunschweig, Cologne and Leipzig, and in August 2009 it also hosted an event with two Saudi scholars. The center allegedly had ties to the Salafist Al-Quds Mosque in Hamburg, where already the 9/11 attackers used to pray and is locally known for its dawa activity in public spaces of Bremen and the plan to set up an Islamic kindergarten, which shall shelter Muslim children from the influence of Western society.[123]

Around 2005-06 Nasir recruited Sepac for the Global Jihad. In spring 2007 he planned on using a former military area near Bremen to practice for urban warfare. Yet, in June 2007 he joint Nasir on one of his travels to Pakistan and was selected by Abdullah Azzam al Saudi, a then senior AQ operative and conduit for new recruits in Waziristan, to travel to Teheran and establish contact with Yaseen al-Suri in order to set up a travel route from Germany to Pakistan. Once in Iran, Sepac's contact man didn't show up and Sepac had to return to Germany. Consequently Sepac was denied a new passport in 2008 and still remains in Germany. But his inability to reach AQ's training camps did not discourage Sepac from further engagement in Salafist-Jihadist endeavors. Quickly he became the head of a new Salafist center in Bremen, which works to connect Salafist groups within Europe and beyond its borders. After an internal dispute of Bremen's Islamic Cultural Center 12 members split off and formed the new association by the name „Family- and Culture-Club e.V. Bremen“. The association officially registered in June 2008 and has its facilities in Bremen-Gröpelingen. Starting with 15 visitors the group has steadily been growing. Bremen's LfV considers the group part of a Takfiri-Salafist

branch of Islam, which is quick in declaring even fellow Muslims apostates. During the end of 2008 two founding members of the association were accused of being mainly responsible for the German material of the Global Islamic Media Front, AQ's European media branch and charges were pressed for the support of Al Qaeda, Al Qaeda in Iraq, and the Iraqi Ansar al Islam. The next year, on July 4, 2009 the group hosted an event of European Salafists, which was raided by German police. The authorities checked 12 women and 40 men from Germany, Denmark, Holland, Austria and France, yet only two men were arrested under charges of traffic violations. Bremen's Salafist scene and especially Sepac remain under close surveillance by German security services and the police.[124]

With his well-established contacts Aleem Nasir recruited also a representative of the large Islamist scene in Bonn, Bekkay Harrach, for the Global Jihad. Harrach not only succeeded in reaching AQ's training camps in Pakistan, but also became a Jihadist figure of some importance, which led the U.S. to officially list him as Al Qaeda operative in October 2009.[125] Ömer Özdemir and Rene Marc Sepac helped facilitate Harrach's travels to the Pakistani FATA area in 2007. His wife and his son, who was born in June 2007, followed about a year later in May 2008. Once at the AQ camp Harrach underwent military training. One of his instructors was AQ's chief of planning, the Egyptian Abu Ubaida, who taught Harrach the use of large remotely detonated bombs. Harrach rose to be a mid-level member of AQ and became part of the council for foreign operations. He was believed to be under the protection of Taliban Warlord Siraj Haqqani, whom he allegedly assisted with every plan for a larger attack in the local arena.[126] Haqqani is member of AQ's Shura Majlis and leads one of the Taliban's four military commands for Afghanistan. It has been suggested that Haqqani is the factual top leader of the Taliban in Pakistan, even though he tries to portray himself as being only a regional commander.[127] If that were true it would be the more confounding that a German Salafist with no prior military training could climb up Al Qaeda's hierarchy as quickly as Harrach did.

Harrach's face became known to a wider public, when in 2009 Al Qaeda's media label As-Sahab started to release a number of German video messages featuring Bekaky Harrach, in which he directly addressed the German public. The first clip appeared on January 17, 2009. It was titled

The rescue package for Germany from Al Hafidh Abu Talha the German“ and threatened terror attacks in Germany in case the national elections in September 2009 would not bring a government into office that would withdraw German troops from Afghanistan. The second video with Harrach was released February 26 under the name „The Islam and the financial crisis“, in which he criticized the German government for spending taxes on its military and declared the financial crisis to be a punishment of Allah. Another clip appeared just before the elections on September 18, 2009. In „Security – a shared destiny“ Harrach warned again that Germans can avoid an upcoming attack only when voting for political parties, which would end the military commitment in Afghanistan. Finally, two more clips appeared on September 20 and 25 respectively: „Oh Allah I love you“ part 1 and part 2 do combine Qur'an recitations and Harrach preaching about the need to wage Jihad. It appears now that Harrach has been killed. According to unconfirmed intelligence reports Harrach along with four other Jihadists died in a U.S. Predator strike on a compound in Danda Darpa Khel – hub for the Al Qaeda affiliated Haqqani network.[128]

The recruitment of fairly educated German converts into the ranks of AQ and its affiliate organizations in Central Asia must be seen as a considerable boost of the group’s propaganda capabilities. Even though the effect on the German public and politicians is so far neglectable, the ability to produce video clips in German featuring German Jihadists plays an important role for further incitement of local German Salafist circles and the attraction of new recruits to the camps in Pakistan and Afghanistan. German intelligence has mentioned an increasing popularity of Jihad anthems in online forums, which are often produced by the German members of AQ’s affiliate groups. Those songs are at times treated like “the charts”.[129] The BfV has also pointed at the lively discussions in German forums after each release of a German Jihadist online message.[130]

The aforementioned Islamic Jihad Union developed in recent years, what is perhaps the most outstanding record of recruitment of German volunteers. It is since around mid-2005 that the originally Uzbek group stopped focusing on its domestic issues in Uzbekistan and rethought its strategy. This change must be seen in the light of a series of by and large unsuccessful attacks in

Uzbekistan and the resulting dire need for new funds.[131] In order to improve its financial situation the IJU moved closer to the agenda of the Taliban and Al Qaeda. According to the NEFA foundation there have been extensive contacts between the IJU leadership and then AQ chief of external operations Hamza Rabi'a, who was killed December 2005 in Mir Ali. It is likely that Rabi'a tasked the IJU to target Germans and Turks from European countries for recruitment. Since then many German Salafists have joined the IJU's ranks.[132] The story of the German convert Eric Breininger provides some inside as to how the IJU developed its German division.

