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**Anti-Antisemitic Enthusiasm & Se-  
lective Philosemitism:  
Geert Wilders, the PVV and the  
Jews**

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### Anti-Antisemitic Enthusiasm & Selective Philosemitism:

Geert Wilders, the PVV and the Jews

Evelien Gans

Since Geert Wilders and his Party for Freedom (PVV) appeared on the political stage in 2006, great confusion has surrounded the reading of his ideas: especially his quest for ethnic homogeneity, his rejection of Islam as an ideology, comparing it to fascism, his anti-Muslim stereotypes and lately his stereotypes of Eastern European migrants. Are these views simply populist? Or rather radical right? Or socialist nationalist?<sup>1</sup> Or extreme right? An argument against this last characterisation has been, and still is, that the traditional extreme-right movement has baggage filled substantially with antisemitism – and that Wilders does not carry this heavy burden. On the contrary, he has always referred emphatically to the Jewish-Christian foundation of Europe, setting himself up as a fighter against antisemitism and as a bosom friend of Israel. That's how, in very divergent circles, he got, in both a positive and negative sense, the reputation of being a "Jew's friend" - a philosemite. But: he isn't. Wilders only flirts with this image.

Just like antisemitism philosemitism is elastic both as a phenomenon and as an analytical category. According to the most favourable interpretation, philosemitism is the idealization of Jews – the least favourable interpretation is the belief that philosemitism is the mirror image of antisemitism.<sup>2</sup> This lead was followed by the Dutch-Jewish poet Jaap Meijer, in his poem "philosemite" (1967): "worse than/hatred which/can/offend: friendship/against which I have no defence."<sup>3</sup> Antisemitism and philosemitism are based on generalising and stereotyping. Jews have per definition bad or, on the contrary, good qualities; they are despised, hated and feared, or admired and glorified. Not that both phenomena are experienced exactly as one and the same. In 1967, when, after the Six Day War in the Middle East, the first signals emerged that not everybody in the Netherland was pro-Israel, the *Algemeen Dagblad* (General Daily) wrote: "Rather the cooling

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1 See, for example, M. Davidović et al., 'Het extreemrechtse en discriminatoire gehalte van de PVV', in: J. van Donselaar & P. R. Rodrigues, *Monitor racisme en extreem-rechts; achtste rapportage*, Amsterdam: Anne Frank House/Leiden University 2008, pp. 167-198; H. Moors et al., *Polarisatie en radicalisering in Nederland. Een verkenning van de stand van zaken in 2009*, Tilburg: IVA Beleidsonderzoek en Advies, 2009. <<http://www.iva.nl/uploads/documents/166.pdf>> (23 August 2010); 'Populisten EU: een familie met veel verschillen. Rechts splijt politieke midden', *NRC Handelsblad*, 25 September 2010; Edmond Hofland, 'Beleefdheid is een groot goed, interview met Abram de Swaan', in: *Hollands Diep*, October/November 2010, p. 44. PVV ideological heavyweight Martin Bosma even places the PVV in the tradition of the well-known Social-Democratic politicians father and son Drees. He pictures them as disappointed Social Democrats who were critical of immigration: R. Meijer & M. Sommer, Martin Bosma: "Ik wil bewijzen dat Hitler een socialist was", *de Volkskrant*, 25 September 2010.

2 A fairly recent and most interesting study on philosemitism, is Jonathan Karp and Adam Sutcliffe (eds.), *Philosemitism in History*. New York: Cambridge University Press 2011.

3 Original Dutch text: "filosemiet (1967): erger dan/haat die/beledigen kan:/vriendschap/waartegen/ik mij niet/verdedigen kan": saul van messel, zeer zeker en zeker zeer. joodse gedichten, Haagse Cahiers 10, Rijswijk Z.H.: De Oude Degel 1967. Saul van Messel was the poet alias of Jaap Meijer. He systematically refused to use capital letters in his poetry. For Jaap Meijer, see the first part of the double biography of father Jaap and son Ischa Meijer: Evelien Gans, Jaap en Ischa Meijer. Een joodse geschiedenis. Amsterdam: Bert Bakker 1994.

