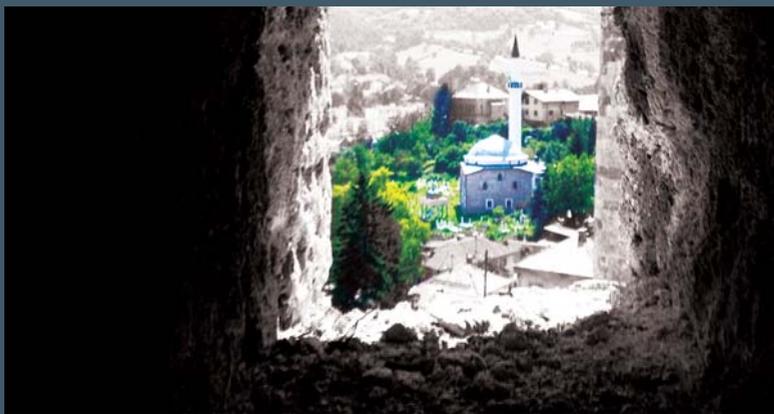


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ARCHES

QUARTERLY



EUROPE'S ISLAMIC ROOTS

UNCOVERING EUROPE'S HIDDEN
ISLAMIC PAST, CHALLENGING
CONTEMPORARY MYTHS



مؤسسة قرطبة

The Cordoba Foundation
Cultures in Dialogue.

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Cover image: Počitelj is a picturesque little town perched on a hillside above the Neretva River, south of Mostar in Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH). Built by Bosnian King Stjepan Tvrtko I in 1383, until recently Muslims and Christians had lived together in Počitelj for 500 years. The walled town of Počitelj evolved over the period from the 16th – 18th centuries. Architecturally, the surviving stone-built parts of the town are a fortified complex with mediaeval and Ottoman backgrounds. The first documented reference to the town dates from 1444, in Charters issued by Kings Alfonso V and Friedrich III. During the period 1463-1471 the town held a Hungarian garrison. Following a brief siege in 1471, the town fell to the Ottomans until 1878. From 1782 to 1879 it was the centre of a kadiluk (area under the jurisdiction of a *qadi* - judge) and from 1713 to 1835 it was the headquarters of the Počitelj military district.

Three periods were significant in the development of Počitelj: the first period was the Hungarian King Matthias Corvinus when the town enjoyed significant strategic importance (1463-1471); the second was the settlement under the Ottoman Empire with the erection of typical public buildings: mosques, *mekteb* (Muslim primary school), *imaret* (charitable kitchen), *medresa* (Muslim high school), *hamam*, Turkish baths, *han* (inn) and *shah-kula* (clock-tower) (1471-1698); and finally the recovery of its strategic importance after the Venetians conquered and destroyed Gabela (1698-1878).

During the 1992-96 war in Bosnia-Herzegovina Počitelj suffered extensive damage. In 1996, Počitelj was named by World Monuments Watch as one of the world's 100 most endangered cultural heritage sites, and recently a UNESCO "monuments of culture" heritage site.

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THE CORDOBA FOUNDATION

Cultures in Dialogue.

FOUNDED IN 2005, The Cordoba Foundation (TCF) is an independent Public Relations, Research and Training unit, which promotes dialogue and the culture of peaceful and positive coexistence among civilisations, ideas and people. We do this by working with decision-making circles, researchers, religious leaders, the media, and a host of other stakeholders of society for better understanding and clearer comprehension of inter-communal and inter-religious issues in Britain and beyond.

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- Face-to-face interaction with decision-makers and figures of authority
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FROM THE EDITOR

MENTION Europe and Islam in the same sentence and it is sure to conjure up negative impressions of a supposed Islamic radicalism, fundamentalists, intolerance and terrorism. Indeed it has become fashionable now to describe the Muslim presence in Europe with terms such as Eurabisation, Islamification or the Balkanisation of Europe. Such terms are used to stoke up fear and apprehension amongst the masses but also to assert that Islam in Europe is new, foreign and something to be loathed as a menace.

Such is the depth of apprehension amongst certain sections of society, that a number of organisations abound today that claim to protect Europe from the “Islamification” of Europe. Norwegian blogger, Fjordman, writing for Stop Islamisation International in his lengthy diatribes warns about civil strife breaking out in Europe due to “runaway immigration” from Muslim countries. In 2007, Pax Europa, a German-based organisation was banned from staging a demonstration in Brussels with the motto “For Europe – Against Eurabia”, to protest against the growing influence of Islam in Europe. Stop Islamisation of Europe (aka Stop the Islamification of Europe), also opposed to Muslim immigration in Europe conducts anti-Islamic protests and its motto is “Racism is the lowest form of human stupidity, but Islamophobia is the height of common sense”.

In an effort to better understand Europe’s Islamic roots and the place of Islam and Muslims in contemporary Europe, this edition of *Arches* explores early Muslim contacts with European societies, their contributions to culture and civilisation

as well their historical legacies. We also touch on related contemporary challenges facing Muslims in Europe, from identity formation, integration, Islamophobia, to political developments and government policies vis-à-vis Muslim communities in Europe.

Mention Europe and Islam in the same sentence and it is sure to conjure up negative impressions of a supposed Islamic radicalism, fundamentalists, intolerance and terrorism.

As ever, we have pulled together an impressive line up of writers, consisting of historians, academics, policy-makers and commentators. Matthew Carr provides a vivid historical backdrop of Muslim Spain, in particular the Moriscos – many of whom lived parallel lives, outwardly conforming to Catholicism whilst continuing to worship as Muslims in secret. Carriona Robertson adds to the discussion focusing on the Moors, attempting to retell shared European stories by negotiating our shared heritage. Telling the story of *Hayy ibn Yaqzan* by Abu Bakr Ibn Tufayl, Nabil Matar explains how there has been many adaptations of the character *Hayy*, from 13th century Damascus as a ‘Qur’anic Man’, to 15th century Florence where *Hayy*

was dubbed Europe's 'Renaissance Man'.

Humayun Ansari takes a special look at Muslim contributions in the Armed Forces throughout Europe, revealing some fascinating stories and insights. Ron Geaves, Robert Lambert, Grahame Davies, and Hamzah Foreman focus on British Muslim history: Geaves looks at the life and times of Liverpool convert to Islam Shaykh Abdullah Quilliam; Lambert concentrates on antipathy towards Islam and Muslims with significant roots during the Renaissance or early modern England; and Davies provides a fascinating insight about Welsh encounters with Islam. Similarly Foreman provides a biography of London's first mosque, The East London Mosque between 1910-1942 and Fiyaz Mughal reports on the experiences of British Muslim converts, who he describes as a 'minority within a minority'.

Looking at identity constructions, integration and engagement, Jeremy Henzell-Thomas reflects on being British and Muslim: holding values to account through reciprocal engagement while Laura Kilby and Avad Horowitz examine Cameron's "muscular liberalism" and media constructions of the terrorist 'other'.

On a broader level, Christian Lochon contributes a piece about a new approach to Islamic learning and the Medieval West; Ferid Muhic studies the roots of Balkan Muslim identities; and Amanda Paul analyses Turkey's EU journey and the obstacles that lay in its path. Omur Orhun addresses the challenges facing Muslims in Europe and Jonathan Fryer reflects on European responses to the Arab Spring.

Completing the excellent contributions in this edition of *Arches*, we are happy to introduce two captivating book reviews – M.A. Sherif's *Brave Hearts: Pikhthall and Philby: Two English Muslims in a Changing World* (reviewed by Choudhury Mueen), and Michael Morgan's *Lost History: The Ending Legacy of Muslim Scientists, Thinkers and Artists* (reviewed by David Levering Lewis).

As we literally turn the pages of history

in this issue of *Arches*, it is hoped that we are able to develop a better understanding of Europe's Islamic roots, than the misinformation that abounds.

*Abdullah Faliq

EDITOR
ARCHES QUARTERLY

*Abdullah Faliq helped set-up The Cordoba Foundation and edits *Arches*, amongst other publications, as the foundation's Head of Research. In 2001, he helped launch the "Declarations of European Muslims" by the Grand Mufti of Bosnia Dr Mustafa Ceric. Faliq studied Arabic and conducted research in Egypt, Jordan, Sudan, Palestine & Bosnia as part of his MA and doctoral studies specialising in Arab political Islam and British Muslims. Active in the British Muslim scene since the 1980s, he is currently a trustee of the London Muslim Centre and Deputy General Secretary of the Islamic Forum of Europe.



FOREWORD BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

IT is quite common for nations in the clutches of fear resulting from political and economic recession to adopt a more insular, introvert and isolationist attitude.

Some call it 'putting one's house in order', others term it 'a re-address and revision' of recent ways and methods. Sometimes, these are necessary practices, often they manifest a deeper and more profound problem in the intellectual and ideological understanding of a peoples' 'self.'

These days, it seems that virtually all nations, or at least most, are addressing their respective 'self', albeit in different and various ways. The Arab people seem to be on a tremendous and fantastic journey of self-discovery after decades of political, cultural and ideological stagnation through the wave of revolutions creating the new term: Arab Spring. European nations seem to be on a different kind of journey, although no less fascinating.

Immense economic and political challenges facing Europe and the West in general have resulted in the emergence of a new narrative, which reflects the collective insecurities and apprehensions. Whether it be the fear of losing a job, a home, a pension, or the fear of losing an industry or the security and safety of society as a whole, the narrative is distinct and unmissable.

In the past few years, numerous European leaders have lined up to repeat and emphasise the line on Europe's Judeo-Christian heritage. Virtually every European leader, most recently the German Chancellor Angela Merkel, have repeated that claim in prominent forums and before significant audiences, deeming it beyond question, doubt or inquisition.

However, historians and academics from across the spectrum, point to a different

reality. That reality is that Muslims also played considerable and substantial role in shaping Europe as we know it today. Besides the fact that more than 30 million Muslims call Europe their home, the continent's recent past speaks of Muslim European politicians, judiciaries, economists, scientists, scholars, philosophers, thinkers, poets, writers, artists, musicians, athletes, and many more, who made an immense contribution to what Europe is today.

Muslims also played considerable and substantial role in shaping Europe as we know it today. Besides the fact that more than 30 million Muslims call Europe their home, the continent's recent past speaks of Muslim European politicians, judiciaries, economists, scientists, scholars, philosophers, thinkers, poets, writers, artists, musicians, athletes, and many more...

It is notable that among Europe's most important and aesthetically attractive tourist sites are the remains and relics of Europe's Muslims, especially in the

southern regions. And while some of the chapters recalled might speak of clash and conflict, there are far more which reflect a time of economic, artistic and scientific boom, where Muslims alongside their fellow European Christians and Jews created some of the wonderful and uplifting times.

To deny this, is to misrepresent the history of Europe; hence misrepresenting its heritage, current status and future outlook. It is also to deny the tens of millions of European Muslims their claim to belong and to have made a contribution to Europe's present. With governments across the continent demanding of Muslims to integrate, would this not be the best way to achieve that goal? Indeed, in a world that is divided by political and ideological conflict, would it not serve to promote Europe's past, present and future image across the globe, by reflecting its truly 'inclusive' and cohesive history?

The Cordoba Foundation recognises the glorious past of Europe where people of faith came together and created the basis for its present reality on so many levels. Hence the name we chose upon establishing this organisation. Also, we recognise the necessity for Europe's younger generations to all collectively look back unto their past with pride and a sense of belonging, ownership and contribution rather than with an outlook of exclusivity and isolationism.

As a result, this issue of Arches comes to address this particular narrative and to propose a new approach to Europe's past, in which faith played a crucial role and all religions came together and shared the burden of delivering our collective present.

***Anas Altikriti**

CHIEF EXECUTIVE
THE CORDOBA FOUNDATION

*Anas Altikriti, CEO of The Cordoba Foundation, is an internationally accredited translator and interpreter by profession and a postgraduate lecturer in the same field. He was a leading figure of the British Anti-War Movement and Chair of the 2-million Iraq demonstration in February 2003. Altikriti helped successfully negotiate the release of Western Christian peacemakers taken hostage in Iraq in 2005. He is a media commentator and writer in Arabic and English, as well as an advisor and consultant to numerous UK and international organisations on Muslim politics, East-West relations, combating extremism, negotiations, and dialogue. He is former President of the Muslim Association of Britain, a founding member of the British Muslim Initiative and an advisor to the European Muslim Research Centre. Altikriti is also completing a PhD in Political Studies at the University of Westminster, London.



The Moriscos: a Lesson from History?

*MATTHEW CARR

IN April 1609 King Philip III of Spain ushered in one of the cruelest episodes in Spanish history, when he secretly ordered the expulsion of all his Muslim subjects from Spanish territory. Between 1609-14 an estimated 350,000 men, women, and children were forcibly removed from their homes and deported from the country in what was then the largest removal of a civilian population in European history, even larger than Spain's previous expulsion of the Jews which followed the Christian conquest of Granada in 1492. Unlike the Jews, the Muslims were all baptised Catholics who had been forcibly converted to Christianity at the beginning of the sixteenth century. For more than a hundred years the Moriscos, or 'little Moors', as these reluctant converts were known, lived a precarious and marginalised existence in the midst of a chauvinistic Christian society that demanded the eradication of their religious and cultural traditions and punished them when they proved unwilling or unable to meet these demands.

Some Moriscos accepted their new Catholic identities in the knowledge that they had little choice and even became fervent Christians, but many continued to practice an underground Islam despite the increasingly severe repression of the Spanish state. In 1568 the victimised Muslims of Granada rebelled and initiated a savage civil war, which convinced Spain's rulers that the Moriscos were collectively incapable of Christianity. An influential consensus at the upper echelons of the church and state depicted the Moriscos as alien trespassers on Spanish soil with political and religious affiliations to Spain's foreign Muslim and Protestant enemies, whose presence constituted a permanent threat to state security.

In the last decades of the sixteenth century leading Spanish clerics and statesmen considered a series of radical solutions to Spain's 'Morisco question' that included mass castration, physical extermination, and physical expulsion. This consensus was not universal. Religious tolerance was not generally an option in sixteenth century Spain, but there were Christians both inside and outside the Catholic Church who criticised the persecution of the Moriscos and called for a more gradualist form of assimilation through persuasion and preaching rather than force.

These arguments were partly responsible for the years of vacillation and tortuous official debates that preceded the drastic and terrible decision by Philip and his ministers in 1609 to forcibly remove all Moriscos from Spanish soil. In doing so, Spain's rulers destroyed the last vestiges of the rich multi-ethnic Moorish civilisation of al-Andalus that had developed in the Iberian Peninsula, in the wake of the eighth century Muslim conquests of Visigothic Spain. By the early seventeenth century the best days of al-Andalus were a distant memory, and the Moriscos were a marginalised minority whose members were mainly descended from the former proletarian base of Moorish Spain.

The eradication of this essentially defenceless minority completed the ruthless destruction of Spain's complicated multicultural and multi-ethnic heritage that had begun more than two centuries before with the forced conversion of Spanish Jewry, and consolidated Spain's transformation into a religiously homogenous state. The expulsion is often described as a historical tragedy, and for the tens of thousands of men and women who lost their homes, their livelihoods and

in many cases, their lives, their fate was indeed tragic. But the expulsion was also a monumental historical crime. Even from the distance of four hundred years, it is a crime that feels disturbingly modern, and which has become strikingly relevant to our own times.

A DISTANT MIRROR

The history of state formation from the princely faith-based states of early modern Europe to the modern nation-state is filled with episodes in which unwanted or incompatible populations have been expelled or physically eliminated in order to establish religiously, ethnically or racially homogenous communities within a single national territory. Many of the expectations and assumptions that made the expulsion possible were specific to the sixteenth century, but the victimisation of the Moriscos also contains themes and dynamics that are common to persecutory episodes and ethnic cleansings throughout history.

The victimisation of unwanted minorities; conspiratorial narratives which present such minorities as a dangerous 'enemy within' and exaggerate their subversive potential; the representation of cultural difference as a form of deliberate hostility and intransigence; the paranoia and bigotry of powerful majorities that seek to remake or define themselves in a 'them' and 'us' struggle for uniformity and 'purity' – all these universal components of persecution were present in sixteenth century Spain.

Today, in the early 21st century, many of these tendencies are becoming disturbingly visible in Europe in a very different historical context, in which economic insecurity, anxieties about national identity and the future of the nation state, and the international terrorist emergency engendered by the September 11 attacks, have all combined to create a toxic climate of fear and xenophobia which has focussed on Third World immigrants in general and particularly on European Muslims. At first sight there may not seem to be much in common between

contemporary Islamophobic narratives depicting secularism and tolerance as the essence of Europe's *civilisational identity*, and a sixteenth century Catholic Spain that demanded that Jews and Muslims become Christians in order to remain in the country. What lessons, if any, can we draw from this tragic episode in Muslim-Christian relations?

Many Moriscos did become 'good and faithful Christians', either through resignation to the new status quo or genuine conviction. Others remained faithful to their Islamic religious beliefs and lived parallel lives, outwardly conforming to Catholicism while continued to worship as Muslims in secret.

At a time when many European politicians are increasingly rejecting 'failed' multicultural notions of citizenship and depicting cultural diversity – and Muslim cultural diversity in particular – as a corrosive threat to European values, the destruction of the Moriscos is a grim example of what can happen when a policy of assimilation is imposed by force and driven by bigotry and chauvinism. The decision to expel the Moriscos followed more than a century in which Spain's rulers tried to eradicate not just the Islamic religious beliefs of the Moriscos, but their customs and cultural traditions. Public or private bathing, dances, the speaking of Arabic, circumcision and Muslim burial rites, even eating couscous were regarded as deviant acts and punished with fines, imprisonment and even execution. These efforts were spearheaded by the Inquisition,

and they were not entirely unsuccessful.

Many Moriscos did become 'good and faithful Christians', either through resignation to the new status quo or genuine conviction. Others remained faithful to their Islamic religious beliefs and lived parallel lives, outwardly conforming to Catholicism while continued to worship as Muslims in secret. Such behaviour confirmed the prejudices of their Christian enemies and became a justification for further repression. This increasingly vicious circle of repression and defiance fatally undermined the possibility for coexistence even within the admittedly narrow terms demanded by Christian society. The original 'conversions' of the Moriscos were intended to eradicate an Iberian Islamic presence that was considered to be inimical to Spain's Catholic/Hispanic identity by forcibly absorbing Spanish Muslims into Christian society. But the more extremist anti-Morisco elements depicted Spain's Muslim population in quasi-racist terms as defilement of Christian 'blood,' who contaminated Christian society precisely because they were so closely interwoven with it.

The original 'conversions' of the Moriscos were intended to eradicate an Iberian Islamic presence that was considered to be inimical to Spain's Catholic/Hispanic identity.

Today, 'biological' or skin-coloured racism has become a largely submerged but by no means absent undercurrent, in the emphasis on cultural difference and incompatibility that defines the new pan-European drift toward monoculturalism and 'social cohesion'. Where sixteenth century Spaniards regarded the physical presence of Muslims as a 'stain' on Spanish blood purity, the more extreme

Islamophobes of the our own era depict Islam as a backward and inferior culture/religion whose degenerate customs and beliefs are permanently and ineradicably ingrained in those who belong to it. At present Europe is home to fifteen to eighteen million Muslims, who first began to arrive in large numbers as immigrant workers in the early 70s. Where these migrants were once identified in terms of their national origins, whether Turkish, Bangladeshi, Pakistani or Moroccan, their descendants are now more likely to be defined as Muslims – a categorisation that is often imagined as a single monolithic bloc whose members are collectively incompatible with European values and perhaps with modernity itself.

These sentiments were already visible in the last decades of the twentieth century but they have been exacerbated and legitimised by the 'culture wars' of recent years, to the point when the Muslim presence in Europe is often presented as a common threat not just to particular nations but to the future of European civilisation itself. These threat narratives incorporate a wide gamut of ideological persuasions and sometimes contradictory positions, in which liberal defenders of freedom of cultural expression demand the prohibition of the Muslim headscarf, secularists and atheists call for the 're-Christianisation' of Europe, Catholics present themselves as defenders of the Enlightenment, and former fascists defend Europe's 'Judeo-Christian' essence.

All these different perspectives share the same perception of Islam as a primitive and barbaric religion intent on imposing *shari'a* law on the entire world through covert cultural infiltration or overt conquest. And it is here, in this hostile anti-Muslim consensus that the 21st century sometimes begins to resemble the sixteenth. A sixteenth century Spanish time traveller in today's Europe might have been puzzled by the representation of Europe's Muslims as a collective threat to European secularism and tolerance – to say nothing of the often-repeated references to Europe's 'Judeo-Christian' roots. But he or she would

have felt on more familiar ground on hearing Pope Benedict XVI's controversial speech in September 2006, when he quoted the fourteenth century Byzantine Christian Emperor Manuel Paleologos II's observation that Muhammad had brought 'things only evil and inhuman' into history, such as his command to 'spread by the sword the faith he preached'.

THE INTERNAL ENEMY

If contemporary Islamic threat narratives sometimes recall medieval anti-Muslim polemics, they also fuse culture, religion and politics in their imagination of the Muslim enemy, in ways that would not be entirely unfamiliar to a visitor from Hapsburg Spain. Where sixteenth century Spanish officials regarded the Moriscos as 'domestic enemies' with links to the Barbary corsairs and the Ottomans, journalists and 'terrorism experts' depict Europe's Muslims as an 'enemy within' with links to terrorism and enemies beyond Europe's borders. Where Inquisitors regarded Morisco communities as bastions of covert Muhummadism and nests of sedition, some of these commentators depict a continent pockmarked with hostile Muslim enclaves, 'Londonistans' and no go areas that lie entirely outside the control of the state, in which the sight of a beard, a *shalwar kameez* or a *niqab* is evidence of cultural incompatibility or a refusal to integrate.

As in the sixteenth century, the depiction of Europe's Muslims as 'suspect communities' tends to interpret cultural and religious difference – whether real or simply imagined – as an expression of defiance or intransigence. Today, as in the past, the covered female face has become a particular object of such suspicions, even if the meanings associated with it have changed. Where Spanish clerics once associated the Muslim veil or *almalafa* with female sexuality and saw it as a threat to Catholic morality and virtue, the *hijab*, the *niqab* and the *burqa* have been variously interpreted as a threat to European secularism, a symbol of the oppression of women or as a 'terrorist threat' as the Dutch

cabinet described the *burqa* in November 2006, during a discussion which resulted in a decision to ban it from public places throughout Holland.

Holland is not the only European country to have introduced legislation banning the *burqa*, the *niqab* and the *hijab*. Whether such bans are presented as a defense of female equality or the promotion of integration, they tend to take it for granted that Muslims are members of a puritanical and primitive culture/religion that sanctions genital mutilation, the stoning of homosexuals and the oppression of women and demands violent jihad as a religious obligation. There are certainly reactionary elements amongst Europe's Muslim communities, who denounce the decadence of the West, who talk of killing apostates and homosexuals and the superiority of Islamic civilisation. There is a small minority of radical extremists who have carried out or attempted to carry out mass killings of European civilians. But these groups constitute a minority within a minority, compared with the hostile consensus that is beginning to take shape amongst media pundits, politicians, terrorism experts and the ordinary population which increasingly depicts Europe's Muslims as a dangerous and possibly incompatible presence that will not or cannot adapt to European norms.

Such hostility tends to ignore the distinctions between religious and secular Muslims, between different strands of Islam or different cultural traditions, between 'fundamentalist', 'terrorist', and 'Islamist' and cite the most extremist and reactionary preachers such as Abu Hamza or Abu Qatada as evidence of a generalised cultural backwardness. Where sixteenth century Spaniards were unable or unwilling to distinguish between the religious and cultural loyalties of the Moriscos and their political loyalties to their Christian lords or to the Spanish Crown, contemporary Islamophobic narratives imagine that all Europe's Muslims are driven by common religious allegiances that have remained essentially unchanged since the time of the Prophet.

Other religious groups, including Christians, also exhibit reactionary attitudes towards women and homosexuals, but such attitudes amongst Muslims tend to be singled out as further evidence of their singular incompatibility with the values of a secular, enlightened and tolerant Europe. The result is that Europe's Muslims, like the Moriscos, tend to be imagined as a monolithic community whose members all share the same core identity – an identity that is hateful and threatening and the antithesis of the more enlightened values that are considered somehow intrinsic to all indigenous Europeans.

THE EURABIAN CONSPIRACY

The 'identity politics' of 21st century Europe are based on very different assumption to a sixteenth century Spanish society that often believed itself to be a divinely chosen for conquest on behalf of the faith, but then, as now, hostility toward the Moriscos was often fuelled by a sense of insecurity and vulnerability, which led easily to suspicions of conspiracy. Spanish Christians often argued that the Moriscos were engaged in a secret conspiracy to 're-conquer' Spain. In recent years an increasingly influential school of thought that spans the conservative/extreme right political spectrum has depicted Europe as a doomed continent that is being transformed into a colony of Islam called 'Eurabia'.

Eurabia bears many of the essential features of the invented anti-Semitic tract, the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*

Merging Islamophobic fantasy with conspiracy theory, Eurabia is a nightmare vision of a European future culturally and religiously colonised by Islam. It fuses science fiction visions of a dystopian future in which European civilisation has ceased to exist with historical references to the

battle of Poitiers or the 1783 siege of Vienna in their presentation of Europe's Muslim immigrants as the vanguard of a new Islamic conquest. Originally developed by the Egyptian-born ultra-Zionist writer Bat Ye'or, Eurabia bears many of the essential features of the invented anti-Semitic tract, the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, in its presentation of European Muslims as agents in a conspiratorial program of world domination. To Ye'or, every new mosque, every Arab investment or Arab endowment to a European university is a confirmation of European masochism, spiritual sickness and subservience to Muslim 'dhimmitude'.

A whole range of writers, commentators that span the 'soft Eurabianism' of Christopher Caldwell to the more fanatical and hysterical punditry of Melanie Philips and Mark Steyn, have articulated a similar vision of a masochistic and suicidal Europe surrendering to Islamic cultural and religious domination. To the American anti-Islamic ideologue Daniel Pipes, Eurabia stems from Europe's 'alienation from the Judeo-Christian tradition, empty church pews and a fascination with Islam', whereas 'Muslims display a religious fervour that translates into jihadi sensibility, a supremacism towards non-Muslims and an expectation that Europe is waiting for conversion to Islam'.

Eurabia's premise of a clash of civilisations between Islam and Europe's 'Judeo-Christian' civilisation is a recurring theme of the European far-right – many of whose parties have distanced themselves from their Nazi ideological roots to become ardent Zionists. But Eurabian fantasies are not limited to the political fringe. Respected mainstream historians such as Martin Gilbert and Niall Fergusson have expressed approval for Ye'or's linkages between Europe's imminent cultural decline and its falling population.

Just as Spanish anti-Morisco writers once feared that Moriscos were out-breeding Christians to the point when they would eventually outnumber them, Eurabians predict that rising Muslim birth-rates and declining fertility rates amongst 'secular' and 'Christian' Europeans alike transform

Europe into what the late Italian journalist Oriana Fallaci called 'a province of Islam, as Spain and Portugal were of the time of the Moors' which 'teems with mullahs, imams, mosques, burqas and chadors'.

Purveyors of these nightmare scenarios tend to be more temperate than Fallaci, who wrote that Muslims 'breed like rats'. But even mainstream academics such as the Princeton historian Bernard Lewis could tell the German newspaper *Die Welt* in July 2004 that 'Europe will have Muslim majorities in the population by the end of the twenty-first century at the latest' – a prospect that he predicted would transform Europe into 'part of the Arab west- the Maghreb'.

Other commentators have described a similarly dire future, in which Europe's Muslims are inexorably growing to the point when they will be able to impose shar'ia law across Europe through sheer weight of numbers. Some attribute this demographic transformation to low birth rates amongst an aging European population; others claim that European Muslims are deliberately increasing their numbers in order to take over Europe as a form of 'stealth jihad' – a lunatic notion that Philip III and his advisors would nevertheless have understood.

There is abundant evidence to demonstrate that these demographic projections are unreliable at best and inflated and fantastic at worst. According to the respected US-based Population Reference Bureau, Muslim fertility rates have fallen continuously not only in Europe but also in North Africa. In an article in August 2007, the *Financial Times* disputed Eurabian predictions of a demographic decline and noted a 'rebound in fertility' in northern Europe in recent years. Citing figures from the United Nations and the CIA World Factbook which found little difference between the birth-rates of Algerian women in France and French women overall, the article concluded that 'Islamicisation – let alone shar'ia law – is not a demographic prospect for Europe'.

Statistical evidence of these developments is far more readily available

than it was in the sixteenth century, but the fear and loathing at the heart of Eurabian mythology is as impervious to rational analysis as the supposedly pre-modern bigotry that was once directed at the Moriscos, and its assumptions and beliefs are too often uncritically accepted and acted upon.

Eurabia is one element in a rising tide of anti-Muslim sentiment throughout Europe that has taken various forms, from relentlessly negative and often blatantly dishonest media coverage of Muslims to physical attacks, campaigns against the construction of mosques and acts of vandalism against Islamic buildings, and grotesque episodes such as the 'pig parade' in Bologna, where local residents carried pigs heads and sausages to the site of a proposed mosque in an attempt to 'contaminate' it. European politicians generally avoid the language used by Giancarlo Gentilini, the deputy mayor of Treviso, who once described Muslims as 'a cancer which must be eradicated before they start to spread'.

Respectable English political discourse tends to more reserved than Winston Churchill's grandson, who has warned that the 'takeover' of British mosques by the Deobandi sect is creating a 'viper's nest in our midst'. But many European politicians and respected commentators share Churchill's belief that 'unlike most other categories of migrant, the Muslims are reluctant to assimilate and, all too often, wish to pursue their own agenda.' In September 2000 Cardinal Giacomo Biffi, the Archbishop of Bologna called for a limitation on Muslim immigration into Europe, on the grounds that 'in the vast majority of cases, Muslims come here with the resolve to remain strangers to our brand of individual or social "humanity" in everything that is most essential, most precious'. To Filip Dewinter, the leader of the far-right Vlaams Belang party in Belgium, 'it's impossible to assimilate in our country if you are of Islamic belief'.

Similar accusations were once levelled at nineteenth century Jewish immigrants from Tsarist Russia in Western Europe.

Then, as now, such assumptions tended to ignore the evidence of discrimination and prejudice from within the 'host' country itself. David Cameron's recent attack on 'state multiculturalism' in Munich was only the latest expression of an increasingly inquisitorial mentality which demands that Muslims prove their 'moderation' in order to justify their continued presence in Europe.

That same month, the Sarkozy government in France announced its plans to launch a 'national debate on the role of Islam and respect for French secularism among Muslims', whose issues would include the financing and building of mosques, the contents of Friday sermons and the education of the imams delivering them. In a number of countries, regional and national governments have introduced legislation which aims to weed out incompatible (Muslim) immigrants and test their ability to interact with European notions of tolerance and secularism. In 2005 the interior ministry of the German state of Baden-Wurtemberg introduced a two-hour exam aimed primarily at Muslim applicants for German citizenship, in which applicants were asked questions on their attitudes to homosexuality, freedom of expression and arranged marriages.

Similar tests have subsequently been introduced in other European countries. In March 2006, the Dutch government introduced a civic integration test, in which prospective migrants wishing to become Dutch citizens were shown a DVD entitled 'To the Netherlands' that showed gays kissing on a beach and a topless woman emerging from the sea. These tests are not specifically aimed at Muslims but at relatives of migrants 'from non-Western countries' wanting to join their families and non-Dutch residents of Holland, but they were introduced after years in which the Muslim presence was routinely cited by mainstream politicians and right-wing populists such as Pim Fortyn as the predominant cultural threat to Dutch liberal tolerance.

A similar pattern has unfolded in other parts of Europe, including Spain, which

has increasingly begun to move away from its previous *laissez faire* attitude toward its new Muslim immigrant population. Last year Spain experienced its first 'headscarf crisis', a number of town councils introduced bans on the *burqa*, and rightwing politicians have begun to highlight Islamic cultural and religious difference as a particular egregious example of the corrosive impact of multiculturalism on Spanish national identity.

In Spain, as in other European countries, the backlash against multiculturalism is often fuelled by security fears that conflate Muslim cultural and religious difference with radicalisation and terrorism, and which then view assimilation and 'social cohesion' as essential components of national security. But if the history of the Moriscos has any single lesson to offer the present, it is that assimilation – in the sense of forced religious and cultural absorption – is an ineffective and even counterproductive response to security fears.

From the moment Spain's sixteenth century rulers set out to transform their Morisco subjects into Christians, they became trapped by their own suspicions, prejudices and unrealistic expectations, while coercion bred resentment, defiance and alienation amongst Moriscos who might otherwise have been loyal subjects of the Crown.

Is Europe in danger of succumbing to the same dynamic in its treatment of its Muslim minorities? These similarities need not be overstated. There is no Inquisition to police the cultural and religious behaviour of Europe's Muslims. Citizenship and integration tests implemented by democratic governments do not equate with the inquisitorial dungeon and the *auto da fe*. Nevertheless, Europe is moving increasingly further away from the former British Home Secretary Roy Jenkins' description of integration as, 'equal opportunity accompanied by cultural diversity in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance', toward an *assimilationist* model in which the right to remain in European territory is increasingly conditional on

compliance and conformity.