The Case of Eric Breininger - Accelerated recruitment to Al Qaida's affiliate camps

Eric Breininger, born 1988, grew up in the town of Neunkirchen in the Saarland region. After a basic level secondary school he enrolled to a vocational school for trade, the „Kaufmännische Bildungszentrum Neunkirchen“. He already had a police record for drug abuse, when in 2006 he started working for a small parcel service. Here a Muslim colleague of his, Anis, actively tried to convert Breininger to Islam. A few weeks later in February his colleague from work introduced him also to Daniel Martin Schneider, who had just come back from Waziristan, and another young Muslim, Hussein al Malla. From now on the radicalization of Breininger proceeded with astonishing speed. In March he convinced his German girl friend to convert to Islam and to marry him according to Islamic law. Soon he asked her to stay at home and to avoid going out whenever possible. Because she did not confirm to his new life-style they broke up shortly after. In May Breininger quit school because he did not want to study in company of girls anymore. When his sister Anke confronted him after the drop out she could not get through to him anymore. He became more and more aggressive even towards family members, who questioned his newfound faith. Searching closer contact to other Salafists, he moved in with Daniel Schneider. The apartment building that belonged to the radical Omar mosque in Dudweiler-Herrensohr near Saarbrücken was home to some more aspiring Salafists. One of them was the Lebanese Hussein al Malla, who became a good friend to Breininger. For a period of six weeks another convert to Jihad, the Kazakh born ethnic German Jan Pawlowic Schneider, lived there as well.[133]

Jan Schneider was born 1981/82 in Kazakhstan but grew up in Saarbücken, Germany. In 2004 he traveled to Medina, allegedly studying Arabic and Islamic science. During his short stay in the Omar mosque he was working for German intelligence, which was trying to obtain more information on Daniel Schneider and the planned attacks against U.S. installations. Jan Schneider later probably also joined the IJU. His picture appeared November 2009 on notes, which the Federal Criminal Police of Germany had distributed across Afghanistan and which warned of a possible attack by Schneider against German military and civilian infrastructure.[134]

The fourth roommate in the mosque's compound, Hussein al Malla, had been born on November 15, 1984 in Beirut as a stateless Lebanese. While working at a cleaning company for industrial facilities he met Daniel Schneider and other young Muslims from the town, who all went to the local Yunus Emre mosque. Al Malla is believed to be in contact with the IJU already since 2004.[135]

Under the influence of his Salafist peers and regular visits in internet cafes, where he and friends went to watch Jihadist clips online, Breininger soon decided to go and wage Jihad himself. Al Malla left Germany before him but was arrested on June 10, 2007 at the Pakistani border and transferred to Pakistan's ISI before being deported to Germany. With him arrested were Ulm's Tolga Dürbin and a Kyrgyz citizen.[136] Breininger now also thought of ways to join the Global Jihad. According to his memoirs „My way to Jannah“[137] Daniel Schneider also advised him to leave the country as „something is about to happen, which will have negative consequences for you“.[138] At first Breininger wanted to travel to Algeria. An Algerian friend though, advised him to choose a different destination as Algeria was neither suitable to study Arabic nor to live a truly Islamic life. Inquiring first about flights to both Syria and Egypt, Breininger finally boarded a flight to Hurghada on September 2, 2007. It was probably Daniel Schneider, who helped Breininger with his preparations for Egypt. Once there, he took a bus to Cairo, where he was to stay for only a few weeks studying Arabic. As schools were closing for Ramadan, Breininger stayed only 13 days in class. He read about the arrest of the Sauerland cell online. A few days later he got a phone call from al Malla, who told him to come and meet him at the airport.

Although already on the Germans radar, general attorney Harms had just denied an arrest warrant for al Malla, as he considered the evidence against him to be too weak. Breininger met his friend in Cairo and al Malla told him he knew a way to Pakistan, where they would be able to join the Mujahideen. After some second thoughts because of his insufficient Arabic, Breininger agreed. Both took a plane to Teheran and moved on by bus via Bam to the Iranian border town Zahedan.[139]

The Makki Mosque of Zahedan has emerged as a center for IJU logistics and the last stop for many European recruits before entering Pakistan. The recruiter of the Sauerland cell, Gofir Salimov, is believed to be the main IJU facilitator in Zahedan.[140] The IJU handler received Breininger and al Malla and together with other recruits they continued their journey to the IJU camps, wearing Burkas when crossing the border. The basic training commenced in mid-October 2007. Al Malla left early, leaving Breininger nobody to talk to anymore. One evening a Turkish-German friend by the alias Saad visited him in his camp and told him about the suicide mission he was about to embark on. It was Cüneyit Ciftci, who had been recruited by the Sauerland cell's Adem Yilmaz a few months earlier. The encounter must have been a moral boost to Breininger, as in a long time he had not been able to speak with a fellow German or, for that matter, in a language he was fluent in. After Breininger had finished the basic training he was moved to another camp, where he met Ciftci again as well as another acquaintance, the later suicide bomber Said al Kurdi, who joined him for the advanced training. The next instructions included handling of heavy weaponry, mines, GPS, and radio communication.[141] Breininger stayed with the IJU and took part in different attacks on U.S. troops, some of which he describes in his memoirs.[142]

Breininger emphasizes that even after a long time[143] with the IJU he still had problems to communicate with the other fighters. Thus he was delighted when one day in 2010 his commander told him about a group of Germans, which had arrived in the area. Breininger went to meet them and learned that they were planning to join the Taliban. He decided to team up with the new group and thus, according to Breininger, was the beginning of the so-called German

Taliban Mujahideen (GTM).[144]The German Taliban Muhajideen – The consolidation of German catering colonies

German intelligence officials report that a spokesperson of the new group appeared at the beginning of 2010 in a Turkish / German Jihadist internet forum trying to portray the GTM as a cell of very modern fighters, whose training allegedly includes ideology, study of weapons as well as chemicals and explosives. The spokesperson also claimed the group had computer experts and knowledge about espionage- and intelligence services. The GTM representative alleges he was born in Germany and lived there for a longer period of time.[145] This also fits the description of Ahmet M., who seems to have become the media service provider for the German colony. M. was born 1977/78 in Salzgitter, Germany into a Turkish family and lived in the Saarland region until he was convicted for drug crime and deported to Turkey in 2000. He is allegedly a key recruiter for the German-speaking scene and responsible for the Jihadist media label „Elif Media“, in which several German recruits have appeared. In early 2010 he recruited an Islamist from Berlin via Email, yet the police intercepted the young man before he could leave the country. M. claims to have been working as an IJU spokesperson for years before he joined the Taliban. He also raised money online in Germany’s Salafist scene. It is possible that M. has been amongst the militants, who were killed in May 2010 during a shooting with Pakistani forces.[146]

The German recruits of the IJU and the GTM seem to come from different regions across Germany. There are the Chouka brothers, Yassin and Mounir, from Bonn. Both have left to Pakistan in 2008 and appeared in September 2009 in the Elif Media clip „Ruf zur Wahrheit“ (call to truth).[147] The Choukas’ brother in law, Ahmed Krekshi, tried to reach the German colony in early 2009 with several other German recruits: Azzedine A., Bilal Ü., Atnan J., and Andreas M. with his wife and daughter. The suspects, who became known amongst German intelligence officials as the „travel group“, were arrested by Pakistani authorities at the border and subsequently extradited to Germany. [148] It did not remain the only travel group. Meanwhile it appears that there are multiple Jihadist colonies in the border area of Pakistan / Afghanistan, which cater specifically to German recruits and their families.[149] A recent terror warning

showed the picture of Hayrettin Burhan Sauerland, a German citizen of Turkish origin from Berlin, who had left Germany in 2009 with a group of other German Islamists from Berlin. On September 25, 2010 the German Federal Criminal Police warned about an imminent attack by Sauerland.[150]

