

Islam & the Decline of the West

By Jacob Thomas



For 1300 years, the overwhelming majority of Muslims lived within their homelands, known in Arabic as “*Dar’ul Islam*,” (House of Islam). This living pattern changed drastically after World War II. The European nations had suffered the loss of millions of their citizens during the war. Although their economies were devastated they grew very fast after the war and soon there was a severe shortage of workers. Moreover, the sixties saw the end of colonialism and the colonial powers may have felt the moral obligation to be open and welcoming to the citizens of their former colonies. Though there may have been different reasons in different countries, fact is that many European leaders encouraged the influx of a large number of foreign workers to help reinvigorate their economies.

Immigrants from North Africa, the Middle East, Turkey, the Indian sub-continent, and south-east Asia arrived in large numbers and settled in several parts of Western Europe. Many of these foreign workers were of the Muslim faith and before too long; it became evident that the majority would not integrate into the European societies that had welcomed them. A couple of years ago, we became aware of this fact when we learned about the attacks on local properties in several parts of France and Belgium, and the burning of cars in Paris, Lyon, Marseille, and Brussels.

The inability and unwillingness of many in the large Muslim communities of Western Europe to assimilate into the culture of the countries, where they now are firmly entrenched, can be seen once again in an article which appeared recently in the Arabic-language reformist website, *Al-Awan* ([here](#)). It was posted on 9 October, 2009, and had the rather alarmist title (*Kayf Yahfor al-Gharb Qabrahu?*) ***How the West Is Digging its Own Grave?***

The writer, who is an Algerian intellectual and a frequent contributor to this website, claimed that Europe has for too long allowed many of its Muslim residents to disseminate an Islamic supremacist ideology. This, he believes, will lead to the eventual downfall of

European civilization. Here is a translation of parts of the Arabic text, followed by my analysis and comments.

A pioneer Islamist ideologue said the following about the West's inability to face the challenge of Islam: "***While we are able to fight democracy from within; democracy, on the other hand, cannot fight Islam, or at least, it cannot openly admit that.***" These words point to the most difficult problem facing Western democracies. Europe finds itself in an unprecedented dilemma in confronting the Islamists' activities within its borders. Islamists take all the advantages available to them in Europe: they travel on European passports, receive free social services, benefit from the democratic and human rights traditions, only to work for the destruction of these blessings of modernity. How long should the Muslim communities in the West be allowed to provide a Trojan horse for the Islamic extremists to pursue their attacks on freedom and democracy?

Is France, and with it, the entire West, on its way to Islamization? Or is this fear simply an indication of ***Islamophobia*** spreading throughout Europe and America, due to fear of what the activities of the Islamists may portend? Is there any hope that descendents of Arab and Muslim immigrants will eventually integrate with Western secular and democratic societies? Or are they going to demand recognition for their specific culture, by demanding the promulgation of laws based on the Islamic ***Sharia***? Are they going to be satisfied with the freedom of worship that secular European laws grant them, or would they demand more special privileges, including allying themselves with those radical groups seeking to dismantle the very nature of secular European societies? Is their ultimate goal to make the ***Sharia*** rule at least in those enclaves where Muslims now form the majority?

In other words, what should be the response of modern European societies to Muslim immigrants who are facing tremendous pressures from Islamist groups that seek to isolate them culturally, thus preventing them from integrating and acting as free and independent individuals?

Beginning with the 1980s, a new phenomenon surfaced among the young people of ***Maghrebi*** and ***Indo-Pakistani*** backgrounds who were born in Europe. They seem to have adopted a new type of religiosity that is radically different from their parents' faith. Their Islam is quite different from that traditional Islam that the first generation of immigrants brought with them in the middle of the 20th century. Due to certain living conditions and to foreign influences, second generation Muslims have adopted ***Salafist*** (radical) ideologies. These ideologies began in local mosques where traditional forms of worship and education were transformed into a political fundamentalist ideology. This in turn morphed into the jihadism of the 1990s. Second-generation Muslims thus became the main agents in the project for the Islamization of Europe. Their financial support comes from both oil-producing countries and from fund-raising campaigns at European mosques. Such well funded radical jihadism culminated in the "***super-attack***" on Uncle Sam's country, on 11

September, 2001. The invasion of far-away New York, received the blessings of Muslims from one end of the world to the other!

From the days of *Imam Ibn Hanbal*¹ (780-855), who lived during the days of internecine Islamic conflicts among the Abbasids in Baghdad; then proceeding to *Ibn Taymiyya*² (1263-1328) a contemporary of the Mongolian invasion of the Islamic lands, and coming down to *Muhammad ibn Abd-al-Wahhab*³ (1720-1792), we witness this phenomenon: **Whenever Muslims contrast their own weaknesses with the Europeans' superiority, they begin by calling for a return to the Islam of their righteous ancestors! This notion has become their sole philosophy, and the cure for all their ills.**

Demographic studies indicate that the number of Muslim-background people in Europe reached 5% at the beginning of the 21st century. It is estimated that by 2025, their number would reach around 15%. Already throughout European cities, certain metropolitan areas have become entirely Islamic, so that the French people feel as if they have become aliens and undesirables in their own country! All kinds of signs point to the steady and unrelenting process of Islamization: *hijabs*, *burqas*, shops advertising *halal* are everywhere. Ham and pork have been banished from many parts of French cities; and in lieu of wine from Bordeaux, you find cafes in the Islamized areas, where men are sipping mint tea, and *Mecca Cola*, as well as other foreign items that have been imported into the country illegally!