affection of philosemitism than the hot hatred of antisemitism”.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, in philosemitism also its opposite can be hidden: a certain awkwardness, a trickle of shame one tends to tuck away, of irritation, envy. And, certainly after 1945: a sense of guilt. The same goes for idealisation, and zealotry. In psychology one speaks of a ”reversal into the contrary”, of ”reaction formation” –these are mechanisms of defence.<sup>5</sup>

Wilders and his PVV are not philosemitic. There are no traces of shame or guilt; there is no residue of the traditional Protestant exaltation towards the Jews as the ”Old People” – PVVers are in fact secular fundamentalists. Idealisation is there only with respect towards Israel, and then in a very restricted way. It would be too easy to say, though, that it is all fake. Wilders shows no affinity with antisemitism. He went to Israel at the tender age of 17 and worked and lived on a kibbutz; he visited the Jewish state later on many times. These are crucial factors in why and how Wilders’ PVV is able to draw a line between his party and the traditional antisemitic extreme right and neo-Nazi organisations. Crucial conditions also for entering successfully Dutch politics, where, by trial and error, the PVV has become part of the political establishment.<sup>6</sup>

At the same time, however, Wilders’ supposed positive attitude towards Jews shows plenty of opportunism, implied in its highly selective nature. Wilders uses ”the Jew” as legitimation.<sup>7</sup> In history, several groups have employed the Jews to add strength to their own position. Jews have served as shining examples, as warnings or as the ultimate evil. This is where Wilders belongs: he takes according to his needs. Why do I say so?

First, the PVV identifies itself one-sidedly with the right and extreme right in Israel. Wilders’ political friends are particularly the Minister of Foreign Affairs Avigdor Lieberman and Arjeh Eldad – both extreme-right Israeli politicians who want ”the Arabs” out of Israel. Wilders himself embraces the old ”Jordanian option”: Judea and Samaria for Israel and Jordan for the Palestinians. For him and his ideological soulmates Israel is the nationalist, militaristic bulwark that fights the Jihad for the West. Martin Bosma, Wilders’ right-hand man and party ideologist, is an admirer of the revisionist-Zionist leader Vladimir Jabotinsky.<sup>8</sup> The PVV is, so to speak, choosy. It supports only Jews who basically subscribe to the ideals of the PVV and a Jewry that meets its own criteria.

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<sup>4</sup> *Algemeen Dagblad*, 3 August 1967, Niod, KB II 454.

<sup>5</sup> E-mail Dr. Maria Hendriks, psychoanalytical psychotherapist, to Evelien Gans, 24 September 2013. For mechanism of defence, see a.o.: Harry Stroeken and others, *Nieuw psycho-analytisch woordenboek, begrippen, termen, personen* (Amsterdam: Boom 2000).

<sup>6</sup> One of Wilders’ last ’errors’ was that he, during his election campaign, in March 2014, caused a national scandal by suggesting the PVV could arrange ’less’ and not ’more’ Moroccans in the city The Hague. Though Wilders still enjoyed some, and in some cases substantial, sympathy in Jewish circles because of his pro-Israel stand, this time several Jewish organisations protested openly, <http://www.nu.nl/geert-wilders/3730669/geert-wilders-beloof-minder-marokkanen-in-haag.html> (read 21 June 2014), Jigal Krant, ’Een rode kaart’, NIW, 27 March 2014.

<sup>7</sup> David Wertheim, Wilders, Le Pen kapen de Joodse zaak, NRC Handelsblad, 13 November 2013. The Dutch historian David Wertheim organised a conference on ”The Jew as Legitimation” in Amsterdam, in August 2013, and is the editor of a future volume of the same name on the basis of the presented papers.

<sup>8</sup> Telephone conversation between the author and Martin Bosma, 9 October 2013.