In France, as Interior Minister, Nicolas Sarkozy proposed to expel entire families where 'a wife is kept hostage at home without learning French'. In Holland, migrants who fail the new integration tests or do not present themselves to have their progress monitored after 6 months can be fined. In Switzerland the Swiss People's Party (Schweizerische Volkspartei or SVP) has called for the penal code to be changed so that all foreigners who commit crimes can be deported once they have finished their jail sentences. In March 2006, interior ministers of the six largest countries in the European Union considered a proposal that would require immigrants to learn the language of their adopted country and adapt to its social norms or face forcible removal.

Liberal, conservative and far-right commentators have proposed a halt to Muslim immigration in order to prevent Europe's cultural Islamicisation.

In Norway the right-wing Progress Party has proposed that immigrants whose children do not learn Norwegian should lose their social security and child benefits in order to ensure their future adherence to 'Norwegian values'. There are also those who argue that more extreme measures may be required to preserve Europe's heritage. Liberal, conservative and far-right commentators have proposed a halt to Muslim immigration in order to prevent Europe's cultural Islamicisation. Some have proposed that Muslim immigrants already in Europe should be deported en masse.

If the fate of Spain's Muslims is a distant and barely-remembered episode in European history, the Nazi solution to Europe's 'Jewish problem' provides a more recent example of where such thinking can sometimes lead. It is often

forgotten that the Nazis originally saw the forced emigration of German Jewry as the solution to the Germany's 'Jewish problem' before turning to physical extermination. Partly as a result of the Holocaust, 'scientific' notions of racial supremacy have been largely discredited, but bigotry and racial hatred can always find new channels of expression and new ways of making themselves appear legitimate and commonsensical.

The spores of hatred and prejudice are latent in every society, and the expulsion of the Moriscos is only one example of a dark tradition that is deeply rooted in European history. Today 21st century European civil society has vastly greater possibilities to resist and challenge the dangerous and toxic currents of xenophobia and hatred that are coursing through the continent. Four hundred years later, the destruction of the Moriscos can still provide us with an example of what can happen when societies fail to rise to this challenge, and succumb to their worst instincts and their worst fears in an attempt to cast out imaginary devils.

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Between Collaboration & Resistance: Muslim Soldiers' Identities and Loyalties in the two World Wars

*HUMAYUN ANSARI

Lance Corporal Jabron Hashmi, a British Muslim soldier, was killed in Afghanistan in 2006 while fighting the Taliban. His funeral was attended by four hundred people including his commanding officer and the Muslim Chaplain for the Armed Forces. His coffin was draped in a gold and green cloth bearing a quotation from the Koran; his uncle described his nephew as 'a hero of Islam, Pakistan, Britain and the international community, who sacrificed his life for a noble cause' (echoing similar comments to those made by leading British Muslims during the First World War); his older brother Zeeshan, a former member of the Intelligence Corps, said that 'Jabron was a committed soldier and a committed Muslim. He was fiercely proud of his Islamic background and he was equally proud of being British. (The Guardian, 21 April 2007)

Your democratically elected governments continuously perpetuate injustice against my people all over the world, and your support of them makes you directly responsible, just as I am directly responsible for protecting and avenging my Muslim brothers and sisters... We are at war and I am a soldier. (Mohammad Siddique Khan [7/7 bomber], BBC News, 1 September 2005)

IN January 2008, a gang pleaded guilty for plotting to behead a British Muslim for having enlisted in the British army¹. This threat highlighted the need for British Muslim soldiers to feel confident that their role in the British army does not compromise their adherence to their religion especially as operations in countries such as Iraq and Afghanistan have raised important ethical questions amongst Muslims about the role of British

service personnel. Fighting against their co-religionists can be challenging for individual Muslim soldiers. Siddique's speech recorded before the 7/7 bombing together with the report of Hashmi's funeral raise complex questions about identity and loyalty. What are the sources of the construction of Muslim identities - the ethno-religious culture? How important are the changing contexts of society, in addition to the changing global context? In what ways does the dynamic interaction of these shifting variables make an impact? How does one construe the dialectic between identity and loyalty? More specifically, how does a Muslim soldier reconcile the desire and duty to serve the nation in its army with the imperative to kill a Muslim enemy? Finally, how does a Muslim understand *jihad* against one's nation, something that Siddique pronounced as 'an obligation on every single one of us'²?

These questions, while very contemporary, are not new, however, since Muslims have formed a significant part of, and fought in, rival non-Muslim rulers' armies for centuries. We discover, for instance, that in the armies of the British Empire, particularly in South Asia, over a period of perhaps two hundred years, there were literally tens of thousands of Muslims who fought on the side of the British as loyal partners-in-empire. From the early nineteenth century, with British involvement in the subcontinent steadily growing, Muslim soldiers started to represent an important element in the ranks of those locals who joined the various regiments of the British India army, fighting on occasion against their fellow believers on behalf of, first,

Company and, later, Crown.³ Punjabi and Pathan Muslims came to be recognised as the backbone of the British Indian Army; in time, they made up about a third of that force. Thus there had developed in British India a long tradition of military service and loyalty to the Crown. Drawing on material that explores the experiences of these former soldiers can help us to contextualise the dilemmas currently faced by British Muslims facing the challenges that twenty-first century conflict poses for constructions of their identity.

It was not just Indian Muslims who played a key role in Britain's imperial forces. Muslims from other parts of the British Empire too were prepared to fight against their co-religionists. For instance, in November 1883, British commander, Hicks Pasha, led an army of 10,000 Egyptian soldiers against the Mahdi at the Battle of El Obeid in Sudan – they were defeated and many massacred. In the late 1890s, two-thirds of the 25,800 soldiers of the Anglo-Egyptian Nile Expeditionary Force, which began operations against the Khalifa in Sudan under Kitchener, belonged to Egyptian units. The exhortation to them made by the well-known late-Victorian British convert, Abdullah Quilliam, not to fight against their Sudanese Muslim brethren (who he declared had “taken up arms to defend their country and their faith”) was ignored.⁴ With the further consolidation of Britain's global empire, Muslim recruits continued to provide essential manpower, fighting in twentieth-century wars on Britain's behalf.

There is ample evidence to suggest that thousands of Muslims have loyally fought and died on Britain's behalf. We now know that at the start of the First World War, within the opening months, when British forces took a pounding, thereby needing desperate reinforcements, two divisions of the Indian Army were mobilised and deployed on the Western Front. Though they played a crucial part in holding the line, displaying great determination, for a long time Indian soldiers received scant attention in the accounts of the

‘Great War’ and their sacrifice was rarely acknowledged. By Armistice Day, 11th November 1918, 1.3 million Indians had joined the British Indian Army with over 47,000 of them being killed and a further 65,000 being wounded during the conflict. Muslims were disproportionately involved. They saw action in France and Belgium; in Gallipoli and Salonica; in East Africa; and in Mesopotamia, Egypt and Persia.

The contribution of the Indian Army to the Second World War was even greater. By 1945, 2.5 million men had fought in the war – they formed the largest volunteer force ever seen in history. They served in Africa, Burma, Malaya, and in the Middle East. According to the military historian Jahan Mahmood, ‘[o]ver a period of five years, 617,353 Muslims volunteered. Muslim regiments provided 65 per cent of Indian troops fighting in North Africa, Italy and Burma. After the great successes of British Indian units in North Africa in 1940-42, three battle hardened Indian divisions were deployed to Italy where they fought some of the most determined and experienced German troops.’⁵ The price that they paid was heavy – 36,092 volunteers were killed or reported missing; 64,354 were wounded; and almost 80,000 had to endure captivity as prisoners of war (PoWs). As in the First World War, hundreds of military awards were won, including thirty Victoria Crosses, the highest award for bravery. Again, a substantial number of these soldiers were Muslim.

Moreover, many Muslims who were employed in the British merchant navy, and made up a substantial proportion of the more than 50,000 Indians who worked as lascars at the beginning of the First World War, also took a heavy toll. Between 1914 and 1918, 3,427 Indian crew members in British merchant ships were killed and 1,200 were taken prisoners. In the Second World War, the equivalent figures were 6,600 killed and 1,022 wounded, with an additional 1,217 as PoWs. At Tower Hill, half a mile from Aldgate in London's east end, which is the heart of today's Bangladeshi community in Britain, there

Among the names of the 26,833 merchant seamen killed in the 1939-1945 conflict are those of many Muslims - Miah, Latif Ali, Uddin...

is a poignant monument to the men of the British merchant navy who lost their lives in these two world wars. Among the names of the 26,833 merchant seamen killed in the 1939-1945 conflict are those of many Muslims - Miah, Latif Ali, Uddin. Their sacrifice for 'King and Country' is recorded and honoured in bronze as these men died fighting defending British rights and liberties and the nation's most cherished values. Their ultimate contribution reflected their commitment and loyalty. Only recently though has the heroic story of how Muslims from Britain's far flung empire contributed during the two world wars, begun to emerge.

Two stories illuminate this heroism. The first one took place during the Italian campaign in the Second World War: 'On 9 April 1945, a Pashtun soldier by the name of Ali Haidar, alongside his battalion, the 6/13 Frontier Force Rifles, attempted to cross the Senio River⁶. On their left 6/13 Frontier Force Rifles likewise carried the near slope in the first surge. But as they topped the bank, the trough of the river was lashed by a score of machine-guns, firing from portholes in both inner banks, and from enfilade positions on the left. The Frontiersmen dashed into the stream, where many fell dead and wounded. Sepoy Ali Haidar and two others were all of one platoon to reach the far bank. From thirty yards away a machine-gun nest spat death. Bidding his comrades give him covering fire, Ali Haidar lopped a grenade and followed in under it. Although wounded by a stick bomb he closed and destroyed the post. Without pause he charged the next weapon pit, from whence four machine-guns played on his comrades. He was struck twice and fell, but he crawled

forward, pulled the pin of a Mills' bomb with his teeth, and hurled it into the spandau nest. Weak with loss of blood he pulled himself to his feet, staggered forward and threw himself upon the gunners. The two surviving Germans surrendered. After recovering from his wounds, Ali Haidar was awarded the highest military honour; the Victoria Cross.⁷

The second story is of a Muslim woman: Noor Inayat Khan (1914-1944) who was the daughter of Inayat Khan and his American wife Nora Baker. Khan, a sufi musician from Bhopal in India came to England in 1912 and set up a '*khanqah*'⁸ in London. Finding it difficult to live on the meagre resources he was able to muster, in 1927, he moved to France. When France was occupied in 1940, Noor escaped to London and joined the Women's Auxiliary Air Force (WAAF) in November 1940. As the War intensified she was recruited by the Special Operations Executive and was dropped in France in June 1943 to help gather military intelligence. For four months she assisted both British and French resistance groups. Betrayed to the Germans she was arrested in October 1943 and held at their Headquarters. Having attempted to escape twice, she was declared highly dangerous and moved to Pforzheim and then Karlusche prisons where she was shackled in chains and kept in solitary confinement. There she was tortured, but showing immense courage refused to divulge the secrets codes. In September 1944 she was transferred to Dachau Concentration Camp and executed. She was one of the few people to be awarded the George Cross as well as Croix de Guerre with Gold Star, the highest British and French awards for non-combat gallantry.⁹

In highlighting these Muslims contributions we must not lose sight of the fact that it was not only the British for whom Muslims fought in these conflicts. They also fought and died equally heroically for the French Empire and the German Emperor during the First World War and for both Hitler and the Russians in the Second. Some 16,509 Tunisian

soldiers died for France in the First World War, out of a total of 62,461. Around 25,000 Algerian Muslim soldiers likewise lost their lives on French soil. According to Joe Lunn, 140,000 mainly Senegalese Riflemen of the French colonial army fought on the Western Front taking part in every major battle from Verdun, where they played a key role in the recapture of Fort Vaux, to the Armistice. Indeed, they were deployed as shock troops often suffering three times as many casualties as the French troops, as French generals 'sought to spare French lives by sacrificing African ones'.¹⁰ By the end of the Second World War, 175,000 African soldiers, comprising the majority of the Free French Army, had fought for France with nearly 30,000 killed in action at a terrible mortality rate of 26 per cent.¹¹ Several thousand of the Senegalese Muslim PoWs were also murdered by the German Army during the western campaign in 1940. These soldiers' motivations were, in large measure, similar to what induced those who fought for the British, except in one respect – in this case, most had been forcibly recruited through conscription.

Some 150,000 Muslim troops thus joined the German ranks as auxiliaries.

The situation on the Eastern Front was far more complex with many Muslims from Central Asia fighting there, having been rounded up by the NKVD (the Soviet secret police), and pressed into battalions – the Kazakhs, Uzbeks, Crimean Tartars. Huge numbers died, while thousands of Muslim conscripts deserted to escape the horror. Over four million Russian soldiers were captured by the Germans in the summer of 1941, amongst them tens of thousands of Muslim soldiers from southern Soviet Republics, for whom switching to the German side offered an escape from the brutality and starvation of enemy prison camps. Some 150,000

Muslim troops thus joined the German ranks as auxiliaries. An added incentive was that, in contrast to the suppression of Islam that they had experienced under the Soviet system, these troops were allowed much freedom of religion by the German authorities. Germany meanwhile had its Turkmen battalions who fought bravely to the last man rather than surrender. No mercy was shown to those who were captured.¹²

In the Balkans, Muslims were viewed as an enemy by all sides. Caught literally in the middle, Muslims found themselves being persecuted by the Ustasha, the Chetniks, the communist Partisans, and the orthodox Serbs: "The result was a population in crisis and struggling to survive. By 1943, 250,000 Muslims had been forced to leave their homes and become refugees, and perhaps as many as another 100,000 had been murdered or died of disease or starvation. This was the backdrop to future Muslim Waffen-SS recruitment in Bosnia".¹³ Back in Berlin, the recently-arrived anti-British Grand Mufti of Jerusalem was happy to offer a helping hand to establish a Waffen-SS Handschar (Scimitar) division of over 20,000 Bosnian Muslims: "The hearts of Muslims must today go out to our Islamic brothers in Bosnia, who are forced to endure a tragic fate. They are being persecuted by the Serbian and communist bandits. They are being murdered, their possessions are robbed, and their villages are burned. England and its Allies bear a great responsibility before history for mishandling and murdering Europe's Muslims just as they have done in the Arabic lands and in India".¹⁴ According to Jonathan Trigg, "by far the biggest recruiting sergeant for the new division was the ongoing spectre of ethnic violence – with the Partisan or Chetnik attacks targeting the Bosnian community... young Muslim men signed up to what they believed was the best defence they could get – German uniforms, German training and above all, German weapons".¹⁵ Under attack, these simple farmers' sons felt that the best way to protect themselves

and their families was to train and arm themselves under German auspices. This way they were able to look after their own villages and communities.

Clearly, Muslim soldiers such as these were struggling for their own survival – what brought them and the Germans together was not ideology but the devastating circumstances. It was primarily the persecution of their communities and religious repression combined with pan-Islamic solidarity that drove them into the arms of the German war machine.¹⁶

The Indian Army, too, some have suggested was a ‘mercenary’ force. It was drawn from the so-called ‘martial races’ – those who were perceived by the British to possess the necessary physical courage demanded of warriors. While it has been argued that ‘military values were not only real but deeply held – that ‘they went to the very heart of certain communities’, and that ‘for Pashtuns and Rajputs in particular the martial tradition has been an intrinsic aspect of their life and sense of identity’ – the fact remains that the British sought to harness these traditions to serve their own military ends. Hence, for instance, while Pathans were perceived as manly, courageous and chivalrous, it was when they were shorn of ‘primitiveness’ and imbued with loyalty and obedience to authority, that they and their military qualities became worthy of respect and admiration.

Even so the British were aware of Pathan ‘fanaticism’, which made them dangerous and unreliable in situations of critical conflict. So, in order to avoid such an eventuality, the British had been careful in the past to recruit Punjabis and Pathans from among the more trustworthy and obedient Muslim clans and tribes of northern India. However, the exigencies of the two world wars meant that those who joined increasingly did so primarily to satisfy their basic needs, and certainly comments regarding material rewards for military service – allotment of land, supplementing of agricultural income, promotion, pay rises, pensions, clothing – featured prominently in soldiers’

letters during the First World War – a valuable source for understanding the motivations of individual soldiers at this time. As one soldier wrote, “Our Indian Government deserves to be congratulated. Notwithstanding the great difficulties of distance, they arrange to perfection everything connected with the clothing and rationing of their Indian troops”,¹⁷ while, according to another, “Our generous Government made excellent arrangements for us while on leave... May God speedily give victory to our gracious King, and may he blacken the face of the enemy and humiliate him, both in this world and in the world to come. Amen”.¹⁸

Just as important perhaps as these ‘mercenary’ motives were the ‘traditional’ concerns of shame and honour (*izzat*) – standing, reputation or prestige. Largely drawn from among the middle-ranking peasantry, Indian Muslim soldiers cherished these values greatly. Soldiers’ comments about honour and shame suggested these to be the forms of identity that they held most dear. The discourse about *izzat* in their correspondence revealed a widely shared value system to which soldiers were expected at least to aspire. Honour was particularly important to many Muslims and it was deeply embedded in these soldiers’ psyche: as one wrote, “You did things which were right in your point of view even if it meant death”.¹⁹ For *izzat*, if necessary, such men were prepared to lay down their lives. Indeed, one of the primary purposes of fighting was to raise the status of one’s caste, clan and community. For instance, one letter talked of “Suffering for one end only – *izzat*. My duty is to help Government and increase the reputation of our family”.²⁰

The British tradition of absolute loyalty to the regiment dovetailed neatly with these values. Loyalty to the regiment was paramount, and these Muslims were convinced that only in the army any *izzat* could be acquired. There was often contempt for those who ran away or deserted or failed in their duty – “better to die than fail in one’s duty”.²¹ In the eyes of many soldiers, shame could involve an

excruciating loss of masculinity; to be a coward was to be “like a woman”, even a “sodomite”. Chivalry, on the other hand, was highly prized: “To die in the battlefield is the glory. It is the duty of everyone now to sacrifice one’s life and property for the Government and to show one’s courage”.²² As Jamadar Shamsheer Ali Khan of 34th Poona Horse stationed in France in April 1917 explained, this was the “time for showing valour”.²³ Why they fought so bravely was because they simply wanted to win honour on the battlefields. Given that religion permeated most aspects of Muslim soldiers’ practice, British sensitivity towards it helped to reinforce their loyalty; they were allowed scrupulous observance of their religious customs during the Great War. Every effort was made to facilitate Muslim troops in the fulfilment of the requirements of their faith – the British Indian authorities made sure that Indian soldiers received culturally appropriate food,²⁴ and knew in which direction to pray and bury the dead. Wounded Muslim soldiers fighting in France were treated in special hospitals along the south coast – in Brighton, Bournemouth and Brockenhurst. Those among them who died received burial rites according to their religion – indeed, meticulous attention was usually paid to the burial arrangements.

The first burial in the UK of an Indian Muslim soldier who succumbed to wounds received while serving in France took place in the Brookwood Cemetery in December 1914. Floral tributes were placed on the coffin by local Muslim converts. In 1915 the burial of an Indian Muslim officer took place. At the request of the imam of the Woking Mosque, the local commanding officer detailed fifty soldiers, headed by an officer, to attend the funeral in order to pay military honours to this gallant Indian soldier. Three rounds were discharged and, in a fusion of Muslim practices with British military traditions, the “Last Post” was sounded by the bugle boys. The Chairman of the local Urban Council deemed it “an honour to have men who fell as a result of the war buried in the district”. Soldiers reciprocated in equally glowing terms:

“The exalted Government has showered every blessing on us here, which I shall remember all my life, and which will bind me in complete loyalty”.²⁵

On the battle front too great efforts were made to accommodate their religious ceremonies, and ritual occasions and cherished religious artefacts such as the Qur’an were properly catered for. Havildar Ghufuran Khan, of the 129th Baluchis, wrote in August 1915 that “arrangements here to enable our people to keep Ramazan are excellent”;²⁶ Eid was celebrated on the battlefield – “all the Muslims of the Division had their prayers together... About 1,500 men assembled and prayers were offered for the victory of our King”.²⁷ The sensitivity of British officers to their men’s religious needs received warm praise. This gave rise to a relationship with the British often referred to as ‘tasting the salt’ – the salt of Britain. So, when wars broke out, it was time for them to repay. Such loyalty was greatly appreciated by the British officers who led them – those who led the Indian regiments often having immersed themselves in the cultures of India. There developed in one British somewhat romanticised account, ‘a close bond’, attachment, between officers and their men, ‘from which the rest of the world was excluded... For him there was no halfway house; he must give total obedience, total loyalty, total devotion’.²⁸

While most Muslim soldiers remained committed to fighting for the British Raj, nonetheless discipline problems did emerge. A real test of Muslim loyalty came soon after the eruption of the First World War when the Ottoman Empire entered the conflict on the opposite side in October 1914. What must have caused them deep anguish was the fact that on 14 November 1914 the Sheikh-ul-Islam in Istanbul declared *jihad* on behalf of the Ottoman government, urging Muslims all over the world – including in the Allied countries – to take up arms against Britain, Russia and France. Desertions and mutinies resulted: two mutinies took place in Rangoon (Burma) and Singapore – in the former case, in January 1915, three

Laying the Qur'an on their heads, the whole regiment, the 15th Lancers, took an oath "not to fight against Muslims".

companies of the 130th Baluchis (regiment), comprising Indian Muslims, expressed their unwillingness to fight their Turkish co-religionists by refusing to embark on ships destined for Mesopotamia. When in November 1915 the majority of the Indian Army was withdrawn from France to fight in Mesopotamia against Germany's Turkish ally, the Ottoman *Khalifa*, the symbolic leader of Islam, this presented fundamental dilemmas as Muslim troops arriving in Basra had to face Turkish Muslims in combat. This they were not prepared to do. Laying the Qur'an on their heads, the whole regiment, the 15th Lancers, took an oath "not to fight against Muslims".²⁹ Instead they "asked to be sent to some other theatre of war".³⁰ These mutineers were severely punished. But unease and dismay among Army ranks simmered. Indeed, some soldiers voiced sympathy for the mutineers: as one soldier wrote, "they did not in reality decline to fight for the Sirkar [Government], and should not have been called upon to fight against the Turks against their wish".³¹ In the opinion of another, "it is clear that they were not to blame... [They] only made a respectful protest".³²

As Indian Muslim soldiers became aware of differential treatment, they became increasingly disillusioned and critical. They realised that the specific measures, rules and regulations, which the British authorities instituted in relation to them, reflected their perceptions of Indians as inferior and less civilised people unfit for the freedoms available to the English. Curtailment of such freedoms was justified on the grounds that "Orientals... cannot understand the freedom with which the sexes mingle. Hence when they are allowed

unlimited freedom from the hospital etc. to go where they please, they are liable to gain many wrong ideas and impressions".³³ Not only did these views remain uncorroborated, the Chief Constable of Brighton was able to reassure the Secretary of State that "nothing could have been better than the conduct and behaviour of Indian sepoy[s] [soldiers] in Brighton. They have behaved as gentlemen".³⁴

Increasingly, Indian soldiers, whether in hospitals or at the battle front, expressed their discontent and frustration privately and publicly: for instance, one soldier observed that "all English doctors... take very good care of English wounded, while we Indians are badly neglected and treated".³⁵ Others, also convalescing at the Kitchener Indian Hospital in Brighton, wrote of the freedoms accorded to the English but denied to them. They resented this treatment and some complained bitterly of the injustices of these measures, of being treated "as prisoners". As the war became more ferocious they realised that white troops were being accorded preferential treatment over them, that "[t]he brave English have evolved such a rule as is advantageous to them. The red pepper is little used while the black pepper is daily used to the extent of at least a thousand maunds [a measure of weight]".³⁶ This differential treatment became even more invidious when they gathered that Algerians who were fighting for the French, in contrast, seemed to be receiving much more equal treatment, both in terms of freedoms and pay.

As the First World War dragged on, a growing awareness of being regarded and treated in an inferior manner, of oppression and subordination, of the double standards applied by the authorities in their treatment of British and Indian personnel reflecting the inequality of relations, served to erode 'patriotic' feelings and undermined identification with the British. Indeed, the feeling that white troops were being spared at the expense of Indian troops led to many Indian Muslim soldiers advising their families and friends not to enlist any more.

On the whole, though, the British were

able to retain Muslim loyalty. While fears were raised that Indian Muslim soldiers would sympathise with their co-religionists and the Chief Censor of the Indian military correspondence in France was instructed to monitor any disquiet or dismay, remarkably little 'seditious' material was detected. Indeed, the Censors were somewhat "surprised by the excellent spirit of the troops, who suffered so much and complained so little".³⁷ Disloyalty, for these soldiers was tantamount to treason, the worst of all offenses. When it occurred, it was subjected to severe censure from within the ranks. Referring to the mutinies of soldiers belonging to two Pathan tribes, the Afridis and Mohmands, one letter bemoaned, "[i]t was indeed a great pity that they should have acted thus at such a time. This is the time to show loyalty and give help to the Government and not to be false to one's salt... I am sure you will remember your hereditary services and show yourself worthy of your family traditions... Our duty is loyalty and bravery. I again say that I am deeply grieved and hurt by the behaviour of our people".³⁸ To reinforce loyalty they were reminded that, on the one hand, "[i]t is very difficult to get such a King [as we have got]" and, on the other, that "no fealty was owed to the Turks". As one soldier wrote: "Turkey, it is true, is a Muslim power, but what has it to do with us? Turkey is nothing at all to us".³⁹ Another put it even more bluntly: "The Turks are not our paternal uncle's children!" (a category of relative to whom, traditionally, loyalty would be owed).⁴⁰ And they were advised by their peers too to "remain in every respect loyal to our King and by your bravery give proof of the fidelity of your race".⁴¹

As the conflict progressed, criticisms of Turkey's entry into the war among these soldiers grew, providing further justification for not shirking combat against it: for instance, "The Turks made war against our Sirkar without any cause. Our Sirkar repeatedly told the Turks before the war to remain neutral, and that their security would be arranged for in every way. But Turks would not be advised, and

now they are giving away their country with their own hands".⁴² In June 1916, the revolt of Husayn, Sharif of Mecca, further tested Muslim opinion: "Turkey had made a mistake in joining Germany... Now we hear that the Sharif and leaders at Mecca and Medina, resenting the subservience of the Turks, have revolted and the wise men of India are disgusted with the Turks. It is a thousand pities that Turkey did not take the advice given by our Kings who are now fighting against her, to remain neutral. If she had remained neutral and anybody had attacked her, he would have been considered a tyrant".⁴³ Loyalty to the British army, evidently, outweighed any sense of common identity with Turkish Muslims: "This [15th Lancers Mutiny] was a great mistake to behave to our King in this way. The enemy no doubt are Turks, but in spite of this our men ought not to have been untrue to their salt".⁴⁴

However, there still remained concern for the Turks' fate and admiration for their fighting qualities. Take, for instance, Ghulam Abbas Ali Khan's following comment about the battles in the Dardanelles: "The Turks smashed and bashed the whole lot [France, Italy, England] ... The Turks are bravest of all".⁴⁵ Others felt "sorry about Talimand Khan [code term for Turkey] but it is at the will of God".⁴⁶ likewise, "you ask me to pray that Fateh Khan [code term for Britain] may obtain the victory. I however am concerned about Sultan Khan [code term for Turkey] because he is an honest person whereas Fateh Khan is a great rascal, and dishonest. I pray for Sultan Khan, that he may obtain his rights".⁴⁷ And when the Turks were destroyed at Baghdad by a mixed force of British and Indian troops in March 1917, Sowar Gul Mohamed Khan expressed "a great pity" for the outcome.⁴⁸

What we see here in all these letters dating from the First World War is a debate that Muslims conducted among themselves over their religion and loyalty to their Kings. How should they understand religion in order to resolve the tension between faith and loyalty? Should they put loyalty to their faith above loyalty to their

Empires? Throughout the war, they had to contend with this range of positions and arguments. For instance, there was German propaganda denouncing the British as an enemy of Muslims and encouraging them to desert. On the other hand, as the war progressed, *Akbar-i Jang* (War News), an Indian language periodical, was circulated among wounded soldiers, providing news of the glowing exploits of their compatriots as well as extracts from Indian soldiers' letters, some of which invoked religion to express loyalty. In the words of Hamidullah Khan, writing to Mohamed Wazir Khan of the 18th Lancers in France, "our religion teaches us to be in accord with our King".⁴⁹

Other Muslims elsewhere in the British Empire also sought to justify their identification with, and commitment to, the British war effort in terms of broad Muslim values: a resolution, proposed by a leading Muslim convert Lord Headley, seconded by the imam of the Woking Mosque, Maulvi Sadr-ud-Din, and unanimously passed by the British Muslim Society in September 1914, expressed "delight to find that their co-religionists in Islam were... carrying into effect the principles of Islam as inculcated by the holy Prophet Mohammed... freely pouring out their life blood in defence of honour and for the love of truth and justice".⁵⁰ At the same time, by arguing that the conflict could not be considered a 'religious war', the call for *jihad* by the Ottomans was implicitly rejected. Ahmadiyya literature similarly rebutted German calls to soldiers to stop fighting for the British by stressing that it was their religious duty to battle for their British Badshah (King): according to one soldier with Ahmadi sympathies, "the Prophet laid down that non-Musalman who were our friends should be helped and supported... The English Government is our supporter and protector... It is our duty to combat its enemies".⁵¹

Others were, however, less convinced that obedience to "the Authority placed over [them] was a religious duty". As one more sceptical soldier put it, "Now the God is holy, the Prophet is holy, should not the Authority placed over us be holy?

Must one in fact conform to the religion of our present King? We cannot accept [his] authority as [this] Authority eats swine's flesh, drinks spirits and commits fornication".⁵²

As the above exploration highlights, issues of identity and loyalty were very important concerns for Muslim soldiers on all sides – the Allies as well as their rivals. However what we also see is that this identity and any accompanying sense of loyalty were constantly being shaped by changing context. Connected and separated by a multitude of intersecting identities - ethnicity, kinship, tribe, nationality, geographic and regional location, and doctrinal and sectarian traditions, practices and interpretations – Muslim soldiers clearly attached at least as much importance (in some cases, more) to these forms of identification as to their religion - Islam. Throughout these conflicts, therefore, these men had to reconcile their ethnic, religious, and other affiliations at community and individual levels, buffeted (at least to some degree) by rapid change during the two world wars, compelling them to adapt and negotiate them consciously as well as unconsciously. The diversity of their values, symbols and aspirations, approaches to issues of identity, strength of adherence to ritual and loyalty to kin and tribal networks, and their involvement in a secular institution such as the British army, meant that, despite the ethics, discipline and the duty of loyalty to their respective realms imposed by such an organisation, their responses were varied. Those Muslims who fought for the British in the Second World War, coming from politically conservative backgrounds, did so largely because they saw the army as an attractive career option rather than in defence of the Empire which they identified little with, especially as the struggle for independence was reaching its peak. As Claude Auchinleck, C-in-C of the colonial Indian Army, observed: "It is quite wrong to adopt the attitude that because these men have been in service in a British controlled Indian Army that therefore their loyalty must be the same as

British soldiers. As I have tried to explain, they had no real loyalty towards Britain as Britain, not as we understand loyalty".⁵³

On the other hand, as secret memoranda written in 1941 have revealed, nor was there much support in the Indian Army for nationalism as a creed. In the Punjab, the fear of emerging Hindu dominance in India began to raise serious concerns about the fate of the Muslim minority, causing Muslims to be supportive of the constraints and protection they perceived that British rule continued to provide. Hence, there was support for the British announcement of India's entry into the War in contrast to the nationalist opposition to it. While political sentiments could not be completely ignored by those who joined the armed forces, it was military professionalism in which neutrality was regarded as an ideal that more strongly determined their involvement in the war effort. What these soldiers had acquired through military training was a professional ethic, an unquestioning obedience to those in authority, a social responsibility to their imperial states and a corporate loyalty, an *esprit de corps*, within their military institutions, which prevented ideological discourses from being able to shape their attitudes and behaviours in the majority of cases.

So while during the extraordinary conditions of the two world wars Muslims soldiers held fast to their fundamental beliefs and practices, it was rarely their Muslim identity that became the sole or even overarching determinant of whom they considered their friends or foes. As a result, what the experience of Muslim soldiers in these two global conflicts tells us is that the things that mobilised them to offer the ultimate sacrifice of their lives was much more deeply underpinned by their traditional cultural values, social conditions of life and material issues and interests rather than any overwhelming sense of either national identity or so-called 'Muslimness'.

Every year on Remembrance Day thoughts in the United Kingdom turn to the observance of commemoration of

those members of the British armed forces who lost their lives during the wars. Special services are held, red poppies are worn, and wreaths are laid at war memorials throughout the country and at London's Cenotaph honouring those who sacrificed their lives. Despite this, how many people in Britain today (Muslims included) are aware of the significant role that thousands of Muslims played in those wars in defence of British freedoms? While in the past there was little public acknowledgement, with Muslims and other communities becoming increasingly rooted in Britain and other European nations, their past now receives and requires greater recognition in the history of these societies. A poignant example is the restoration of the graveyard in Wunsdorf near Berlin, where soldiers such as Jafarullah Mohammad and hundreds of other Indian prisoners of war had lain buried and forgotten for decades – their headstones looted, and the plot disappeared 'under rhododendrons and

Vandals desecrated 148 Muslim graves in France's biggest First World War cemetery.

fallen oak'. In 2005, diplomats from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh attended a rededication ceremony, along with officials from Russia and France, to honour Tartar soldiers who lie buried at the same site.⁵⁴ Yet, the claims of belonging by Muslims living in Europe continue to be contested and, at times, violently rejected. This is visible in the desecration of war graves: in April 2008, for instance, vandals desecrated 148 Muslim graves in France's biggest First World War cemetery. "A pig's head was hung from one headstone and slogans insulting Islam and France's Muslim justice minister were daubed on other graves",⁵⁵ while a year earlier Nazi slogans and swastikas had been painted on about fifty graves in the Muslim section of the cemetery; again in December 2008, a further 500 Muslim graves were desecrated.

