

Radical Islam in Europe

by Leslie S. Lebl

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Abstract: Europe now faces three related but different challenges: how to respond, in a time when “native” European populations are shrinking, to the growing presence of Muslim minorities; how to avoid having its relationships with its Muslim communities controlled by Islamists who seek to replace Western civilization with Islamic government based on sharia law; and what to do generally about this Islamist threat. Thus far, the European responses to these challenges have been shaped by four factors: accumulated civilizational exhaustion; the inability to grasp the challenge posed to European national identities by the allure of the global Caliphate; weakness arising from degraded security capabilities, including the impact of the continued drive to “build Europe” by adopting the Treaty of Lisbon; and the preference for appeasement of Islamist demands.

Introduction and Summary

In January 2008, U.S. Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff warned that Europe risks becoming a “platform for terrorists,” a serious threat to itself as well as to the United States and the rest of the globe.¹ The immediate, severe nature of the Islamist terrorist threat has caused media and government authorities to pay close attention to it. Unfortunately, they – and European political elites in general – have paid less attention to two inter-related issues that are equally worrying: how Europe will live with its growing Muslim minorities; and whether European elites and authorities will learn to identify and respond successfully to the threat posed by “non-violent” Islamism.

Europe’s Muslim minorities, who settled primarily in Western Europe, are a mixture of many different groups, coming from different traditions and cultures. Nevertheless, certain trends are discernable. The combination of Europe’s decades-long resistance to assimilating Muslim immigrants with its

¹ Kate Kelland, “U.S. Says Europe poses terrorism threat.” *Reuters*, Jan. 16, 2008.

passion for multiculturalism, a passion reinforced by political correctness, has given Europe the worst of both worlds.

While some Muslims have integrated successfully others, along with their second- and third-generation descendants, have been allowed to live in a separate, subsidized world of Muslim ghettos. In these ghettos, traditional tribal and Islamic values prevail over such “European values” as women’s rights. Elements of Islamic law, or *sharia*, are already replacing Western law and “no-go” areas are emerging, areas that European authorities dare not enter.

European governments are belatedly addressing these problems. In addition, they are seeking to protect their citizens from Islamist terror. In both cases, they have turned for advice and support to Muslim organizations and leaders that they believe are moderate or mainstream. In reality, however, many of these groups and individuals are not moderate, but dedicated to supplanting or overthrowing the existing order. Western failure to understand the basic goals of these groups – to decode their doublespeak – has proven costly, and remedies for this failure are slow in appearing.

The Islamists have known what they want and presented it persuasively; the Europeans have done just the opposite. Valiant attempts by both Muslims and non-Muslims to combat radical Islam are constrained by underlying trends working in the opposite direction. These trends include a general lack of energy and conviction to support Western civilization, often framed as civilizational exhaustion.

This trend is linked to a failure to keep either existing national identities or to develop a new European one attractive enough to counteract the allure of radical Islam. In addition, support for European security capabilities is eroding, whether for traditional defense or for combating terrorism, both at the level of national governments and of the European Union. These weaknesses in turn enhance the attraction of appeasement as a response to Islamist demands.

A Separate Muslim Europe

Europe has been on the receiving end of large migratory flows for the past forty years, originally to provide labor for postwar reconstruction and growth, then as a result of family reunification and asylum requests. A recent estimate set the number of immigrants at 7.6 percent of the total population.² These individuals tend to be younger and have higher birth rates than the native population. In addition, many so-called immigrant populations also include European-born second- and third-generation descendants who are actually citizens of the European country where they live.

Within this amorphous immigrant category, Muslim populations were estimated in 2007 at 16.1 million, or 3.3 percent of the 482.1 million people

² *World Migration Report 2008*, International Organization for Migration, Geneva, Switzerland, p. 455.

living in the twenty-seven EU member states.³ The migratory patterns vary, with Turks tending to settle in Germany, South Asians in the United Kingdom, and North Africans in France and Belgium. Within this larger pattern, the Muslim presence is concentrated in certain countries and cities. In France, they make up more than 8 percent of the population; in the Netherlands, over 6 percent. In Malmo, Sweden, they account now for over 20 percent of the total population, and could perhaps constitute a majority within a decade or two.⁴ In the United Kingdom, Muhammed is already the second most common name for newborn boys, and could soon become the most popular.⁵

Multiculturalism, political correctness and assimilation. These immigrants were often relatively uneducated, unskilled workers from rural regions. They arrived in countries that had not traditionally been lands of immigration, and where both governments and ordinary citizens preferred to keep immigrants at arms' length. While governments and immigration experts assumed that by the second or third generation these immigrant groups would by some natural process assimilate into Europe, their societies made little effort to foster such a process.