The success of AQ and its affiliate groups in Central Asia to recruit German Jihadists does not only provide new manpower but also seems to foster ties with the Salafist community in Germany. This also provides opportunities for those groups to raise more funds, even though the amount is probably insignificant compared to the potential and factual support from the oil rich Gulf countries. In terms of support activities in Germany recent cases also indicate a growing nationwide collaboration of the Salafist scene. Since November 2010 Filiz Gelowicz, the wife of the head of the Sauerland cell, stands trial for raising funds for a foreign terrorist organization. After her husband's arrest in September 2007 she conspired with two men from Berlin to send money to the IJU via a middleman in Turkey. Two transactions from November 2009 totaling 2450EUR are part of the incriminating evidence.[151] She was arrested in February 2010 together with her alleged co-conspirators, Alican T. and Fatih K. The police monitored T. in his apartment in Berlin-Kreuzberg already since May 2009. The authorities had confiscated his passport. Despite that in early February he attempted to leave the country with Pakistan being the likely destination. The train to Vienna was intercepted by the police. His arrest a few weeks later might not have come as a surprise. The third accused, Fatih K., was also under surveillance since at least 2009. He is alleged to have transferred 1400EUR to the IJU. In October 2009 Berlin's registry office denied his plans to journey abroad. Together with Filiz Gelowicz and T. he was arrested February 2010 but shortly after released on parole. Although on the radar of Berlin's LKA, he managed to evade the authorities and go undercover. T. surfaced more than a year later in Turkey. On September 11, 2010 he was arrested at Istanbul International Airport, with him another wanted Salafist, Thomas U., and his pregnant wife. U. has allegedly been to Taliban training camps since fall 2009 and taking part in attacks on U.S. and Afghan soldiers. The group had planned to return to Germany via Copenhagen. The Turkish authorities took them into custody, where they are awaiting extradition.[152]

Remarkable about the current trial of Filiz Gelowicz and Alican T. is the outspoken solidarity by parts of the German Salafist scene. The moderator of the notorious Ahlu-Sunnah Forum called Gelowicz' arrest unjust and encouraged other members to write her solidarity letters. The forum also mobilized sympathizers to attend the court hearings. Because the wearing of the niqab in German courts is forbidden, the men were asked to sit in the front so that the women could sit by themselves in the back of the room. One user noted that also Alican T. needed the support. Yet another asked, whether the appearance of members of the Muslim community might not hurt the defendants' cause.[153] This raises the question if a growing number of jailed inmates from the Salafist-Jihadist spectrum has the potential to further mobilize the scene and perhaps increase practical support for Jihadist activities within the Salafist milieu.

The greater picture that appears when looking at the mentioned Jihadist-cases altogether is affirmed by official reports. The German BfV noticed in 2009 a growth in the membership of homegrown networks and an increased percentage of German converts and Germans with Turkish origin.[154] Furthermore, they observed a rise in travel activities to Pakistan, often via Turkey, Egypt and Iran. More militant training camps are assumed to be in the Maghreb, the Horn of Africa and Yemen.[155] There is some information hinting at a future expansion of the recruitment centers for German Jihadists. In a declaration in German from January 16, 2010 the GTM calls to support the Jihad in Yemen with „money, weapons and soldiers“.[156]

In addition, one of the GTM affiliates, Mounir Chouka, is alleged to have been to Yemen in 2006 to join the Jihadist fighters.[157]

Nonetheless, for now the camps in Pakistan clearly remain the center of German recruitment.[158] Bavarian intelligence officials noted that the migration of German Islamists to Pakistan continued in 2010.[159] The report also assumed that the intensified propaganda for suicide operations in 2010 causes concern this tactic might be employed in the near future on German territory or against German interests abroad.[160]

The Europe Plot – Al Qaeda bringing in the harvest?

For now though it appears that a different kind of terror plot has been planned in 2010, which targeted multiple European cities for a Mumbai-style terror attack. In concerted shooting attacks, cells of militants were supposedly to shoot random civilians along the Eiffel Tower and the Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris, as well as the Brandenburg Gate, the Alexanderplatz TV tower and the Central Railway Station in Berlin.[161] By early October 2010 the U.S., UK, Sweden and Japan had updated their travel advices for citizens, warning of possible attacks in Europe. November 2010 German Minister of the Interior, Thomas de Maizière confirmed that there was concrete information indicating the plot of an attack and put German police forces on high alert.[162]

The plot was exposed in the course of the interrogation of Ahmed Sidiqi, a former resident of Hamburg, who had been arrested in July 2010 in Afghanistan and is held in a US air base for questioning, where he cooperates with the investigations. Then in November 2010 another hint appeared, when the German Federal Criminal Police (BKA) apparently received a phone call from one of the German militants in Pakistan, who wanted to leave the Jihadist scene and return to his family. At the time of writing this paper, only limited information was published on the plot.[163]

Sidiqi was recruited in the Taibe Mosque of Hamburg. Since long the mosque had been under surveillance by German police and intelligence as it had already been the meeting point for the Hamburg cell of the 9/11 plot and continued to attract Salafist Muslims for this very fact. Shortly after the attacks in New York the former Al Quds Mosque had been renamed and only in August 2010 German authorities shut it down for its ties to terrorist groups.[164] Now it emerges that the core cell of the „Europe plot“ also originates from the Taibe Mosque.

Central figure of the mosque is Mamoun Darkazanli. The 1958 in Damascus born former member of the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood holds German and Syrian citizenship. He arrived to Germany in 1983 and became naturalized in 1990. He is probably the most senior Al Qaeda affiliated individual in Germany, who remains free to this day. Darkazanli was part of the 9/11 Hamburg cell. He and his „Darkazanli Company, Import Sonderposten“ are designated by the

EU and the U.S. Department of the Treasury as Al Qaeda associates. As early as 1993 Darkazanli had come under scrutiny, when one of the East Africa embassy bombing convicts, Wadi el-Hage, was found carrying Darkazanli's phone number with him. Furthermore, Darkazanli had power of attorney over the bank account of Abu Hajer, one of AQ's Shura council members. Darkazanli was well acquainted with the long term Al Qaeda member and 9/11 recruiter from Hamburg, Mohammed Zammar.[165] In October 2004 Darkazanli was arrested after an extradition request by the Spanish government, who claimed that he was a constant and direct assistant to Osama bin Ladin and supported AQ in Spain since 1997. Darkazanli fought the request and was released July 2005 after the Federal Constitutional Court had ruled in his favor and denied extradition. He worked as the Imam of Hamburg's Al Taibe Mosque until its closure in August 2010.[166]

The German cell responsible for the Europe Plot is apparently led by the Algerian-French suspect Naamen Meziche. Meziche recruited Sidiqi and the others in Hamburg's Taibe Mosque. The group left in late 2008 via different routes to the FATA area in Pakistan. Eight of them, including two women, are said to have joined the IMU. Another Salafist from the Hamburg scene, Asadullah M., is said to have arranged the logistics for the travel group.[167] What sheds more light on the close cooperation between the IJU, IMU, AQ and the Taliban is the fact that Meziche's group from Hamburg is associated with the German Taliban Mujahideen. Rami Makanesi, German national of Syrian descent and resident of Hamburg, was arrested June 2010 and extradited to Germany, where he faces a criminal investigation.[168]