Are the descendents of this "*Islamic Civilization*" about to become the West's major problem during the 21st century, as many intellectuals are predicting? Is *Sharia* going to rule Europe as many Muslims dream? And what are the radicals among them planning to do, in order to reach that goal? Finally, what will be the Europeans' response to this Islamic invasion?

Analysis

The writer of the article is alarmed enough about the things he describes to assert that the West is surely "*digging its own grave.*" He has witnessed the change that has occurred in second-generation Muslims who were born in Europe, but who have not yet become assimilated into Western culture. Various things have gone into making them shun the freedom and relative comfort they currently experience (compared to their countries of origin) that some of them became radical in the extreme and make every attempt to dismantle and destroy Western civilization in order to supplant it with Islamic Sharia. Of equal importance are the author's concerns that of European governments seem unable to know how to confront those who use the West's freedoms and democratic ideals against it.

Comments

For centuries, several European countries colonized Islamic lands and peoples. The Dutch had a powerful presence in the East Indies, now known as Indonesia. The British

ruled over large Muslim communities in India, in the Middle East, and in East and West Africa. The French had a dominating presence in North Africa which began as early as the 1830s, and expanded to include colonies in *Daru'l Islam* within west and central Africa. The process of decolonization began in earnest during the 1960s. It wasn't long before people from these former European colonies immigrated to the lands of their former exploiters. They have, as the saying goes, set up shop in their adopted lands. And often with a vengeance. The modern, free, secular societies, wherein these people of *Daru'l Islam* now have sizeable communities, are experiencing the extreme irony of reverse colonization. Will they be able to deal with it better than they have so far?

At the moment, it does not appear promising. It is puzzling to understand how the political leadership in Western Europe for so long ignored the consequences of having such large Muslim communities within their borders. Rather than strive for assimilation the Western nations have overly accommodated Muslim beliefs and traditions, to the detriment of their own. Political correctness has overtaken prudence. As the Islamist ideologue stated at the outset of his article "***While we are able to fight democracy from within; democracy, on the other hand, cannot fight Islam, or at least, it cannot openly admit that.***"

The plain facts are there for all who will to see. "All kinds of signs point to the steady and unrelenting process of Islamization: *hijabs, burqas*, shops advertising *halal* are everywhere. Ham and pork have been banished from many parts of French cities; and in lieu of wine from Bordeaux, you find cafes in the Islamized areas, where men are sipping mint tea, and *Mecca Cola*, as well as other foreign items that have been imported into the country illegally!"

Will the West wake up or is it digging its own grave after all? Will it be willing to guard democratic ideals in such a way that they cannot be used against them by those who are currently doing just that?

This article brought to mind the words of the late Samuel P. Huntington⁴:

In all these places, [reference is to Middle East and Africa] the relations between Muslims and peoples of other civilizations --- Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox, Hindu, Chinese, Buddhist, Jewish --- have been generally antagonistic; most of these relations have been violent at some point in the past; many have been violent in the 1990s. Wherever one looks at the perimeter of Islam, Muslims have problems living peaceably with their neighbors. The question naturally rises as to whether this pattern of late- twentieth-century conflict between Muslim and non-Muslim groups is equally true of relations between groups from other civilizations. In fact, it is not. Muslims make up about one-fifth of the world's population but in the 1990s they have been far more involved in intergroup violence than the people of any other civilization. The evidence is overwhelming." (*The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. Published in 1996 by Simon & Schuster, New York, NY 10020, p. 256)

Perhaps I shouldn't be too hard on the Western political leaders who took the decision to invite large numbers of Muslims to settle in Europe. There were understandable reasons for establishing the immigration policies they did. Overlooked, however, was the fact that Muslim "*guest-workers*," or "*Gastarbeiter*" as the Germans call them, brought with them not only their suitcases, but their cultural and religious ideology. Soon their extended families arrived. In the comfort of their tolerant adopted countries, they soon were able to practice their religion in peace and with vigor. And they now could promote the true nature of Islam, to dominate and rule without any interference from the state.

Footnotes

¹ ***Imam ibn-Hanbal***, founder of one of the four Sunni schools for the interpretation of the Sharia. Known for his conservatism, and promoter of the doctrine of the "uncreatedness" of the Qur'an, he clashed with Caliph ***al-Ma'moon*** who championed an opposite view of the Qur'an. Imprisoned in 842, he was released and rehabilitated four years later. He is considered as the father of ***Wahhabism*** and radical Islam.

² ***Ibn-Taymiyya*** is a Syrian Sunni jurist who lived during the times of the Mongolian invasions of the Middle East. As a disciple of ***Imam ibn-Hanbal***, he worked hard to bring about a revival of Islam.

³ ***Abd-al-Wahhab***, was born in the central part of Arabia, studied Sharia in Basrah, and began spreading his radical views by calling for a return to original Islam as practiced by the Prophet and his Companions. With the help of the ***House of Saud***, ***Wahhabism*** spread by force throughout the peninsula during the 19th century. In 1932, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia came into existence under the leadership of ***Abdul-Aziz***, of the House of Saud. A strict form of ***Hanbalism***, known also as ***Wahhabism***, is enforced throughout the Kingdom.

⁴ **Samuel P. Huntington was born in 1927, and died on 24 December, 2008.** "After receiving a doctorate from Harvard University, he spent most of his career teaching at Harvard, specializing in defense and international affairs. In ***The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order*** (1996), he predicted conflicts between the world's major cultures in the post-Cold War era." For more information, please see [this page](#).