As these examples show, Muslims remain a long way from being perceived as an integral part of the European nations that are now their homes. Much more needs to be emphatically and publicly shown about the history of shared sacrifices that were made by people from diverse backgrounds who were involved in earlier cataclysmic conflicts before any notions of national sharedness is likely to be achieved.

Muslims in Britain today see themselves as part of a range of local, national (British) and global (the Pan-Islamic *umma*) 'imagined communities', as did many of the Muslim soldiers who fought on behalf of rival empires in the two world wars. Their fluid and shifting, on occasions, competing identities and loyalties were shaped by their individual and collective perceptions of the contexts in which they were then located. Their interactions with their social, political and cultural environments helped to generate their responses, just as the dynamics of the relations with the societies in which they are now embedded influence present-day reactions.

Indeed, British Muslim responses to the 9/11 terrorist atrocities in the United States, the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, the 7/7 London terrorist bombings, and subsequently to being viewed as part of a 'suspect' community with questionable or, at least, divided loyalties, have been predicated upon how they have constructed, in complex ways, their multiple identities, and how the privileging of some facets of these identities over others has been contingent upon their specific experiences rather than some intrinsic quality of any particular identity. Their attitudes and actions reflect, today as before, different degrees of resistance to, and support for, national war policies – from, at one end of the spectrum, chanting slogans in protest at the alleged killing of Muslim civilians against British soldiers returning from duty in Iraq and Afghanistan, and burning 'giant' poppies in London, to paying homage to the fallen on Armistice Day, and even joining the British army and serving the nation in the

war zones, at the other.

By acknowledging these past realities, previous Muslim experiences can help us to understand the complex interplay of factors that motivate Muslim responses to similar challenges today.

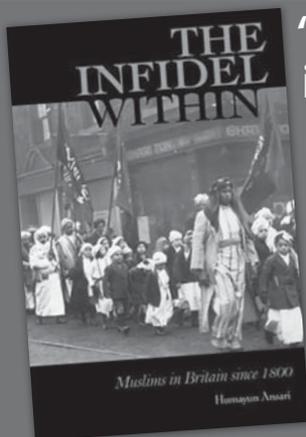
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BOOK PROMOTION



'The Infidel Within'- Muslims in Britain Since 1800

BY KHIZAR HUMAYUN ANSARI

There has been an explosion of research into the experiences of British Muslims, but what has been conspicuous by its absence is a proper historical treatment of the phenomenon. This book aims to address this issue. *'The Infidel Within'* by Humayun Ansari remains one of the most important books on the history of British Muslims.

'The Infidel Within' - Muslims in Britain Since 1800

By Khizar Humayun Ansari. Published in 2004 by C Hurst & Co Publishers Ltd.



British and Muslim: Holding Values to Account Through Reciprocal Engagement

*JEREMY HENZELL-THOMAS

BRITISHNESS AND HUMAN VALUES

WHAT is Britishness? Well, Andrew Marr says that the British are hostile to “taking anything, even the meaning of life, too seriously... If God is still with the British”, he says, “He will be quiet, understated, embarrassed by enthusiasm...”¹ The philosopher Roger Scruton, who prefers to write about the English, seems to agree with the thrust of this, claiming that “silence” is the “normal condition of the English in both public and private”, as is their propensity (so he claims) for “deploring the volatile humours of Mediterranean people and the fickle sentimentality of the Irish”.² Stephen Fry identifies “joy in ignorance and anti-intellectualism” as a key marker.³ Other notable characteristics include a “love of nonsense”, “the cult of the amateur and the eccentric”, and “good-hearted irreverence and whimsicality.”⁴

Such attempts to capture what Britishness is supposed to be are legion, fraught with subjectivity, and often riddled with idiosyncratic personal preferences, prejudices and biases.⁵

One of the sanest contributions to the debate initiated by the British Ministry of Justice in their consultation on “What does it Mean to be British?” is a statement by the Humanist Philosophers’ Group which emphasises that the values they identify are “first and foremost human values. The values of cooperation, openness and inclusiveness ought to be maintained in any human society because they derive from the shared needs of human beings as social beings. They are made real in people’s lives insofar as they are transmitted through particular social traditions and institutions, but no tradition or institution can claim an

exclusive or dominant importance in this regard. It is essential that the values of our society should be shared values.”⁶

A report on “Muslims in Europe” by the Open Society Institute has found that “on the whole people from different backgrounds in the 11 cities studied said they got along well together and were willing to help each other. Yet, though both Muslims and non-Muslims believed that similar values were an important part of belonging to a country, the majority did not believe that people in their own neighbourhoods shared similar values. Muslims identified respect for religion as a more important national value than did non-Muslims. These results present a complex picture, suggesting that a sense of shared values is not as necessary for people from different backgrounds as trust and willingness to help neighbours.”⁷

Clearly, people will always value different things and place different relative and subjective weights on their valuations, but such differences are not necessarily impediments to social cohesion and a positive sense of community. The subjectivity of cultural differences can be transcended by higher, objective *principles* derived from our shared humanity, such as trust, neighbourliness and community spirit. It is surely such higher principles that enable unity within diversity, the coexistence of different perspectives within an overarching respect for what it means to be fully human.

And that raises a burning question: should we not simply talk about human values, our shared humanity? Instead of misappropriating and colonizing human values for the purpose of asserting tribal or national superiority, should we not, no matter what our affiliation, simply be working together to reclaim those shared

universal principles and core human values which transcend national, cultural, ideological and religious divides?⁸

MULTIPLE STRANDS OF IDENTITY

In reflecting on what it means to be British and Muslim, I am always struck by the daunting complexity and slipperiness of just trying to define the first part of this apparently dual identity.

If I identify most strongly with Englishness, what about the Celtic blood from my Welsh and Cornish ancestors? Are there specific Celtic principles and values which are clearly distinguishable from those associated with Englishness and which converge in their own way with my identity as a Muslim? In 2010, there was due to be a debate on “Celtic Islam: Rhetoric or Reality?” in the Scottish Parliament. Recognising that “there are many shades and strands in the Scottish Tartan”, the event would address the question: “Does Celtic Islam exist in Scotland today or is Celtic Islam a multiculturalist’s myth?”⁹ As for Welshness, I recalled the fundamental *decency* of the thoroughly likeable Welshman Captain Fluellen in Shakespeare’s play *Henry V*. The king himself describes Fluellen as, a man of “much care and valor”, but “out of fashion”. Fluellen embodies the unfashionable virtues of discipline, honour, conscientiousness, rectitude, scrupulous integrity, honesty, temperance and propriety over licence, licentiousness, dissoluteness, rudeness, and impiety.

It is that core virtue of *decency*, however, which strikes a particular note in my attempt to harmonise the different strands or layers of my identity, because it is integral to each component, even if Chris Rojek explicitly associates it with the Welsh element in his analysis of Britishness. In “the high-water mark of empire” this was regarded as a composite identity, “the combination of the best and highest that nature and nurture could provide in the British Isles”, with each nation within the Union providing “crucial elements that the others lacked” - a “marriage between

Scottish invention and discipline, Irish daring and imagination, Welsh decency and pluck, and English application and genius for compromise.”¹⁰ The distinctive contributions of each nation could, of course be amplified almost *ad infinitum*, with moral seriousness, for example, being identified as a characteristically Scottish Presbyterian virtue, or fiery eloquence (both in pulpit and on political platform) as distinctively Welsh.

Rojek’s analysis is framed within a discussion of the fact that “conflicted national identity” is not confined to migrant ethnic populations, but increasingly seen in the ‘indigenous’ population, a fact confirmed by the 2007 Ajebo Report on nationalism, multi-ethnicity and education.¹¹ In that year, only 44 per cent described themselves as British compared to 52 per cent ten years earlier. In other words, more than half of the population have chosen to discard ‘British’ as an acceptable term to express national solidarity.¹²

To compound the apparent complexities of my multiple Western, British, English, Celtic and Muslim identities, I could go still further in trying to incorporate the values of my Huguenot (French Protestant) ancestors, glass-makers who emigrated to England to escape religious persecution in France in the sixteenth century. The strong religious values of these Calvinists, including the Protestant work ethic, ensured that they made substantial contributions to British society out of all proportion to their numbers, embracing many spheres: political, military, diplomatic, economic, commercial, artistic and intellectual. One historian maintains that while many of the descendants of the Huguenots retain great respect for their ancestors, they are today “fully English”. He reports that the process of “assimilation” was a long and gradual process not without its “frustrations”, and “retarded” not only by successive waves of refugees from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries, each reminding its predecessor of a joint continental inheritance, but also by English ignorance, insularity and suspicion of foreign ways.¹³

While many Muslims might obviously prefer a more nuanced vocabulary, replacing “assimilation” with “integration” and rightfully questioning whether “retardation” necessarily proceeds from continuing reminders of a foreign heritage, there are clearly messages to be drawn from the experience of these continental ancestors as a “creative minority” within British society, and this is a theme I shall return to in due course.

GENETIC TRACKS

It is important to recognise that these French glass-makers originally imported their craft into Lorraine in medieval times from Bohemia, the modern-day Czech Republic, and my Celtic ancestors also originally came from much further afield than the Welsh valleys and the Cornish coves. In fact, they did not actually come from Central European tribes, as once assumed. Recent genetic evidence suggests that British Celts – our indigenous population – are descended from a tribe of Iberian fishermen who crossed the Bay of Biscay almost 6,000 years ago.¹⁴ And it may be surprising to learn that, in spite of later waves of settlers, including Romans, Anglo-Saxons, Vikings and Normans, the genetic makeup of Britain and Ireland is overwhelmingly what it was in the Neolithic period: a mixture of the few thousand indigenous Mesolithic inhabitants with those Neolithic settlers who came by sea from Iberia and ultimately from the eastern Mediterranean. Research indicates that the Anglo-Saxon contribution to the genetic make-up of Britain was under 20 percent of the total, even in southern England, and the Norman contribution was extremely small, perhaps only 2 percent. There are only very sparse genetic traces of the Roman occupation, almost all in southern England.

What is more, the settlement in Spain was only a staging post on an onward journey of migration. According to a very recent Leicester University study, most Britons, along with four out of five white Europeans, are descended from male farmers who left what is now Iraq and Syria

in the Fertile Crescent 10,000 years ago.¹⁵

But let us go back even further in time. Several years ago I went to Lascaux in the Dordogne to marvel at the 17,000-year-old cave art of earlier descendants of Cro-Magnon people who first came to Europe 40,000 years in their migration from East Africa. I was greatly moved by the very simple and striking realisation, inspired by that extraordinary art, of the common humanity I shared with these people, and, stretching back even further in time, to their ancestors who first moved out of Africa 70,000 years ago. I felt as never before that ultimate connection to a shared humanity. It was an authentically simple insight, at once emotional and intuitive, which might have completely transcended any analysis of all the complex factors supposedly involved in the makeup of my British identity, whether historical, genetic, or conceived of in terms of distinctive national character or values.

Yet, no matter how ultimately universal our worthy vision of shared humanity might be, it may be hard for us to identify in any deeply personal or emotive sense with a remote genetic inheritance. I do not feel like a Stone Age Syrian farmer or Iberian fisherman, let alone the first Cro-Magnon migrant out of Africa. It seems to me that the impact of a specific cultural or religious inheritance can dramatically trump whatever is in our genes. The contribution of the Normans to the gene pool of the British was extremely small, but their impact on our culture was clearly massive. After all, more than half of the English language comes from Latin through Old French, including (as one French wag suggested to me) all words of more than one syllable.

LEARNING THROUGH RECIPROCAL ENGAGEMENT

The late Hasan Gai Eaton once ended a lecture with these words: “And now, I believe, we see the first green shoots of a specifically British and, perhaps specifically Western Islam... We have to find our own way and that, to my mind, is an adventure as well as a challenge.”¹⁶

He was not of course speaking here of adaptation as some kind of watered down compromise through which “good, moderate” Muslims can be conveniently assimilated and rendered silent and invisible in the public square and within a culture that he himself would not have hesitated to describe as having largely lost a sense of what is sacred. He did not mince words on this topic, any more than Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury, who has spoken of the “moral vacuum” in modern society, its “triviality”, “desolation”, and “dysfunctionality”,¹⁷ or Tim Winter, who has lamented “this strange time of spiritual disconnection”.¹⁸

My purpose here is not, however, to dwell on that disconnection, but to explore the positive and optimistic sense of convergence between the different layers of my own identity, and especially the convergence between Islam and the “British temper” that has often been noted. This is not of course to fall into “smug ethnocentrism” or jingoism, because Islam itself came to abolish a tribal mentality. But at the same time, Islam is “generous and inclusive. It allows us to celebrate our particularity, the genius of our heritage; within, rather than in tension with, the greater and more lasting fellowship of faith.”¹⁹

Britishness is best understood in terms of spiritual identity and has special value as a broad church measure of spiritual and cultural inclusiveness.

Ian Bradley believes that Britishness is best understood in terms of spiritual identity and has special value as a broad church measure of spiritual and cultural inclusiveness as an antidote to narrow nationalism and jingoism.²⁰ Professor Tariq Modood praises Bradley’s book as

“a vision of a country in which traditional and new religious sensibilities have a place without crowding out English, Scottish, Welsh and ethnic minority identities; sensitive to ancient voices yet at one with its contemporary diversity.”

I want, however, to go further than the celebration of inclusiveness and suggest specific ways in which any aspect or layer of my identity can act as a reminder of and hold to account the values, principles and ideals professed by any other layer. As a British Muslim, I regard my ‘multiple identity’ not as a source of conflict between values, but as a precious gift. In identifying with virtues such as decency, fairness, moderation, civility, and stoicism (that very British unflappability and equanimity, keeping calm and carrying on, the ‘stiff upper lip’), I do not of course suggest that any such values are uniquely Islamic or British. They are of course first and foremost human values, but every community gives particular emphasis to a set of values which in some way distils its identity and this is exactly what is meant by those beautiful verses in the Qur’an which sanction diversity as a positive human condition that has been divinely ordained.²¹ My identity as a Muslim is not in conflict with my identity as a human being, and some of my cherished human values may find expression in other parts of my identity which I see as English, Welsh, British or Huguenot. All these multiple layers of identity can compete with one another, support each other, and hold each other to account, and each one can help us to see what needs to be reclaimed and revived, for all of us are confronted in these times of social decay with an urgent need to renew the best in our respective traditions.²²

The Qur’an also advises us that God made us into nations and tribes so that we may come to know one another,²³ and that in the diversity of our tongues and colours are signs for people of insight.²⁴ The pluralistic dimension of *ta’aruf*, learning from one another, is absolutely germane to the Qur’anic perspective. And the Prophet Muhammad is also reported to have said,

“The diversity of my people is a blessing”. Homogeneity is a recipe for sterility, whereas diversity raises the intelligence and virtue of groups. It does so because each community can act as a role model for particular skills and human virtues for others to emulate, and that is a reciprocal process; it works both ways. Striving to be a better Muslim may help me to embody the best of whatever it means to be British, and let us be clear that this can work the other way round too. Trying to live up to the highest principles, values and ideals associated with being British can also help me to reclaim those authentic Islamic virtues to which they correspond. From this perspective, reflecting the highest level of each component within a multiple identity, there need be no conflict of loyalty whatsoever.

I personally try to avoid referring to myself as a ‘convert’ to Islam, because the word ‘convert’ can often be taken to express some kind of shift in allegiance, leaving one tribe or cultural milieu and joining another, and my becoming a Muslim had nothing to do with that. Islam, for me, is not a culture, but a set of universal principles, a way of knowing, being and living which guides us to a comprehensive vision of what it means to be a human being. It was for me not a sudden espousal of that vision, not a Road to Damascus experience, not a rejection of everything I was before, but the positive culmination of a long and apparently circuitous journey which took fifty years, a destination which does not sever threads, but draws them all together. *Tawhid* is a vision of unity, not of severance, fragmentation or partisanship.²⁵

MULTICULTURALISM AND SHARED NARRATIVES

In recent times there has been a noticeable shift in emphasis in public discourse in some quarters on the themes of pluralism and national identity. Concerns about loyalty, citizenship and social cohesion have generated an ongoing critique of the long-standing model of multiculturalism ideally based on co-existence and tolerance between separate communities. Many

influential scholars, religious leaders, policy makers, and commentators are increasingly questioning whether such a model successfully reduces friction between communities, arguing instead that, at its worst, it produces a society of divisive and conflicting ghettos, isolated enclaves and encampments, defensive fortresses, adversarial and self-interested pressure groups, non-intersecting lives, and a Tower of Babel of mutually exclusive and incomprehensible perspectives and belief systems.

From this standpoint, the disconnection between communities might be characterised not as multiculturalism, but as “plural monoculturalism”.²⁶ A similar critique of disconnected communities has been developed by the philosopher and theologian Jonathan Sacks who argues in his most recent book for the need for Britain to construct a national narrative as a basis for identity, reinvigorate the concept of the common good, identify shared interests among conflicting group, and restore a culture of civility.²⁷

This is conceptually a positive starting-point but it needs to be emphasised that the constellation of distinctive gifts envisioned by Sacks needs to be balanced to include those which Muslims can contribute to the common good from their own tradition. If a “dominant narrative” of Britishness is adversarial, lacking in civility, plays into the hands of the far right, excludes or stigmatises sections of society, or is perceived as the imposition of an ideology rather than a shared vision, then it is not a step forward.

PLURALITY, PLURALISM AND THE PERILS OF MUDDLED THINKING

Constructive critics of “plural monoculturalism” are not of course to be equated with those who crow about the supposed “failure of multiculturalism” as a means of reinforcing narrowly political and tribalistic agendas which uphold cultural, ideological or nationalistic supremacy, advocate crude assimilation of minorities, and provoke intolerance

and discrimination. So much is obvious. Constructive critics are, in fact, often seen to be advocating a genuine pluralism which goes far beyond the ‘tolerance’ which is so often upheld as a core national (or Western) value. Authentic pluralism goes far beyond the unchallenging mediocrity of mere tolerance, which may often extend no further than lip-service, the reduction of awkward complexity to the lowest common denominator, or the mere exchange of clichés and platitudes about the “celebration of diversity”. At worst, tolerance may be no better than sullen indifference or even veiled hostility.²⁸ The root of the word ‘tolerance’ comes from medieval toxicology and pharmacology indicating how much poison a body could ‘tolerate’ before it succumbed to death. Tolerance may therefore be little more than asking ourselves how much of the ‘other’ we can stand before it kills us. I agree with Omid Safi when he says that he does not want merely to ‘tolerate’ his fellow human beings, “but rather to engage them at the deepest level of what makes us human, through both our phenomenal commonality and our dazzling cultural differences.”²⁹

Clearly, the mere existence of diversity, difference or *plurality* should clearly not be equated with the loftier ideal of *pluralism*,³⁰ which implies a committed process of dialogue and active engagement between communities. In this sense, true pluralism is envisaged as a truth-seeking encounter, a process of mutual transformation which goes even beyond respect and understanding of the ‘other’ to a new level of self-understanding.³¹

The current level of political discourse about multiculturalism and immigration is often vitiated by simplistic and muddled thinking which fails to make fundamentally important conceptual and terminological distinctions. What is meant when the label ‘multiculturalism’ is bandied about? If it refers simply to the existence of plurality, then that is a fact of life, for we live in a multicultural society, but it is unjust and divisive to generalise and stigmatise that plurality exclusively as a negative form of

Multiculturalism in its best sense refers to mutual respect between different communities in the spirit of the Qur’anic injunction to “know one another” and “compete with one another in doing good”

tribalism based on isolated encampments or separate enclaves of people with no sense of belonging to wider society, or even active hostility to the values espoused by the majority. Multiculturalism in its best sense refers to mutual respect between different communities in the spirit of the Qur’anic injunction to “know one another” and “compete with one another in doing good”, and that is surely a recipe not for failure but for a healthier society, one which sees the revival of the best of shared human values for the benefit of all. The highest form of multiculturalism does not lead to fragmentation and division, or the mutually incomprehensible din of competing ideologies; it is a reciprocal process of positive engagement for social transformation and this never entails the denigration or demonization of any community. As such, it is the very antithesis of the Tower of Babel.³²

Similarly, it is important to challenge the false notion that has recently been voiced that the failure of immigrants to learn English is a major cause of the disintegration of communities. In reply to this accusation, a leading expert has pointed that in 23 years of research on immigrants and ethnic affairs he has never yet found a non-English-speaking immigrant who did not want to learn English. “Integration”, he says “means many things. Most significant is the sense that denotes a two-way process; otherwise it merely means assimilation. Immigrants need to be enabled to belong.”³³ On the other hand, while living in France a few years ago, I was surprised to learn from

a survey that over half of the very large number of Britons who have emigrated to France have no intention whatever of learning French beyond the most rudimentary level.

CIVILITY

Let me give some examples of the mutual reinforcement of principles within my own British Muslim identity. The Islamic concept of *adab* (correct behaviour and deep courtesy) has obvious resonance with the civility, politeness and good manners which many people would associate with traditional Britishness. John Bird, Founder and Editor-in-chief, *The Big Issue*, associates being British with the “careful balance of order, structure and politeness that governs most of our lives on most occasions”.³⁴ Civility is, to my knowledge, rarely referred to in lists of supposedly definitive and cohesive British values proposed by the government, even though it converges to some degree with the virtue of ‘respect’ which is often included, along with tolerance and pluralism, as ‘respect for the law’, but it is prominent in many individual contributions to the current debate about British values and is also highly prized by the public at large. Respect for the law and politeness towards others are rated as the two most important British public values.³⁵ If the virtue of civility used to be an integral part of the self-image of the British (or was it the English?) many would say it has drastically declined in recent times, and that we live in an increasingly vulgar and unmannerly society.

But we must talk about convergence of principles at the highest level. Bog-standard civility is not much different from the unchallenging mediocrity of that brand of uneasy tolerance that keeps society from falling apart on a small island with many diverse communities in close proximity. In our own language, to be ‘civil’ often has the connotation of cold formality rather than the refined, courtly feelings associated with ‘courtesy’ and ‘politeness’. At worst, civility may hide disrespect, and tolerance may, as I have

said, be no better than sullen indifference or even veiled hostility.

The higher level of both *civility* and tolerance reaches to the essence of what makes a great *civilisation*, and not merely to the avoidance of conflict between *citizens* from diverse communities in a crowded city (Latin *civitas*). That higher level entails something more than an imposed code of behaviour. For a Muslim, it ideally comes from the intrinsic motivation inspired by a deep awareness of the responsibility to strive for moral and spiritual excellence and beauty and goodness of character (*ihsan*) and embody these virtues in the conduct of his or her life. And, ultimately, respect comes from something even deeper than awareness of other people’s feelings. It comes from that sense of consciousness and awe of God (*taqwa*) that grow out of acts of worship and spiritual devotion. In defining the deepest dimension of the faith (*ihsan*) the Prophet Muhammad is reported to have said that it is “to worship God as if you see Him, for if you do not see Him, He sees you”.

We sorely need the restoration of that altruism and impeccable conduct which used to be a hallmark of the British tradition of public service.

THE CREATIVE MINORITY

I believe that the model of deep courtesy in Islamic tradition has much to offer us in rescuing our own native tradition of civility, and in such a way Muslims or any other principled community (often faith-based but not exclusively so) can act as a creative minority within wider society to revive important values which have receded in public consciousness and practice. And I use the term “creative minority” in the sense used by the historian Arnold Toynbee, who believed that during a period of social decay, a civilisation in decline can be transformed through the insights generated by such a minority.³⁶ But these are demanding ideals representative of the highest level of civilisation. Muslims themselves need to reclaim them from their own spiritual tradition and embody them in the *adab*

which they bring to bear in their dealings with everyone if they are to work together with all people of goodwill to become an inspirational force for the common good.

The same universal and inclusivist vision is articulated in the assertion that “civic involvement based on a social ethic is an Islamic imperative, and Muslims must build social and political networks to improve the condition of the human family as a whole. Only through this inclusive vision will divine aid and succour accrue to the Muslim community itself.”³⁷

Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury, robustly asserts a moral and social vision which challenges Muslims and Christians not only to continue to engage fully in constructive and mutually respectful inter-faith dialogue as a truth-seeking encounter, but also to contribute actively to the real health of society through their joint and energetic commitment to sustain what he calls “the visibility of faith in the public sphere”. This has nothing to do with imposing a theocracy, but nevertheless affirms what he calls “the religious roots of moral and social vision” and actively resists the idea that the default setting for every developed human society must be rooted in secularism and must obsessively keep out of view any sign of religious commitment.³⁸ Let us be clear, however, that Dr Williams is referring here to that brand of ideological secularism which seeks to silence religious voices in the public square rather than the accommodative brand of procedural secularism within the British political tradition which has ensured political and religious freedoms for minorities.³⁹

It is also worth noting that, according to the classical Muslim jurists, the key elements that make a country the ‘land of Islam’ (*dar al-islam*) are the existence

of justice, security and the freedom to practice one’s religion. Britain ranks very favourably against these criteria, certainly more so than many Muslim-majority countries.⁴⁰

LEGITIMATE DISSENT AND RADICALISM

We have a noble tradition in the United Kingdom of active citizenship through legitimate, intelligent and peaceful dissent, which has historically guided our national evolution towards a free, fair and tolerant society liberated from autocracy and tyranny.⁴¹ We should not forget that civic engagement cannot be defined solely as conformity to any politically motivated agenda.⁴² In discussing the political context of pluralism, Rowan Williams also affirms an “anti-hierarchical, anti-centralist view of social order which challenges an uncritical or oppressive view of the sovereignty of the nation state.” In his view, “a truly pluralist political culture insists that legitimacy is not conferred top-down by an all-powerful state on subordinate bodies, but, conversely, the state derives its legitimacy from the positive way in which it manages the relationship between a huge variety of civil society associations, faith communities and other intermediate human communities.”⁴³

In asking what it means to be British today, Chris Rojek also points out that in the face of the decline in nationalism, “the task of reconciling nationalism with multi-culturalism, multi-ethnicity and globalisation... goes well beyond engineering compliance between migrant populations and hallowed British traditions.”⁴⁴ It is instructive to note the different meanings that certain words may assume in politicised contexts. The word ‘radical’ has long carried a positive connotation of reforming liberalism, but when applied to Muslims the word ‘radicalisation’ it is almost invariably equated with violent extremism. The deployment of terms in this way to represent politically and ideologically motivated agenda needs to be rigorously questioned. Muslims have as much right as anyone

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else to be 'radical' in the positive sense, and, indeed, by so doing, to participate vigorously in the political process.

It is also vital to challenge the false equation between religion and 'radicalization'. There is clear evidence that, contrary to popular belief, the people who are attracted to 'radical' Islam are likely to be those who do not have a good grounding in the religion, and, conversely, very religious Muslims are in fact most resistant to radicalization.⁴⁵

EQUANIMITY AND EXCELLENCE

If Islamic *adab* converges with British civility, the Islamic virtue of patient endurance (*sabr*) can also help me to reclaim the best aspects of traditional British self-restraint, equanimity and stoicism. In the same way too, the Islamic concept of excellence (*ihسان*) can remind us that excellence is often confused with professionalism. After all, we can talk about a professional hit man, but it would be rather strange to say that someone was an *excellent* hit man, unless we were members of the Mafia. The difference is that the heart of true excellence is not simply about personal mastery of a skill, effectiveness in accomplishing a task, or success at all costs, but includes virtue, beauty and goodness, that excellence of human character that has a moral and ultimately a spiritual dimension.

MODERATION, BALANCE, FAIRNESS, AND DECENCY

Let me move on now to the hallowed British values of moderation, fairness, and decency and the striking convergence I see between these values and authentic Islamic principles. The Qur'an tells us that that Muslims are *a community of the middle way*,⁴⁶ which suggests, according to Muhammad Asad, "a call to moderation in every aspect of life". President Izetbegovic of Bosnia-Herzegovina has written eloquently of the "Anglo-Saxon spirit" and its convergence with Islam in the idea of the Middle Way.⁴⁷

Integral to the concept of the middle way is the principle of fairness, the 'fair play' so

important to the ideal British conception of good character. The English word 'fair' has two meanings: the first is 'just, equitable, reasonable', and the second is 'beautiful, proportional', a combination of senses which closely parallels the meaning of '*adl*' in Arabic.

The meaning of its original Germanic root is 'fitting', that which is the right size, in the correct ratio or proportion. Indeed, the Qur'anic statement that *Everything have We created in due measure and proportion*⁴⁸ is completely in harmony with the underlying sense of the English word 'moderation'. The word 'decency' has exactly the same underlying meaning as 'fairness'. It comes from Latin *decere*, 'be fitting or suitable', and is closely related to the words 'dignity' and 'decorum'. To be fair and decent, and hence to act with dignity, is to behave justly, beautifully and proportionately.

According to Izetbegovic, the source of the convergence between what he called the "Anglo-Saxon spirit" and Islam was an Englishman, the thirteenth-century philosopher Roger Bacon, who was strongly influenced by Islamic thinkers. Bacon's genius was to set the entire structure of English philosophical thought on the balance between faith and reason, between inner experience and outer observation, and between idealism and a pragmatic concern for everyday needs. This balance is considered by most Englishmen as the most authentic expression of English thought and feeling.⁴⁹ We may well say that in the society around us this balance has been grossly disturbed, for we see little evidence of that altruism and hunger for transcendence which once animated the English soul.⁵⁰ It goes without saying that the same balance between faith and observation is integral to Islam; indeed, our faith is not a blind faith but a faith strengthened through studying the divine imprint in every aspect of the created world, for, as the Qur'an repeatedly reminds us, we have been endowed with "hearing, sight and hearts".⁵¹ The Muslim part of my identity helps me to reintegrate the two axes, the horizontal and the vertical,

the immanent and the transcendent, and, by so doing, to reclaim the balance. That also means defending and reclaiming that capacity for common sense which some would say is on the verge of oblivion in our nation today.

FREEDOM, EQUALITY AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

I have touched on some Islamic values which can inspire the renewal of the best of what it means to be British, but the process is reciprocal. The quality of pluralism embedded in our national way of life can remind Muslims of their own obligation to respect the religious, cultural and ethnic diversity which is divinely ordained in the Qur'an, and the freedom of conscience which this entails.

In the same way, British ideals of freedom and equality might inspire the rediscovery of authentic Islamic principles centred on the primacy of human dignity and individual autonomy. The equality of opportunity that is regarded as a core British value can urgently remind Muslims of where and how equality can be advanced in their own societies. But exemplifying values must go beyond preaching or grandstanding. We must be aware that growing inequality is also a major issue in Britain today and divisions between the rich and poor are wider now than 40 years ago.⁵² If we want to preach about British values, we need to ensure we hold them to account. The same goes for Islamic values. As Tariq Ramadan has pointed out, religious scholars and intellectuals may hide behind Qur'anic verses and Prophetic traditions which sanction gender equality,

My composite and multi-layered identity can also serve to hold to account other ways in which so-called British or Islamic values may be espoused but not lived up to.

but "this does not reflect the reality and to say otherwise would be a lie."⁵³

My composite and multi-layered identity can also serve to hold to account other ways in which so-called British or Islamic values may be espoused but not lived up to.

For example, a government script of British values prepared in 2006 included "taking responsibility for others" as a core British value and was reported at the time as part of the strategy to "win over Muslims"⁵⁴. This was presumably meant to mean "dealing with radicalisation" in the Muslim community, but social responsibility in its widest sense would not be regarded by many as a distinctively British value in our times. Many lament a national culture of social decay and I need hardly enumerate ways in which the dominance of self-interest and the decline of empathy and humanity are all too obvious.⁵⁵ If 'respect' is to be championed as a core British value as an aspect of social responsibility, we can only be dismayed by successive reports that have highlighted a lack of compassionate care and a growing culture of neglect, disrespect and abuse of vulnerable people – the young, the old, the disabled, and, astonishingly, even against those who help and serve others in the community.

THE DISINTERESTED PURSUIT OF TRUTH

Another value often held up as characteristically 'Western' is the liberal ideal of free inquiry, dialogue, discussion and argument, the development of self-criticism and the disinterested pursuit of truth. Various attacks on Muslims (and Muslim schools) have been orchestrated in the media and by think tanks in recent times claiming to represent these values, but in practice favouring rhetoric as a means of persuasion. One of the founding principles of Western civilisation rests on Plato's affirmation that the process of philosophical dialectic - the testing process of critical inquiry and the cumulative refinement of ideas through discourse, dialogue, discussion, and engagement with alternative views - is utterly distinct from

and immeasurably superior to rhetoric. To achieve authenticity and public respect, values which are held up as integral to a civilization need to be embodied in actual practice by those who claim to represent them.