One of the Jihadists allegedly tasked to be in the team of attackers is Shahab Dashti, also from the Al Taibe Mosque scene. He is already known from an IMU video from late 2009, in which he called upon German Muslims to join the Jihad.[169]

The mastermind behind the plot, which is said to have been ordered and financed by Osama bin Ladin, is allegedly Sheikh Younis al-Mauretani, a senior Al Qaeda leader and involved with its external operations council.[170]

This most recent case again emphasizes the growing cooperation between the German Jihadist scene, Al Qaeda and its affiliates IJU, IMU and the Taliban. More than that, it shows that for the first time Al Qaeda's most senior leadership tries to use the grown infrastructure of German Jihadist colonies to launch attacks on German, and in this case also French soil. Significant differences to the Sauerland case are apparent. The Sauerland Cell had only been given orders by the IJU leadership, not by Al Qaeda. In addition, the orders did not specify Germany as target. In fact, Germany was only chosen because it appeared to the cell the only feasible option. Even more, not the German population was to be targeted but U.S. interests in Germany, even though German casualties would have been unavoidable in case of a successful attack. The Europe Plot, in contrast, seems to have been centrally planned by Al Qaeda, would have included homegrown Jihadist recruits and targeted the German and French public.

The development of the German's Jihadist scene over the past two decades shows 5 major trends: 1. Increased domestic cooperation – A well-connected Jihadist scene within Germany has developed, which includes Jihadist veterans, potential recruits and supporters. Susceptible individuals can easily find like-minded Muslims in internet forums, mosques and private meeting venues for further radicalization. The increased number of Jihadist migrants makes it easier for undecided individuals to join others in their journey to the training camps. 2. Increased international cooperation – Due to the growing number of trained Jihadists, the knowledge of how to get to AQ affiliated training camps is more widespread and easier to obtain. The proximity of IJU, IMU, Taliban and Core Al Qaeda in Pakistan and Afghanistan provides a pool of contacts all around the globe and raises awareness for other arenas of Jihad as well. The close cooperation between German Jihadists and the Jihadist groups in Central Asia helped establishing a travel infrastructure for German recruits, who now can plan their trip from Germany to the camps. 3. Growing potential for home grown attacks – The growing number of German Jihadists trained in the handling and manufacturing of weapons and explosives makes for an overall increased capability of Jihadists with the intention to perpetrate attacks against Germany. The more and more frequent internet propaganda against Germany must also be seen as a motivator for domestic cells to act without direct order from one of the established Jihadist groups. 4. Growing potential for home grown recruitment – Returnees from Jihadist camps can

be very successful recruiters. Not only are they able to help with practical travel arrangements but they also become a source of inspiration and a possible role model for the next Jihadist generations. The development from recruit to recruiter can hereby take as little as a few months.

5. Growing potential for Al Qaeda and its affiliates to use Germans for propaganda purposes and terror attacks – The growing network of Jihadists in Germany increases Al Qaeda's logistical support inside the country. Furthermore, the larger number of German recruits in Al Qaeda camps and its affiliate organizations provides more potential attackers for Al Qaeda orchestrated plots against the country.

It has been shown how a homegrown Jihadist-Salafist scene in Germany developed during the past years and the security implications of this development have been discussed. It remains to be seen, what are the dominant forces, which create and maintain the Salafist milieu in Germany, from which the new Jihadists emerge.

Legalist Salafism in Germany – The public face of Germany's conduits for Jihad

In recent years a number of popular Salafist preachers has emerged, who actively try to convert people and to influence Muslims to abide to a strict interpretation of Islam.

Since Muslim communities in Germany usually don't keep record of their membership it is very difficult to evaluate how many individuals could be won over to Salafist Islam. A recent rough estimate puts the number of converts in Germany between 40,000-60,000.[171] Although it is unclear how many of those converts must be considered to be close to Salafist thought, it is telling that the most successful Islam preacher in the German speaking countries, Pierre Vogel, is a major figure in Germany's Salafist scene and a convert himself.[172] Next to German converts it is Muslims of Arab and Turkish descend, who constitute the following for preachers like Vogel. It is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss, why Salafist groups in Germany are attracting such a large number of new adherents. Only a few outstanding features shall be mentioned.

Prayers, Islam courses and other proselytization efforts are conducted mostly in German, which

attracts more native Germans but also bridges a cultural and linguistical divide between native Germans and other Muslims with a migration background. In the same time does the negation of ethnical, national and other issues make Salafism attractive to young people in complex identification processes. Instead of being the underdog of society or literally a nobody, young Salafists can feel part of a religious avant-garde, which can lecture a whole mislead Muslim community.[173] Therefore, the several Salafist events bring interested people from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds together. This stands in contrast to a previous type of mosques, which were predominantly catering their respective migrant community. Another important aspect is the generous support from Saudi Arabia for construction projects in Germany like mosques and Islamic cultural centers, which promote a Salafist-Wahhabist ideology and often become centers of radicalization. A German local newspaper mentioned an unofficial report by the EU's security commission from 2008, which states, „Saudi charities increasingly finance extremist Muslim communities and their construction projects of mosques in Europe“.[174] Finally, the role of the internet in radicalization and promotion of Jihad has been stressed by German security agencies time and again.[175] But the same holds true for an Islamization of society, which includes a general promotion of Islam, as well as efforts to convert native Germans and to bring Muslim born citizens and migrants again closer to Islam. These attempts by Salafist groups and preachers must be seen as only an introduction to the whole anti-liberal, anti-western and anti-democratic ideology. Although no verified numbers exist, it appears that the majority of new Muslims in Germany convert within the Salafist scene.[176]

Despite the great importance of the internet for Islamization, radicalization and promotion of Jihad, the Salafist network in Germany still relies on real meeting points for its members and the promotion of its agenda to a wider public. A number of mosques and Islamic centers in Germany must be considered as genuine Salafist infrastructure, which is directly run by Salafist preachers. However, there are also a number of cities with a scene of Salafist sympathizers around non-Salafist mosques and prayer rooms. These sympathizers sometimes try and actively influence the ideological orientation of the mosque by organizing events with popular Salafist preachers. Especially venues with a mixed audience, often changing Imams or internal conflicts are susceptible to such influence.[177]

In recent years a number of major Salafist preachers and groups have emerged in Germany, which are well connected and often hold joint events and seminars all over the country. Some of those preachers have been or are still in contact with Jihadists from different terror groups including senior Al Qaeda personnel. As has been already touched upon, many of the German militants in Al Qaeda and its affiliate organizations were radicalized within this very Salafist milieu.