Widespread intellectual commitment to multiculturalism reinforced the trend of allowing Muslim immigrants and their children to live apart from European society. In theory, multiculturalism holds that all cultures are equally worthy of respect. However, the effect of this concept, according to British columnist Melanie Phillips, is that:

[Multiculturalism] holds that all minority values must have equal status to those of the majority. Any attempt to uphold majority values over minorities is a form of prejudice. That turns minorities into a cultural battering ram to destroy the very idea of being a majority culture at all.⁶

Thus, the practice of giving equal weight to non-European cultures has torn the fabric of European society, loosening its connection to liberal democracy and to other values such as women's rights or equality of all before the law. Multiculturalism has contributed as well to the conviction that Western society is inferior to other cultures – a conviction closely connected to the guilt that many Europeans feel about their countries' colonial pasts.

Multiculturalism became ever more entrenched, occurring as it did in a climate in which, in general, the European political elite tolerate few

³ David T. Armitage, Jr., "The European Union: Measuring Counterterrorism Cooperation." *Institute for National Strategic Studies*, National Defense University, Strategic Forum #229, Nov. 2007, p. 3. Available at <http://www.ndu.edu/inss>.

⁴ Fjordman, "Swedish Welfare State Collapses as Immigrants Wage War." Mar. 28, 2006, <http://www.brusselsjournal.com/node/938>.

⁵ Helen Nugent and Nadia Menuhin, "Muhammed is No 2 in boy's names." *The Times*, Jun. 6, 2007, at <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/article1890354.ece>.

⁶ Melanie Phillips, "Liberalism v Islamism." Presentation at Neo conference, Stockholm, Sweden, May 11, 2007, p. 2.

alternative views. “Diversity, respect, dialogue: this, of course, was the mantra of political correctness, a habit of thought that in America is an annoyance but in Europe is a veritable religion,” according to Bruce Bawer.⁷ The result, according to Mark Steyn, is that “. . . Europe has all but succumbed to the dull opiate of multiculturalism.”⁸ This tone-deaf approach that ignores the dangers of accommodating people who don’t play by the same rules has helped to create a new form of European Islam.

Although Muslim immigrants came from different countries, cultures and traditions, many of their communities in Europe now lead traditional ways of life (often more traditional than would be possible in their country of origin) at sharp variance with democratic, Western society based on the rule of law. After 9/11 and subsequent terrorist attacks in Europe, some of them by home-grown terrorists, European authorities began to focus more on what was going on inside these Muslim communities.

Women’s rights: One of the things the authorities belatedly discovered was massive violations of women’s rights.⁹ In many cases, these practices aimed to separate the Muslim communities from their surrounding environment. As Turkish-born German sociologist Necla Kelek observes, with regard to many Turkish women in Germany, “. . . for them, tribal laws still govern – the family’s honor is a higher right than self-determination of the individual.”¹⁰

Many of these women enter Germany as young brides for the sons or grandsons of Turkish immigrants. Considered more submissive than European-born Turkish women, they frequently end up as household slaves, trapped in the house by family members and by their ignorance of the German language or of Germany.

Imported brides, along with the other women in their families, often find themselves subject to physical abuse and punishment, including honor killings for those who stray.¹¹ Samira Bellil describes a similar situation among Muslim immigrant communities in France, where domestic violence is common and gang rape functions as an accepted tool to control young Muslim women who refuse to veil themselves or remain at home.¹²

⁷ Bruce Bawer, *While Europe Slept: How Radical Islam Is Destroying the West from Within* (New York: Doubleday, 2006), p. 6.