The dialectical process attributed to the philosophical tradition of the Greeks is also inherited, and strengthened, from the insistence on consciousness and knowledge and the spirit of independent inquiry which is integral to the message of the Qur'an, as Muhammad Asad so eloquently describes in the Foreword to his *tafsir*.⁵⁶ My respect as a British Muslim for the disinterested pursuit of truth is mutually reinforced at the highest level of both the Islamic and British intellectual tradition. Those familiar with that common tradition therefore have a double interest in restoring a culture of honest inquiry to what many see as the increasingly debased profession of journalism. One distinguished professor of journalism claims that the prevalence of a culture of shallowness, negativity, and cavalier carelessness in checking facts is exerting a corrosive influence on public life and breeding a toxic cynicism in the public mind.⁵⁷ Analysis of over 2000 UK news pieces gleaned from the quality papers (and the *Daily Mail*) has revealed that only 12 per cent consists of a story that a reporter has found out and pursued on his or her own initiative or checked the facts. The rest is all rewritten wire copy (mostly from a single source, the Press Association) and PR. Likening the situation to a "terminal illness", Nick Davies coins the stinging word "churnalism" to describe 88 per cent of what people read even in the posh papers.⁵⁸

We are all too familiar with the unjust and unbalanced reporting which aims to find the "worst possible quotes from the Muslim world and disseminate them as widely as possible."⁵⁹ It does great credit to those fair-minded commentators who have objected to the "paranoid and abhorrent obsession with Muslims in the media" and expressed their concern that "ideas regarded as intellectually null and morally abhorrent in any other context are not only

accepted and condoned but also celebrated as bold truth-telling".⁶⁰ It is undeniable that "we do not treat Muslims with the tolerance, decency and fairness that we so often like to boast is the British way. We urgently need to change our public culture."⁶¹ To that effect, it is promising to hear honest voices raised in the media in support of the much publicised contention that Islamophobia is now not only widespread but also socially acceptable, and hatred of Muslims is one of the last bastions of British bigotry.⁶² Many would also agree that it is right to reject the claim that the term Islamophobia is exploited to stifle legitimate criticism of Muslims, because such a claim legitimises indolent stereotypes and panders to fascist groups and sections of the media.⁶³

THE THEOPHANY OF NATURE

There is one very personal and profoundly important way in which my identity as an Englishman might reinforce my understanding of Islam, and that is the English love of nature and the countryside, that rural idyll and national genius for gardening. It was my realization that my emotional and spiritual roots lay in the English landscape that inspired me to return to my homeland. But what has this to do with being a Muslim? Quite simply because the Qur'an, perhaps more than any other Holy Scripture, is insistent on the beauty, majesty and sacredness of the natural world.⁶⁴ It tells us again and again that the natural world is brimming over with luminous signs which offer a continual reminder to all those who, by turning to God with their hearts, are given the insight to see in those signs the living Presence of God in the created world.⁶⁵

And yet, it has struck me how disconnected many of my British Muslim friends are from nature and the countryside. There is a historical explanation for this, of course, in the preference by migrants for close-knit urban communities and the prospects for community support and economic advancement that they provided, but there is a real need for a revival of the Qur'anic vision of the beneficence of

nature within the community, not only as personal spiritual nourishment, but as a prompt for Muslims to get involved in addressing our ecological crisis. There are encouraging signs that this is developing apace in the younger generation of Muslims in Britain today. I believe that this broadening of horizons and the closer connections it might encourage between Muslims and the broad swathe of Middle England can only be of benefit to all communities in helping to break down barriers to understanding.

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32. See Henzell-Thomas, Jeremy (2011). "In Search of Harmony amid a Babble of Voices", Credo column, *The Times*, 9 April.
33. Poynting, Scott (2011). Professor in Sociology, Manchester Metropolitan University, letter to *The Guardian*, 18 April.
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40. *Ibid*, p.36.
41. Trevor Phillips, Chair, Equality and Human Rights Commission, identifies "a powerful tradition of dissent"

as one of the characteristics of the British "way of living together" (Ministry of Justice consultation on "What does it Mean to be British?", op. cit.).

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44. *Op.cit.* Rojek, Chris, p.10
45. These findings emerge from meticulous research in the UK by Quintan Wiktorowicz, now senior director for global engagement at the National Security Council in the USA. See <http://www.npr.org/2011/01/24/133125267/new-terrorism-adviser-takes-a-broad-tent-approach>
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The Life and Times of Abdullah Quilliam: British Foreign Policy, Muslim Loyalties and Contemporary Resonances

*RON GEAVES

IN 1887, a Liverpool solicitor converted to Islam after visiting North Africa. William Henry Quilliam adopted the name Abdullah and began to seek converts to his new faith in his native city. His conversion was announced in the press and presumably created some consternation amongst the city's gentry. Quilliam was highly respected in Liverpool. His family members were prominent Methodists and established watchmakers. He was known for his temperance activities, successful law firm, presidency of the Mersey Railway Quay and Carters Union and as an amateur geologist of some renown. In my recent biography of Abdullah Quilliam I assessed his significance both historically and also his contemporary resonances for the Muslim presence in Britain today.¹

In October 1899 *The Sunday Times* reported that he had successfully converted 182 English men and women to Islam and had established a mosque, a Muslim school and an orphanage in Liverpool. Quilliam's activities on behalf of Islam became well-known throughout the Muslim world through his weekly newspaper, *The Crescent*, which was circulated to over 80 Muslim nations for nearly twenty-five years. By 1893 he had attracted the attention of both the Sultan of the Ottomans, Abdul Hamid II, the titular Caliph of the Sunni Muslim world and the Amir of Afghanistan. The former was to award Quilliam the title of Sheikh al-Islam of the British Isles and the latter donated £2300 for the purchase of the mosque premises. It is estimated that by 1908 when he left Liverpool to reside in Istanbul he had converted over 250 native-born English men and women to Islam. Perhaps more significantly he had attracted to Islam a number of prominent

personalities who were to play major roles in the establishment of the London Muslim community in the early decades of the 20th century.

Quilliam's activities in Liverpool need to be reassessed in the light of his historical role in the creation of a Muslim community in Britain. Although he is now achieving something of an iconic reputation because he provides evidence of an indigenous Muslim presence in Britain that precedes mass economic migration, his real achievements need to be clarified. The Muslim community in Liverpool was more than a group of English middle-class converts. The renown of the British lawyer and his mosque in Liverpool had gone out to the Muslim world. At the time, Liverpool was the second city of the Empire and the gateway through which most Muslims arrived in Britain. The new railway linked the city to Manchester and to the rest of the nation. Wealthy upper-class Muslims had already developed their own version of a world tour and arrived in Liverpool on the steamships. They would use the city as a place of transit to visit London, Europe and even the USA. Many had heard of the mosque in the city and visited, often staying as a guest in Quilliam's home, from where they would attend jum'a prayers on Friday, sometimes even giving lectures on various aspects of Islam or Muslim culture and history.

The steamships did not only bring the wealthy to the shores of England. Many of the deckhands who ensured the success of the British merchant fleet were Asian or Arab Muslims. The Lascars, as they were known, were often in dire straits, stranded in Britain's port as they waited to contract a journey home. Quilliam

became their champion, accommodating them in the mosque when they were homeless, attending them in hospital when they were ill with fevers contracted at sea or offering them a full Muslim funeral with appropriate rites when their cause was hopeless. In addition to funerals the Sheikh was pilloried in the British media for his willingness to carry out weddings in the mosque between English women and Muslim men. Quilliam was also known to Muslim students studying in Edinburgh, Oxford and Cambridge. They visited him and he helped Cambridge Muslim students to establish the first Islamic Society in Britain.

Through his activities Quilliam was able to bring together the various constituents of the nineteenth century Muslim presence in Britain and draw upon the resources of the mosque in Liverpool to create a hub around which these often itinerant Muslim presences could cohere. But he also effectively utilized the possibility of the global reach brought about by the Victorian communications revolution to network and assist fledgling Muslim communities trying to establish themselves in Canada, USA, Australia, and South Africa. Yet globalization was about more than using steamships, trains, telegraph and wireless to lessen the impact of the geographical distance between nations, or even the increasing occurrence of migration to weaken the gulf between cultures; globalisation was also about empire and the attitudes of Muslims in Britain towards British foreign policy with regard to the Muslim world.

Even then, this would raise issues of loyalty and citizenship. Quilliam insisted that he was 'a loyal British subject by birth and a sincere Muslim from conviction'. However, individuals who followed religions whose centre of authority was abroad were perceived with deep suspicion by the British public, and this was particularly true when the foreign nations that were associated with the religion were hostile or at war with Britain. This suspicion could take the form of religious prejudice, but Quilliam never shied away

from being forthright in his criticism of imperial policies in the Muslim world. His challenge was to offset the prevalent view of Islam and to present it as the religion of reason allied to the values of toleration and moderation that public opinion insisted were part of the British worldview. His dilemma remains pertinent to the contemporary political domain and the demands on the children of the mid-

Quilliam's...refusal to confuse patriotism or citizenship with subservience to governments [is] one... way forward for contemporary Muslims"

twentieth century migrants in Britain who remain caught between proving their loyalty to their country of birth yet true to the teachings of their religion and reconciling the empathy they feel towards fellow Muslims worldwide. Quilliam's political and social activism, his pride of nation, his love of its values, but his refusal to confuse patriotism or citizenship with subservience to governments are one model for a way forward for contemporary Muslims in the West.

In the topical debates surrounding Islam, identity and citizenship, Quilliam provides a precedent from the past that can inform the present. Quilliam was convinced that only English Muslims could successfully establish Islam in Britain. His reasons for this were straightforward. Firstly, only Muslims born in Britain would be able to establish an Islam that did not carry cultural baggage from elsewhere in the Muslim majority world. The second point is not unconnected: in order to avoid carrying cultural baggage, a Muslim had to practise their faith from conviction rather than by birth. As he noted in 1896, 'English Muslims have adopted the faith not for personal advantage but because they believe it to be true, and the world

will then know how to appreciate these courageous men and women who have boldly made a stand for truth'.² Such a position might not preclude all Muslims who were part of the *umma* through birth, but they would need to go through similar processes to the converts, in other words, a conscious re-examination of their commitment to Islam.

In raising the issue of people who were Muslim by birth and Muslim by conviction, Quilliam began a discourse that remains highly relevant amongst contemporary British Muslims. The same debate arose in the late twentieth century and was particularly creative and public during the 1990s. It was the younger generation of British-born Muslims of South Asian parentage, especially those influenced by a modified post-Islamic political radicalism, who began to examine critically the relationship between religious and ethnic identity as they grappled with three major factors in their identity formation: being British, Muslim and Pakistani/ Bangladeshi/Indian.

Quilliam was English and Muslim in a period of colonial tensions between the country of his birth and the religion of his choice.

Quilliam never had to engage with these three identities in his attempts to fashion 'British Islam'. His personal ethnicities were only Liverpoolian and Manx. They may have contributed to his unique identity, but they were not major factors in forming his 'Muslimness'. But his efforts do parallel those of recent years, after the various crises and tensions generated by religious extremism and terrorism exposed and emphasized discourses around the issue of being Muslim and British. Ironically, there are connections between the two moments in the history of the British Muslim presence. Quilliam was

English and Muslim in a period of colonial tensions between the country of his birth and the religion of his choice. Today, British Muslims find themselves inheriting the colonial relationship in a post-colonial form; yet there are some who argue that this relationship between Britain and parts of the Muslim world has not ceased and that it is still too early to speak of the 'post-colonial' period.

Quilliam was passionate about the direction of British foreign policy. He had always been interested in politics but his conversion to Islam was to determine his relationship with British expansion overseas and particularly where Muslim territory was involved in the colonial enterprise. His patriotic loyalty to the nation of his birth and the intense feelings for the religion he had adopted by choice of conviction were never going to be easy to resolve.

Quilliam lived through a period of British history where the expansion of empire on a dramatic scale also created extraordinary challenges to national identity. Not everyone was at ease with the way that empire was sold to the British people. The blatant hero-worship, the sensationalising of glory and adventure, the magazines and books lauding romantic exploration of 'untamed' nature and the 'civilising' of 'native' peoples by missionaries and accounts of brave military exploits were to create unease for some individuals who tried to distinguish patriotism (a wholesome love of country) and jingoism (unhealthy xenophobia).³ Quilliam too struggled with the same dilemmas. His pan-Islamism was idealistically drawn from his instinctive sense of the oneness of humanity and he would never be at ease with xenophobic or racist attitudes towards other peoples. But more than that, his confirmed view that Islam was the final truth of God led him to the certainty that his new religion would ultimately triumph and that a future view of history would show a political and spiritual struggle in which Islam would be revealed to be mankind's correct choice.

With respect to that view of the world, Quilliam viewed Christianity not simply

as another possible monotheistic choice but as irredeemably locked in the political struggle that was Europe's and especially Britain's colonial enterprise. Like many Muslims of his time he remained at some level in a deep state of shock at the misfortunes of the Muslim world and convinced of its innate moral superiority over the decayed civilisation that Christendom had become. The solution in his eyes was for the British government to recognise that its self-interest lay in alliance with the last Muslim empire, the Ottoman. Although an apparent political solution, it also resolved his personal dilemmas of conflict of loyalty. As the nineteenth century came to an end he used *The Crescent* as his platform for representing his political view of the world to both the British media and Muslim readership around the globe.

As Abdullah Quilliam, the leader of British Muslims and the Sheikh al-Islam with a duty to report to the Sultan, he insisted that Britain's interests lay in supporting and encouraging a strong Ottoman Empire as a bulwark against the threat of Russia. He maintained this position until the outbreak of World War I. In analysing and critiquing British foreign policy in the last two decades of the nineteenth century, he would look back to those Foreign Secretaries and Prime Ministers who had pursued the policy of maintaining British interests through seeking alliance with the Ottomans. With regard to issues that might affect Britain's relationships with Muslims outside the Ottoman Empire, especially those under British colonial rule in India or elsewhere in Asia, Quilliam's position was more ambiguous. His dual loyalty to British monarch and Muslim caliph was a juggling act in which he differentiated between British intervention into Muslim territory under Ottoman rule or influence and those Muslims who also had a loyalty to the Queen Empress as citizens of the British Empire. Although critical of British incursions into Afghanistan, Sudan, and French activities in North Africa or Russian influence in the Ottoman domains, he

never challenged the rule of Britain in India or other parts of the Empire. Indeed he considered the British form of 'benign' paternalistic colonialism to be the pinnacle of world civilization. However he would argue that British politicians should be careful not to embarrass the monarch by heavy-handed treatment of the Empire's Muslim populations. His consistent plea and political strategy was to remind respective governments of his time that Queen Victoria ruled over more Muslims than even the Sultan.

However, the situation had changed dramatically by the time Quilliam converted to Islam and was appointed the official representative of Muslims in the British Isles by the Ottoman Sultan. By the 1880s there had been a change of attitude with regard to the motives behind imperial expansion and the series of colonial campaigns from 1877 to 1888 against the Zulus, the Afghans, the Boers and the Egyptians. These campaigns were more to do with territorial expansion than the necessary defense of Britain's trade and economic interests abroad. Imperialism was no longer reluctant or benign. Although Quilliam was to vigorously defend Britain's struggles against the Boer, he was deeply distressed by events in Afghanistan, Sudan and Egypt.

In 1893, Quilliam had returned from North Africa with an acclaimed honorary title of *alim* awarded by the Sultan of Morocco. He interpreted the award of *alim* and his status of Sheikh al-Islam as conferring on him the right to issue *fatwa* that were not only binding on British Muslims but on Muslims around the globe. There was no indication of him using this privilege to influence the minds of his fellow Muslims or to express himself on matters of religious law until the situation in Egypt and Sudan enraged him. *The Crescent* and the *Islamic World* provided the means to promote this first *fatwa* to the Muslim world, whilst the Annual General Meeting of the Liverpool Muslim Institute gave the public platform to pronounce it.

The *fatwa* (*fetva*) reads as follows:

In the name of Allah, the most merciful

and compassionate! Peace to all True Believers to whom this shall come!

'Know ye, O Muslims, that the British government has decided to commence military and warlike operations against the Muslims of the Soudan, who have taken up arms to defend their country and their faith. And it is in contemplation to employ Muslim soldiers to fight against these Muslims of the Soudan.

For any true believer to take up arms and fight against another Muslim who is not in revolt against the Khalif is contrary to the Shariat, and against the law of God and His Holy Prophet.

I warn every true believer that if he gives the slightest assistance in this projected expedition against the Muslims of the Soudan, even to the extent of carrying a parcel, or giving a bite of bread or a drink of water to any person taking part in this expedition against these Muslims, that he thereby helps the Giaour (infidels) against the Muslim, and his name will be unworthy to be continued on the roll of the faithful.

Signed in the Mosque of Liverpool, England, the 10th Day of Shawal 1313. W.H Abdullah Quilliam Sheikh al-Islam of the British Isles.⁴

Not all Muslims were happy with the proclamation and Quilliam himself mentions the controversy in Muslim circles and a letter received from India pleaded with him to confine himself to religion and leave politics alone.⁵ Some Muslims in India, recognising the sensitive and delicate position they held in India since the failure of the uprising in 1857 accused him of high treason and the *Muslim Chronicle of India* stated that there was no support for such views amongst Indian Muslims.⁶ Quilliam's response is controversial but also revealed that he understood the complexities of separating religion and politics. He quoted the Prophet on the subject of Muslim brotherhood and stated that if Muslims are being set against each other to the detriment of the unity of the *umma* by the politics of Giaour nations then it was a matter of religion. He declared

that the aim of all Muslims should be to work actively for the union of Muslim people and Islam.⁷ Controversially, he announced that the ultimate religious goal for all Muslim endeavour was the 'world for Islam'.⁸

The situation which had aroused Quilliam's ire in 1896 was the British expeditionary force into Sudan under the command of Major-General Sir Horatio Herbert Kitchener and utilising native Egyptian Muslim troops. General Kitchener had been a Major with the ill-fated Gordon relief column in the 1884-1885 campaign in the Sudan and there were who suspected that one of the motives behind the incursion into Sudan was revenge for Gordon's death at the hands of the Mahdi.⁹

The 1882-1888 campaigns had occurred before Quilliam converted to Islam and certainly before he had the vehicle of *The Crescent* to publicise his opinions of the war. However, the situation was different in the 1890s. Quilliam's early reporting of the war had not been completely condemnatory. He found himself feeling the weight of a confusing clash of loyalties. In a speech celebrating the Ottoman Sultan's birthday in 1898, Quilliam announced that British troops were once again fighting dervish movements but also that there was a 'need to crush Mahdism and free the people of Sudan from their tyranny'.¹⁰ *The Crescent* of the 12th January reproduced a number of articles from both French and British newspapers to represent a variety of views of the situation in the Sudan. Quilliam's equivocal position arose from his admiration for the Ottoman Empire and his undying loyalty to the Sultan. The Khedive in Egypt was the official representative of the Sultan and therefore in Quilliam's opinion the Mahdi's forces were rebels against both the religious and political authority of the Caliph of Sunni Islam and the Sultan, the rightful ruler of all Muslims under the dominion of the Ottoman Empire. In addition, French excursions into the Sudan provoked Quilliam's sense of patriotism and he could not abide the

thought of the old enemy of the British gaining an upper hand in Africa. In April, he published an article in *The Crescent* in which he argued that British forces needed to strike at Khartoum before the French Expeditionary force marched up from the south.¹¹

The Battle of Omdurman on the 2nd September 1898 was to severely test Quilliam's already stretched loyalties whilst providing the newspapers with a new arena for war reporting. However, the media was to find itself faced with the same conundrum as the Sheikh. Sir Horatio Herbert Kitchener's methodical conquest of the dervishes did not fulfil the romantic expectations of heroism that fed the British popular imagination.¹² With the loss of very few British lives, over 11,000 dervishes were slaughtered, breaking the back of Sudanese resistance. In spite of the imposition of strict censorship the news was carried by the British media and the victory was celebrated with special parades and church services.

Quilliam's view on the rebellious and treasonous Madhi forces had now transformed and he viewed them as men fighting to protect their legitimate territory from colonial invaders. He described them as men 'in whose veins runs the blood of freedom and patriotism, and who preferred manfully to be slain on the battlefield rather than to yield in subjection and humiliation, and to enjoy martyrdom in defending their dear and beloved native country'.¹³

By the following week Quilliam had consolidated his position sufficiently to write an article on Omdurman entitled 'War or Murder, Which?' He claimed that 20,000 Muslims had lost their lives in the campaign murdered by machine guns, but who had never done any harm to anyone in England. He argued that these 'simple sons of the desert' were merely protecting their families, homes, country and religion against Englishmen who had no right to be in their land. He blamed industrialisation and capitalism for the slaughter asking, 'Is the desire to supply the simple child of the sandy waste with shoddy cloth, Manchester

prints, Sheffield cutlery, Belfast whiskey and Birmingham jewellery a sufficient justification for the invasion of another person's land?' He went on to challenge the media perception of the heroism of the British forces and condemns Christian clergy for their religious services thanking God for victory.

A week later Quilliam had resolved the various ambiguities he was feeling by regarding the conflict in the region as a colonial attempt to deprive the Sultan of his legitimate territory in order to further British interests by building a railway from Cairo to Capetown. In a letter to the *Liverpool Courier* he declared that 119,000 Muslims had been killed in total in Egypt and Sudan by Christian forces intent upon stealing the Valley of the Nile from its rightful owner.¹⁴

In March 1899, Quilliam was to note that the forces of resistance in the Sudan were far from destroyed and that the dervishes had defeated Arabs loyal to the British. Furthermore he noted that a force of 10,000 was marching back to Omdurman to recapture the town. The renewal of conflict with the revitalised forces of the 'Mahdi' was to bring with it a severer test of loyalty than even the slaughter at Omdurman. Some of Kitchener's troops were to desecrate the shrine grave of the Mahdi, digging up his corpse and removing the head. Rumours stated that the head was in the possession of Kitchener himself, something that the General never denied. At a meeting of the Liverpool Muslim Institute it was decided to send a letter to the British Parliament on behalf of British Muslims to formally complain. It was agreed to petition Parliament and the Petition was presented to the House on the 27th March 1899 by Charles McArthur, the Member for the Exchange Division of Liverpool. Entitled the Muslim Petition to the Imperial Parliament of Great Britain and Ireland, the document read:

To the Honourable the House of Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland in Parliament assembled.

The humble petition of the Undersigned

showeth;

that at a meeting of persons professing the Muslim faith and residing in England, held in the lecture hall of the Liverpool Muslim Institute, West Derby Road, in the City of Liverpool, on the 21st day of March, 1899, it was unanimously resolved:-

that this meeting hereby records its earnest protest against the outrage that was committed in the Soudan, in the rifling of the tomb of him who was called the Mahdi at Omdurman, and the mutilation of his corpse, and respectfully requests the Imperial Parliament of Great Britain to hold an enquiry with reference to the same, so that the perpetrators of this scandalous outrage can be reprimanded and punished, and that the copies of this resolution shall be forwarded to her Majesty the Queen, Lord Salisbury and Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman.

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that your Honourable House will cause an enquiry to be granted into the above matter in accordance with the sentiments of the said resolution.

*And your petitioners will ever pray,
signed on behalf of the persons
assembled at such meeting as aforesaid.
W.W. Abdullah Quilliam
Sheikh al-Islam of the British Isles and
Chairman of the said meeting.*

The events in Omdurman focused Quilliam's loyalties in way that other incidents could not and his second proclamation as an *alim* was to express his anger. Significantly the target was no longer Muslims in Egypt who fought against fellow Muslims in Sudan as part of British forces but against the British forces themselves. They were linked to a wider cosmic religious struggle between Allah and Shaytan. The battle lines were drawn and no true Muslim could side with the British excursions into Muslim territory. It is notable that for the first time the Sheikh al-Islam uses the term 'fatwa' as opposed to the English adaptation of 'proclamation' he had used formerly.

In the name of Allah, the most merciful

and compassionate! Peace to all True Believers to whom this shall come!

To all true believers in Allah and in his Holy Prophet in whatever land they may dwell: this message is from Abdullah Quilliam, the humble instrument whom Allah hath appointed to preach Islam to all English speaking people.

Brethren peace be unto you!

Brethren, it is written in the Koran that the true believers are brethren. Each Muslim, is therefore, my brother, your brother. It is the bounden and sacred duty of every Muslim to assist his brother while alive, and to respect and protect his mortal remains when it hath pleased Allah to call him to rest. It matters not whether the true believer be Hanifee, Malekee, Hanballee or Shafee; if he believe in Allah and His Prophet, he is our brother.

Brethren, a few years ago a certain Mussulman, Mahommad Ahmed ibn Abdullah by name, gained great victories in the Soudan; the giaours and kaffirs opposed him in vain; Allah in His divine wisdom brought their devices to naught, and gave the victory to this son of Islam. Allah Akbar. This man was a Muslim; as such he lived, as such he died, as such he was buried. Years after this true believer had died and entered into rest, the giaours came to the place where his corpse was buried. nothing is sacred to these men, who follow a vain delusion, and who deny that Allah is one, and refuse to follow the true path revealed by the blessed Mustapha al-Amin. they are blind and deaf, and take the rebellious Shaitan for their patron, and the truth is not in them. These Nasuranee came like loathsome swine, filthy dogs, cowardly jackals and offal eating hyenas to defile the grave of this great Mussulman, Mahommad Ahmed ibn Abdullah, the Soudanee. With sacrilegious hands they dragged his corpse from the grave and backed off his head, and hath borne it off to exhibit in their own lands to their women and children as a proof how the Nasuranee hates the Mussulman. Then they took the body of this great

Mussulman and dragged it with every mark of dishonour to the riverside and flung it therein, that it might become the food for the voracious crocodile.

Brethren, this is what the Nasuranee have done to the mouldering corpse of a dead Mussulman. By this shameful outrage upon the dead every Muslim in the world has been insulted, has been outraged in his feelings, and wounded in his self-respect.

Brethren let the remembrance of this outrage be engraved deeply upon each Muslim's heart. Until every one of the perpetrators or assistants in this diabolical outrage are adequately punished for their participation therein, there can be no friendship, no communion, between any true believer and those of the same religious creed as these despoilers of dead men's graves. Shun the presence of these wicked men – these human ghouls – as ye would flee from the presence of a leper! Shun them as ye would one who Shaitan has infected with a touch! Brethren, Allah will support you against those who are in manifest error, for he is the Hearer, the Wise!

The *fatwa* goes on to quote the Chapter *Al Imran* from the Qur'an commanding 'contract not a friendship with any besides

[Quilliam] appealed to a Muslim unity that would override lesser loyalties to schools of law or sectarian divides.

those of the true faith; they will not fail to corrupt you'. The message of the *fatwa* is uncompromising and expressed the anger and indignation of Quilliam but he was of no doubt that Muslims around the world would feel the same way. He appealed to a Muslim unity that would override lesser loyalties to schools of law or sectarian divides but significantly names the enemy as 'Nasuranee', or Christians

and Christianity as a 'vain delusion' rather than the British powers. He declared that Christians have always hated Muslims right from the time when they refused to hear the message of the Prophet and thus they fall on the side of Shaytan not God in the struggle between God and the Devil. However, he falls short of demanding rebellion or insurrection but requests Muslims to isolate themselves from communication with the Christian world until the perpetrators have been identified and tried and the remains of the Mahdi returned.

Quilliam's final comments on the Sudan have a contemporary resonance. In January 1900 the Sheikh noted that Omdurman was being Westernised under Kitchener who had introduced European style shops, cafes run by Greeks, a music warehouse and a concert hall, a postal and telegraph system.¹⁵ In case there were those who were not clear that he disapproved of the introduction of European culture to the Sudan, the following week he commented that 'Omdurman only needs a brewery and a bishop and its Christianisation will be complete'.¹⁶

However, the Balkans or the Near East would be more problematic for him. Most European powers including Britain supported the attempts of Macedonia, Bulgaria, Armenia and Greece to free themselves from the Ottomans and upheld the various rebellions. It enraged Quilliam and he spent a lot of his energy as a writer defending his beloved Ottoman civilisation and trying to explain the hypocrisy inherent in the Western European position, pointing out that in no circumstances would they have allowed breakaway movements from their respective empires.

Quilliam's significance in the Muslim world and his nuisance value in opposition to various British Foreign Secretaries took place in the context of Muslims worldwide having to come to terms with the threat of European imperial states. The material and human resources of the Muslim powers that had formerly dominated large areas of the world were exploited for the

needs of the European empires. Whilst this took place, European ideas began to shape Muslim institutions and to drive the existing systems of the Muslim world to represent Western interests. British laws and policies began to transform Muslim societies that came under British control threatening Islamic education, governance and legal systems.¹⁷ It is not surprising that many Muslims were psychologically fascinated to learn of the Sheikh's activities and overjoyed to discover that a middle-class Muslim convert was promoting Islam in Britain itself.

Quilliam could never understand why various Foreign and Colonial Office officials of the final decades of the nineteenth century would not understand the significance of alliance with the Muslim world, especially with the Ottomans, to maintain strategic dominance over the old enemies of Russia and France. Quilliam's own patriotism had been forged in the earlier Victorian period and he viewed with considerable distaste the new mood. It took considerable courage to resist with very public statements in the newspapers and through his vehicle of *The Crescent* the new mood of the times. In Liverpool he publicly offset the waving of flags of the dependent nations controlled by the British Empire world with a very public display of the banners of the independent Muslim nations on the roof of the mosque in Liverpool. In 1903 his public defence of Islam in Liverpool's town hall brought to a head his frustrations and was reported by both British and European newspapers.

However, Quilliam would find as other British Muslims a century later that the position of defending Islam, when the country was intent on invading territory where Islam was the dominant faith, was not tolerated by the government in power, the dominant media and the majority of the population. Although liberal by inclination and passionate in his belief that Muslims needed to embrace modernity, the Sheikh found himself forced by circumstance to express his anger at what he considered inadvisable foreign policies through recourse to statements from the harsher

side of Islam. Such statements would draw the ire of the media and reinforce the very prejudices against Islam that he had spent his life trying to dispel. The dominant view is always hard to go against especially when the country is at war but there are always minority views of dissent. Such voices may in the long term be shown to be right in their views and sometimes even change government policy through the means of legitimate protest. Quilliam's continuous struggle against foreign policy that he believed to be wrong-headed and misplaced gives an example of engaged citizenship to British Muslims today and shows the pitfalls of divided loyalties when allegiance to the state and the dictates of conscience and religious revelation point in opposite directions.

In 2009, the left-wing journalist Seumas Milne argued that the Government preaches globalisation but refuses to face up to the multiple identities and loyalties that flow from this.¹⁸ His sentiments could have been expressed at the time of Quilliam's efforts to create a Muslim voice in Britain in the last decades of the nineteenth century. Muslims were forced to come to terms with the power of the European imperial state through which their material and human resources were joined to the needs of the European empires. Migration itself was part of this process but, more insidiously, European ideas began to shape Muslim institutions, bending existing systems in the Muslim world to Western interests. British laws and policies began to transform many societies that came under British control.¹⁹ Quilliam was never fully at ease with the process of colonisation that went along with globalisation, nor should it be surprising that the sons of Muslim migrants who arrived from the ex-colonies would be any more acquiescent to the continuity of a foreign policy that they perceive to have historical kinship with nineteenth-century colonialism.

When Quilliam insisted that he was 'a loyal British subject by birth and a sincere Muslim from conviction',²⁰ he did so in an environment in which to be Roman Catholic in Britain still raised

issues of divided political loyalty. Gwylm Beckerlegge states that a 'Muslim living according to the imperatives of Muslim law' was no less perceived to be 'answerable to authorities beyond and other than the British monarch and the British state'.²¹ The difficulty was that most Protestant English people identified their religious conviction more with the struggle for civil and religious liberty than they did with theological or ritual differences, and they regarded both Islam and Roman Catholicism as being open to the acceptance of arbitrary power. Beckerlegge claims that individuals who followed those religions whose centre of authority was abroad were perceived with deep suspicion by the British public, and this was particularly true when the foreign nations that were associated with the religion were hostile or at war with Britain.²² This suspicion could take the form of religious prejudice, but Quilliam never shied away from being forthright in his criticism of imperial policies in the Muslim world; neither did he take the line of the Woking Muslims, who were more conciliatory towards Christianity. Quilliam was openly and publicly hostile to the religion he had left when he embraced Islam and often conflated Christianity and imperialist ventures in the Muslim world.

Quilliam's fatwas show that he was not afraid to antagonise public opinion, the media and British politicians as he vociferously opposed British government colonial ventures in Sudan and Afghanistan and fully supported the rights of the insurgents. It might be argued that the presence of significant Muslim populations with recent roots in parts of the world where British troops are fighting unpopular wars is one reason why domestic and foreign policy can never be separated as was possible in colonial times; but Quilliam demonstrated that, even with a much smaller Muslim presence in Britain, it was not possible to separate the two policies even in colonial times. Both the Foreign Office and Home Office were intensely interested in his activities and maintained files on him.

When it came to conflict between the West and the Islamic majority world, Abdullah Quilliam would proclaim, 'harm one Muslim and you harm us all'. He was not beyond threatening the British governments of his time with the prospect of inciting the Muslims of the Empire to rise up in the cause of injustices inflicted upon fellow Muslims. It is unlikely that his fatwa could have achieved this, but he was ready to do it. Such behaviour, if undertaken by a Muslim leader today, would be regarded as inflammatory.