One could even think of calling this attitude "selective" philosemitism. The (psycho) historian Peter Gay used the concept of 'selective antisemitism' in the context of the early 20<sup>th</sup>-century position of Berlin Jews towards the Eastern European Jewish immigrants: one of contempt and fear. Not only by the partly assimilated West European Jews, also by their Gentile counterparts, *Ostjuden* often were looked upon as primitive, and thus, inferior. It is a classic example of a supposed dichotomy between "good" and "bad" Jews.<sup>9</sup>

The PVV does not regard leftist Jews as "true" Jews. Rather, they supposedly belong to the so-called "Leftist Church", to submit to Islam and figures as so-called dhimmi's: a term referring to Christians and Jews in the ancient world of the Islam, where they were second-rang citizens but, at the same time, as peoples of "the Book" had more privileges than other minority groups. In the present context the term is totally devoid of its original historical context, meaning only those who submit to Islam, reviving the age-old suspicion that Jews and Muslims are conspiring against the Christian West.<sup>10</sup> The view that the former Amsterdam mayor Job Cohen, a Social Democrat, identified closely with Muslims and their minority status precisely because he is Jewish, was voiced by filmmaker and columnist Theo van Gogh and circulated on (mainly right-wing and PVV) websites and forums.<sup>11</sup>

Second, Wilders and his party avail themselves of anti-antisemitism as an instrument in their campaigns against Muslims and Islam. Now in Muslim circles there certainly is antisemitism to a considerable and sometimes extreme measure, no question about it.<sup>12</sup> What here is at stake, however, is that the PVV mainly protests against Muslim antisemitism. Fleur Agema, an important confidante of Wilders, claimed in 2009 that largely the Moroccans imported antisemitism into the Netherlands – which is, obviously, nonsense.<sup>13</sup> Such an approach is what I call

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9 Peter Gay, *Freud, Jews and other Germans. Masters and Victims in Modernist Culture*. New York: Oxford University Press 1978; Evelien Gans, *De kleine verschillen die het leven uitmaken. Een historische studie naar joodse sociaal-democraten en socialistisch-zionisten in Nederland*. Amsterdam: Vassallucci 1999, 208-210. The other side of Western Jewish contempt and fear for their Eastern fellow-Jews, who would, they rightly believed, reinforce the existing antisemitism, was a mixture of solidarity and admiration for the East European Jewish "authenticity".

10 Evelien Gans, *De strijd tegen het antisemitisme is verworden tot ideologie tegen moslims*, NRC Handelsblad, 8 January 2011.

11 Evelien Gans, " Hamas, Hamas, All Jews to the Gas". *The History and Significance of an Antisemitic Slogan in the Netherlands, 1945-2010*, in: Günther Jikeli, Joëlle Allouche-Benayoun (eds.), *Perceptions of the Holocaust in Europe and Muslim Communities. Sources, Comparisons and Educational Challenges*. Dordrecht: Springer 2013, 85-103: 9; Theo van Gogh referred systematically to Muslims as "goat fuckers". He was brutally killed by the Muslim fundamentalist Mohammed Bouery in November 2004, the immediate cause being his direction of the controversial film pamphlet "Submission" by the former Dutch MP and Islam critic Hirsi Ali: *ibidem*, 101. See also: Ralph Pluim, *Hoe nemen Nederlanders het Jodendom van Job Cohen en van andere Joodse politici waar?* (unpublished) Amsterdam 2010, 90-91.

12 There has been considerable research, media attention and debate on antisemitism among Muslims in the Netherlands. See, for example: Fenny Brinkman, *Haram. Uit het dagelijks leven op een islamitische school*. Amsterdam: Balans 2005; Remco Ensel en Annemarike Stremmelaar, *Speech Acts. Observing Antisemitism and Holocaust Education in the Netherlands*, in: Jikeli and Allouche-Benayoun (eds.), *Perceptions of the Holocaust in Europe and Muslim Communities*, 153-171. Most recently: NRC Handelsblad, 13 December 2013. See also the reports and monitors on racism and extremism on resp. [www.cidj.nl](http://www.cidj.nl) and <http://www.annefrank.org/nl/>

13 Gans, *Hamas, Hamas, All Jews to the Gas*, 96; *idem*, *On gas chambers, Jewish Nazi's and noses*, in: Peter Rodrigues and Jaap van Donselaar, (ed.) *Racism and Extremism Monitor. Ninth Report*. Amsterdam:

anti-antisemitic enthusiasm (a concept inspired by that of anti-Israeli enthusiasm by the Dutch sociologist Abram de Swaan<sup>14</sup>). This is a form of anti-antisemitism which is suspiciously eager – it has a hidden meaning, a double, political agenda. A case in point are several debates in Dutch Parliament on the increasing antisemitism in the Netherlands in 2011 and 2012. The debates were caused by incidents during which mainly Moroccan youngsters had attacked and/or insulted recognisable Jews like rabbis and visitors of synagogues. What is relevant here is that the representative of the PVV, Joram van Klaveren, kept emphasising that the source of the increasing antisemitism was Islam itself. Islam taught that Muslims should not be friends with Jews, that it was Allah's wish to kill the Jews. Islam was “essentially antisemitic”, with the Quran stating that Jews are apes, swines and the Devil's servants.<sup>15</sup> With respect to the problems with, again mainly but not only, pupils with a Muslim background at schools during Holocaust education, one spoke of the “Islamisation of our society”.<sup>16</sup> One could presume it to be known that Islam has quite a different history with regard to Jews and Judaism than Christianity with its doctrine of substitution, believing that it has taken over the place of Judaism and badly needing the Jews to recognise this. Christianity was bound to Judaism willy-nilly, while Islamic law, as the historian Mark Cohen puts it, “lacked a specific focus on Jews”.<sup>17</sup> There are several anti-Jewish passages in the Quran and Hadith, like those about the apes, but they previously led, so to speak, a sleeping existence. They have been roughly kissed awake now, however, both by Islamists who want to prove their antisemitic and anti-Zionist actions are based on divine authority, and by those who want to show that violent antisemitism is intrinsic to Islam. Here Wilders and the PVV join anti-Islam ideologues like Pamela Gelber, Daniel Pipes and Bat Ye'or (Gisèle Littman) who warn against a future, horrifying “Eurabia” (2005).

There is one important exception: In March 2011, the football club ADO (The Hague) unexpectedly defeated Amsterdam Ajax - which has a firm Jewish image, though it is not in fact a “Jewish club”. As a reaction to antisemitic slogans against Ajax, which became a structural phenomenon from the beginning of the 1980s, Ajax supporters reacted by defining themselves in chorus as “Jews” and “Super Jews”, carrying banners bearing the Star of David.<sup>18</sup> After the ADO-Ajax match of March 2011, in a revelling changing room one of the most popular ADO football players, Lex Immers, started yelling “Wij gaan op jodenjacht” [We go Jew-

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Anne Frank Stichting/Leiden University 2010, 74-87: 84.

[http://www.annefrank.org/ImageVaultFiles/id\\_12537/cf\\_21/Monitor9UK.PDF](http://www.annefrank.org/ImageVaultFiles/id_12537/cf_21/Monitor9UK.PDF)

<sup>14</sup> Abram de Swaan, *Anti-Israëlische enthousiasmes en de tragedie van het blind proces*, De Gids, Vol. 168, no. 5, May 2005, 349-368.

<sup>15</sup> *Spoeddebat over snel groeiend antisemitisme in Nederland*, Tweede Kamer, 24 juni 2010, TK 91, 91-7576; *Verslag Algemeen Overleg Vaste Commissie voor Binnenlandse Zaken*, 2 februari 2011, Tweede Kamer, 2010-2011, 30 950, no. 22, 11-12.

<sup>16</sup> *Vragen gesteld door de leden der Kamer, met de daarop door de regering gegeven antwoorden*, Vergaderjaar 2009-2010, Aanhangsel, 2662, 1.

<sup>17</sup> Mark Cohen, *Under Crescent and Cross: The Jews in the Middle Ages*. Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press 1995, 54.

<sup>18</sup> See a.o. Gans, “*Hamas, Hamas, All Jews to the Gas*”, 96-98; Simon Kuper, *Ajax, the Dutch, the War. Football in Europe During the Second World War* (London: Orion 2003).

hunting], followed by a crowd of triumphing supporters who also chanted “ Hamas, Hamas, alle joden aan het gas ” [ Hamas, Hamas, All Jews to the gas ]. The scene was filmed on mobile phones and circulated on internet.<sup>19</sup> There was indignation nationwide and subsequently much media attention. The PVV was one of the political parties that protested in Parliament against the abuse (already uttered over several years nationwide), calling it “ disgusting ” and asking for concrete measures against similar antisemitic remarks.<sup>20</sup> PVV MP Richard de Mos, himself an ADO supporter, stated in PowNews, a program of television company PowNed (more or less sympathising with the PVV), that antisemitism should be banned from professional football completely.<sup>21</sup> This, as well as his position on the matter in Parliament, brought De Mos a lot of hate mail from his clubmates.<sup>22</sup>