A few organizations have emerged to become the most important platforms for German Salafists. One such group is „Einladung zum Paradies e.V.“ (EZP), which literally translates to „invitation to paradise“. Founded in 2007[178] it offers events with the majority of the popular Salafist preachers in Germany, who are also featured at the group’s website. Two main organizations are directly related to the EZP: The „Islamic Education- and Culture Center e.V.“ in Braunschweig, which was established by the head of the EZP, Muhamed Ciftci, and the Masjid As-Sunnah e.V. from Mönchengladbach, which was headed by the German convert preacher Sven Lau. The latter merged with the EZP and dissolved in May 2010. Subsequent to the merger Sven Lau became the deputy head of the EZP. According to Ciftci’s website the EZP is internationally active, but focuses its activities on Germany, Turkey, Bosnia and Macedonia. The group’s-website advertises itself as the „only true website“ of the popular convert preacher Pierre Vogel, who is the main face of the association and most articulate speaker of the group. The EZP features many more Salafist preachers, notably the Syrian born Dr. Hassan Dabbagh. These most prominent speakers deserve further scrutiny.[179]

Pierre Vogel

Germany’s arguably most popular convert preacher, Pierre Vogel, aka Abu Hamza Salahudin, was born in 1978 in the town of Frechen near Cologne in what was then West Germany. He was baptized Evangelical Christian.[180] His family lives in Bergheim, a small town west of Cologne, where his parents run a restaurant. Vogel first went to a Catholic elite gymnasium before changing to a special sports gymnasium in Berlin Hohenschönhausen, where he underwent an intensive boxing training. In 2000 he signed a professional boxing contract. After

his conversion to Islam on 11 May 2001 he wanted to stop boxing, since according to the Sunnah it was forbidden to punch people in the face. Yet out of financial considerations he stopped boxing only in 2002. Vogel then enrolled at the University of Cologne for a teacher's program in social science and geography but quit already after the first semester. He planned on becoming interpreter and started an Arabic program, which he did not finish either.[181] Since the traditional Muslim way of a family arranged marriage was infeasible for Vogel, in 2003 he asked his friends to choose a wife for him.[182] From 2004 on he studied three semesters Arabic at the institute for foreigners of the Umm-al-Qura University in Mecca, Saudi Arabia. His plans to reunite with his Moroccan wife and his son Hamza in Saudi Arabia had to be cancelled when in 2006 his daughter was born with a cardiac disorder, which made him return to Germany to join his family.[183]

In internet clips he rejects the label „Wahhabist“. Instead he differentiates between Salafism and Wahhabism and endorses the ideas of Ibn Taymiya – a 13./14. century Muslim scholar calling for a return to the sources of Islam, justifying jihad against non-Muslims as well as rebellions against unjust rulers. Despite Vogel's vocal denunciation of terror, for which he allegedly has received numerous death threats, he promotes the anti-individualist and anti-liberal values of Salafism, which are almost identical with those of the Jihadist scene. On one incident in 2007, for example, he justified the marriage of nine-year-old girls during a talk in a mosque in the city of Göttingen.[184] According to German security officials, Vogel and the other prominent figures of the EZP have for years been in contact with the MKH in Ulm and the IIZ in Neu-Ulm. Both centers, as previously shown, have been the hot spots for the recruitment of German Muslims to Global Jihad before their closure in 28.12.2005 and 02.10.2007 respectively.[185] After the minaret ban in Switzerland he was invited to speak at a public rally in December 2009 but was barred by Swiss authorities from entering the country.[186]

Muhammad Ciftci

The head of the EZP was born August 27, 1973. His full Islamic name is Sheikh Muhammad Ciftci Seyfudin Abu Anas. His website includes a short biography, which provides some insightful information:

Ciftci's father was one of the founding members of the Islamist organization IGMG, which was established in the 60's as platform for Turkish Muslim migrants, who had joined the German labor force after the industrial boom of the 50's had made the immigration of foreign workers necessary. Ciftci grew up in Braunschweig, where he attended the Lessing Gymnasium until the 11th grade. Already as a child he studied the Qur'an and the writings of the Hanbali school of Islam. Between 1992-94 he was a social worker for the Islamist Muslim charity IHH in Bosnia.[187] There is little information about Ciftci's work at that time, but it is known that the IHH was during the 90's involved in the support of Jihadist cells in Bosnia.[188] Since 1994 Ciftci considers himself part of the Salafist branch of Islam. He started to visit different Imams within Europe to continue his Islamic studies. From 1997 on he apparently also guided Hadj tours to Saudi Arabia, where in 1998 he started studying Sharia Law at the Medina University. Until 2006 he was taught by different Saudi scholars but also started preaching himself in different Saudi cities including Medina and Mecca. Upon his return to Germany he became Imam in Braunschweig, from where he also runs the EZP and since 2007 online Islam courses in German according to the standards of Medina university. In 2009 he became the owner and director of EZP's own publishing house and it's magazine „Zam Zam“.[189]

Also Ciftci is under observation by German security agencies. A report from 2010 cites one of Ciftci's online clips, in which he explained that the decapitation is the appropriate punishment for the renunciation of Islam, furthermore that women do also have to conceal their faces and hands when leaving the house, and that women are only allowed to leave the house in company of a male guardian.[190]

In one of the trial hearings of the Ömer Özdemir case, the accused mentioned Ciftci accidentally when asked if he did collect money for Al Qaeda in Germany: „Let's say, I had gone to Ciftci from Braunschweig and I had said: Give me money for the Jihad! He wouldn't even have believed me.“ Unfortunately, nobody raised the question, why of all people he should have gone to Ciftci.[191]

Sven Lau

The former head of the „Masjid as-Sunna e.V.“ and now deputy head of the EZP is a native German from Mönchengladbach, a little West of the densely populated Ruhr-area., where he lives to this day. In an internet clip he describes his way to Islam. A born Catholic he never seriously practiced his religion. When younger he played football, later got into running sports and wanted to be a professional athlete. He was class representative in school, had a girl friend and went to parties. As Lau explains now, none of this was truly satisfying for him. Until around 2005 he apparently also worked with the fire fighters of Mönchengladbach.[192] After school he started a vocational training as an industrial mechanic. It was at the end of his first year of training – he was eighteen at the time – when Lau met a Turkish colleague at work, whom he describes as an altruistic and welcoming person. Enchanted by his colleague’s different behavior Lau became interested in Islam and specifically the explicit confirmation of an afterlife. He converted shortly thereafter.[193] The fixation on the mortality of human life is also the main topic in many of Lau’s speeches and the „catch-phrase“ of his proselytization efforts.

Like his other Salafist brethren from the EZP, Lau seems to seek international contacts in his dawa activities. In online clips he mentions travels to the Muslim world including Morocco, Bosnia, Turkey, and Mecca in Saudi Arabia[194] and can also be seen in front of foreign audiences.