Abdullah Quilliam believed in 'active citizenship'. While he may not have used this actual term, he belonged to an age when Britain's democracy and civil society were being forged. He was a devout and committed Muslim, trade union leader, active supporter of 'negro' rights, committed advocate on behalf of the campaign to abolish capital punishment and a philanthropist in his own city. Not all of his political struggles were on behalf of Islam, but he did not differentiate between struggling for social justice and being a British Muslim. He created a strategy in which his patriotism was to the person and the institution of the monarchy, but he had no faith in the respective governments who served the reigning empress or emperor of his time. He considered it the duty of Britain's Muslims, as an ethical and moral presence in the land, to challenge the decisions of government when necessary and to resist the implementation of these decisions when dissent was not heeded. He resisted Britain's divorce laws to the point of breaking the law and sacrificing his career as a lawyer, and was not beyond threatening ministers when he considered that they were encroaching on the rights of various Muslim populations. He engaged in a successful campaign to withdraw a play from the West End which he considered insulted the reputation of the Prophet, and was a vociferous critic of the 'jingoistic' patriotism that was prevalent as part of the propaganda of empire. I would argue that it is precisely that which makes Quilliam problematic, that makes him an iconic figure for British Muslims. It is his struggle

to reconcile the deep loyalties to nation and religion that make him typical of a Muslim in a Muslim minority nation, and he was not always successful in integrating the two loyalties. Abdullah Quilliam was not against the idea of citizenship, or as he expressed it, 'being a British subject', but he did not confuse citizenship with acquiescence or an uncritical patriotism that declared 'my country right or wrong'. His dilemma remains pertinent to the contemporary political domain and the demands on the children of the mid-twentieth century migrants in Britain who remain caught between proving their loyalty to their country of birth yet true to the teachings of their religion and reconciling the empathy they feel towards fellow Muslims worldwide. Quilliam's political and social activism, his pride of nation, his love of its values, but his refusal to confuse patriotism or citizenship with subservience to governments are one model for a way forward for contemporary Muslims in the West.

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Recently he has published *Islam in Victorian Britain: The Life and Times of Abdullah Quilliam* and is currently working on a critical edition of Quilliam's writings with Yahya Birt. In addition to his prolific publishing record, Geaves is the editor of the Journal, *Fieldwork in Religion*, and the Director of the Centre for the Study of Islam and Muslims in Britain, and former Chair of Muslims in Britain Research Network.

ENDNOTES

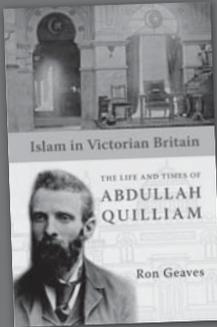
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BOOK PROMOTION



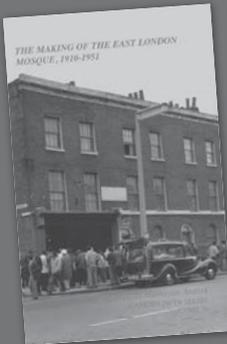
ISLAM IN VICTORIAN BRITAIN THE LIFE AND TIMES OF ABDULLAH QUILLIAM

BY RON GEAVES

Islam in Victorian Britain, by Liverpool Hope University professor Ron Geaves, provides the first full biography of Abdullah Quilliam (1856-1932), the most significant Muslim personality in nineteenth century Britain. Based on exhaustive archival work, Geaves not only provides the first account of Quilliam's colourful and turbulent life, but examines his teachings and considers his legacy for British Muslims today.

Islam in Victorian Britain: The Life and Times of Abdullah Quilliam by Ron Geaves
Published in 2010 by Kubepublishing.com

BOOK PROMOTION



THE MAKING OF THE EAST LONDON MOSQUE, 1910-1951: MINUTES OF THE LONDON MOSQUE FUND AND EAST LONDON MOSQUE TRUST LTD

EDITED BY HUMAYUN ANSARI

The book describes the history of the establishment of the East London Mosque, established in 1910. A detailed introduction provides a critical analysis for understanding the history of Muslim efforts at religious institutionalisation in Britain stretching over a century (1910–2010), and is followed by annotated Minutes of the meetings which took place between leading Muslims and members of the British establishment in the first half of the twentieth century.

The Making of the East London Mosque, 1910-1951: Minutes of the London Mosque Fund and East London Mosque Trust Ltd (Camden Fifth Series) by Humayun Ansari, published in 2011 by Cambridge University Press.



The Journeys of Hayy ibn Yaqzan

*NABIL MATAR

IN the shadow of Averroes, and with Maimonides as his contemporary, Abu Bakr Ibn Tufayl wrote *Hayy ibn Yaqzan* just under a decade before his death in 1185. The story of Hayy is about a solitary baby who was nourished by a gazelle, and using empirical knowledge to study nature and the cosmos, discovered “Aristotle’s Unmoved Mover”. Like Ibn Tufayl, the fictional Hayy was a surgeon, an astronomer, a geographer and a philosopher, who was to become one of the most memorable figures in Arab-Islamic and world literature.

What the philosophical allegory of *Hayy ibn Yaqzan* tells us has remained the object of differing interpretations. Although Ibn Tufayl looked back at Ibn Sina for inspiration,¹ he produced a tale that was uniquely his own and very different from the Hayy that Ibn Sina had created a century earlier. Ibn Sina had situated his old and venerable protagonist in Jerusalem, and his journey of the soul followed in the tracks of the Prophet’s *mi’raj* (Night of Ascent) to God. Ibn Tufayl’s *Hayy* on the other hand reflected the intellectual breadth of Islamic learning in the medieval West.

The setting of the story in the Indian Ocean evokes the geographical and cartographical discoveries of the Arabs – as Ibn Tufayl’s contemporary, al-Idrissi, demonstrated in his famous map, the first world map ever, produced under King Roger in Sicily. The medical and surgical skills that Hayy employed, invokes the *Canons* of Ibn Sina, a book of advanced diagnosis, prognosis and pharmacology, which continued to be in use in European universities until the seventeenth century. Hayy’s intense philosophical reflection on Aristotelian metaphysics reflects the bustling debates in the court of the

Cordoban caliph, led by Averroes (the Commentator on Aristotle, as he came to be known in European translations). The Sufi vision of this story is a reaction to the formidable al-Ghazali, whose work, only a generation after his death, had traveled across most of the then known world, from Khorasan, where he was buried, to Andalusian Spain, where he provoked Ibn Tufayl, and Ibn Rushd, to their respective responses.² The harmony that Hayy attains at the end with his fellow seeker, Asal, reflects the serenity of the majestic mosque of Cordoba.

However Hayy did not remain in Cordoba for long. Within a century, he had begun a journey that would take him across continents and languages, inspiring writers in Damascus and Florence, Madrid and London, Massachusetts, Oxford and Aleppo. His would be a book that, in the words of the Syrian critic, Samar Attar, would launch “a thousand books.”³

With many manuscripts surviving of his story, Hayy ibn Yaqzan, ‘Alive son of Awake’, traveled widely in both the Arabic-speaking world as well as Western Europe and North America, inspiring all, from the Muslims and the Jews to the Christians (Quakers, Anglicans, and Catholics), and to a Sunni theologian in Syria and even a Nonconformist novelist in England, in a time period spanning the thirteenth to the eighteenth century. In a curious twist of fate, that has not been hitherto recognised, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, Hayy was re-imagined by a Swiss traveler and Arabist as ‘Al-Sharif Yusuf Robinson’ of the city of Hull in England.

The allegorical fable was a product of Qur’anic imagery (sprung of mud and clay, Qur’an, 15:26),⁴ Greek philosophy, and Sufi illuminationist tradition:⁵ and it inspired international reformulations.

How a story written by a Muslim jurist in the puritanical city of Cordoba could resonate in so many environments and across so many centuries is a testimony to its trans-linguistic and trans-religious appeal. It is also a testimony to the imagination that created the central figure of the story: a man whose humanity is not determined by any cultural, historical, religious, or linguistic factors. The hero of Ibn Tufayl's story has no roots in birth, society, or tradition, because he is a man who has literally sprung out of the earth in an act of spontaneous generation.⁶ In this respect, he is unique as a hero of fiction: there was none like him in the earlier literatures of the classical tradition. Ibn Tufayl fashioned out of the earth a naked man, and subsequent readers and thinkers have adapted him in their varied "intellectual and emotional adventures."⁷ Hayy became everyman in many languages and in many religions, a 'classic' that was able to migrate to other continents and civilizations whilst retaining its unique character.

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Man'.

There were many adaptations of Hayy, starting with Ibn Al-Nafis who re-imagined Hayy in thirteenth-century Damascus as 'Quranic Man'. This was followed in the middle of the fourteenth century by Moshe Narboni (d. 1362) who commented on a Hebrew translation of *Hayy*.⁸ By the end of the fifteenth century, *Hayy* had reached Florence where Pico della Mirandola (d. 1494) fashioned him into Europe's 'Renaissance Man'.⁹ A century and a half later, it is possible that the Spanish writer Baltazar Gracián used Hayy

as the model of Andrenio /Moral Man in his allegorical novel *El Criticón*. Written in three parts, and published in 1651, 1653, and 1657 respectively, this novel describes the adventures of its protagonists, and the process, satirizes contemporary society. Critico, the "critical man" is the embodiment of disillusionment, and Andrenio, the "natural man" represents human impulses. As Paul Rycaut, who translated the novel to English in 1681, indicated in his preface:

"I am of opinion, that the Author of this Book might originally have deduced his fancy from the History of *Hai Ebn Yokdhan*, wrote in Arabick by Ebn Tophail, and Translated into Latin by Dr. Pocock; and though there is much difference in the relation of one, and the other, yet the design of both is almost the same, being only to show how far the Spiritual and Immortal Soul of Man, is able in its natural capacity, and by degrees, and steps of exterior Objects to proceed unto Rules for conversation of its own well-being, and that of others" (The Translator to the Reader).¹⁰

In 1671 Oxford, Edward Pococke the younger, turned Hayy into 'Philosophical Man', to be followed by 'Hayy the Quaker' (1674), 'Hayy the Anglo-Catholic' (1686), and 'Hayy the Autodidactus' (1708), the man who attains "true knowledge of God, and things necessary to salvation, without instruction."¹¹ A few years before that, c. 1700, Cotton Mather of Boston, Massachusetts, expressed admiration for the Muslim who attained knowledge of God without recourse to institutions.¹² Then, in London of 1719, Daniel Defoe found in Hayy the English/Protestant Man, Robinson Crusoe, to be followed in 1761 by an anonymous writer who imagined Hayy as Catholic Man/ a monk (*The Life and Surprising Adventures of Don Antonio de Trezzanio*). Finally, in Aleppo of 1810, John Lewis Burckhardt fashioned out of Hayy a Sharif Yusuf /descendant of the Prophet on a deserted island, imbued with all the industry, morality, and piety of Arab Man.

In this paper, I will concentrate on the

Hayy-Robinson-Yusuf trajectory of Ibn Tufayl's hero.

ENGLISH MAN

From Damascus or Florence, a manuscript of *Hayy* found its way to Aleppo where it was purchased by the English chaplain and Arabist, Edward Pococke. On returning to Oxford where he assumed the Laudian Chair of Arabic at the University, he started to translate it, which was then finished by his son and subsequently published in 1671. Pococke lived at a time when he and his countrymen began learning about the civilisation of the Islamic world, as manuscripts of "oriental" theology, history, geography, and literature were being edited, translated, and published in England. These manuscripts, and the disciplines that developed to study them, suddenly showed Britons what the swarthy "Moors" and the "Mahometan Turks" and sword-wielding "Saracens" had produced: a vast civilisation that had long preceded anything that the Britons could claim in their own land, and that had adopted and adapted the same Graeco-Latin legacy which Britons claimed as their own classical patrimony.

As Pococke commented, "the Progress" that the Arabs and the Muslims had made "in ingenious Studies, was so great, that they hardly came behind the Greeks themselves."¹³ As more and more oriental material became available in print, Britons realised that, for the very first time in their history, they were encountering a non-Christian and a non-European civilisation that was vast, complex, and rich. While medieval writers had often mentioned Arabic sciences, at no time before the seventeenth century were the writings of those Arabs, and to a lesser extent, of Turks and Persians, ranging from history to chronicle, and from geography to poetry, so widely available in print for English study.

The translation of *Hayy* by Simon Ockley in 1708 found its way into the private library of a newspaper editor, political commentator, and religious anti-establishmentarian, Daniel Defoe.¹⁴

In 1719, Defoe published one of the most famous and popular novels in the history of the English language, *Robinson Crusoe*. The novel told of a sailor who was marooned on an island, survived for 27 years, after which he returned with a slave to England to start his life again in wealth and status. It was a story partly inspired by the account of Alexander Selkirk, who had spent four years on an island 300 miles west of South America (now named Robinson Crusoe Island by Chile),¹⁵ but it was also the product of Defoe's imagination, especially in locating the island in the tropics, in describing visits by cannibals, and in enslaving Friday.

Although there has been much debate as to the impact (or lack thereof), of *Hayy* on *Robinson Crusoe*,¹⁶ the evidence is compelling for the former. Foremost is the solitariness of the hero: Hayy spends 28 years of his life on the island before meeting any humans. There is no other figure in the literary imagination of the west or the east who is a solitary hero without family, history, religion, or country/countrymen. Although Crusoe has family and country, the novel focuses on him in his solitariness where memories of his country/countrymen are nearly totally absent, and where he has little recollections of siblings, friends, 'good old England' or anything else of his childhood, hometown, or relatives. This physical solitariness of Crusoe could only have been inspired by Hayy since his is a solitariness that goes beyond anything that appears in the spiritual autobiographies of the Protestant "pilgrim" writers of the seventeenth century.

Although the spiritual autobiography of English (and American) Protestant piety influenced Defoe's thinking, as critics have shown,¹⁷ the isolation of Robinson is in sharp contrast with the world of temptation and distraction against which the Protestant has to fight. Even Christian in Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* meets with many figures of temptation: after he leaves wife and family behind, he does not enter a world of absolute solitariness in which there is no human contact; rather, he is

bedeviled by people who try to lead him astray. Robinson meets with no human tempters which is why his solitariness corresponds to what Ibn Tufayl uniquely envisaged for his hero.

**In *Crusoe*, as in *Hayy*,
the discovery of the
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centered investigations
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solitary life.**

Robinson Crusoe reveals important similarities with Hayy in the journey of knowledge that he undertakes. In *Crusoe*, as in *Hayy*, the discovery of the self occurs without interaction, in the self-centered investigations and analyses of the solitary life. Ian Watt observed that Defoe showed through Crusoe how the individual's daily life and experience is "of sufficient importance and interest to be the proper subject of literature."¹⁸ In Hayy, Crusoe found the daily life of a man who attained subjectivity without, and away from, humanity. Like Hayy, Robinson Crusoe mastered the art of survival, learning how to build and calculate and strategize: he relied on deduction, self-making, and self-fashioning; and like Hayy, his reason was informed by the empirical experience which led him from the visible to the invisible. Most interestingly, the novel showed how in isolation, a wayward youth could attain the knowledge of God, all by himself.

It is worth noting that Defoe's novel appealed to the vast readership of Protestant Britain for another key reason than the adventure and the colonial implications that it presented so vividly. Crusoe's story was very much in the tradition of the Puritan spiritual autobiography, with its emphasis on the conversion of the sinner from error to enlightenment.¹⁹ In this respect, it was also very much in line with *Hayy*. Crusoe begins his life on the island

as a man "thoughtless of God" – in the same manner that Hayy did not know God either. Neither one thinks of God/Supreme Being before coming in control of his surroundings – clearly confirming that the journey to metaphysics begins by understanding the physical world. That is why, and soon after his arrival on the island, Crusoe begins to appeal to his reason to guide him in all his actions toward survival: "I call'd a council, that is to say, in my thoughts," and "I drew up the state of my affairs in writing."²⁰ He then turns to work because, as he explains, "as reason is the substance and original of the mathematicks, so by stating and squaring everything by reason, and by making the most rational judgement of things, every man may be in time master of every mechanic art."²¹ Notwithstanding his unfamiliarity with tools, he proceeds to examine and study and control the island around him. Crusoe operates within the philosophical system of John Locke's Aristotelian empiricism – the same Aristotelianism that had inspired Hayy who relied on empirical investigation and rational judgment to understand and control the island around him.

Hayy evolves in his intellectual journey from knowledge of individual creations to species and then to the unity of all beings; as does Crusoe who discovers the unity between him and the "savage" because God had bestowed on all humans "the same powers, the same reason, the same affections, the same sentiments of kindness and obligation."²² This discovery of the unity of mankind is confirmed for Crusoe in his reading of the Bible. The Bible leads him to the "Providence of God" (111) but without any reference to denomination or doctrine: it teaches him of God beyond the articles of creed or the mysteries of faith. He admires the "hand of God's Providence" (103), seeing it as a universal power over both humankind and nature. Like Hayy, Crusoe arrives at the knowledge of the metaphysical through the physical; and like Hayy, he quotes verses from the Bible that confirm his findings, in the same manner that Hayy quotes verses from the

Qur'an, without mentioning the text by name, that confirm his own conclusions. On reaching the knowledge and experience of God, both Hayy and Crusoe begin to fear the pain of separation from almighty Providence, especially as Hayy yearns for unity with God while Crusoe becomes aware of sin. At such moments of fear, both men reorient themselves by intense meditation, spiritual abnegation and deprivation; both will direct themselves toward the Supreme Being in fear and prayer, in tears and reflection. In the tale of Hayy, Daniel Defoe found the God-attaining soul of English Protestant man, and took Ibn Tufayl's allegory of the human mind's ascent to the metaphysical, and turned it into a biographical account of an Englishman in the physical world: Robinson Crusoe.

ARAB MAN

This image of religious, if not mystical, attainment after years of solitude on an island reached its most curious development in the story of al-Sharif Yusuf Robinson written in 1810 by the orientalist Johann Ludwig Burckhardt. The Cambridge-educated Swiss traveler so mastered Arabic and Islam that he was able to pass off as Ibrahim ibn Abdallah, to visit the holy cities of Mecca and Medina, and upon his death, to receive burial in a Muslim graveyard in Cairo. During his residence in Aleppo between 1809-1810, Burckhardt turned to refashion the stories of Hayy and of Robinson Crusoe by creating a synthesis of the Muslim and the Christian protagonists in a short novella, *Durr al-Bihar, Gems of the Seas*.²³

Written in a mix of classical and colloquial Arabic, the story line of Sharif Yusuf Robinson is more or less the same as that of *Robinson Crusoe*: of a youth who disobeys parents, sails away to the Indies, the East Indies for Burckhardt, is marooned on an island, learns to survive, saves a captive from cannibals, and finally returns to his native York in *bilad al-ingliz*. Burckhardt retained the English nationality of his protagonist but moved beyond its limitations: for Yusuf

belongs to the syncretic world of Islam and Christianity in the bustling city of Aleppo. Burckhardt opened the book with an invocation using the first words of the *fatiha* – *bism al-lah*; but then, he continued with a reference to God the eternal and everlasting, *al-azali al-sarmadi*: a curious blend of Islamic and Christian piety. The title mentioned “*sifr* Robinson,” perhaps recalling one of the *asfar* of the Arabic translations of the Old Testament, and it was about a *sharif*, not however from an Islamic, but a Christian, region. Throughout, Burckhardt maintained this intermixing of phrases, sensibilities, and invocations: reference to Genoese cheese follows the Turkish *biksmat*, and verses from Arabic poetry, ranging from the piety of ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib to the moralisation of the *Arabian Nights*, are mixed with the *hijri* calendar and with biblical episodes. Yusuf plucks out his beard in frustration, just like an Aleppan, while speaking with his slave Friday in English; he becomes an *amir* guiding Friday to *al-surat al-mustaqim* and away from *al-shaytan al-rajim*, while telling him to love others – a clear echo of the words of Jesus.

One night, Sharif Yusuf heard a voice saying: “Robinson, Robinson, where are you and what have you done? I awoke and jumped up and sought help from the merciful, the compassionate, *rahman al-rahim*.” The voice continued as “if coming down from heaven, saying Robinson Robinson, have you forgotten me? Suddenly, my body trembled and my knees collapsed and I fell to the floor like a corpse.” The epithets of the divine are Qur’anic, but the drama is a cross between Samuel’s and St Paul’s encounters with the voice of God in the Hebrew Scriptures and in the Acts of the Apostles. Was there also an echo of the Prophet Muhammad’s first vision of the Angel Gabriel where the *Sira* tells of his falling in fear and prostration?

Burckhardt fashioned Yusuf Robinson into a universalist man: Arab and English, Muslim and Christian, a descendant of the Prophet/a Sharif and a native of the port city of York. He is a man from the West who behaves like a Syrian: He celebrates feeling

like a *sultan* while recalling the rivalry between England and Spain; he writes from within the Qur'an but is inspired by the New Testament - to produce a new Hayy whose journey leads to fulfillment in *firdaws al-na'im* of Islam and Christianity. Importantly, at no point does Yusuf mention any religion by name, or religious text, ever confirming submission to God, without specific creed. He teaches his Jum'u'a/Friday the Jesus command to turn the left cheek if he is struck on the right, at the same time that he recalls the Qur'an, telling him to travel '*ala kaff al-rahman bi 'wnihi ta'ala*' trusting the merciful and with the help of the almighty; he calls the father of his slave as a *sheikh* while reenacting the submission of the New Testament Prodigal Son on his return to his father. Burckhardt ended the journey with the death of the Sharif Yusuf, echoing thereby the death of Sinbad in the *Arabian Nights*: "And came upon them the destroyer of joys and the separator of peoples: they died, praise be to the everliving who never dies."

Hayy traveled from Islam into Judaism and Christianity, and from Damascus to Florence, and from London to Aleppo, reenacting man's heroic journey in search of God, *al-rahman, al-rahim*/the merciful, the compassionate.

From Cordoba, Ibn Tufayl constructed a story of a man who rises from within the Arabic imagination of Islam to become an inspiration in many languages, cities and lands. He also inspired theologians and scientists, philosophers and architects – as Ibn Tufayl was remembered long after his death. Edward Said spoke about how a text, traveling from its point of origin to a new language or religion or culture, is translated

and changed, subdued or invigorated to give life to new ideas and experiences.²⁴ In this manner, Hayy traveled from Islam into Judaism and Christianity, and from Damascus to Florence, and from London to Aleppo, reenacting man's heroic journey in search of God, *al-rahman, al-rahim*! the merciful, the compassionate.

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2. See Hawi, Sami S (1976). "Ibn Tufayl's Appraisal of his Predecessors and their Influence on his Thought," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 7, pp. 89-121, esp. section E.
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13. *The Theological Works of the Learned Dr. Pocock, ed. Leonard Twells* (London, 1740), 35.

14. This translation was perhaps the best as it was done by an Arabist and a Latinist, Simon Ockley, who held the Adams Professorship of Arabic at his alma mater, Cambridge University, from 1711-1720.

15. A cruising voyage round the world: first to the South-seas, thence to the East-Indies, and homewards by the Cape of Good Hope. It begun in 1708, and finished in 1711, containing a journal of all the remarkable transactions, particularly, of the taking of Puna and Guaiquil, of the Acapulco ship, and other prizes, an account of Alexander Selkirk's living alone four years and four months in an island, and a brief description of several countries in our course noted for trade, especially in the South-sea: with maps of all the coast, from the best Spanish manuscript draughts; and an introduction relating to the South-sea trade (London, 1712). Captain Edward Cooke, A voyage to the South Sea,

and round the world, performed in the years 1708, 1709, 1710, and 1711. Containing a journal of all memorable transactions during the said voyage, the winds, currents, and variation of the compass, the taking of towns of Puna and Guayaquil, and several prizes, one of which a rich Acapulco ship; a description of the American coasts, from Tierra del Fuego in the south, to California in the north, (from the coasting-pilot, a Spanish manuscript); an historical account of all those countries from the best authors; with a new map and description of the mighty river of the Amazons: wherein an account is given of Mr. Alexander Selkirk, his manner of living and taming some wild beasts during the four years and four months he lived upon the uninhabited island of Juan Fernandes : illustrated with cuts and maps (London, 1712).

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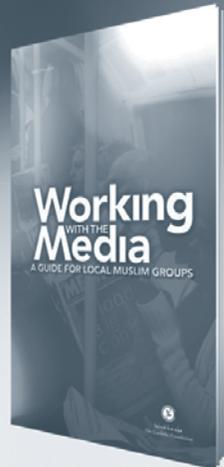
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MEDIA GUIDE

Working with the Media is designed to help individuals and local groups better meet their media and communications needs. It introduces the media, outlines how journalists operate and offers practical advice for spearheading a proactive public relations (PR) strategy. The Guide is written for local Muslim groups and Mosques who are unfamiliar with working and dealing with the media.

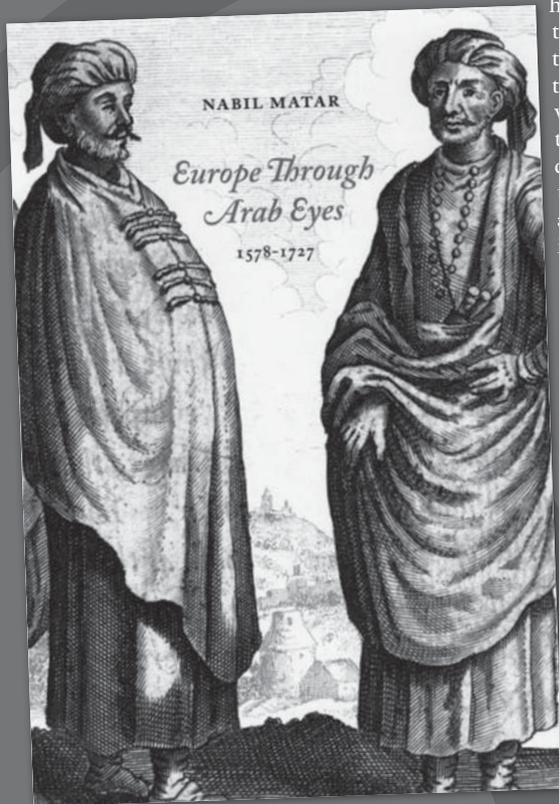
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EUROPE THROUGH ARAB EYES, 1578-1727

BY NABIL MATAR

In *Europe Through Arab Eyes, 1578-1727*, Nabil Matar assembles a rare history of Europe's rise to power as seen through the eyes of those who were later subjugated by it. Matar provides



historical evidence to show that the Muslims of the Maghrib and the Mashriq (the east) were keen to establish good relationships with Euro-Christians through trade and royal marriages, even during wars. Muslim rulers used to insist, for example, that their ambassadors provide detailed information about the political institutions, innovations and religious culture of host countries to better learn about their allies and foes.

Europe Through Arab Eyes fills a huge gap in our understanding of the history of that period. What is presently available in abundance in Western libraries, via literature on Islam, Muslims and the Orient in general, is a resolutely Orientalist depiction of the East. Instead, Matar presents us with a mirror image of Euro-Christians and argues that there was a greater degree of Muslim interest in Europe than has been previously thought.

Europe Through Arab Eyes, 1578-1727 by Nabil Matar.
Published in 2008 by Columbia University Press.



Roots of Balkan Muslim Identities

*PROFESSOR FERID MUHIĆ

Europe is not exclusively a Christian entity. Whilst Europe's identity includes essential Muslim component, neither Christianity nor Islam is by origin a European religion. The earliest spread of Islam in Europe dates centuries before the completion of the spread of Christianity in large parts of Europe. In the Iberian peninsula as well in southern France, parts of Switzerland and almost all the Mediterranean islands, Islam spread during the eight century -- and remained to be the main creed until the end of fifteenth century (1492). In the Balkans, Islam began to spread as early as the eighth century, and on great scale remained the prevailing religion until the mid-nineteenth century. The case of Islam's European identity, specifically in the Balkan and affirmation of its Islamic identity is of utmost importance for integration of the modern Europe, and as such it presents the key factor of its historic, cultural, and spiritual unity as well as for stability in the future.

As a human being, it should be perfectly normal to feel at home anywhere on this planet. Yet, so many people deny others or are denied the right to feel at home in many parts of the world. For instance, the European Christians strongly deny this right to European Muslims, among which are the Muslims of the Balkans. Even today, representatives of the Christian component of modern Europe tends to treat representatives of the European Muslim component as specific type of intruders, seeing them like the baby in the step-mother's womb!

In light of unbiased historic evidence and facts, it is clear that the history of Europe was primarily the history of intra-European wars, and not the large scale clash between so-called "Christian

Europe" against the so-called "Non-European Islam". The historic fact that both, Christianity and Islam, entered Europe from Asia and were later adopted by different parts of its population in various parts of the continent, tends to be underlined strongly at all times and in every objective study, unburdened by ideological prejudices.

EUROPEAN IDENTITY PROBLEM

A frequent question raised today is, would Europe accept to be a continent for Muslims as well? This very question reveals a complete ignorance or the intentions to ignore the facts, that Europe is first of all, the continent of, and then for both Muslims and Non-Muslims. In this context, the real question is why is Europe not willing to admit this fact and recognise Muslims as native to Europe? Part of the answer was negatively provided by the German Chancellor, Angela Merkel's statement that multicultural Europe failed as a project and that the unity and identity of Europe must be preserved. Similar statements came from others like Tony Blair, Giscard d'Estaigne, and much earlier from Willy Brandt. Do Muslims constitute a significant demographic, intellectual, and cultural component of the continent? And as a continent and a geographic entity, does Europe belong partly to the Muslim world? In other words, does Europe have a Muslim identity besides its distinctive Christian identity?

Given that Islam today is the second largest faith in Europe, and that our present day civilisation is not without strong Muslim roots, whether in the realm of science, philosophy, humanities or arts, would it not be appropriate to qualify this civilisation as "Muslim-Christian" or to admit that Islam and Muslims constitute

one of the key components of Europe?

European culture is far from monolithic. Generally, albeit an ideologically fabricated prejudice, is hitherto accepted as a self-evident fact, which recycles the old myth that it was laid by the Greeks, strengthened by the Romans, stabilised by Christianity, reformed and modernised by the fifteenth-century Renaissance and Reformation -- and globalised by successive European empires between the sixteenth and twentieth centuries.

This could be easily explained in light of the intimate relationship between the science of history and the myth. Namely, historical narrative, like myth, exercises a strong cognitive dynamic in the definition of a community's ethical and political principles. Emerging in 'the age of nationalism', modern recorded history was more often than not entangled in the web of 'nationhood myths'. In his speech at the Sorbonne in 1882, Ernest Renan asserted that "to get one's history wrong is an essential part of the making of a nation". The architects of nationalism are extremely capable of providing meaning to the ideological and political projects of the present, through an interpretation of the past. At the same time, however, the exposure of nationalist history as myth is an instrument to distort the objectivity of the history as profession creating fabricated myths such as "The United Christian Europe in holy war against the United anti-Christian Islam".

To make this crypto-mythology simple, the description of the identity of Europe was simplified into the standard bionomic conflict of civilisation against the barbarism, gradually transformed into the battle of Good versus Evil, and finally equated with the confrontation of the West against the East, where "West" stands for Christian Europe, and "East", or "Orient", simply for "Muslim". Edward Said's *Orientalism, Western Conceptions about the Orient* (1978, 1989), candidly disclosed this huge and systematic ideological project aimed to smuggle in the story of perennial differences of "centrally placed superior Western/Christian culture

and man, in opposition to the Oriental as inferior periphery identified by absence of culture or civilisation, due to the complete lack of rational capacities and of logical thinking characteristic for Muslim men." An extremely valuable contribution for an objective understanding of Muslims as an integral element of European identity is to be found in Mahmoud Mamdani's, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim* (2004). Allegory to the notoriously racist comment by General Phil Sheridan on Comanche chief Toch-a-way: "Me, good Indian!" "Only dead Indian is good Indian!"¹

A brief analysis of the notion "WEST/WESTERN", as proposed by so-called "Western", and more specifically, by Christian men of science, could clearly illustrate the ideological character of this paradigm, demonstrating the complete lack of rational capacity and the absence of logical thinking of its authors. The history of "the West" came to a triumphant climax in the period of European colonialism and imperialism. Geographically defined, the notion suggests spatial division on the line of cultural identity, so that European identity would be Western, Christian and civilised, while non-European, Asian, and African would be Oriental, Muslim, uncivilised.

How do we geographically distinguish the West from the East? By the position of the "0" meridian? Where is it to be found? Is it in Greenwich, western suburb of London? In terms of geography, even the city of London is Eastern, or Oriental and not the Western part of Europe - not to mention France, Germany, Italy. If the term "Western", borrowed from geography, was to be interpreted metaphorically, for instance, as the type of philosophy, democracy, morality, logic, mathematics, arts, science, do we find an acceptable explanation? In order to answer this, we have to first see where these disciplines and models of thinking originate from. In the Western hemisphere, they all originate not *from* but *to* Western Europe. To Western Europe they came from the Balkan region from where they, to a great extent, originated, in addition to the Eastern coast

of Anatolia.