Then, in an interview on the fan site of ADO, De Mos said he was 110 % convinced that neither Immers nor the ADO supporters were antisemites. He firmly believed they had had nothing offensive in mind. “ Antisemitism belongs to Hitler and his friends ”, he said – not to The Hague nor ADO. The contested yells, however, De Mos said, touched a sensitive spot because of the past and were interpreted as antisemitism. That’s why the PVV had to take a firm stand – after all, the party strived to fight antisemitism.<sup>23</sup> Though De Mos went on working with other members of parliament on a memorandum “ Football again a treat for everybody ”, in his interpellation following the antisemitic scandal in the Hague, in May 2011, the term “ antisemitic ” had disappeared. Now De Mos talked more generally of “ offensive chants ”, and the only concrete example he mentioned was that Ajax supporters should be stopped immediately from using their honorary nickname “ Jews ”.<sup>24</sup> Perhaps De Mos wrestled with a double loyalty.

Third, this last year Wilders was touring around Europe looking for political allies among several European parties that, rightly or not, do not call themselves extreme right anymore, but actually have, unlike the PVV, an antisemitic ideological past the party leadership is trying to get rid of - which isn’t an easy task.<sup>25</sup> PVV, FPÖ, Front National, Vlaams Belang: one is striving, paradoxically, for a Nationalist International that is anti-Europe, anti-Islam, anti-immigration. And the more Israel moves to the right, the more it can be instrumentalised as a partner in the struggle against Islam. Moreover, the (commemoration of the) Holocaust can–

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zdfLQjLCjcg>

<sup>20</sup> Vragen gesteld door Kamerleden Van Klaveren (PVV) en De Mos (PVV), ingezonden 24 maart 2011, Tweede Kamer, vergaderjaar 2010-2011, 2011Z06148:

<http://www.tweedekamer.nl/kamerstukken/kamervragen/detail.jsp?id=2011D15254>. That they had sent in written questions was already mentioned in: NRC Handelsblad, 22 maart 2011. My thanks to Iwona Gusc.

<sup>21</sup> PowNews, 21 maart 2011: <http://www.uitzendinggemist.nl/afleveringen/1081866>

<sup>22</sup> NRC Handelsblad, 24 maart 2011; see also: Kamerlid PVV met dood bedreigd door fans ADO, Algemeen Dagblad, Ad.nl: <http://www.ad.nl/ad/nl/5616/ADO-Den-Haag/article/detail/1899028/2011/03/23/Kamerlid-PVV-met-dood-bedreigd-door-fans-ADO.dhtml>

<sup>23</sup> Interview with Richard de Mos on groengeelhart, 25 March 2011:

<http://groengeelhart.nl/2011/03/gghtml-interview-met-richard-de-mos/> My thanks to Iwona Gusc.

<sup>24</sup> Vragen gesteld door de leden der Kamer, met de daarop door de regering gegeven antwoorden, Tweede Kamer, vergaderjaar 2010-2011, Aanhangsel, 2522, 17 mei 2011.

<sup>25</sup> Maurice Swirc, Geert Wilders, geen vriend van de Joden, Nieuw Israëlietisch Weekblad, 25 September 2013.

quote Tony Judt – function as “the contemporary European entry ticket”.<sup>26</sup> Antisemitism cannot so easily be politically capitalised anymore.<sup>27</sup> However, it still lurks around the corner. Austrian FPÖ leader Strache provoked a small scandal by launching an antisemitic caricature of a Jewish banker on his Facebook page, but after their meeting in Vienna Wilders twittered that he had met a “very impressive man”: The PVV had more in common with the FPÖ “than with the rest of Dutch Parliament”.<sup>28</sup>

Then, on 21 September, the PVV organised a demonstration against the cut-backs planned by the government. Among the PVV sympathisers who appeared were also representatives of all extreme-right and neo-Nazi groups (a very small spectrum in The Netherlands). Voorpost, an antisemitic and islamophobic neo-Nazi faction, which wants Holland and Flanders united, waved with the Prinsenvlag. This flag – orange, white, blue – goes back to the Dutch Orangists who fought against Spain during the 80-Year War, which started in 1568. It has become highly controversial since the Dutch National Socialists (NSB) chose it as their flag.<sup>29</sup> The next day in Parliament, only because he was forced to, Wilders said that he and his supporters have nothing to do with extremism nor antisemitism. At the very same time, however, four PVV members of parliament sat demonstratively with pins in the shape of the Prinsenvlag. Just a provocation? The flag is a radical-nationalist symbol, excluding everybody who is not “really Dutch”. It could be easily interpreted as a wink at the extreme-right.<sup>30</sup>