⁸ Mark Steyn, *America Alone: The End of the World As We Know It* (Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing, 2006), p. xxi.

⁹ The situation for young Turkish men is also poor. See Necla Kelek, *Die verlorenen Söhne* (Munich: Wilhelm Goldmann Verlag, 2007) and Ahmet Toprak, *Das schwache Geschlecht – die türkischen Männer* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Lambertus-Verlag, 2007).

¹⁰ Necla Kelek, *Die fremde Braut* (Munich: Wilhelm Goldmann Verlag, 2006), p. 65 (informal translation).

¹¹ See also Ahmet Toprak, *Das schwache Geschlecht – die türkischen Männer* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Lambertus-Verlag, 2007).

¹² Bellil, Samira. *Dans l’enfer des tournantes* (Paris: Éditions Denoël, 2003).

Several governments, starting with Denmark, moved to forbid these so-called fetching marriages that, in addition to the wrongs done the young women, served to reinforce the isolation of the Muslim community from mainstream society. They have also imposed language and civic knowledge requirements on new immigrants. Ayaan Hirsi Ali describes her efforts to convince the Dutch that honor killings were actually occurring in the Netherlands¹³; since then, a recognition of this problem is growing throughout Europe and some are finally trying to stop it.

Nevertheless, these trends are only partial. For example, little effective opposition to polygamy exists, despite its clear illegality and detrimental impact on both women and children. The UK government, for instance, now allows payment of social benefits to and acknowledges inheritance rights of all members of polygamous families.¹⁴ The Archbishop of Canterbury sparked a dispute by suggesting that the partial implementation of traditional Islamic, or *sharia*, law “seems unavoidable”; despite the curtailment this implied, *inter alia*, of women’s rights.¹⁵ Similar public outrage greeted the decision of a German judge to base her decision in a divorce case on *sharia* law.¹⁶ A Swedish judge had already done the same thing.¹⁷ Nevertheless, pressure continues to implement *sharia* law.¹⁸

Behavior of young men: Something must also be done to counter the role assigned to many young Muslim men. For young Turkish men interviewed by German educational expert Ahmet Toprak, family honor is foremost – and is almost exclusively measured by the perceived sexual behavior of the women. Young men must enforce this behavior; they expend much less time or effort on speaking German, receiving a good education or obtaining good employment than on defending their honor.¹⁹ This pattern repeats itself in other countries and among other Muslim communities.

An estimated 40 percent of Muslim youth in France and 50 percent in Germany are unemployed but far from destitute. Rather, they receive a wide range of social benefits.²⁰ An estimated 40 percent of welfare outlays in Denmark go to the 5 percent of the population that is Muslim.²¹ According

¹³ Ayaan Hirsi Ali, *Infidel* (New York: Free Press, 2007), p. 309.

¹⁴ Daniel Pipes. “Britain’s encounter with Islamic law.” *Jerusalem Post*, Feb. 12, 2008.

¹⁵ “Sharia Law in UK is ‘unavoidable.’” BBC News, Feb. 7, 2008, available at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/7232661.htm>.

¹⁶ Kate Connolly. “German judge invokes Qur’an to deny abused wife a divorce.” *The Guardian*, Mar. 23, 2007.

¹⁷ Daniel Pipes. “Swedish Follies,” Sept. 1, 2005, at http://www.danielpipes.org/blog_pf.php?id=507.

¹⁸ See “A Guide to *Shariab* Law and Islamist Ideology in Western Europe 2007-2009” by the Centre for Islamic Pluralism, 2009, as well as Denis MacEoin, *Sharia Law or ‘One Law for All?’* (London: Civitas, 2009).

¹⁹ Ahmet Toprak, *op. cit.*

²⁰ “French Lessons: How to Create an Underclass,” *Wall Street Journal*, Nov. 11, 2005.

²¹ Bawer, *While Europe Slept*, p. 30.

to Otty Schily, former German interior minister, speaking of immigrants in general: "Seventy percent of the newcomers [since 2002] land on welfare the day of their arrival."²² Similar stories abound in other West European countries.