In an interview Lau explained the policy of the EZP: New members would not be registered in order to give no one the right to change the board of directors of the association. Only voluntary resignation or demise could remove a member of the board from his office.[195]

Dr. Hassan al Dabbagh

The Syrian born Dabbagh holds both Syrian and German citizenship. He has studied medicine and works currently as the Imam of the Al-Rahman-Mosque in Leipzig, Saxony.[196] Dabbagh is another major Salafist preacher in Germany. He appears in numerous online videos on platforms of different Salafist groups, such as EZP, „Die Wahre Religion“ (The True Religion) and the As-Sunna publishing house. While being active in Islamic dawa activity and keeping in

contact with other Salafist preachers he is also an important link to the German Jihadist milieu. According to the Criminal Police of Saxony Dabbagh functions as a contact for extremists and fighters ready for jihad.[197] For years he has been in close contact with the scene in Ulm and was a personal acquaintance of Dr. Adly el-Attar, who had hosted Al Qaeda's former chief of finances, Mamdouh Mahmud Salim in Germany. Dabbagh received in 1997 1000DM from the alleged senior Al Qaeda member Mamoun Darkazanli. He also stood in contact with members of the Hamburg cell Atta, Bahaji and Binalshibh as well as with the members of the Sauerland group.[198]

In his lectures and seminars for non-Muslim audiences he defends Islam as a peaceful religion. However, on other occasions he has also lamented the „bestial slaughtering of Muslims in Chechnya, Palestine and elsewhere“ and the resulting need for Jihad. In the same speech he has called „Jews the enemies of Islam, who try to kill believers“.[199] Hassan Dabbagh is one of the organizers of several Islam camps, which are held throughout Germany. Those camps are attended by up to 500 participants. Here the predominantly young Muslims try to live a life similar to the first Muslim generations, as Dabbagh explained during one such event.[200] The constant message conveyed in these camps is the necessity for Muslims to separate themselves as much as possible from the non-Muslim society, especially to avoid friendships with Christians and Jews.[201] The more curious it is, that until the summer of 2001 Dabbagh could also volunteer as Imam in the penal facility of Leipzig.[202]

On several occasions he was even given a platform on German TV without even mentioning his ties to Jihadist elements.[203]

Dabbagh's ties to the whole spectrum of Salafism from non-violent groups to veteran Jihadists and his ability to find audiences from the non-Muslim mainstream make him one of the most important figures in today's Salafist scene. He also yields significant influence over major actors in one of the biggest Salafist scenes in Germany – Berlin.

Berlin's Salafist scene

The LfV of Berlin counted 350 Salafist followers living in the German capital in 2010. Out of these 350 it considers 100 to support the use of violence.[204] As previously mentioned, a sizable number of the scene has already joined militant training camps in Pakistan.

Center of the scene is the Al-Nur mosque in Berlin-Neukölln. One Saudi Arabian and two Lebanese citizens had established the mosque in 2001. The purchase of the property was to 75% funded by the now banned Saudi charity Al Haramain. During its first years up to 1,200 Muslims came to the Friday prayers, many of whom were Palestinian Arabs. During the first years the mosque was run by the Lebanese preacher Dr. Salem Rafei, who openly supported Palestinian suicide attacks and called Muslims to kill all unbelievers and kings standing in the way of Islam.[205] Responsible for the generous financial support was the Saudi attaché Mohammed Jaber Fakihi, who had been sent to Berlin in June 2000. Fakihi stood in close contact with Rafei but did also meet one of the members of the 9/11 cell, Mounir al-Motassadeq, in order to provide him with a forged passport to facilitate his escape from Germany. The CIA estimates that Fakihi raised within two years about \$800,000 USD for militant Jihadists.[206] Then in 2003 a bombing plot by individuals of the Al-Nur mosque was discovered.

At the center of the plot was the Tunisian born Ihsan Garnaoui, who had married a German woman in 1996 and subsequently had become radicalized in Germany. In 2001 Garnaoui had visited an AQ training camp, where he apparently received the order to perpetrate an attack in Germany. Upon his return he approached the Al Nur mosque and was given permission by Rafei to offer close combat training for interested Muslims in one of the mosque's rooms. Here he tried to recruit Jihadists in preparation of his attack in Berlin, which he planned for the beginning of the second Gulf War.[207]

This is also how he made contact with the current Imam of the Al-Nur mosque, Abdel Hadime Kamouss. Born in Morocco but grown up in Germany, Kamouss took over the leadership of the Al Nur mosque from Rafei, when in 2006 after a visit to Lebanon, Rafei was denied to re-enter Germany.[208] Kamouss was approached by Garnaoui in 2003 and let in on the bombing plot, which he rejected. After Garnaoui's arrest Kamouss was questioned by the police and asked to

testify against Garnaoui. Kamouss found himself in a dilemma and called Dr. Hassan Dabbagh to ask for advice. The following conversation was recorded by the Office for the Protection of the Constitution[209]:

Dabbagh: If a Muslim covers up for another Muslim then he'll be protected by Allah at the day of judgment in this life and the hereafter.

Kamouss: But also, if it is about a horrible crime, which will hurt Islam and the unbelievers?

Dabbagh: You mustn't hand your brother over nor abandon him.

Kamouss: But if he is a criminal? They know exactly that one has convened with him and want to know more.

Dabbagh: If something can still happen and others will be caused an injustice then one has to testify.

Kamouss: They have arrested him before that.

Dabbagh: Then you shall forget my brother. Nothing has happened. You shall say that it is long time ago. That you are a human being, who is easily to agitate and that you then forget quickly.

Later in court Kamouss followed Dabbagh's lead and covered up for Garnaoui.[210]

Today Kamouss lives in Berlin-Reinickendorf.[211] Next to his activities in the Al-Nur Mosque, where he is active under the name Abdul-Adhim Abu Abdir-Rahman, he also preaches occasionally in the Masjid-E-Bilal mosque in Berlin and is honorary member and spiritual leader of the Tauhid e.V. Berlin.[212]

Although avoiding open calls for the establishment of Islamic rule in Germany he promotes Islamist values. He implicitly legitimizes the stoning of men and women for fornication as is laid out in the Sharia. His praise of Palestinian „martyrs“ and the condemnation of the state of Israel are evidenced in numerous speeches on the internet. On one occasion the German police were tapping into a conversation Kamouss had with his companion Sami Ben D. in which he talked about „spitting on the unbelievers, devouring them, and letting them drown in rivers and lakes.“[213]

Kamouss is also closely connected to the EZP, his speeches appear on the group's website, he participates in joint talks and hosts EZP events in the Al-Nur mosque in Berlin.