For Bosma, the Prinsenvlag, the American flag and Israeli flag are closely connected.<sup>31</sup> The Israeli flag symbolises explicitly “liberated territory”. In his book *De Schijn-élite van de valsemunters* (2010) Bosma warns that if “the left” gets its own way, the Netherlands will, just like Israel, be forced to give “land for peace”, abandoning territory in order to appease the Islam”. Here it wouldn’t be the Gaza strip, but for example the Western suburbs of Amsterdam, Ede or Culemborg.<sup>32</sup> So, in this context, the Prinsenvlag is to be interpreted too as an rampart against the so-called islamisation of The Netherlands and Europe.

Recently, in November 2013, Wilders and Marine Le Pen of the French National Front (NF) launched their “historical cooperation” in Amsterdam. Answer-

<sup>26</sup> Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945* (New York: Pinguin 2005) 803. Inevitably this invokes, as a parallel, the observation by Heinrich Heine that conversion to Christianity was for Jews the entry ticket into European civilization.

<sup>27</sup> Wertheim, Wilders, Le Pen kapen de Joodse zaak.

<sup>28</sup> Swirc, Geert Wilders, geen vriend van de Joden.

<sup>29</sup> André Horlings, Prinsenvlag niet van NSB-smetten vrij: <http://historiek.net/prinsenvlag-nsb-smetten-vrij/37267/>

<sup>30</sup> *De Volkskrant*, 23 September 2013; Evelien Gans, Door PVV’ers gedragen vlag symboliseert politiek van uitsluiting, *ibidem*, 8 October 2013, with a rectification in: *ibidem*, 9 October 2013; *NRC.Handelsblad*, 10 October 2013.

<sup>31</sup> For the American and Israeli flag, see Robert van Heuven, Interview Martin Bosma (PVV): Kunstenaar beschadigen wat niet-links is, 4 August 2011. <http://www.robberivanheuven.nl/?tag=ivo-van-hove> (read 26-2-2014)

<sup>32</sup> The Western suburbs, meaning the neighbourhoods where many Muslim immigrants live, see Martin Bosma, *De Schijn-élite van de valsemunters*. Drees, extreem rechts, de sixties, nuttige idioten, Groep Wilders en ik. Amsterdam: Bert Bakker 2010, 274.



ing a question about the notorious antisemitic statements made by Marine Le Pen's father, Jean-Marie Le Pen, the founder of NF, still honorary president of the party and a member in the European Parliament, Wilders drew a line between the past, present and future. There were sayings by Marine's father he didn't endorse. More important, however, was that Marine Le Pen didn't either, and it was with her party he wanted to cooperate.<sup>33</sup>

In January 2014 the French authorities prohibited the shows of the French-Cameroon comedian Dieudonné M'bala M'bala, who had already been sentenced several times because of antisemitism. Dieudonné, a popular, hard-line anti-Zionist, very close with Jean-Marie Le Pen, and the father of the controversial but ever more widely travelling *quenelle*, resembling the Hitler salute, had been driving his jokes about Jews to a head. When hearing the television presenter Patrick Cohen talking, Dieudonné had jested, "I think, you know, the gas chambers... what a pity." Marine Le Pen passed more criticism on the Minister of Home Affairs Manuel Valls, who had issued the ban on Dieudonné, accusing him of "hysteria", then on the comedian. She announced she was shocked by him, but also said: "I cannot pass judgement on antisemitism."<sup>34</sup> As far as is known Wilders did not react on this comment of his new political partner. Still more recently, in June 2014, Jean-Marie Le Pen launched his remark with regard to French artists who spoke out against the Front National, especially referring to the Jewish singer Patrick Bruel: 'On fera une fournée la prochaine fois' [Next time we put them / him in the oven]. Marie Le Pen blamed her father mainly for having not foreseen 'a malicious interpretation'. Wilders distanced himself only half-heartedly. Le Pen's words were 'disgusting' – if they actually were uttered and meant this way.<sup>35</sup>