If we make another compromise with geography and accepted the strictly spiritual, religious context, in other words to demonstrate that at least Christianity is definitely European and Western, and that Islam is definitely non-European and the Oriental religion, what will the facts tell us? Instead of supporting this claim, evidence shows that Judaism, Christianity and Islam all came from the same courtyard, so to say. Abraham, Ibrahim, Avraam, was the father of all three major religions, as he was the prophet of God sent to all three faiths. He lived and preached not in West London, nor in so-called Western Europe, not even in the most Eastern part of Europe, but in Asia.

Concerning the myth of self-made identity of Europe, even the glorious tradition of philosophy, science, arts and humanistic inspirations originated in Africa and Asia (Egypt, Babylon) which later came to Western Europe from the regions of the Balkans and Anatolia, as Martin Bernal demonstrated in his book, *Black Athena* (1987). The presentation of “Greece” as the self-made cradle of European philosophy, politics and spiritual virtues (ethical and esthetical) was a classic case of intellectual fraud and conspiracy, an ideologically motivated project of fabrication in the period 1785-1985; but even if we accept it as truth, we are faced with the fact that this cradle was situated in the most remote part of the Balkans and the east coast of Anatolia. Moreover, all the national cultures of modern Europe draw mainly – but not exclusively – on the same original sources, which largely explains the cultural unity of Europe over the course of time. But they can and must be complemented by an analysis of European national cultures themselves and by understanding the close and complex relationship between these highly diverse cultures with the strong and permanent Muslim influence, which defines the identity and ensures the cultural unity of Europe.

In light of these facts, we can conclude that, no part of modern European identity

originates from Western part of Europe, nor from Europe, for that matter. As Clearly, “Europe and Islam have a shared history and therefore, a shared identity”, explained Professor Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, Secretary General of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference, at the *Center for Dialogues* event in 2002.

The question of “European culture”, “European identity”, “European values” and so on, has a huge impact on the cultural integrity of Europe.

As such, the question of “European culture”, “European identity”, “European values” and so on, has a huge impact on the cultural integrity of Europe, most of all of its region to which Europe owes the most: Balkan. This issue is far more complex than it appears to be at a surface level. Any serious historical, cultural, and socio-political understanding of contemporary European, as well as of the regional, continental and global situation, interests must take into account the presence of Muslims as one of the key factors of the contemporary world’s reality.

SPREAD AND CONFRONTATIONS OF ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY ON EUROPEAN SOIL

Surprisingly the spread of Islam in many parts of Europe began centuries before Christianity.² In addition, significant parts of Europe, such as the Iberian Peninsula, parts of Southern France all the way to southern Switzerland, as well as nearly all of the largest Mediterranean islands, became lands of Islam in the mid-eighth century – which lasted for the next seven hundred years. When considering this, we have a fairly accurate picture of early medieval Europe as the continent

on which the spread of Christianity and the spread of Islam were historically simultaneous, even overlapping in some regions. At the same time, huge parts of Europe were to be Christianised up to two hundred years later. For instance, although the Christianisation of Jutland (Denmark) started around 820, by the mission of Ansgar from Amiens, Scandinavian lands were not Christianised before the end of the first millennium. Roughly around the same time, Christianity spread in Eastern Europe. *Velikie kniez* (Grand Prince) Vladimir, the ruler of Kievan Rus, adopted Christianity in 988 AD, almost in perfect timing with the mission of brothers Sts. Cyril and Methodius, sent by Byzantine Emperor Michael III to Moravia, which in the process of Christianisation included also the regions of Balkans. In this same period, the spread of Christianity was completed in the regions of today's Belgium, Netherland, great parts of Germany, with some examples of formal constitution for the Christian Church, such as was laid down in 1001 by King St. Stephen of Hungary.

As for the history of Islam in the Balkans and the ethnic identity of its adherents in the region three points are important: *first*, Islam entered the Balkans much before the Ottoman state took over its territories; *second*, Albanians, Boshniaks and Pomaks/Torbesh/Gorans³ represent the nations with the majority Muslim population in the Balkan⁴; and *third*, Muslims of Bosnia, Sandzak, Kosovo, Montenegro, Croatia, are by origin and identity Boshniaks⁵ and not "Islamised Serbs and Croats", as was persistently argued by Serb and Croat historians, without any empirical evidence to back their claims.

Boshniaks and Albanians had their states with centuries old tradition, which lasted until the arrival of Ottoman Empire.⁶ Concerning the ethnic origin of the *Torbesh/Goranci/Pomak* Muslims, there is still no consistent theory based on historic evidence, although the existing documents and archeological sites – especially the tomb monuments called *stećak* widely albeit exclusively spread in Bosnia and

regions where these groups lived, strongly support *The Bogumil Theory*.⁷ In any case, the relevant evidence, including the spontaneous feeling of close cultural kinship, shared by all individuals belonging to this group, demonstrates the fact that during the past centuries the Muslims of the Balkans constituted separate identity sharing in common *Weltanschauung* beliefs -- a value system derived from the religion and social practices of Islam. As such, the Muslims of the Balkans belong to the rich cultural and multi-religious European tradition, representing one of its most coherent identities with longest uninterrupted history.

DISTORTIONS OF HISTORICAL EVENTS

Ignoring the fact that both Christianity and Islam share its non-European origin, as well as mutual advantage and disadvantage in the chronology of their introduction to European history, many a non-Muslim authors speak of Islam -- as a culture, a civilisation, and a "perceived menace to the culture", civilisation and political systems of Europe -- which has regularly "threatened" Europe on three separate occasions. In this way, they support the falsified picture of a constant battle between "the Christian Europe" and "anti-European Islam".

The first of these instances took place in the eighth century A.D. when the Iberian Peninsula and much of France, and later even parts of Switzerland and Italy, fell to the invading armies of the Islamic Empire. Muslim presence was slowly pushed back to the fifteenth century. The second -- from the fifteenth to the seventeenth century -- started when the Ottoman Empire brought Islam into Eastern Europe, specifically to the Balkans, and eventually to the gates of Vienna. The so-called remnant Muslim populations of this incursion are found in Bosnia, Yugoslavia, Albania, Bulgaria, and even Greece⁸. Resentment and fear at the time was strong, and it has lingered.⁹ The recent mass immigration of literally millions of Muslims into several European states, beginning in the 1960s, could be

Europe has significantly impacted the heartland of Islam on at least four separate occasions.

seen as the third Muslim incursion. This time, however, Muslims have not been entering as part of an organised military force. Rather, they have come as asylum seekers, as immigrant workers, and as illegal aliens. Most came as individual “guest workers” to supply the manual labour many European countries had lost as a result of World War II: Germany worked out explicit agreements with Turkey; France relied on its ties to Algeria and other former (primarily North African) colonies.¹⁰

Similarly, Europe has significantly impacted the heartland of Islam on at least four separate occasions. Christian Europe invaded the Muslim lands for the first time in the 10th to the 12th century -- known as the era of Crusades; the butchery and barbaric behaviour associated with this incursion continues to have a dramatic impact on the view of many Muslims with respect to Europe and the West.¹¹ The second major European incursion took place primarily in the 19th and 12th century, when European states with colonial ambitions, primarily Great Britain, France, the Netherlands, though even Italy and Spain joined their ranks, took over Arab/Islamic lands from Morocco in the West, to Afghanistan in the east.¹² The third (and fourth) incursion involved recent military occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan, the two states with a large majority of Muslim citizens, by non-Muslim states. In none of these incursions and invasions was the behaviour of the associated troops particularly exemplary or humane. At the time, there were high resentment and fear, and the historical memory would certainly be kept alive by Muslim population in these Muslim states.

MISUNDERSTANDING THE BALKANS

No part of the world has been more distorted in general public reception

than the Balkans. In allusion to Maria Todorova’s *Understanding the Balkans*, the need to conduct further research about the gross misunderstanding of the Balkans can not be stressed enough. Essentially, there is no single aspect – be it history, culture, mentality, the contribution to the world’s culture, science, philosophy, democracy, which was not brutally falsified and presented negatively. “The Balkans” toponym, for example, is not bereft of the negativity as aforementioned, it is a synonym for “backward oriental, Islamic, barbaric, divided lands in permanent and irrational conflict”. For a long historical period of more than 2000 years, the Balkans unified and modelled Roma-Hellen-Slav communities, remaining in the Ottoman for more than 550 years of its most recent history, evidence that is still incorrectly represented. Today, the term “Balkans” is replaced with descriptive floscula “South-Eastern Europe”,¹³ a meaningless description since it deprives the Balkans from all its history and cultural peculiarity.

The “Balkans” appear as syntagm which constitutes the words “Bal” and “Kan” – namely “Honey” and “Blood”.

In Roman times, Balkan was known as Haemus, preserving its identity, and the Turkish name “Balkan” does the same in an explicit, strong way. Although the term designates “Mountain Chain”, its further derivation discloses even more power and beauty. Divided in two words, the “Balkans” appear as syntagm which constitutes the words “Bal” and “Kan” – namely “Honey” and “Blood”. Two most precious substances of life, unite in this syntagma means not only the sweet and healing qualities of honey, but also of life giving blood, energy, vitality, the virulent and creative power of Balkan people. To realise the full scope of Balkan as a trans-historic

cultural model and civilisation paradigm, it should be highlighted that virtually all of so-called “Western” philosophy, arts, democracy, science, and so on”, originated in the Balkan region; that only in the cities of Balkan, and nowhere else in the world, Catholic cathedral, Orthodox church, Jewish synagogue, Muslim mosque, stand together for hundreds of years. Moreover, the most massive voluntary conversion to Islam of native Europeans took place in the Balkans, most notably among the Albanians, Boshniaks, and Pomaks/Torbesh/Gorans population.¹⁴ Be as it is, there is nothing in the history of the Balkans which would rightfully include any pejorative context in its name, nor which would justify tendency to erase this toponym, and much less to be ashamed of it.

Strong argument against such a negative attitudes toward the Ottomans and the Balkans is deeply impregnated in the speech which President Demirel delivered to the Grand National Assembly on October 1, 1999, where it was stated:

“The Ottoman Empire of which we are the founders and the inheritors and whose seven hundred anniversary we are celebrating this year, has had a decisive role in the formation of Mediterranean and European cultural milieu for 624 years. The fact that we are the heirs of world empire that has ruled over the meeting point of three seas, three continents and various cultural traditions has a direct impact on our past as well as on our future. It is therefore an imperative to understand our history properly and grasp its place in the history of humanity.”¹⁵

With these introductory but indispensable clarifications, we could turn back to our main topic. The title clearly defines this topic, within two key points:

- 1) That Balkan Muslim identities share one or more fundamental common feature, with plausible conclusion that this feature(s) integrate them into a kind of social or cultural unity;
- 2) That by its organisation, structure and practice, it was the Islamic legacy introduced through the Ottoman

state, which created the factors capable to complete this process of integration.¹⁶

Concerning the first point, it should demonstrate that the multicultural, multi-ethnic, multi-religious composition of the population of Ottoman Empire did not prevent, at least in the Balkan territories, formation of a new type of social and cultural cohesion and interplay of different groups sharing basically a common layer which resulted in creation of Balkan Muslim identities. The second point connects the creation of Balkan Muslim identities, with concrete social, political and cultural practice of the Ottoman Empire. Importantly, the Ottoman Empire created and successfully implemented instruments to set the social, political and cultural conditions which not only did not prevent the process of integration, but even more, encouraged such informal processes of integration on a deeper and higher, albeit informal level, resulting in the formation of Balkan Muslim identities.

The fact that ethnic Albanians, Croats, Serbs, Boshniaks, Montenegrins, Pomaks, Torbesh (Gorans) living today in the region of the Balkans, recognise and share the common layer as Balkan Muslim identities, evidently proves the first point. The list of instruments via which Ottoman Empire imprinted its legacy in this common layer of Balkan Muslim identities, should include several key factors.

Administration laws: The first factor for successful formation of common layer for the Balkan Muslim communities was its specific approach of Ottoman legacy to the population. Demographic structure of Ottoman Empire in the Balkans and elsewhere included high percentage of non-Muslims. The process of integration was confronted with an exceptional diversity of the Empire’s population. Main canal for its integration was the conversion to Islam. In Anatolia lands, the process started before the Ottomans, back to the late 10th and early 11th centuries. Conversion to Islam in the Balkans was dated in the first half of

the 14th century. But while the conversion to Islam in the regions of Anatolia lead to the process of Turkicisation, this did not transpire in the Balkans. The conversion to Islam without being Turkicised was generally the case and widespread practice among, for example, Muslim Albanians, Bosnians, Pomaks, Torbesh (Gorans).

In the regions of Balkans, Muslims and non-Muslims lived together peacefully for a long time in the Ottoman Empire. For almost three centuries the expression “Pax Ottomanica” justified this part of the Islamic Europe, epitomising the peaceful and well arranged coexistence, united in the concept of *millet*. The spirit of this socially organised religious and cultural tolerance, guaranteed by the supreme state authority, is best preserved in the document issued by The Sultan Mehmed II El Fatih: “Let nobody bother or disturb ...their churches, let them dwell in peace in my empire, and let those who have become refugees be at safe. Let them return and let them settle down their monasteries without fear in all the countries of my empire. Neither my royal highness, nor

Sultan Mehmed II explicitly proclaimed that all citizens and religions in his Empire were equal.

my viziers or employees, nor my servants, nor ant of citizens of my empire shall insult or disturb them, their property, or the property of their churches...”¹⁷

In another letter Sultan Mehmed II explicitly proclaimed that all citizens and religions in his Empire were equal: “I would like to see Muslims in mosque, Christians in the church and the Jews in synagogue. For me, there are no differences among each other. I feel love to all and my justice is equal to all. All of them are like my own sons”.

But in reality, differences did exist. Islamic Law categorises the inhabitants of Ottoman Empire into two: Muslims and non-Muslims. Existing Muslims can

be divided into different groups but the Islamic Law accepts Muslims as single entity. Non-Muslims were divided into two groups: “Pagans” and “The People of the Book”. In as much as the People of the Book lived in Ottoman Empire they were called “Ehl-i Zimmet” – usually Zimmet - comprising the Christians, Jews, Zoroastrians, and those who idolise the stars – Sabils. The Christians were more populated, but the Jews had greater economic influence. The Christians were categorised in two groups: Catholics (five groups); non-Catholics (mostly Orthodox and Gregorians, plus five more sub-groups).

In the beginning, non-Muslims of the Balkans were from 20 ethnic groups. Among them 90% of Bosnians converted into Islam, as well as 80% of Albanians.¹⁸ It is important to note that the Ottoman Empire was multi-ethnic, multi-religious, multilingual state, meaning its population was far from being homogenous. Social and intercultural communication between Muslim and non-Muslim populations, coexisting together, was pragmatic and politically imperative. They were all united by the drive for a more inclusive society, be it through Islamisation or otherwise.

Economic factor: The influence of capitation tax – harac/ciziye – is generally exaggerated. Not only Christians but also the Muslims paid more or less the same taxes. Military service was only an obligation for Muslims. Apart from positive demographic effect for the non-Muslim population, and negative effect for the Muslim population, this moment had a tremendous economic effect, putting the Muslim population in a much heavier position. At the administrative level, the State did not carry out nor stimulate Islamic conversion as its policy.¹⁹

Third factor - Islam; Organised strictly in accordance with the supreme Islamic values, the social reality was based on religious, philosophical, social, economic, educational and legal premises of Islam. Its mind, as well as its body,

its ideal and logic, its spirit and will, its character and emotions, all were conceptualised, organised and plasticised in strict respect of the fundamental postulates of Islam. The understanding of lawful and forbidden concepts of pride and shame, esthetic standards of beautiful and ugly, criteria of truth and false, final goals of science, ultimate ideals of education – all and every sector of social reality and subjective reception of the world was permeated and shaped to the tiniest details by Islamic World view – *Weltanschauung*. Out of the last six centuries of its history, Balkan was under the strong influence of the most powerful Islamic state in the world, strictly founded on the key principles of Islam paradigmatic for the world of Islam, and leading in all its social, economic, philosophical, cultural and organisational aspects.

To recognise its Islamic legacy thus, for the Balkan Muslim population, means the quest to regain self-respect, to re-adopt its true identity, to fully understand its integrity. For Europe, it is an indispensable act to correct redefinition of its multicultural and multi-confessional identity. In all key aspects – on the level of philosophical concept, applied as political practice, and completed as the social reality, contemporary Balkan states would do best to reintegrate elements of its Islamic past as the only way to true and effective integration of its Muslim population. By reclaiming and reaffirming its Islamic heritage, Europe, and more specifically Balkan states, would not jeopardise its modern secular character since it in no way contradicts its spiritual essence. It will only make greater its capacity to face the challenges of modern world successfully, sharpening its self-esteem and self-consciousness, by promoting a part of its own history to its real significance as authentic political actor and genuine cultural factor of global importance.

In light of this, the example of the Balkans would have tremendous political, spiritual, and psychological implications on Europe. Europe can better understand its own history by accepting Islamic identity of the

Balkan Muslims are as authentic European citizens as any other nation of this continent.

Balkan Muslim population in its entirety, by correct interpretations of Islamic values and Muslim heritage of Balkan history as the intrinsic ingredient of its own values and history. It is high time to accept the truth that by its identity, Balkan Muslims are as authentic European citizens as any other nation of this continent; it is time to embrace the fact that Islamic ideals and values are essentially amalgamated in the very spirit of humanistic ideals and values of Europe; moreover, we must abandon the tradition of seeing Balkan Muslims as the baby in the step-mother's womb.

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ENDNOTES

1. "The only good Indian is a dead Indian" - a saying often attributed to General Phil Sheridan. In January 1869, General Sheridan was in camp at Fort Cobb in Indian Territory (now Oklahoma) shortly after George Custer's fight with Black-Kettle's Cheyenne. Turtle Dove, or Toch-a-way, who was a chief of Comanche, trying to impress the General, struck himself in the breast and said "Me, Toch-a-way; me good Indian". The General smiled and answered "The only good Indians I ever saw were dead." Another US politician demonstrated a bitter sense for racist humour, commenting officially: "I reckon it may be correct only for nine out of ten Indians, but I would not like to *inquire too closely into the case of the tenth.*" These are the words of Theodore Roosevelt less than 15 years before he became president of the USA in 1901.
2. Dzavid, Haveric (2004). *Islamisation of Bosnia: Early Islamic Influence on Bosnian Society* (Deakin University: Victoria). This thesis includes a detailed historical investigation that makes use of a range of bibliographic materials. In opposition to nearly all historic tradition, which connects the spread of Islam in the region of Balkans with the arrival of Ottoman state, dating back to the beginning of 15th century,

without any empirically supported analysis Haveric offered documented evidence to back the spread of Islam in the Balkan as starting some six to seven hundred years before that date - as early as the eighth century.

3. All three terms are widely used in the Balkan region, each one prevailing locally, so that in the Western parts of Macedonia and on the border of eastern parts of Albania, the name *Torbesh* is used to denominate this ethnic group with Islam as their exclusive religion; in the South-West of Kosovo, in the region of Prizren and Dragash, and in neighbouring areas of Albania around Kukes, most common name for the same people is *Goranci*, or *Gorani*; present almost all over Bulgaria, these Muslim people are called *Pomaks*. Despite significantly different historical, political, cultural, linguistic and ethnic surrounding and relatively great distance which separates them in isolation from each other - this is the case especially with the *Pomaks* in relation to *Torbesh* and *Goranci* population - all three groups display impressive unity in their language, habits, rites as well as their firm adherence to Islam as religion.

4. Albanians belong to Islam, Orthodox, and Catholic religions, but Muslims constitute a vast majority. As for the Bosniaks and *Torbesh*, *Goranci*/*Pomaks* both are practically 100% Muslims.

5. For the latest and at the moment by far the most systematic research of ethnic identity of Bosniaks see an excellent two-volume study by Pasic, Ibrahim, *Pre-Slavonic korijeni Boshnaka (Pre-Slavonic Roots of Boshniaks)*, I/II, Mostar 2008/Sarajevo 2009.

6. See in Ibrahimagic, Omer (2009). *Drazavno-pravni i politicki razvitak Bosne i Hercegovine, (State, Law, and Political Development of Bosnia and Herzegovina)* Sarajevo; for the history of Bosnia during the Ottoman Empire see Tanovic, Bakir (2010) *Historija Bosne u okviru Osmanskog Carstva (History of Bosnia inside Ottoman Empire)*, Sarajevo. An extensive history of Bosnia presented by a contemporary insider, see two volume study Muevkekit, Hadzhiseinovic, Salih Sidki (1999) *Povijest Bosne (The History of Bosnia)*, Ottoman-Turkish original title *Tarih-Bosna*, I/II, Sarajevo.

7. Interesting, yet not published theory is in process of systematic elaboration by two historians with Goranci/Pomac origin, which, at this stage offered substantial evidence founded on historic documents, toponomastic analysis, archeological sites and pre-Islamic folklore practices preserved from this earlier tradition, that the Balkan Muslim people may be descendents of large Pavlikians groups who arrived in the Balkans during the 8th and 9th centuries AD.

8. Rather an inappropriate term. The Muslim population of the Balkans is indigenous and to call them "a remnant Muslim population" suggests more than an open desire to expel even this "remnant". Surprisingly, this term is commonly used. See in Lewis 1982; Lewis 1993; Hodgson 1974; Goody 2004; Watt 1972; Lewis 1965; Miller 1996; Wittek 1938; Inalcik 1994.

9. Tolan 2000; Hippler and Lueg 1995; Ideologically fabricated floscula; after more than five centuries of Ottoman Rule, the local population remained with its language, culture, religion and traditions completely intact, demographically growing much faster than in any other part of Europe - a case unique in world history. It is also indicative that Romas preserved their language only in the limits of Ottoman Empire while those from the rest of Europe, including Britain, Spain, Italy, France, Germany, Poland, Russia lost their respective languages centuries past.

10. For other European nationalities, who participate in "guest-worker" population, see Noiriel 1988; King 1993; and

Nielsen 1992a.

11. See Silajdzic, Adnan, (2003). *Islam u otkricu krcanske Evrope (Islam discovered by Christian Europe)* Sarajevo, FIN.

This excellent study shares the methodological inspiration of Edward Said's *Orientalism*, but adds new examples from different aspects of social and cultural life typical for the European's reception of Islam and Muslims in terms of negative stereotypes.

12. Almost every single study of European occupations of the Muslim's lands hardly mention or directly exclude the territories of former integral Pakistan, specifically the region of East Pakistan, contemporary Bangladesh, of Indochina (today's Malaysia) and of Indonesia, the state with the greatest number of Muslims in the world.

13. Critical and firmly argued comments on the misusage of toponym "the Balkans", see article by Ortayli, Ilber (2000). "The Balkans and the Ottoman Inheritance", published in *The Great Ottoman-Turkish Civilisation*, (Ankara), Vol. III, pp. 241-245.

14. Muhić, Ferid (2010). "The Key Motives for and Against Religious Conversion During the Period of Osmanli Devlet - Ottoman Empire", Fourth International Congress on Islamic Civilisation in The Balkans, 13-17 October, MANU, Skopje, Macedonia.

15. Website of the presidency: www.tccb.gov.tr

16. Contrary to the negative stereotype, that Ottoman Turkey opposed any changes in its structure, it kept throughout its long history a very intensive process of political, economic and generally, structural reforms, especially in the final 120 years. These rapid and radical reforms started by Sultan Mahmud II (1808-1839). The project reforms included: the army, the fleet, education, appearance of the press, introduction of opera, domination of French language in upper class communication, administration, census of population, issue of the Ottoman passport, the means of communication, and vast economic and social reforms. Tanzimat was a huge reform in all aspects of Ottoman state, as well as Land code of 1858. During Sultan Abdulhamid II (1876-1909), on n December 23 1876, the first Constitution ensuring basic civil rights and liberties including the equality of all subjects before the law, bicameral parliament, elected assembly and appointed senate was put in place..

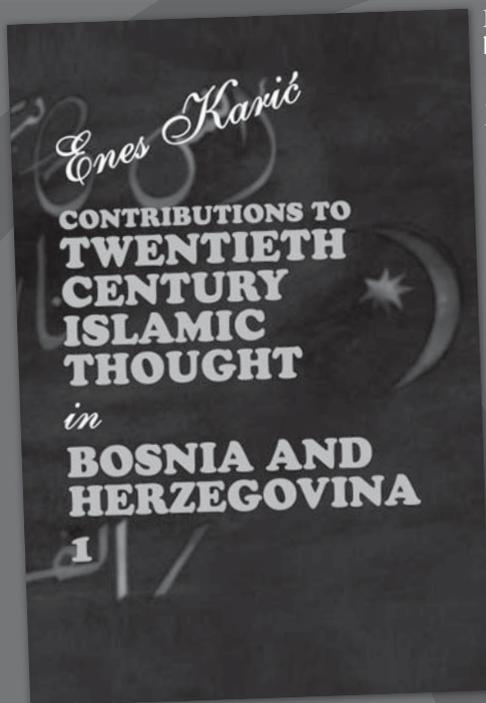
17. *Ahdnama*, a decree issued by the Sultan Mehmed II El Fatih, May 28th 1463, for the Bosnian Franciscan Chruh 585 years before UN International Human Right Declaration.

18. See Yavuz Ercan: "Non-Muslim communities under the Ottoman Empire (Millet system)".

19. For more detailed analysis of the composition of Ottoman Empire population, from the first up to the last century, see Yunus Koc: "The Structure of Population of the Ottoman Empire (1300-1900)".

TWENTIETH CENTURY ISLAMIC THOUGHT IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

BY ENES KARIĆ



Enes Karić was prompted to write this book some 20 years ago. During the war in Bosnia hundreds of Muslim villages and settlements of Eastern and Western Bosnia went up in flames, and with them dozens of libraries, both private and public. The source materials on the Bosnian Muslims and their most important thinkers are increasingly disappearing without trace, even the most recent, merely some hundred years old.

Twentieth Century Islamic Thought in Bosnia takes the reader on a journey, explaining the history and evolution of Islamic thought in Bosnia in the 20th century. The author frequently refers to Hafiz Mahmud Traljić (b.1918), a living encyclopaedia, whose books *Istaknuti Bošnjaci* (Prominent Bośniaks) and *Iz kulturne historije Bošnjaka* (From the Cultural History of the Bošnjaks) are a veritable treasury of living data and direct testimony of the people and events of the Austro-Hungarian and later periods in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Karić's book bring to light interesting debates, such that the book starts with the period 1878 and the Berlin Congress, because the author believes that the 19th century ended in Bosnia in 1878, at which point Bosnia's 20th century began. Rather than focusing on periods history marked by wars, he prefers divisions in history marked by epochs of thought, aesthetic fashions, literature and the arts. And, whilst there is a significant Sufi presence in Bosnia, Karić places less emphasis on Sufi thought in 20th century Bosnia because he argues Sufis have "withdrawn into themselves and have not had a significant impact on Islamic thought" in Bosnia.

Twentieth Century Islamic Thought in Bosnia and Herzegovina by Enes Karić.
Published in 2011 by El-Kalem (Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina).



What did the Moors do for us? Retelling our European stories, renegotiating our heritage

*CATRIONA ROBERTSON

WHAT did the Moors of medieval Spain do for us – and does it matter? Why should we care how Europeans lived centuries ago? There is a big appetite for history, with television series such as *Civilisation* (2011), *A History of Christianity* (2009-10), *The Tudors* (2007) and *Rome* (2005) adding to its popularity. But history provides not only good stories and entertainment; it also informs the way we choose to live, as Europeans, now. It is difficult to work out where we should be going if we are not sure where we came from.

In the current debate on multiculturalism, Islamic and European identities (even though one is based on a religious tradition and the other on a geographical area) are sometimes pitted against each other and presented as an either-or choice. Islam did not originate in Europe, but neither did Judaism or Christianity. This (often implied) choice has an impact at grass-roots level, not only making difficulties for European Muslims but also boxing European-ness into a rather confined and static space.

Ideas about Europe can become muddled with the mercurial notion of 'the West' and problems arise when ideas about Islam are centred solely on places and cultures which are deemed not to be of 'the West'. European Islam thus becomes a contradiction in terms.

Europe is rarely an accurate geographical term. Norman Davies, in his acclaimed doorstopper *Europe – A History* (1997) observes, "For the best part of 200 years, European history has frequently been confused with the heritage of 'Western civilization'. Indeed, the impression has been created that everything 'Western' is civilised and everything civilised is Western. By extension, or simply

by default, anything vaguely Eastern or 'Oriental' stands to be considered backward or inferior, and hence worthy of neglect". Historians claiming Europe in the titles of their books, Davies says, go on to omit large chunks of the continent in the contents, not least in relation to Central and Eastern Europe. In one work, Russia only appears as a European country at the time of Peter the Great and in another, Hungary is not included within Western Christendom.

In London, this confusion (as to what is and what is not European) is reflected in the way works of art are categorised and divided between public museums. Visitors find it difficult to experience European culture as a whole. London's National Gallery houses a collection of Western European painting. But for Spanish and Portuguese art before the 17th century, the place to go is the British Museum, the British Library or the Victoria & Albert Museum. Medieval altar pieces are painted and therefore part of the National Gallery's collection, but Jewish and Islamic art from the same period (illuminated manuscripts, calligraphy, ceramics, metalwork, ivory carving and jewellery) are not. The result is that the earliest example of Spanish art in the National Gallery is dated c 1600 (*El Greco, Christ driving the Traders from the Temple*). The impression given to visitors is that early Western European art is all Christian. There is no obvious intention to divide art according to religious tradition, but the result is that European medieval Islamic art is found in one place (presented alongside non-European Islamic art) and Christian medieval art in another, further confusing our ideas of European heritage with the fluctuating ideas of what constitutes Western civilisation.

Combine this confusion with the

often limited comfort zone of the British with regard to present-day Europe (with the exception of multilingual Euro-professionals, this is often not much more than a city-break here, a beach holiday there, painful memories of school language classes, an underwhelming interest in the EU and maybe a trip to the WWI battlefields); and it is no surprise that we are baffled when we first learn of street lighting, hang-gliders, courtyard fountains, libraries and academic collaboration across the Abrahamic religions in medieval Iberia - at a time when Christianity was relatively new to the British Isles and the Vikings were still raiding.

We are obliged to complete the jigsaw of European history ourselves, complementing museums and history books with travel guides, religious and cultural networks, telly-dons and telly-chefs, early and 'world' music, cookbooks and poetry. In this we are helped by travel journalists, who are now exploring Andalusian Spain and Arab Sicily, by the London restaurant *Moro* which celebrates traditional Spanish dishes such as the black bean and rice 'Moros y Cristianos' and by classical musicians such as Catherine Bott who has recorded *Convivencia*, an album of beguiling Iberian songs recalling Moorish chivalry, garden trysts and Arabic *mouwashahs*.

My interests have taken me to Andalusian Spain, Sicily and Bosnia-Herzegovina in recent years. I found stories there of fierce conquests and bloody warfare, but I also learned of European ways of living, over centuries, which sheds some light on how communities from very different religious and cultural traditions can live well together, while remaining different and with their integrity intact.

IBERIA

In 711, a small Muslim force of mostly Berber soldiers crossed over to the Iberian peninsula from present-day Morocco. Quickly reinforced from North Africa, they overwhelmed the Visigoths, killed King Roderic, and, acknowledging history, named their new conquest Al-

Islamic rule across the emirate of Cordoba and its successors continued for nearly eight centuries.

Andalus 'Land of the Vandals'. Within ten years the Moors had captured all but the north of the peninsular. Islamic rule across the emirate of Cordoba and its successors continued for nearly eight centuries. During this time Muslims, Jews and Christians prospered together in one of the most sophisticated societies of the known world. The substantial population of Jews in Iberia had been subject to increasing restrictions and attempted forced conversions to Christianity under the Visigoths, so the new conquerors were in some ways regarded as liberators.

Richard Fletcher in *Moorish Spain* (1992) guards against a view that the co-existence of Muslims, Christians and Jews during this time was blissful multifaith harmony - it was, "grudging toleration, but toleration nonetheless". The distinctive feature of this toleration, which waxed and waned over the centuries, is that it was both principled and intentional; Qu'ranic teaching ensures freedom of conscience and that 'there shall be no compulsion in [acceptance of] the religion' - no-one should be forced into embracing Islam. Living in a Muslim-ruled country under Shari'a law, Jews and Christians did not enjoy full citizenship but they were given the right to practice their faith in private and to receive the protection of the state. They were also obliged to pay a special tax which Muslims were not required to pay.

This sustained, deliberate and ordered way of protecting and accommodating minorities, even although it may not have amounted to much more than 'toleration' and failed in its protection duties from time to time, seems to have enabled a rich interchange of philosophic and scientific ideas. The earlier period saw the most sustained tolerance, under Abd-ar-Rahman III and his son, Al-Hakam II. The Jewish community prospered and was involved not only in intellectual pursuits

but in trade. Oppressed Jews from other countries made their way to Al-Andalus. The position deteriorated under the rule of the Almohads who treated Jews and Christians harshly. During this time many Jewish, Christian and even Muslim scholars left for North Africa and the - then - more tolerant city of Toledo, which had been re-conquered by the Christians.