Islam Seminars

One last important member of the network around the EZP, the Al-Nur mosque and Hassan Dabbagh shall be mentioned: Mohamed Beshain lives in Bonn Bad Godesberg, where he runs his own publishing house and organizes the notorious Salafist Islam seminars, which also feature the other Salafist preachers of the EZP network.[214] This connection is no secret as the joint events are usually filmed and documented in numerous video clips online.[215] These seminars have become increasingly popular in recent years and are attended by up to 500 participants.[216] The Office for the Protection of the Constitution believes that Beshain is one middleman between radical Salafists in Germany and militant Jihadists abroad, who helps facilitate recruitment and transport of German Muslims to the training camps of AQ and the IJU.[217] This allegation is corroborated by the fact that Beshain knew the militant Jihadist Eric Breininger as well as Abdirazak B., who had tried to join his friend Bekkay Harrach in Pakistan but was stopped by the police. Beshain's Islam seminars were also attended by Attila Selek and Adem Yilmaz, who were part of the Sauerland group as well as Germany's first suicide bomber, Cüneyit Ciftci, and of course Bekkay Harrach, who had even given lectures at those seminars.[218]

One of the basic readings at the regular events is the book „Aqeedah Ahlu Sunnah wal Jamaa'ah“ (doctrine of the Sunni community) authored by the Saudi scholar Sheikh Muhammad Ibn Saleh al-Uthaymeen. Uthaymeen was a student of the known Saudi scholar Sheikh Abd al Aziz Bin Baz, who also wrote the introduction to the book. Beshain translated the book from Arabic into German. One passage explicitly calls all followers of other faiths unbelievers. It remains dubious if only apostates shall be reprimanded and, if intransigent, killed or if all non-Muslims are considered apostates and ipso facto to be put to death:

'It is our opinion that whoever claims the acceptability before Allah of any of today's religions – one different from Islam – as e.g. Judaism, Christianity, and so forth is an unbeliever. He should be asked to regret, and if he does not he has to be executed as an apostate (Murtad), because he denies the Qur'an.' [219]

An ex-Salafist described the major message of all Islam seminars to reject everything that is not sanctioned by the Qur'an, the Sunnah or the teachings of Qur'anic scholars. The participants are advised to refuse friendships with Christians and Jews and girls are taught not to attend swimming lessons or school trips. According to the former Salafist many of his friends quit their jobs because they were not able to pray five times a day. [220]

According to media reports the Public Prosecution Office Munich has opened legal proceedings against ten individuals under §129 StGB, which punishes formation, membership and support of a criminal organization. The accused include Mohamed Benhsain, Dr. Hassan Dabbagh and Reda Seyam, who after his Jihadist globe-trotting is now producing video documentation of diverse Salafist events in Germany. [221]

The Strategy of Salafist Dawa in Germany

Salafism in Germany, as in other European countries, is not one organization but a network of different groups and individuals. There are authorities and leaders but no decision makers with an overall responsibility for Salafists in Germany. Notwithstanding occasional rivalries, the driving actors of the scene, do have similar goals and, to a large extent, share certain strategies to achieve them.

In Salafist belief all human life must submit to the rule of Allah as it is explicated in the Qur'an and the Sunna. Therefore the long-term goal is the dominance of Islam over society and the implementation of the Sharia. Since Islam and especially Salafism are only rooted in a minority of German society, this final goal necessitates three short-term goals, which to day dominate all of the Salafist dawa activity in Germany: 1. Acceptance of the Salafist community by the mainstream society, 2. Consolidation of the Salafist community and 3. Growth of the Salafist

community.

These intermediate goals explain the different dawa strategies, which can be found across the Salafist spectrum: 1. The prominent speakers of the scene constantly proclaim openness, tolerance, rejection of terror and even openness to critique towards the non-Muslim mainstream audience. 2. These attempts to reduce mistrust cater in the same time the second strategy of proselytizing new Muslims. 3. The third strategy covers all efforts to cause interested Muslims to feel guilty for deviating from the right path and to return to a stricter practice of their faith. Many of the concrete tactics have already been mentioned. In order to 1. reach out to the mainstream society and 2. to win new members, a whole spectrum of propaganda activity is used: information stands in public, open door days in mosques, public appearances on TV, internet clips, declarations for tolerance and against terror and cooperation with non-Muslim institutions for talks or multi-cultural projects. Internally constant indoctrination is used through regular prayers, Arabic-, Qur'an-, and Islamic science course, seminars, weekend trips and reading circles to bring all members into line. Especially the discouragement of closer relations to non-Muslims eventually creates closed communities, which are entirely dominated by the teachings of the Salafist preachers. In fact, already the requirement to pray five times a day thoroughly subjugates the individual life to Islamic time. Many believers quit their jobs only so they can perform their regular prayers, which evidently leaves them with even less “worldly” satisfaction and leads to a yet greater fixation on religion.

The proselytization efforts as well as the aim of strengthening inner-communal bonds naturally generate the need to expand also the material infrastructure in order to complement the limitless virtual propaganda infrastructure of the internet. Consequently Salafist groups 1. strive to establish new mosques and acquire meeting facilities for the scene and 2. use other facilities for their meetings and propaganda. Both attempts do recently meet some resistance by state institutions and segments of the society. After the merger of the EZP with the Masjid as-Sunna e.V. in Mönchengladbach, the association planned on extending its facilities in the city by a construction project, which after protests of local citizens was stopped by the municipality and the mosque temporarily closed.[222] However, the desire to expand is a given. The use of more

or less alien infrastructure was at times also foiled: In January 2010 three preachers of the EZP had been invited to Wiesbaden by the „Islamische Gemeinde e.V.“ (Islamic Community e.V.) to speak in the local Tauhid Mosque. After the municipal office for integration had sent a letter to the Imam, Omar Maddaghri, the talk of Ciftci, Lau and the third EZP preacher, Efstatious Tsiounis was cancelled. As the Imam later explained, it was the young Moroccan members of his community, who had asked him to invite the EZP for this event. Yet, he disagreed with the evaluation of the municipal administration, which saw in the EZP’s activities a violation of an integration agreement between the municipality of Wiesbaden and its Muslim community. Therefore, it is quiet likely that Maddaghri only bent to the pressure of the city, to assure the administration’s support for a new mosque construction project of his community.[223]

Since the vast majority of the Salafist recruits is part of Germany’s young it is noteworthy that most of the Salafist leaders do also entertain contacts to Muslims with a very questionable track record of pioussness. These contacts do not violate the principle of separation from an un-Islamic life because they are aimed at recruiting new Muslims or at bringing those, who already are Muslim, closer to the Salafist doctrine. In one online clip from April 2010, Pierre Vogel talks to the German-Muslim rapper Denis Cuspert aka Deso Dogg. In this conversation Vogel first nonchalantly remarks he wouldn’t listen to any music at all and suggests Cuspert should find „a new field of occupation“ more appropriate to Islam and then discusses the possibility of meeting other German rappers in order to recruit whole fan scenes for Islam. Cuspert agrees to help and offers to attend future talks of Vogel to promote his cause.[224]

Conclusion

The Salafist scene in Germany is the breeding ground for Jihadist militants. This is true even where Salafist leaders do not call for violence or outright condemn “terrorism”. Many of the dominating figures of the scene have had contacts to circles or individuals affiliated with the Global Jihad. Almost all of the prominent leaders frequent events and mosques, which have served as incubators for later Jihadists. Any attempt to categorize different streams of Salafism within Germany must consider this fact. It might therefore be more appropriate to describe the Salafist scene as a continuum that includes a Jihadist conviction at one extreme. This Salafist

continuum is dominated by an interpretation of Islam that is prevalent in Saudi Arabia. Many of the German preachers have studied there and many of the mosques and Islamic centers are aided with Saudi money. But more importantly, the Salafist continuum is able to integrate pre-existing ideological resentments of non-Salafist individuals, which can be described as attitudes against the Jewish people and their state, Christians, the United States, Western society at large and female equality. It helps nurturing these stereotypes and transforms them into a dichotomous Islamist world view and practice. It encourages inner-group bonding and discourages social contacts with non-Muslims.