Rather than engendering respect and support for the Western system, this enforced idleness coupled with government handouts has bred contempt. Some interpret the payment of social benefits as a form of *jiziyah*, the poll tax traditionally paid in Islamic societies by non-Muslim peoples as a sign of their submission to Islam. In other words, not only are the social benefits interpreted as a right due to Muslim recipients, but they reflect the higher, dominant position of the latter.²³

Violent crime, including muggings, robbery, rape and rioting, provides another means to establish dominance over non-Muslims. Many European cities are experiencing crime waves in which young Muslims, often operating in gangs, are the primary aggressors, although media and government reports usually omit this fact.²⁴ The primary victims include not only young Muslim women, but increasingly the European population at large.

Harder to deny has been the emergence of no-go areas where police or municipal authorities venture only at great risk. Ghetto inhabitants have now taken up arms against the French police in Paris; the situation is worse now than it was during the 2005 riots.²⁵ To keep innocent citizens out of trouble, an official French website lists some 751 "zones urbaines sensibles" to avoid.²⁶ In Denmark, government authorities have accepted the offer of local imams to assist them in keeping order in the Muslim community of Gellerup.²⁷ In practical terms, they have turned it over to Muslim rule.

Recognizing and Challenging Radical Islam

The Madrid train bombings of March 2004, the murder of Dutch filmmaker Theo Van Gogh in November 2004, and the London subway and bus bombings of 2005 brought home to Europeans the direct threat of Islamist terrorism – terrorism committed by their own citizens, not foreigners. Indeed, the trend toward home-grown terrorism has strengthened since then, while the age of recruits has dropped and the time required for radicalization

²² Quoted in Peter Schneider, "The New Berlin Wall," *New York Times*, Dec. 4, 2005.

²³ Bawer, *While Europe Slept*, p. 30.

²⁴ See Bawer, *While Europe Slept*, pp. 37-40; Pernille Ammitzbohl and Lorenzo Vidino, "After the Danish Cartoon Controversy," *Middle East Quarterly*, Winter 2007, pp. 3-11; and Theodore Dalrymple, "Barbarians at the Gates of Paris," in *Our Culture, What's Left of It: The Mandarins and the Masses* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2005), pp. 296-310.

²⁵ Patrick Poole, "The Parisian Intifada and 'The Project,'" *FrontPageMagazine.com*, Nov. 29, 2007.

²⁶ See <http://i.ville.gouv.fr/divbib/doc/chercherZUS.htm>.

²⁷ Pernille Ammitzbohl and Lorenzo Vidino, "After the Danish Cartoon Controversy."

has fallen sharply. European governments have responded to this threat in various ways, usually applying heightened security measures combined with initiatives to reassure the broader Muslim community that it is not the target of those measures.

As an integral part of their outreach efforts, European governments have turned to Muslim organizations and individuals that officials perceived as moderate or mainstream. Governments sought both their assistance in reassuring the Muslim community and their advice on how to do so. Yet this approach has often turned out to be a dangerous mistake.

For starters, the question of representation is a thorny one. European Muslim communities are comprised of people from many different countries and traditions, with significant generational differences. Determining who speaks for them is inherently difficult. To give just one example, in a recent survey, 51 percent of British Muslims felt that no Muslim organization represented their views.²⁸ Nor were the organizations and individuals in question moderate; often, they were closely linked to Islamist groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood.

Islamist ideology calls for the pursuit and creation of a global Islamist state, called a Caliphate, that unites all Muslims and is governed by Islamic, or *sharia* law. Its adherents consider Islam to be a comprehensive guide to life; they do not believe Islam can be limited to the religious realm. Nor do they accept that the interpretation of Islam could evolve over the centuries, or be modified by cultural or regional differences.²⁹ They want Muslims to live apart from non-Muslim, secular societies – unless those societies are controlled by the Caliphate.

Islamist organizations are dedicated to replacing, by peaceful means, Western legal systems with Islamic *sharia* law. Publicly, they present themselves as non-violent but often maintain ties with jihadist organizations. Often, they serve as a conveyor belt: people who are attracted to Islam and subsequently adopt their Islamist ideology are a significant source of recruits for jihadist groups.³⁰

The Muslim Brotherhood: Because the Muslim Brotherhood plays such an important role in Europe today, it is worth a closer look. Considered to be the largest Islamic movement in the world, it was founded in 1928 in Egypt,

²⁸ Munira Mirza, Abi Senthikumaran and Zein Ja'far, "Living apart together: British Muslims and the paradox of multiculturalism." London, Policy Exchange, 2007, p. 6. Available at www.policyexchange.org.uk.