At the height of its intellectual endeavour, Cordoba had seventy libraries. The links with the great centres of learning in Baghdad and Damascus brought translated ancient Greek texts which were unavailable at that time in Christian Europe. The thirst for knowledge, understanding and scientific discovery led not only to translations of these texts into Arabic but also commentaries and original research by Muslims, Jews and Christians. These were later translated into Latin by Arabic-speaking Christians. In this way, the works of Aristotle, Plato, Euclid and Ptolemy were re-introduced to Christian theologians in other parts of Europe, along with substantial further philosophical and scientific works, re-kindling Latin scholarship and laying the foundations for the Renaissance. Significant advances were made in the fields of medicine, optics (Egypt could be contacted within twenty-four hours by way of a network of sun-mirrors), physics, astronomy, mathematics and chemistry. Some of the beautiful architecture and poetry from this period still survives. This was at a time when Northern Europe was in a poor state, described by Niall Ferguson in *Civilization, The West and the Rest* (2011) as, “a miserable backwater, recuperating from the ravages of the Black Death.”

Amongst the well-known philosophers and physicians of this era were the Muslim philosopher Averroes (Ibn Rushd) whose commentaries ‘turned Aristotle into the philosopher of the Middle Ages’ (Davies, 1997) and the Jewish philosopher Maimonides (Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon), both of whom are honoured by public statues in Cordoba today. A suggestion in 1996 by Spanish MEP Abdelkader Mohamed Ali for a European public

holiday to commemorate Averroes’ major contribution to European scholasticism was agreed in 1998 by the European Parliament but did not take place.

The re-conquest of Spain by the Christian kingdoms of Aragon and Castile was completed in 1492, when the keys of Granada were handed over to King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella – a scene still depicted in modern-day café interiors in Granada. The battles between the Moors and Christians are still re-enacted in annual festivals across southern Spain.

The Jews were given four months to leave. Many left for Portugal (from where any who had not converted to Christianity were expelled in 1497) or to Italy, North Africa and the cities of the Ottoman Empire. They later settled in the Netherlands and northern Germany (where Protestants were defending religious freedom). England had expelled the Jewish population in 1290 and they were not re-admitted until 1655.

Muslims and Jews in Spain and Portugal who had converted to Christianity (Moriscos and Conversos) came under increased pressure to show that their conversion was genuine.

At first, Muslims were able to stay on in the south of Spain, but eventually they, too, were expelled in 1609. Although ‘permission’ to leave cost a great deal of money, some Muslims left for North Africa. It was impossible for them to find refuge in other parts of Christian Europe.

Muslims and Jews in Spain and Portugal who had converted to Christianity (Moriscos and Conversos) came under increased pressure to show that their conversion was genuine. The Spanish Inquisition, which sent thousands across the Spanish empire to their deaths for

failing to convince the Church, was finally abolished in 1834.

Convivencia and the protection of religious minorities in Iberia, with all the benefits it brought, had come to an abrupt halt.

SICILY

Arab attacks on Byzantine Sicily, a strategically placed island (which had known Phoenician, Greek and Carthaginian rule and which had been the bread basket of the Roman Empire), started in 827 and the island was finally taken in 962. For nearly two hundred years, Sicily prospered as the trading link between the East, North Africa and the rest of Europe. Under three successive North African caliphates, an emirate was established in Palermo and trade, the arts and culture flourished. The Arab quarter of the city, al-Khalesa, is still evident today.

As in Al-Andalus, Sicily under Muslim rule was not an intercultural haven. Christians and Jews paid extra tax and the building of new churches and synagogues was not allowed, but there were no forced conversions. There were no forced conversions but the building of new churches and synagogues was not allowed. Some of the larger churches were turned into mosques, a process which was reversed when the Normans later took control. Freedom of religion was allowed so long as recitations of the Hebrew or Greek scriptures were not made within earshot of Muslims. Both Arabic and Greek were accepted languages, with some parts of the island favouring one or the other. As was the custom throughout the Mediterranean lands at that time, Christian, Jewish and Muslim women were all veiled in public.

The Arabs brought superior irrigation techniques to agriculture which resulted in bigger crops and the introduction of cotton, rice, sugar and bitter oranges. As part of an Arab empire (Sicily had a high degree of independence, but was formally under North African rule), the island benefited from more extensive trade with Muslim countries both west and east, and links with China and India. The island

prospered and its capital, Palermo, was considered to be on a par with Baghdad and Cordoba. Literacy rates in Sicily were higher during the transition from Byzantine to Muslim rule than they were in the mid 19th century.

There had always been a large population of Jews in Sicily and more arrived during this time as they were expelled from other countries. Claudia Roden in *The Book of Jewish Food* (1996) writes, "In Sicily, the Jews enjoyed eighteen centuries of tranquil existence. They grew oranges, produced silk and mined minerals, were cheese-makers and artisans, cloth merchants and doctors. They were among the colonies of the Diaspora that had the richest culture and traditions, being at the heart of Mediterranean traffic and benefiting from the cultural and economic impact of foreign occupiers . . . Under Arab rule . . . the Jewish population increased greatly with new immigrants from Muslim lands. They traded with the East and dealt in silks and perfumes; became Arabised in their tastes and looked to North Africa and the East, especially to Egypt, for their culinary standards. The Arab influence on Jewish cooking in Italy remains today".

Sicily was administered by dividing the island into three 'valleys'. The Val di Mazara, on the west side of the island, is where the Arabs first landed. This area around Marsala and Trapani specialises in couscous dishes and is still regarded as the Arab part of the island.

The Normans, descendants of the Vikings, attacked Sicily from southern Italy in 1060 and finally conquered the island in 1072. They built grand cathedrals, monasteries and churches. The Arabs were not forced out—in fact they were an essential part of the new building works. Whether it was a deliberate *homage* to Islamic design and culture or not, many of the church buildings incorporated significant Arab features both in the architecture and in the interior decoration. The Muslim influence and the accommodation of different religious minorities continued well into Norman rule. Only later during this period did conversions to Christianity

become common, as the church became Latinised.

The church of San Cataldo in Palermo was founded around 1160 and shows the strong and continued influence of Muslim architectural style in its blind arches, three hemispherical red domes on the roof, Arab-style battlements and symmetrical inlaid floor. It is not unlike the mosque of Halil-ur-Rahman, built in Urfa (present-day Turkey) in 1211.

The Sicilian way of life under the Muslim Arabs and then under the Christian Normans... recognised and valued minority communities.

The Norman King Roger II ensured that elements from the Muslim, Greek and Latin communities in Sicily were represented in his new Cappella Palatina, also in Palermo, which was built between 1130 and 1140. Above the Byzantine-style golden mosaics, Arab craftsmen carved and painted an intricate wooden ceiling which includes Islamic stalactites (similar to those carved from plaster in Granada's Alhambra Palace) and scenes from an imagined rural paradise. Clusters of Persian eight-pointed stars are arranged on the ceiling in the form of a cross - a Christian symbol. A Christian Psalter used during the reign of Roger II was shown at the British Library as part of the *Sacred* exhibition in 2007. The psalms are written side by side in three languages in their different scripts: Greek, Latin and Arabic.

The Sicilian way of life under the Muslim Arabs and then under the Christian Normans, although it cannot be considered pluralist, was certainly one which recognised and valued minority communities. But it was not to continue.

The French and then the Spanish succeeded the Normans and eventually the Spanish Inquisition arrived in 1492. The Muslims fled south and east. When

the Jews were forced to leave, they took with them their cuisine of "aubergines and artichokes, garnishes of raisins and pine nuts, sweet and sour flavours, marzipan pastries, and the custom of deep-frying batter-coated morsels in oil, all of which came to Sicily with the Arabs and are still associated with the Jews" (Roden, 1996).

SALONICA

Another great European city with a centuries-long history of co-existence among the Abrahamic religious traditions is Salonica, now Thessaloniki, which sits on the Aegean coast in a part of the world which produced Alexander the Great and Mustafa Kemal Atatürk.

Ceded to the Republic of Venice by the Nicaean Empire, a siege and brutal attack in 1430 by Sultan Mehmet II brought Salonica into the Ottoman Empire. Fifty years later, there was still a Greek Orthodox majority, but now almost as many Muslims and some Catholics. At the turn of the 16th century, the first Jews arrived, invited by the Ottomans after being expelled from Spain. By 1519, just over half the population of Salonica was Jewish. The three religious communities brought with them their own trades, professions, cuisine, architectural styles, music and ways of dress. The bustling and cosmopolitan city embraced churches, synagogues and mosques.

Mark Mazower describes the mix in *Salonica, City of Ghosts* (2004), "Under the rule of the Ottoman sultans, one of the most extraordinary and diverse societies in Europe lived for five centuries amid its minarets and cypresses on the shore of the Aegean, alongside its Roman ruins and Byzantine monasteries. Egyptian merchants and Ukrainian slaves, Spanish-speaking rabbis - refugees from the Iberian Inquisition - and Turkish pashas rubbed shoulders with Orthodox shopkeepers, Sufi dervishes and Albanian brigands. Creeds clashed and mingled in an atmosphere of shared piety and messianic mysticism".

The city grew and prospered in this way, more or less, until the First Balkan War of 1912, when the Greek army accepted

the surrender from the Ottomans and occupied the city. The following year, Salonica was annexed to Greece. Following World War I, the Treaty of Lausanne ended the Greco-Turkish War (1919–1922) and resulted in a population exchange between the newly established state of Turkey and Greece. Although the Treaty was agreed between governments and was deemed to be successful in building up the identity of the two nation-states, the expulsion of Greek Christians from Turkey and of Turkish Muslims from Greece was forced, resulting in great suffering on both sides. Salonica, or Thessaloniki as it was now, had lost one of its long-standing communities – the Muslims.

Another, the Jewish community, was lost to the city and almost entirely annihilated during World War II. Greece was invaded and Thessaloniki occupied by German Nazis. Almost all the Jewish families in the city were deported by train to Auschwitz, where most of them were murdered in the gas chambers.

Vienna's Jews suffered a similar fate during World War II. Some were Jews of Sephardic (Spanish) descent, like those of Salonica, who had originally taken the opportunity to settle in Vienna when the Habsburg and Ottoman Empires signed peace treaties in the C18th. A recent exhibition at the Viennese Jewish Museum, *Turks in Vienna*, highlighted the mediating role this community played between the Muslim empires and other parts of Europe, both through trading (silk, wool, tobacco, cotton, spices and sugar) and culturally through the founding of the first printing press in Istanbul in the C16th and others in Vienna and Salonica.

Mazower tries to find a coherent account of what happened to the different populations in Salonica. He fails and ends up writing one himself. "The basic problem . . . has been the attribution of sharply opposing . . . meanings to the same key events. [We] have seen history as a zero-sum game, in which opportunities for some came through the suffering of others, and one group's loss was another's gain: 1430 – when the Byzantine city fell

to Sultan Murad II – was a catastrophe for the Christians but a triumph for the Turks. Nearly five centuries later, the Greek victory in 1912 reversed the equation. The Jews, having settled in the city at the invitation of the Ottoman sultans, identified their interests with those of the empire, something Greeks found hard to forgive.

"It follows that the real challenge is not merely to tell the story of this remarkable city as one of cultural and religious co-existence – in the early twenty-first century such long-forgotten stories are eagerly awaited and sought out – but to see the experiences of Christians, Jews and Muslims within the terms of a single encompassing historical narrative. National histories generally have clearly defined heroes and villains, but what would a history look like where these roles were blurred and confused? Can one shape an account of the city's past which manages to reconcile the continuities in its shape and fabric with the radical discontinuities – the deportations, evictions, forced resettlements and genocide – which it has experienced?"

Historical facts there may be, but how we tell our stories, and who we share them with, can have an impact on our own understanding, on our identity – and on our destiny. Listening to other people's histories and re-telling our own in the light of what we have heard helps to keep us grounded and vigilant against seeing ourselves only as the heroes or righteous victims. If we do not, we risk seeing history through a single lens and miss the messy complexity common to the human family.

David Porter is currently Canon Director for Reconciliation Ministry at Coventry Cathedral. An Ulster Presbyterian, he has been deeply involved in dealing with the legacy of the troubles in Northern Ireland. He wrote the first post of his personal blog, *Shouting at the Devil*, on St George's Day, asking what such a national day is for.

"To ask the big questions – who are we? Who is modern England? And what is the story that its peoples tell that gives meaning to their belonging and participation on this

island and in the world at large? How we tell these stories to each new generation is important. We cannot avoid the story, saying it doesn't matter in today's world. It always matters. Left unexamined and not renegotiated in the retelling, we only leave the narrative open to those who are less nuanced and engaged with the different other. Their wish is to exploit fear and nurture community tension."

This fear and tension is brought out onto the streets of Bradford, Leicester and Harrow by the *English Defence League* and *Stop Islamisation of Europe* ('Islamophobia is the height of common sense'). The strapline to the *Gates of Vienna* blog reads, "At the siege of Vienna in 1683 Islam seemed poised to overrun Christian Europe. We are in a new phase of a very old war." This not only indicates an ignorance of European history – Europe has as much claim to an Abrahamic as a Judeo-Christian heritage – but it also confines each complex human being to just one identity – a religious one. Talk to any European and you will find a rich and fascinating story encompassing religious heritage and much more besides. As Billy Bragg's Essex song goes, 'Cause my neighbours are half English and I'm half English too.' Far right groups would find less traction if the public conversation around Europe, identity, migration and religion was significantly better informed.

For centuries, these European societies encouraged the cross-fertilisation of ideas and flourished.

In medieval Al-Andalus, Sicily and Salonica, religious minorities were intentionally accommodated without losing their identity or integrity. The Moors and other European Muslim and Christian rulers gave us an early (if limited) taste of pluralism and of deliberate (if limited) religious freedom. For centuries, these European societies encouraged the

cross-fertilisation of ideas and flourished. Bringing people together from different religious and non-religious traditions to meet, to exchange stories and to build communities of trust is increasingly a priority in present-day Europe.

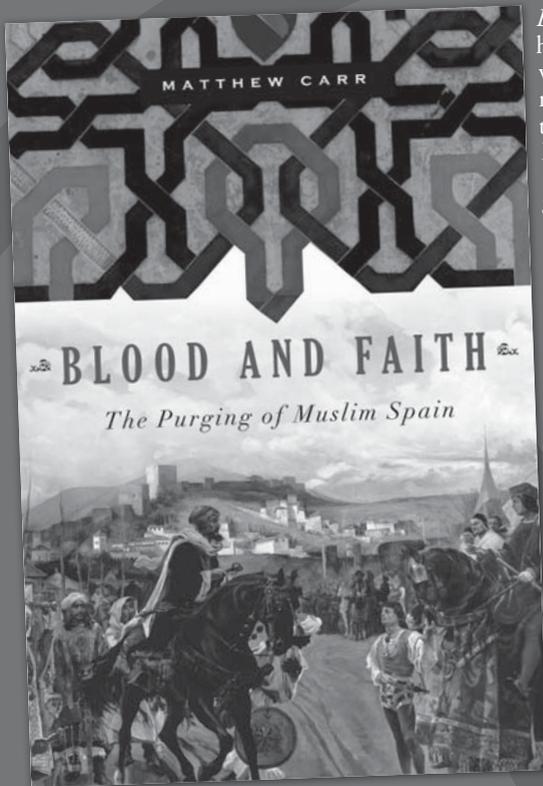
*Catriona Robertson holds an MA in Psychology from St Andrew's University and has worked with local community and religious groups in the UK, India and Papua New Guinea. She has contributed chapters to two books edited by M. Torry & S. Thorley, *Regeneration and Renewal* (2007) and *Together and Different* (2008). Robertson convenes the London Boroughs Faiths Network, which brings together practitioners involved in faith-public sector relations; the Network is also making connections with similar intercultural groups across Europe. Robertson works on the co-production of public services with the Wandsworth Community Empowerment Network and blogs at www.multifaith.wordpress.com.

European Muslim Initiative for Social Cohesion (EMISCO)



BLOOD AND FAITH: THE PURGING OF MUSLIM SPAIN 1492-1614

BY MATTHEW CARR



Blood and Faith is set against the vivid historical backdrop of Muslim Spain, where author Matthew Carr provides a riveting chronicle of what was by 1614 the largest act of ethnic cleansing in European history.

In April 1609, King Philip III of Spain signed an edict denouncing the Muslim inhabitants of Spain as heretics, traitors, and apostates. Later that year, the entire Muslim population of Spain was given three days to leave Spanish territory, on threat of death. In the brutal and traumatic exodus that followed, entire families and communities were obliged to abandon homes and villages where they had lived for generations, leaving their property in the hands of their Christian neighbors. By 1613, an estimated 300,000 Muslims had been removed from Spanish territory.

Blood and Faith presents a remarkable window onto a little-known period in modern Europe—a complex tale of competing faiths and beliefs, cultural oppression, and resistance against overwhelming odds that sheds new light on national identity and Islam at the start of the

twenty-first century. Carr meticulously recaptures the fateful self-mutilation of a society that might have become Europe's first multicultural nation and offers a grim lesson about religious and racial repression today.

Blood and Faith: The Purging of Muslim Spain 1492-1614
by Matthew Carr. Published in 2010 by Hurst Publishers, London.



*HAMZAH FOREMAN

Biography of a Mosque: The story of London's first Mosque, 1910-1942

ON the South side of Whitechapel Road in East London between Aldgate East and Whitechapel Tube stations sits the gold dome of the East London Mosque. For some, it is one of many exotic shapes cropping up all over Britain; for local Muslims it is perhaps more synonymous with the area than the Tower of London; and for others still, it is a slice of East End Nouveau. But what is less known is that the East London Mosque as it currently stands is the descendent of a previous mosque that was established seventy years ago over three decades from 1910 -- a mosque that owed its existence to the highly collaborative vision and efforts of a diverse group of early educated Muslims and non-Muslims.

It is my intention in the following pages to offer a précis account of this history, of how the first Mosque in London came to be through a selective exploration of an eclectic roster of the personalities involved. Our journey begins with the original vision of erecting a Mosque in London at the end of 1910 and the establishment of the London Mosque Fund; through the difficulties brought about by colonial wars, World War One, the Great Depression; leading into World War Two, during which the first permanent mosque premises was established in 1941 on Commercial Road in East London: the East London Mosque and Islamic Cultural Centre.¹

At the beginning of the 20th Century the dream of a mosque in the capital of the British Empire was shared by a handful of English-educated Muslims and a number of sympathetic non-Muslims connected to the Muslim world through colonial channels. Two separate projects were shared amongst the members of this group, with the common goal of building a mosque in London. These projects

were the London Nizamia Trust and the London Mosque Fund. Even though both projects shared some of the same trustees, the logical step of a merger was never taken in order to complete the project and fulfil a seemingly symbiotic dream. The most probable reason cited has been 'religious differences'²; however, these differences did not prevent the group working together for

In 1905 the first 'Eid Prayer... was arranged in London by the Rt. Hon. Syed Ameer Ali and Abdullah Suhrawardy.

a number of years towards the exact same goal through the two projects; a goal that would first be achieved from the treasury of the London Mosque Fund in 1941.

In 1905 the first 'Eid Prayer (Muslim prayers accompanying one of two festivities in the lunar calendar) was arranged in London by the Rt. Hon. Syed Ameer Ali and Abdullah Suhrawardy. Despite appalling weather conditions, the prayer was held outdoors in Hyde Park with a number of prominent British Muslims in attendance. This event continued the highly convivial 'Eid gatherings that had taken place thirty miles south of the capital at Woking Mosque in previous years and would have most certainly inspired much of the energy needed to establish a mosque in London over the following decades.

Five years later a public meeting was arranged by the Rt. Hon. Syed Ameer Ali at the newly built Ritz Hotel on the 9th of November, 1910. Under the Chairmanship of the Rt. Hon. Sir Sultan Mohammad Shah Aga Khan (spiritual leader of the

Ismaili Muslim community) the meeting resolved to raise funds for the purpose of establishing "a Mosque in London worthy of the traditions of Islam and worthy of the capital of the British Empire".³ To this end, and to manage the 'London Mosque Fund' (LMF), an Executive Committee would form under the Chairmanship of the Rt. Hon. Syed Ameer Ali, a man of considerable energy and vision.

A retired High Court Judge and highly connected Shi'a Muslim from Calcutta,⁴ Ameer Ali was the first Muslim to be appointed to the Privy Council in 1909 and was a strong advocate on behalf of the Muslim community in Britain and around the world. Apart from his widely acclaimed scholarly works, *A Short History of Saracens* (1898) and *The Spirit of Islam* (1891), he regularly penned letters and articles to British newspapers commenting on local and global current affairs. He was one of the founding members of The All-India Muslim League who also wrote and lectured on the position of women in Islam, perhaps un-coincidentally during the height of the suffragette movement in Britain. Working tirelessly on his various activities until his death in 1928, Ameer Ali's pan-Islamic and humanitarian concerns led him to found the British Red Crescent Society in 1919 which he used as a platform for action. In 1924 he wrote a letter to the Times appealing for public donations on behalf of the Red Crescent Society to ease the suffering of women, children, wounded and prisoners who were victims of Spain's bombardment of Morocco in 1924.⁵

A few months after that initial meeting of the LMF in 1910 *The Times* published a brief report by the Rt. Hon. Syed Ameer Ali including the names of the Fund's trustees and the intention to raise money for a mosque in London including an Islamic library and reading room, and arrangements for lectures to be delivered after the weekly Friday sermon.⁶

In the first two and a half decades of the London Mosque Fund the trustees were kept busy by seeking local and international support through donations and patronage.

As interest in the project spread, along with requests for donations from global Muslim leaders and aristocracy, donations began to make their way into the LMF coffers. Included was patronage and contributions of £1000 each from The Sultan-Caliph Muhammad V and the ex-Shah of Persia; The Nizam of Hyderabad (25,000 rupees), and £1000 from H.E.H Asaf Jah Nizam-ul-Mulk (the Nizam's successor); as well as subscriptions from Persia. Muslim rulers offering their patronage to the LMF included Habibullah Khan; Amir of Afghanistan and Sultan Sayyid Khalifa bin Harub Al-Busaid, the Sultan of Zanzibar, and a number of Malay Sultans.⁷ The Begum of the Indian state of Bhopal offered the London Mosque Fund a donation of seven thousand pounds⁸ on the condition that a student hostel would be annexed to the Mosque and that Muslim students' dietary provisions would be catered for. This followed in the footsteps of her Mother, the previous Begum, a generous supporter and namesake of the Shah Jahan Mosque in Woking. The Begum's £7,000 never materialised. Patrons and Absentee members of the Executive Committee also included His Highness the Sheikh-ul-Islam (the highest scholarly authority in Islam) and Their Holinesses the Chief Mujtahid of Najaf and the Chief Mujtahid of Tehran (equivalent of Sheikh-ul-Islam in the Shi'a tradition)⁹. H.M. King George V was also surreptitiously approached to patronise the project,¹⁰ but the then Secretary of State for India, Lord Morley advised him against it resulting in a refusal by the King's office.¹¹

Despite the attention the London Mosque Fund garnered from Muslim rulers, the LMF amounted to only 6,131 pounds, 13 shillings and 10 pence, a figure well short of what was needed to begin mobilising a team of architects, particularly while still in need of a suitable location. An article by the Fund's Chairman was published in the *Westminster Gazette* in 1917 describing the aims of the LMF and its current function of "maintaining a Moslem place of worship at 111 Campden Hill Road, Notting Hill (London), to meet the spiritual needs

of the growing Moslem community in London.¹² At this time, Friday (Jumu'a) prayers in London were sponsored by the LMF which allocated £120 per annum up until 1928. Jumu'a had previously been conducted at Lindsay Hall, Notting Hill Gate West, and 39 Upper Bedford Place. The *Westminster Gazette* article also accurately predicted the influx of Muslim visitors and migrants to Britain once the war was over.

While symbolic support for the fund was plentiful and encouraging, with a number of high-profile dignitaries included on its list of patrons, the LMF's Chairman, Syed Ameer Ali later expressed his disappointment that more money had not been raised to get the project beyond the hall-hiring stage as he laments:

I perceive with sorrow that there appears to be, for some occult reason, a general decline of interest in the furtherance of duties enjoyed by their religion among the rich Muslims of India. With some notable exceptions, magnates and ruling chiefs, whilst ready to contribute lavishly to objects favoured by Government functionaries, tighten their purses when an appeal is made to them for a pious or a religious purpose with every guarantee for its proper performance¹³.

Along with international Muslim interest and an influx of financial contributions into the LMF, it also held in its practical service a diverse array of prominent British personalities: colonial civil servants, Lords, academics, writers, politicians, educators, along with a number of officers in the diplomatic service from all over the Muslim world. Around the table of the first official meeting of the LMF Executive Committee on December 13th, 1910 in Caxton Hall sat prominent British educationist, diplomat and writer Sir Theodore Morison, author of a number of works on India's economy and renowned educationist.¹⁴ Sitting perhaps to his right was Khalil Khalid Bey, an Ottoman diplomat and eventual teacher of the Turkish language at Cambridge University. Bey was a prolific writer in the early part of the 20th century, best known for his autobiographical work

The Diary of a Turk (London, 1903) and *The Cross versus the Crescent* (London, 1907). He is also considered one of the first writers against 'Orientalism'.¹⁵ Maybe sitting across from him was Alibhai Mulla Jeevanjee, an Indian entrepreneur and newspaperman operating mostly out of Nairobi. Jeevanjee founded the Jeevanjee Market in downtown Nairobi and the first English language paper in Kenya, the *African Standard*.¹⁶ Also in attendance was a London-based precious stone merchant and Vice President of the All India Muslim League (AIML),¹⁷ Camrudin Amirudin Latif, who would serve the LMF as Honorary Secretary from March 1911 until his resignation in December of 1925.¹⁸ Latif would then be replaced by Professor Thomas W. Arnold, a renowned orientalist academic and long-time friend of Sir Theodore Morison. Professor Arnold's *The Preaching of Islam* (1913) was a meticulously researched publication dealing with the prevalent myth that the propagation of Islam occurred wholly by the sword.¹⁹

Both Morison and Arnold had taught at Aligarh Muslim University (formerly Muhammedan Anglo-Oriental College) in the late nineteenth century: Arnold, Islamic Studies, and Morison, English.²⁰ Arnold would commit his support to the LMF for twenty years until his passing on the 9th of June, 1930. Also included among the early trustees of the LMF was Lord Nathan Mayer Rothschild, First Baron, of the well-known Jewish banking family. While there is no record of Lord Rothschild ever attending a meeting, he was named as a trustee in a *Times* article in 1911 (see *Endnote 4*). After his passing in 1915,²¹ Lord Rothschild was succeeded by the Rt. Hon. Lord Lamington (2nd Baron), who had served the Crown as governor of Queensland (1896-1901) and Bombay (1903-1907).²² He joined the Rt. Hon. Lord Amphilhill (2nd Baron), who had joined the LMF immediately after its inception and had served the Crown as the Governor of Madras²³ from 1900 to 1905. Amphilhill also briefly held the office of Interim Viceroy of India in 1904.²⁴

During the early years of the LMF, the issue of a fitting location for London's first mosque was the subject of fervent discussion. It was resolved that "the matter be looked into [more] thoroughly as the Mosque was being built for all times and it must be commensurate with the dignity of Islam". British solicitor and Unionist politician, Sir William Bull was insistent that "the site be in the centre of the Empire",²⁵ and with some sympathy from the County Council, on the river, in Westminster.

Before the suggestion of where to build a mosque could be fruitfully investigated, Europe would find itself at war. And so with the advent of the 'Great War', the ingredients were gathered that would begin to ferment into Ameer Ali's prediction only a few years earlier. Immediately after Britain's declaration of war with Germany, 8000 British merchant seamen had joined the army and 9000 'enemy' seamen had lost their jobs causing a mass shortfall of labour in the British shipping industry. This prompted a surge of Muslim immigrants from the British colonies to arrive in shipping yards all over the country to fill the gaps in the wartime labour market in service of the Empire.²⁶ These were not the only Muslim subjects to serve the Empire. A considerable number of Muslim soldiers (Lascars²⁷) also fought, with 400,000 Muslims enlisted by Armistice Day, 60,000 deceased, 13,000 medals with 12 Victoria Crosses awarded.²⁸ The Lascars would also make a tremendous contribution to the Second World War effort with approximately half a million, mostly Punjabi Lascars enlisted.²⁹ Many of the 'lascars' employed in the shipping industry would chose to settle in Britain, forging the first link in the migration-chain from the Indian sub-Continent. It wasn't until a few years after WWI that the London Mosque Fund revived its activities and on the 19th of November, 1926 it was declared a Trust for the "... erection and maintenance in London of a fitting Mosque to be used by Moslems in London and Moslems visiting London from any part of the world for worship

**Signatories of the Trust Deed [included]
...Shah Aga Khan, Rt. Hon. Justice Syed Ameer Ali; the Rt. Hon. Charles Wallace Cochrane-Ballie Baron Lamington; [and] the Rt. Hon. Arthur Villiers Russell Baron Ampthill.**

according to the religion of Islam and until such erection to provide for such worship in any manner which may be deemed expedient".³⁰

Signatories of the Trust Deed would include: H. H. Sultan Mahomed Shah Aga Khan, Rt. Hon. Justice Syed Ameer Ali; the Rt. Hon. Charles Wallace Cochrane-Ballie Baron Lamington; the Rt. Hon. Arthur Villiers Russell Baron Ampthill, and Sir Muhammad Rafique.³¹ Now an official Trust, the LMF's Chairman initiated a new funding drive across the Muslim world as well as appealing to the British Government for support, arguing that a state sponsored mosque would serve to commemorate the contribution of Muslims to the war effort in the same way the French government had done by erecting the Moorish, Grande Mosquée de Paris in 1926.³² The Government again responded adversely. Soon after this the LMF lost its main driving force and visionary founder, the Rt. Hon. Syed Ameer Ali who passed away on the 3rd of August, 1928 at the age of 79.³³ Lord Lamington then assumed the Chairmanship of the LMF.

The LMF's fundraising activities had already been delayed by the outbreak of three wars involving Muslim territories: The Tripolitan War (1911), the Balkan War (1912-13), and later the First World War (1914-18), along with the passing of the LMF's Chairman, Hon. Secretary (T. W. Arnold in 1930) and Sir Muhammad Rafique. With the arrival of the Great Depression, and an increasing number of

Muslim settlers in London in the early 1930s, particularly the East End, the LMF's Trustees recognised the need for a more geographically focused approach. To accommodate the religious needs of these 'poor Muslims' the London Mosque project would adopt a more philanthropic, local character.³⁴

In the late 1930s the trustees eventually agreed to move the Friday and 'Eid Prayers from West London to appropriate venues on Commercial Road in the East End, first making use of Queen's Hall and then King's Hall. Despite the economic downturn, the trustees were optimistic, with money still being sought from a number of local and international benefactors. The most generous of these was Osman Ali Khan, Asaf Jah VII, the Nizam of Hyderabad, then considered the richest man in the world³⁵ and namesake of the competing Nizamia Mosque project. The difficulty of not uniting the two mosque projects was becoming apparent and after a two failed attempts in the early 1930s for charitable endowment from the Nizam, Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall, then in the Nizam's service, was urged to put a proposal forward on behalf of the LMF.³⁶

Pickthall was a prominent British convert to Islam who had served the Muslim community that met for Friday prayers at Campden Hill Road as the Imam (religious leader) during the early days of the LMF and was then located in Hyderabad working as a university teacher and helping to prepare officers for Hyderabad's civil service. Most famous for his translation of the Qur'an into English (still probably the most widely used translation), Pickthall was also a gifted novelist and contributor to numerous Muslim causes nationally and globally. One beloved institution that he (along with the Rt. Hon. Syed Ameer Ali and the H. E. The Aga Khan) was loathe to see disappear was the Ottoman Khalifate (Sovereignty). Pickthall, Ameer Ali and the Aga Khan petitioned the British Government not to dissolve the Caliphate after the fall of the Ottoman Empire in the early 1920s;³⁷ to no avail. Even though Pickthall was a close

confidant of the Nizam, the government of Hyderabad itself was under financial strain and the competing project in West London, where the Nizam's much stronger commitment lay was gaining momentum. Around 1930 the Nizam had pledged £60,000 to the project bearing his name at the behest of Lord Headley, another prominent British convert to Islam.³⁸ Pickthall's fundraising attempt for the LMF was duly unsuccessful.³⁹

With the recent passing of two stalwarts of the LMF, the need arose to recruit two new members to the board of trustees. These recruits would represent, quite literally, the next generation of leaders. Ameer Ali's eldest son, Waris Ameer Ali, also a Judge, and Major General Nawab Malik Sir Mahomed Umar Hayat Khan Tiwana, a wealthy Punjabi landowner with a highly distinguished Indian Army career, who would later go on to serve three of England's Monarchs [George V (1930); Edward VIII (1936), and George VI (1937)] as Honorary Extra Aide-de-camp,⁴⁰ joined the LMF in early January, 1931.

The early 1930s also saw the establishment of the Jami'at-ul-Musulimin (JuM), an organisation that would later have a lasting impact on the Muslim landscape in East London and Britain, establishing Mosques and Muslim institutions in a number of major cities including Glasgow and Manchester. The JuM was formed in 1934 under the chairmanship of Allama I. I. Kazi, Barrister at Law, philosopher, educationist, and founding Chairman of Sindh University, India. Its broad objectives were to further the observance of Islam and provide help to poor and needy Muslims throughout the world. Unity of the Muslim communities in Britain was also important to the JuM. In its first Annual Report (1934-35) are details of its efforts to unite the Nizamia Trust and the London Mosque Fund by abandoning the mosque project in West London, combine resources and build a mosque in the East End of London which was "the centre of [the] Muslim population and the resort of seamen from abroad".⁴¹ The JuM were

active in organising Friday and Celebratory prayers in East London under the auspices of the LMF which provided funding.