Other Islamist organizations at times foster the radicalization process of Salafists initiates. In the case of Christian Ganczarski the former head of the ZMD, Dr. Nadeem Elias, was crucial for his career in enabling him the studies in Saudi Arabia, where his appetite for Global Jihad was wet. For the Sauerland cell the experience of the joint Hajj to Mecca, organized by the Islamist IGMG, was important as it triggered the first discussion about Jihad.

The Salafist scene relies on own facilities, meeting venues of other Muslim organizations, as well as non-Muslim infrastructure, like universities, community schools and centers, and public places. In addition to this physical infrastructure the internet has become the main space for propaganda activity, indoctrination, inner-scene communication and fund raising. All those activities follow a three-pronged strategy: Acceptance building amongst the mainstream society, fostering of internal coherence, and growth of the Salafist community. The strategy bases on a general rejection of Western concepts of life. A direct confrontation of the Western society, although currently not part of mainstream Salafist practice in Germany, can thus in principal only be opposed with tactical arguments. It is because of this that the scene tolerates if not bolsters Jihadist attitudes amongst its followers.

Comparing the cases of the past two decades an acceleration in the development of radicalization, Jihadization, and operationalization becomes apparent. A major factor for this development was the emergence of German catering colonies in Pakistan. The larger number of Germans in AQ and its affiliate organizations means a decisively increased potential of these groups to attract new recruits from Germany and to garner support from within the Salafist

scene.

Recruitment for Al Qaeda in Germany has become comparably easy. As could be seen in the cases of the MKH, Bekkay Harrach and Adem Yilmaz, former recruits can quickly become role-models and even recruiters themselves. Experience made and connections to AQ's logisticians established, the returnees from Pakistan and Afghanistan can not only inspire the next generation of militants but also provide practical assistance for the journey into the arenas of Jihad. Furthermore, the German members in AQ's, the IJU's, the IMU's and the Taliban's ranks often serve as spokespersons, enabling the groups to address the German society and in particular prospective Jihadists in Germany in their native language.

The reality of life in the Pakistani camps, however, appears to be a challenge for a considerable number of the German recruits. The conditions during the training and combat missions are hard and difficult to stomach for individuals with a Western upbringing. In the case of Ömer Özdemir a traumatic experience triggered his return home. If current media reports about the German citizen who contacted the BKA turn out to be true, then a change of mind during the Jihad experience has even helped the authorities prepare against terror attacks on domestic soil.

The more frequent anti-terror trials and the most recent case of Filiz Gelowicz raise the question, whether a growing number of inmates from the Salafist spectrum can further mobilize the scene and perhaps increase the passive and active support for Jihadist activities within the Salafist milieu. As the case of the Sauerland cell has shown, Jihadist returnees can count on the support from within the Salafist scene. Numerous individuals assisted the group, without previous training in foreign camps. The more "Jihadist-friendly" the Salafist scene in Germany becomes the easier it will be for trained operatives to use this support network during the preparation stage of an attack.

At least in the short- and mid-term Central Asia will remain the center for recruitment and training activities. As Eric Breininger's case shows, social interaction with peers is of great importance to endure the hardships of Jihadist life. The native language for the Uzbeki IMU and

IJU members is Uzbek, belonging to the Turkic language family. For that fact it is comparably easy to understand for Turkish speakers, who make up the majority of the German Muslim community. It is thus no surprise that many of the Turkish-German recruits joined the Uzbeki groups, where they could communicate much easier than in the predominantly Arab groups of Al Qaeda – and the presence of Turkish-German fighters provides the possibility for native German converts to socialize in their mother tongue. Meanwhile the language issue may be of less importance, as the presence of dozens of German speakers in Waziristan will make new arrivals feel just at home.

Despite occasional set backs the Salafist scene in Germany is growing. In the same time the media and state institutions seem to become more aware of the problems this new phenomenon entails. However, the current policy towards German's Salafist scene does not seem to reduce the influx of new members into the scene, nor could it stop the movements of German recruits to Pakistan. In fact Salafism is one of the fastest growing political movements today, not only in Germany.[225]

Under the current circumstances this trend will continue. Since there is no real ideological boundary between non-militant Salafism and Salafist Jihadism the expanding Salafist scene will inevitably worsen its derivative problem: the emergence of homegrown Jihadists.

The warnings of German security officials are thus no wonder. The question is not if but rather when a first Islamist terror attack on German soil will be successful.

Abbreviations

AABF - Almanya Alevi Birlikleri Federasyonu – Federation of Alevi Communities in Germany

AQ – Al Kaida - Al Qaida

BfV – Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz – Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution

BGH – Bundesgerichtshof – Federal Supreme Court

BKA – Bundeskriminalamt – Federal Criminal Police of Germany

DIK – Deutsche Islam Konferenz – German Islam Conference

DITIB – Diyanet İşleri Türk-Islam Birliği - Turkish-Islamic Union for Religious Affairs

e.V. – eingetragener Verein – registered association

EZP – Einladung zum Paradies – Invitation to Paradise

FATA – Federally Administered Tribal Areas (Pakistan)

FRG – Bundesrepublik Deutschland – Federal Republic of Germany

GSG 9 – Grenzschutzgruppe 9 – Border Protection Group 9, German Counter Terror Unit under the authority of the Federal Police (Bundespolizei)

GTM – Deutsche Taliban Mudschahidin – German Taliban Mujahideen

IGD – Islamische Gemeinschaft Deutschland – Islamic Society Germany

IGMG – Islamische Gemeinschaft Millî Görüş - Islamic Community Millî Görüş (lit. “National view”)

IHH - İnsani Yardım Vakfı - The Foundation for Human Rights and Freedoms and Humanitarian Relief

IIZ – Islamisches Informationszentrum – Islamic Information Center

IJU – Islamische Dschihad Union – Islamic Jihad Union

IMU – Islamische Bewegung Usbekistan – Islamic Movement Uzbekistan

IRD – Islamrat für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland – Islamic Council for the Federal Republic of Germany

IZH – Islamisches Zentrum Hamburg – Islamic Center Hamburg

KRM – Koordinationsrat der Muslime in Deutschland – Coordination Council of Muslims in Germany

LeT – Lashkar-e-Taiba – Army of the Good

LfV – Landesamt für Verfassungsschutz – State Office for the Protection of the Constitution

MB – Muslimbruderschaft – Muslim Brotherhood

MKH – Multikulturhaus – Multi Culture House

MLD – Studie “Muslimisches Leben in Deutschland” – Study “Muslim Life in Germany”

StGB – Strafgesetzbuch – German Criminal Code

VIKZ – Verband der islamischen Kulturzentren – Association of the Islamic Cultural Centers

ZMD – Zentralrat der Muslime in Deutschland – Central Council for Muslims in Germany

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