My fourth – and last point: The bill that demanded a ban on animal slaughter without stunning beforehand, introduced into Parliament by the Party for the Animals and accepted by a parliamentary majority in June 2011, was forcefully supported by the PVV. It is clear that for Wilders and his followers it was meant in the first place as a blow against Muslims and Islam – the (orthodox) Jews were so to speak only collateral damage. But in the vehement public debate on the question of so-called ritual slaughter antisemitism was a recurring element. A Liberal Party member of the Upper House (where the bill was rejected in the end, one year later) got much hate mail. In an interview he said that especially the Jews were the target: "Deal with those Jewish animal brutes."<sup>36</sup> It's the old stereotype of the barbaric, primitive and cruel Jew. On the internet, of course, the debate was the least restrained. Plenty of sincere animal lovers participated, and there were some serious

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33 Servaas van der Laan, Wilders en Le Pen gaan "historische" samenwerking aan, *Elzevier.nl*, 13 November 2013: <http://www.elsevier.nl/Europese-Unie/nieuws/2013/11/Wilders-en-Le-Pen-gaan-historische-samenwerking-aan-1409280W/> (read 19-2-2014)

34 Mark Beunderman, Frankrijk verbiedt shows komiek uit vrees voor oplaaen jodenhaat, *NRC Handelsblad*, 8 January 2014; see also: Hassan Bahara, Een antisemitische ananas. De ongemakkelijke populariteit van Dieudonné, *De Groene Amsterdammer*, 16 January 2014; Pascal Bruckner, Racisme tegen blanken bestaat heus, *Dieudonné*, *NRC Handelsblad*, 11 /12 January 2014.

35 'Jean-Marie Le Pen splijt Front National na antisemitische uithaal', and 'Uitspraak Jean-Marie Le Pen is meer dan "een politieke fout"', *NRC Handelsblad*, 10 June 2014.

36 *NRC Handelsblad*, 12 June 2012.



debates – depending on the sites they were on. But islamophobic and antisemitic remarks popped up as well. To quote one of these:

“Judaism is just as primitive an ideology as Islam. Both movements mistreat children and animals for their personal pleasure and this is perverse, out of date and in fact should be punished. It should be OVER with this special position of the religious fanatics. Or has a backward human being in The Netherlands more rights than a normal one? If the Jews have to leave The Netherlands at the moment that circumcision for boys is banned, I will welcome their exodus. Those Jews who are not backward will stay. The same goes for the Muslims.”<sup>37</sup>

On the PVV “Forum voor realisten”, statements could be found like Jews are as “backward” as Muslims, both “come from the same sandbox”, and: “Jews first kept bleating about having a country of their own, why they don’t simply go there?”<sup>38</sup> Most striking is that the prominent PVV member of Parliament, responsible for animal well-being, Dion Graus, systematically and publicly, also in Parliament, spoke of “ritual torture”. In an interview he added that Jews did so supposedly under the “pretext of freedom of religion”.<sup>39</sup> Actually, that makes two antisemitic allegations in one saying. He was never corrected by his party leader.

The PVV is instrumentalising Jews, Jewry and Israel, anti-antisemitic enthusiasm and selective philosemitism being two of its tools.

*Evelien Gans, Anti-Antisemitic Enthusiasm & Selective Philosemitism: Geert Wilders, the PVV and the Jews November 2013 / February 2014, [www.jmberlin.de/antisemitism-today/Gans.pdf](http://www.jmberlin.de/antisemitism-today/Gans.pdf)*



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<sup>37</sup> Reaction: Voor mij een reden on: Bart-Jan Spruyt, Geert Wilders en de Joden, 24 August 2012 (read: 4-11-2-13).

<sup>38</sup> Forum voor realisten (read 12-7-2011). The forum was removed after some time. See <http://kafka.antenna.nl/?p=4548> and <http://www.alertmagazine.nl/?p=1328>

<sup>39</sup> See, among others, Trouw, 30 October 2012; Gans, Door PVV’ers gedragen vlag symboliseert politiek van uitsluiting; Hans Knoop, Hoeveel gekker kan het worden, NIW, 19 October 2012.