²⁹ See definitions in "Violent Islamist Extremism, The Internet, and the Homegrown Terrorist Threat." United States Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, Majority and Minority Staff Report, May 8, 2008; and Zeyno Baran, "The Muslim Brotherhood's U.S. Network." The Hudson Institute, *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology*, Vol. 6, p. 96.

³⁰ See Ed Husain, *The Islamist* (London: Penguin Books, 2007); and Sean O'Neill and Daniel McGrory, *The Suicide Factory: Abu Hamza and the Finsbury Park Mosque* (London: Harper Perennial, 2006), for detailed descriptions of these mechanisms.

with the stated goal of restoring the Islamic Caliphate abolished by Turkish President Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in 1924. Its motto was: "Allah is our objective. The Prophet is our leader. The Koran is our law. Jihad is our way. Dying in the way of Allah is our highest hope."

Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser accused the Muslim Brotherhood of plotting to assassinate him in 1954 and systematically repressed it until his death in 1971. Many Brothers were imprisoned, tortured or executed; others fled. Some Brothers ended up in Saudi Arabia, where they joined forces with Wahhabist teachers and ideologues.³¹

Others made their way to Europe, including Said Ramadan, the son-in-law of Muslim Brotherhood founder Hassan al-Banna. He arrived in Geneva in 1958, where in 1961 he set up the Islamic Center of Geneva³² with the help of Saudi funding.³³ He also established the Islamic Society of Germany, which has since become one of Germany's three main Muslim organizations.³⁴ One of his sons, Hani, now heads the Center in Geneva; his other son Tariq is considered by many to be the leading spokesman today for French Muslims.

In the ensuing decades, the Muslim Brotherhood "steadily established a wide and well-organized network of mosques, charities, and Islamic organizations."³⁵ This is true in Germany, where the Brotherhood presence is best-organized; in France, where the principal Islamic organization, the Union of Islamic Organizations of France, is linked to the Brotherhood; and in Belgium, of particular interest because of the central EU institutions located there.³⁶

In Brussels, the Federation of Islamic Organizations in Europe (FIOE), an umbrella organization with close connections to the Brotherhood,³⁷ and the Forum of European Muslim Youth and Student Organizations (FEMYSO), have in recent years consulted with the European Commission, the European Parliament and other organizations such as the Council of Europe.³⁸ Indeed, organizations and individuals linked to the Muslim Brotherhood often have a virtual monopoly on contacts with the same governments who claim to be seeking to combat radical Islam.³⁹

³¹ Osama Bin Laden, as a university student in the 1970s in Jeddah, attended public lectures by Muhammad Qutb, the brother of Muslim Brotherhood leader Sayyid Qutb. See Lawrence Wright, *The Looming Tower: Al-Qaeda and the Road to 9/11* (New York: Vintage Books, 2006).

³² Islamic Center website, <http://www.cige.org/cige/historique.html>.

³³ Lorenzo Vidino, "The Muslim Brotherhood's Conquest of Europe." *Middle East Quarterly*, Winter 2005, available at <http://www.meforum.org/pf.php?id=687>.

³⁴ Vidino, "Muslim Brotherhood's Conquest."

³⁵ Vidino, "Muslim Brotherhood's Conquest."

³⁶ Steve Merley, "The Muslim Brotherhood in Belgium." *NEFA Foundation*, Apr. 14, 2008.

³⁷ Merley, "Muslim Brotherhood," p. 11.

³⁸ Merley, "Muslim Brotherhood," pp. 17-18.

³⁹ A similar situation exists in the United States, where government entities turn to organizations such as the Council on American-Islamic Relations and the Islamic Society of North America that are known to be connected to the Muslim Brotherhood. See Zeyno Baran, "The Muslim Brotherhood's U.S. Network," pp. 95-122.