More changes to the LMF's Board of Trustees were to come in the Mid 1930s following the passing and long service of Lord Ampthill on the 7th of July 1935; the resignation of Sir Mahomed Umar Hayat Khan Tiwana; and the appointment of another distinguished military and colonial serviceman Sir Frederick Hugh Sykes, having recently returned from India where he served as the Governor of Bombay.^{42/43} Before moving into politics, the Rt. Hon. Sir Frederick Sykes completed a highly distinguished military career, retiring from the Royal Air Force in 1919 with the rank of Air Vice-Marshal.⁴⁴ But unfortunately for the LMF his "manifold other duties" prevented him from remaining a Trustee beyond September of 1941. The passing of Abdeali S. M. Anik in 1939 would also be a blow, ending the longest service given to the London Mosque Fund to that date. A merchant by trade, A. S. M. Anik volunteered his proficiency in financial matters for over twenty-seven years, the majority of which was spent as the Fund's Honorary Treasurer. His services in this capacity were also given to the British Red Crescent Society and The Indigent Muslim Burial Fund.

Just prior to Anik's death, the Trustees again began mooted the purchase of a suitable site to establish a Muslim place of worship in East London. On the 9th of December, Sir Firoz Khan Noon, (High Commissioner to India) reported two possible sites for consideration by the Trustees. His report was as follows:

[...There are] two possible sites both of which are now in the market. One, in Adler Street, leading out of Commercial Road, is not built on, so that building would have to be undertaken immediately. Further it is quite close to a Jewish place of worship. The other nos. 446 and 448 Commercial Road, [are buildings] which with some alteration would be suitable. The corner site No. 450 is also to let, but not for sale. The price asked for 446 and 448 is about £2,000. Some of the rooms could be converted into bedrooms for

*the use of sailors and other Moslems visiting London. Some could be let out as shops. No. 450 could also be used, if it were decided to take a lease of it.*⁴⁵

The meeting resolved to pursue the option of purchasing the Commercial Road buildings with further enquiries being made by way of a sub-committee under the guidance of the newly appointed Honorary Secretary, Sir Ernest Hotson. Sir Hotson had spent most of his career in the Indian Civil Service and had gained a reputation for having 'cheated death' after escaping an assassination attempt in Poona while inspecting Ferguson College as the acting Governor of Bombay. It was reported at the time that a student of the college fired two shots at him from a revolver, "the first shot struck Sir Ernest Hotson's coat just above his heart, but was deflected by a metal stud and a pocket book. The second shot missed him".⁴⁶

The acquisition of property for use as a mosque roughly coincided with the outbreak of World War Two, the outcome of which would bring more Muslim 'Lascars' to the East End of London, growing the demand for a Mosque even further.⁴⁷ After the passing of the Rt. Hon. Lord Lamington on the 18th September 1940,⁴⁸ and under the dedicated leadership of the LMF's new Chairman, Lt. Col. Sir Hassan Suhrawardy, an adviser to the Council of the Secretary of State for India and a trustee of the Nizamia Mosque Trust, the purchase of property numbers 446, 448, and 450 Commercial Road, London E1 was completed in late December, 1940. The total cost of the properties was £2,800 (no. 450 being purchased for £1,050, and nos. 446/448 for £1,750).⁴⁹ The timing of the purchase could have been more fortunate given that WWII was well underway and a wave of German Luftwaffe bombers had begun a campaign over the skies of London. The newly attained mosque would escape the resulting attacks with minor damage. The LMF was subsequently forced to cover the costs of repairs and renovations to the buildings to make them more fit for

purpose, and of course to prepare for the planned opening ceremony. At this time it was also agreed that the Jami'at-ul-Musulimin would rent No. 450 Commercial Road and be appointed to organise prayers and other religious functions based at the new East London Mosque and Islamic Cultural Centre.⁵⁰

With further Executive Committee vacancies opening up and the opening ceremony of the new Mosque premises just over a week away, changes were to come to the LMF. His Excellency Hassan Nachat Pasha the Egyptian Ambassador, and H. E. Sheikh Hafiz Wahba, the Minister of Saudi Arabia were approached to become trustees of the Fund, with Hassan Nachat Pasha agreeing to serve as Vice-President. Sir Ernest Hotson and Colonel Stewart F. Newcombe were elected Joint Hon Secretaries and Sir John A. Woodhead, namesake of the Woodhead Commission that aimed at a mutually agreeable plan to divide Palestine only three years earlier assumed the role of Hon. Treasurer. Woodhead would commit the next nineteen years to the Executive Committee and would be the last of the non-Muslims to serve the LMF in an official capacity.

The British Council offered the LMF a capital grant of £100 (and a possible recurring annual grant of £75) to stock a reading room at the Mosque.

With somewhat of a buzz around proceedings, the British Council offered the LMF a capital grant of £100 (and a possible recurring annual grant of £75) to stock a reading room at the Mosque and Cultural Centre with a variety of literature. The task of procuring newspapers, periodicals and books was delegated to Colonel Stewart F. Newcombe (Loyal friend to T. E. Lawrence and legendary

veteran of the Palestine Campaigns during the Great War⁵¹); while Professor Arthur J. Arberry (orientalist academic and notable translator of the Qur'an) was asked to acquire publications in Arabic, Urdu, Persian and other Oriental languages.⁵² Public lectures were also planned at the new premises. Another acclaimed translator of the Qur'an, political activist and Muslim scholar, Abdullah Yusuf Ali returns to London and resumes his position as a trustee. His previous tenure only lasted seven months due to his departure for India to enter the service of the Nizam of Hyderabad in 1921.

The official opening of the East London Mosque took place on Friday 1st of August, 1941. The Jumu'a (Friday) prayer was led by H. E. Sheikh Hafiz Wahba, Ambassador of Saudi Arabia. In attendance were H. E. Hassan Nachat Pasha, Vice Chairman of the LMF and Egyptian Ambassador to Britain, LMF Trustees, representatives from the Jami'at-ul-Musulimin, Lascars from the Pioneer Corps, seamen on leave from their duties, and others from East London's Muslim Community. Echoing the public spirit of the time, in his Khutba (Friday Sermon), Sheikh Hafiz Wahba stated the following:

*In this critical time, when rivers of innocent blood are flowing with total disregard for human suffering, and when all the evil elements in the world have united to destroy every civilised and humanitarian activity, we gather here together to inaugurate this mosque [...] So on this happy occasion, let us pray earnestly to God to bestow upon the world once more the blessings of sanity, security and happiness (trans.).*⁵³

Also speaking at the opening of the mosque, the Egyptian Ambassador hinted at another ascending project that had recently been granted practical support from the wartime cabinet, the Nizamia Trust stating: "The opening of this Mosque, for which we are gathered today, means the realisation of our aspirations. We hope in the near future to establish an Islamic institution in the centre of London, a worthy project which will meet with the approval of all Muslims and which will be

in keeping with Islamic traditions".⁵⁴

The Opening Ceremony was a great success and the following Friday (7th of August) the Rt. Hon. Leo Amery, Secretary of State for India paid an informal visit to the East London Mosque where he recited the first chapter of the Holy Quran (Surah al-Fatihah) from beginning to end flawlessly, creating great enthusiasm. Leo Amery was a strong advocate for a mosque to be built in London and welcomed the gift of £100,000 from the British government to the Muslim communities of London for the establishment of a mosque. The endowment was bestowed as a tribute to all of the Muslims who sacrificed their lives fighting for the Empire.⁵⁵

It took thirty-one years for a mosque to eventuate in East London. From the vision of a few learned men in the early part of the 20th Century and the creation of the London Mosque Fund; through the immense difficulties of the Great Depression and World Wars One and Two, to the purchase of the three houses on Commercial Road, and the establishment of a permanent place of worship for the benefit of the growing immigrant Muslim community in East London: the East London Mosque and Islamic Cultural Centre. The people who worked for the LMF during this period were a considerably diverse group. In the words of the LMF Vice Chairman "This Mosque, where children and brothers who live here will find a place where they can pray, exchange religious and cultural ideas, as is the case so far as other religions are concerned, means the fulfilment of a desire very near to our hearts, and I note with pleasure that it has found support from every Muslim and every friend of Islam".⁵⁶ The Mosque gradually became enveloped into family life by the early post-war Muslim settlers, beginning with Muslim Lascars from the military and shipping industry, later followed by their families becoming links in the chain of migration from the Indian sub-continent to the Capital of the British Empire.

Still today, Muslims in London and particularly the East End continue to benefit tremendously from the enduring

spirit with which numerous collaborators (mentioned and unmentioned) worked; a spirit that navigated the simple idea of a mosque in London through over three decades of a difficult half-century, from a vision in 1910 to a reality in 1941.

Historical timeline of The East London Mosque and London Muslim Centre since 1941

1948 The repairing of minor damage done to the East London Mosque and Islamic Culture Centre during 'The Blitz' (mid 1940- 1942) is completed. The majority of allocated funds being from the War Damage Commission.

1949 On the 11th of May, after fulfilling the legal provisions of the Law of Property Act, 'The London Mosque Fund' is authorised to act "in relation to charitable, ecclesiastical and public trusts as a trust corporation". The London Mosque Fund, in a document drawn up by Norton, Rose, Greenwell & CO is henceforth known as 'The East London Mosque Trust Limited'.

1951 Earl Winterton retires from his Chairmanship of the London Mosque Fund to work on his memoirs (d. 26 August 1962).

1956 After serving the London Mosque Fund and The East London Mosque Trust for almost fourteen years, Sir John Woodhead, [namesake of 'The Woodhead Commission' (1938), which recommended a partition plan for Palestine in favour of the Palestinian Arabs], retires from his duties. He is presented with a silver cigarette case as a token of esteem and thanks.

1963 The property at 450 Commercial Road is damaged by fire and subsequently repaired.

1975 The Greater London Council (GLC) under compulsory purchase order acquires the three Mosque buildings on Commercial Road and in return provides land and temporary buildings (45 Fieldgate Street E1) until a permanent Mosque can be built on Whitechapel Road. The new Mosque is designed by Messrs. John Gill Associates and constructed by Messrs. W. J. Mitchell & Sons.

1982 Construction commences

of the new purpose-built Mosque to accommodate three thousand people on Whitechapel Road.

1985 People from the local community march peacefully against the Greater London Council (GLC) in order to secure the land adjacent to the mosque to create room for a planned extension programme.

The official opening of the newly built East London Mosque is held on Friday 12th July by Shaykh Abdullah bin Subayl, Imam of Masjidul Haram (Islam's holiest site), Makkah, Saudi Arabia.

1998 The need for a larger Mosque and Islamic Cultural Centre becomes increasingly urgent as the Muslim population of East London continues to grow. The entire community, including many non-Muslim organisations unite in a campaign to acquire the land being used as a car park adjacent to the Mosque. On the 8th March, a large, peaceful procession moves through East London to achieve this end.

1999 Once the land is made available, the local community dig deep into their own pockets to raise £600,000 in order to purchase it. On the 27th November there is great jubilation as a cheque for this amount is handed to the Mayor of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets.

2000 After a long campaign to secure the land, a comprehensive extension programme known as the 'London Muslim Centre' begins earnestly to house much needed community facilities.

2001 On the 23rd of November, His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales and His Royal Highness Prince Mohamed al-Faisal laid the foundation of the London Muslim Centre as part of a ceremony to launch the construction project. This event led Prince Charles to comment in his speech *"I am particularly glad that I have a personal involvement with this project and other community outreach activities of the East London Mosque... Apart from anything else, the history of the East London Mosque Trust shows many non-Muslims amongst its ranks – something that continues in the present day"*. Encouragement also came from then Prime Minister Tony Blair

after he was briefed on the LMC project stating in a letter, *"I am also pleased to learn that the centre will both meet the cultural requirements of the Muslim Community and be open for use by all, regardless of their faith or ethnicity"*.

2004 On the 11th of June the London Muslim Centre is opened. Over 25,000 people fill the streets around the Mosque to participate in Friday prayers with Shaykh AbdurRahman Sudais.

The success of this opening inspired a return visit by HRH Prince Charles in November, footage of which was included in Her Majesty the Queen's Christmas broadcast of the same year.

2005 The London Muslim Centre established secondary educational facilities in the form of the London East Academy.

2006 Employment and training projects were established to facilitate community development and engagement.

PRESENT The East London Mosque and London Muslim Centre continue their commitment to the provision of broad, holistic, culturally sensitive services for the communities of London. These institutions aim to improve the quality of life for Muslims and all people in Britain and to ultimately enhance community cohesion and prosperity. The Maryam Centre, Phase Two Extension Project of the East London Mosque, started in 2009, to provide further space and provisions primarily for women - including schools, fitness facility, research and training. Construction work begun in 2010 and is due for completion early 2012.

www.eastlondonmosque.org.uk

*Hamzah Foreman was born and raised in New Zealand. He studied Geology and Literature at Victoria University of Wellington, and Education at the University of Otago. Foreman converted to Islam while travelling and writing in Pakistan and India. He is a working ceramicist, recently establishing *Whitecloud Pottery* and is currently working on an MPhil in International Development. Foreman has previously taught English in South Korea and Japan, and more recently in the UK. He has contributed to the Centenary of the East London Mosque and London Muslim Centre, developing a research interest in the history of Muslims in Europe. Currently he works as the Communications and Grants Officer at the Council of Mosques in Tower Hamlets,

East London. A member of the editorial team, Foreman helps edit publications of The Cordoba Foundation, namely *Arches Quarterly* and the *Occasional Papers* series.

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A New Approach to Islamic Learning and the Medieval West

*CHRISTIAN LOCHON

THIRTY five years ago the Islamic Festival of London offered the public a choice of 15 different exhibitions, including one of exhibiting an array of magnificent manuscripts. It was accompanied by a full program of lectures on religion philosophy, literature, architecture and science as a statement to Muslim contribution in these fields. In November and December 2005, the Arabic World Institute in Paris offered a series of lectures about the contribution of Islamic Scientific traditions to Europe. What was striking was that the Muslim scholars were presented not merely as plain transmitters of Greek heritage but as real research workers who were able to innovate, experiment and to create.

In the past decade, there has been a change in these relationship dynamics, mainly as a result of Arab funding of huge cultural projects and consequently 'cultural achievements' -- and accolades have been co-opted by various Arab and Muslim states. For example, the Louvre Museum in Paris, received 17 million Euros in 2005 from Prince Al-Walid to develop a new Islamic Arts Department, which was inaugurated five years later. The Royal Fontainebleau Palace (south of Paris) had its Napoleon III's Theatre rehabilitated through the financial help of Sheikh Bin Zayed of Abu Dhabi. The Sorbonne University currently has a branch in Abu Dhabi. Two Muslim personalities (Sheikha Mozah from Qatar and the Aga Khan) have been elected in 2010 as Associate Members of the prestigious Parisian Fine Arts Academy. The awarding to Qatar of the World Championship of Handball (in 2015) and Football (in 2022) serves to underscore how the Arab World has mainly 'bought' its influence and importance vis-à-vis cultural progress.

The saying used to be that after the Romans, the Light would come from the East. Now it seems that the East is financing the means of having the Light in the West! This despite the fact that the West owes a lot of its Light to the East as this article will illustrate.

EUROPEAN CULTURE AND SCIENCE

In his book, *The Mediterranean of Philip II*, Ferdinand Braudel claimed that "The countries of the Mediterranean are collections of regions which are isolated from each other but at the same time are trying to find each other. This results in constant interchange, which is encouraged by man's tendency to be nomadic. This

It was during the Middle Ages that the Arab-Islamic lands offered an ideal background in which a world civilisation could flourish.

makes all kinds of exchanges, including scientific ones, easier". This point has also been emphasised by Rushdi Rashed, a historian of Arabic mathematics, who wrote, "The Mediterranean is the meeting place of different cultures and civilisations and that is why Western science is a Mediterranean creation"¹.

It was during the Middle Ages that the Arab-Islamic lands offered an ideal background in which a world civilisation could flourish. Four conditions were of particular importance: *First*, Arabic was a common language with a sufficiently comprehensive vocabulary to cover the

terminology needed for the inventions of the time. The language of modern science still uses many terms of Arabic origin. *Second*, the political conditions were extremely favourable: there was a strong, centralised state which encouraged research and continued the work of its Seleucid and Byzantine predecessors. The Arabs managed to create a successful synthesis of Indian and Greek cultures. Arab Christians were also involved and were prolific translators of classical Greek, Syriac and Sanskrit works. The caliphs formed increasingly large collections of manuscripts and after defeating the Byzantine Emperors, forced them to hand over their rarest and most precious manuscripts. Arabic translations were made of Ptolemy on Geography and Astronomy, of Archimedes on physical sciences, of Euclid on mathematics.

Third, the countries of the Arabic speaking world, from its African to its Asian limits, were explored by the great geographers like al-Masudi (d 957), al-Idrisi (1100-1165) and Ibn Battuta (1304-1368). Maps drawn up on the basis of information brought back by these explorers made the exchange of ideas far easier, helping the capital of the Abbassid Caliphate to become an extraordinary clearing house for all kinds of discoveries.

Lastly, two main geographical European lines of interaction, Spain (or Andalucia where the Omayyad dynasty had taken refuge) and Sicily (occupied by the Kalbite dynasty in 878) provided the basis for what was described by Ibn Hawqal (died 976) as the 'Golden Age of Islam'. The economic and cultural cosmopolitanism of these cities that fused the Greco-Latin, Christian, Arab and Islamic cultures was a work of genius as described by the geographer from Cordoba, Sherif al-Idrisi in his Encyclopaedia *Kitab Rujjar*. For example, Cordoba the largest city in Spain with a population of 500,000 (Baghdad had 1 million and Paris 30,000) had 900 public baths, 50 hospitals and a public library containing some 400,000 books.

Many European students were attracted by the Arab civilisation. One of them

was Gerbert d'Aurillac, who would later become Pope Sylvester II (999-1003). Pope Sylvester spent 3 years in the Catalan monastery of St Mary of Ripoll looking for scientific Arabic manuscripts. There he discovered al-Khawarizmi's (780-850) *Al Jaber wal Muqabala* (Calculation and Reduction) which had been written using the Indian figures and describing the four fundamental operations. The first part of the title *Al Jabr* was later transformed to "Algebra". Gerbert contributed to the diffusion of the book and Arabic figures were adopted in Bologna University a century later. , Khawarizmi's name was also adopted and transcribed to 'Algorithms' to describe his discovery of binary language.

INFLUENCE OF ARABIC LITERATURE

The French consider that the courtly romances are part of their own literary traditions. However themes of courtly love – always ending in death because of being foiled by some insuperable obstacle – were actually developed by the Cordoban poet Ibn Hazm (994-1064). From Ibn Hazm the themes passed on to the Provençal troubadours who got their name from the Arabic word "tarab" (elated) plus an Occitan suffix. Ibn Hazm took his stories from the pre-Islamic epic poetry of Amrul Qays (d 550) who first wrote about the thwarted love between Layla and Majnoon (a pre-figuration of the Shakespearean Romeo and Juliet) and of Rodrigue (The Cid, Al Sayed) and Chimene from Corneille's play. Some stories, complete with their protagonists also passed into French medieval literature such as the tale "Aucassin ("Abulqassem") and Nicolette". Juan Vernet, the Spanish orientalist reminds us that the "Syrian Voltaire", Ibn Maari (973-1057), invented the theme of the wager which was later taken up by Pascal: "we should wager that God and the after-life exist and live righteously. If it is true we will then go to heaven, and if it is not true, we will not loose because we will not exist any more". Vernet also says that Ibn Tufayl (1109-1185) created a character

who, 500 years later, Daniel Defoe would describe as Robinson Crusoe, after the translation into English of Ibn Tufayl's manuscript.

INFLUENCE OF ARABIC PHILOSOPHY

Norman Daniel has demonstrated the influence of Arab-Islamic philosophers on their twelfth-century European colleagues. Ibn Arabi is said to have influenced Dante's *Divine Comedy*, whilst also introducing Thomas Aquinas to Aristotle as a result of Ibn Arabi's translation of Aristotle (and other Greek manuscripts). However one prize of the Arabs' success in the West was that their names were Latinised. Ibn Sina (980-1037) became Avicenna, much admired by Dante and 70 of his works are still in Madrid Escorial Library. Ibn Rushd (1126-1198) became Averroes whose advice for "considering, carrying out experiments and seeking for truth through reason" was put into practice by Roger Bacon, also an al-Kindi admirer. For these reasons Alain de Libera claims that Western philosophy stems from the East. Recent comparative studies on the way medieval universities functioned in both East and West have shown very striking similarities. The golden age of the universities in Cairo (Al Azhar), Baghdad (Al Mustansiriyyah), Fes (Al Qarawiyyin), Tunis (Al-Zaytuna) and Cordoba coincided with the foundation of the first universities in Paris (Sorbonne), Pisa and Bologna. All were based on libraries with a similar stock of manuscripts and the teaching by "disputatio", based on a teacher and his assistants, developed a similar methodology. There is no doubt though that a deeper study of medieval philosophy could bring some clarity to the fantasy-ridden theories of a confrontation between Islam and the West.

INFLUENCE OF ARABIC MEDICINE

The extraordinary progress made by the Arabs during the Middle Ages is most obvious though in the field of medicine. Starting with Ibn Sirin, a seventh century psychoanalyst, and considered

a predecessor of Freud, as he initiated the analysis of his patients' dreams. Arab-Islamic doctors excelled in various specialities.

Ar-Razi, known in the West as Rhazes (865-932), was born in Rayy near contemporary Tehran and studied Indian and Chinese medicine and pharmacopoeia treated fevers, infectious diseases as smallpox, hernias and kidney stones. His *KitabalHawior* "Continens" was translated by Gerard of Cremona (114-1187) and all 24 volumes published in Italy in 1486 were reprinted 40 times until 1866. Abulqassem (963-1013), known as "Abulcassis" described 300 surgical instruments, made by himself, in his *Tasrif*. He was a pioneer of surgery in the fields of ophthalmology, oto-rhino laryngology, obstetrics, urology, orthopaedics. Avicenna, most famous in Europe, born in what is today known as Uzbekistan (980-1037), was praised as the "Prince of Doctors". His encyclopaedia *Asb-Shifa* was translated into Latin by Gerard of Cremona and became a required reading in European medical schools until the 17th century. Ibn An-Nafis, a Syrian doctor (1210-1288), discovered the pulmonary circulation of the blood and corrected Claude Galien's mistake concerning communication between the right and left ventricles of the heart.

The Arabs were well aware of medical deontology. They emphasised the importance of nutrition and of specific diets for particular illnesses, attached great importance to pulse measurement and urine analysis as well as recommending hygiene and prophylactic measures when epidemics were raging.

INFLUENCE OF MATHEMATICS

As far as most members of the public are concerned, the Arab heritage means mathematics and "Arabic numerals. In fact Indians were the first to go beyond the primitive stage of repetition putting together isolated elements: they gave each unit its own individual sign and determined that its position in a series of 9 columns (tens, hundreds...) gave the value of that unit. The Indian mathematician

Arya Bhata invented the concept of zero for designing the empty place which avoids confusion between 408 and 48. In 773, the Indian astronomer Kankah came to Baghdad to present the Caliph Al-Mansur (754-775) with a treaty, the *Siddhanta* which contained these 'Indian figures' which were immediately adopted by Arab merchants, bankers and mathematicians. This discovery was passed to Europe at the same time as the Andalusian way of writing the unknown quantity in algebra, "x" transliterating the first letter of "xay" ("a thing unknown").

European scholars have often been given the credit for discoveries which had been made long before in the Middle East. For example, it was the Persian al-Tusi (1201-1272) who stated the principles of non-Euclidean geometry and his book was translated into Latin in Roma in 1594. Yet in 1733 the Italian Saccheri was given the credit for being the originator of this form of geometry.

INFLUENCE OF ASTRONOMY

Astronomy, a branch of applied mathematics, soon attracted the interest of researchers, if other than for the fact that Muslim societies needed to be sure they knew the position of Makka (al-qibla) so they could face the right way during prayers. In his lecture "Islam, Philosophy and Sciences" at UNESCO in Paris in 1981, Professor Rushdi Rashed said: "A vast number of books on astronomy were written by the Arabs... Arabo-Islamic astronomers were as familiar with the *Siddhanta* from the Indian tradition as with Ptolemy. Every educated man was expected to know the *Almagest* (translated into Arabic in 827) as well as Euclid's *Elements*. This is shown by the summary of both which Avicenna gives in his work *Al-Shifa*".²

More detailed examinations of the Ptolemaic models can be found in the works of Taqi-Din al-Urdi (1260), Nasir al-Din al-Tusi (1270), Qutb al-Din al-Shirazi (1130) and Ibn al-Shaatiir. The theory of the movement of the planets was no longer based on Ptolemy even though it was still

geocentric. Arab scholars believed that the longitudinal movement of the planets consisted of a series of uniform circular movements, and many of the examples they gave are identical to those used by Copernicus much later. This tradition was continued in the observatory at Maragha of the Mongol ruler, Hulagu, where al-Tusi was director 1263-1274. He had large copper spheres made for the observation of the stars in imitation of the ones made by Ptolemy in Alexandria.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that a universal calendar of religious festivals for the Persian, Hegiran, Greek, Jewish and Christian years was drawn up the great humanist al-Biruni (973-1048).

INFLUENCE OF THE PHYSICAL SCIENCES

Al-Farabi who came from Central Asia was active in the field of physics. He was a follower of Aristotle and he proved that sound moves through the air in waves. Al-Biruni compared the speed of light with that of sound. He was a contemporary of Avicenna and a great polymath. He discovered the principle, now attributed to Galileo, of the invariability of the laws of nature: that the same physical laws that apply on earth also apply throughout the universe. Al-Biruni applied his gift of observation to geology as well.

Al-Biruni was also a botanist and classified flowers on the basis of the distribution of their petals. He gained such a wide reputation through his vast knowledge that his name, corrupted into Aliboron, was a laudatory nickname given to any great scholar in the West during the Middle Ages.

Ibn al-Haytham (965-1035), known in Europe as al-Hazin or al-Hacen, wrote a book which was translated into Latin under the title *Opticae Thesaurus Alhazeni*. In it he described his research into optics, which was later taken up by Roger Bacon in his *Opus Majus*. He anticipated Fermat's principle that, "A ray of light which passes through homogeneous material will take the easiest and quickest path".

INFLUENCE OF TECHNOLOGY

It is only to be expected that a brilliant civilisation would be able to train the skilled engineers it needed. Among them were the three Banu Musa brothers, who were not only mathematicians, but were also engineers, doctors and translators. In the twelfth century they invented powerful hydraulics machines, described by al-Jaziri in his *Art of Mechanics*, and amazed their contemporaries with their construction of automata and watches. Andalusian agriculture benefited from the irrigation methods and machines at Ghouta, the famous Damascus oasis.

Arab architecture was also influential. Romanesque art borrowed from eleventh century Spanish Islamic art, its chisel-curl brackets, horseshoe arches, ribbed vaults and its "Saracen chimneys". During the same period Crusaders brought back from the Middle East a new type of radial concentric town plan, such as those from which Baghdad or Jerusalem had been built. That type of plan was adopted in France at La Charite-sur-Loire, le Puy, Vezelay, Moissac, Paray-le-Monial. The idea of a courtyard with flowers, fountains and an internal garden became an essential and permanent feature of Andalusian architecture.

The art of cartography reached a high point in the tenth century with al-Balkhi, about whom the orientalist Guy le Strange had much to say in his book *The Lands of the Eastern Caliphate*. Al-Balkhi drew up an atlas in 921 entitled *Souwar al Aqalim* (A Description of Various Regions). He was followed by al-Istakhri and Ibn Hawqal. Centuries later the Portuguese used these Arab maps on their voyages to West Africa and India.

History has also handed down to us the name of a famous navigator, Ibn Magid. He was born in 1435 in Oman and composed a treatise on navigation, writing in verse so that it would be easier to remember. G.A. Tibbets commented upon it in his book *Arab Navigation in the Indian Ocean Before the Coming of the Portuguese* (Luzac, London, 1971).

As early as 758 we hear of an Arab tea

merchant working in Canton (the word "tea" has passed through Arabic into all Western languages). Al-Yaqubi (died 897) has been called the father of Arab geography, and after him we come to the travels of Ibn Fozlan in Hungary and South Russia. Abbasid coins have also been found as far away as Sweden.

We have already mentioned al-Idrisi in Sicily. Ibn Jubayr (1145-1217), who went to Sicily later, found veiled women in Palermo. The ruler of Hama in Syria, Abu al-Fida (1278-1331), was also one of the great geographers of his age. However, there can be no doubt that the most famous traveller of all is Ibn Batuta.

In 1325 he left his native town of Tangier and went to Algiers, Alexandria, Jerusalem, Beirut, Damascus (which he described as "a beauty spot on the world's cheek", Mecca, Baghdad (where he described the two bridges), and Isfahan. From there he travelled to Constantinople, back to Iran, India (where he was appointed Qadi - "judge"), Canton (where he discovered an enlightened regime under which men aged 50 no longer paid taxes and when they reached 60 they received a pension), Sumatra, then back via Calcutta, Baghdad and Palmyra; finally arriving in Fez in 1347. In 1352 he crossed the Sahara to visit Mali and Timbuctu.

There are over 2000 words in English whose origin is Arabic.

New words only enter a language when there is need to designate something that was not previously known in that environment. In English, French and most other European languages there are many words of Arabic which have entered the language through Italian, Provençal or Spanish. The Arabic word *sifr* is an example. In Arabic it means zero and in Italian it was taken over as *zero*; through Spanish it became the French word *chiffre* and cipher in English. There are over 2000 words in English whose origin is Arabic.

Young generations of European muslims [need to learn] how much their heritage and the contribution of that heritage and culture [contributed] to the development of European and universal civilisations.

In chemistry there is alcohol, alembic; in medicine, camphor, elixir, syrup; in petrochemicals, natron, naphtha; in food, apricot, coffee, orange, tamarind; in clothing, muslin, satin; in botany, jasmine, and lilac.

CONCLUSION

It is most important that the young generations of European Muslims know how much their heritage and the contribution of that heritage and culture to the development of European and Universal civilisations. It is also equally

necessary that Europeans value the influence of the 3 Abrahamic cultures and religions (all coming out of the Middle East. Islam was not born in Europe, nor Christianity neither Judaism) have transformed their own ancestors way of life and contributed to their development. However it seems that not every European wants to realise this historical reality.

The 2000 Arabic words that have been adopted by the genuine European languages constitute another proof that our level of civilisation would not be what it is today if the Arab-Islamic culture had not played an important part.

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ENDNOTES

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Islamophobia in Early Modern England

*ROBERT LAMBERT

ALTHOUGH Islamophobia is a new and contested term it denotes antipathy towards Islam and Muslims that has significant roots during the Renaissance or early modern England. This is the period of English history when Shakespeare was alive and the time when pioneering English merchants were encountering Islamic culture in their commercial ventures to Muslim countries for the first time. In focusing on the birth of mercantile England I do not ignore the existence of strident anti-Islamic sentiment in the preceding mediaeval period, but rather seek to chart the distinctive features of anti-Islamic sentiment in early modern England. In doing so, I aim to identify aspects of a popular and negative response to Islam that has resurfaced during the last two decades.

In the wake of the most spectacular terrorist attack the world has ever seen, England's burgeoning Muslim communities witnessed their religion being identified and vilified as the key motivational factor that prompted it. Al-Qaeda terrorists who crashed passenger jets into the twin towers of the World Trade Centre in New York and the Pentagon in Washington on 11th September, 2001, were, according to sections of the media, acting in pursuit of political ideals allowed and encouraged by Islam. Following an argument made popular in the West by Samuel Huntington¹ it became commonplace to describe and explain the event as symptomatic of an inevitable clash between Islam and the West wherein the former was endemically hostile and opposed to the hegemony of the latter. Consequently, according to this argument, the West would have to redouble its efforts to defend its cherished notions of freedom and democracy from the religious and

cultural extremism of Islam. Londoners were warned to brace themselves for a similar attack on the English capital as their interests and vulnerability were described as being inextricably linked to those of the USA. In this way the actions of a small, extremist group were linked with Islamic imperatives – most notably *jihad* – that governed the lives of a million Muslims living in the capital of England.²

In consequence, Islam became an instant topic of curiosity for London's largely secular majority that had only previously paid a passing interest in Muslim affairs some thirteen years earlier when a leading literary figure in London was placed under sentence of death for offending Islamic religious sensitivities. Then, Islam emerged from the shadows of a secular society to oppose the most sacred cow of English modernity, *freedom of speech*. Salman Rushdie, adopted by London's *literati* after an acclaimed first novel, *Midnight's Children*, found that such approval could not protect him from the threats of an outraged Muslim cleric in Tehran, Ayatollah Khomeini, who found his third novel, *The Satanic Verses*, blasphemous. While most Muslims questioned the authority and basis of Khomeini's *fatwa*, authorising the killing of Rushdie³ the fatwa reflected widespread outrage that spread through Muslim communities in Pakistan, Bangladesh and India, to Bradford and East London in England. Rushdie was judged to have questioned the inviolable word of God and to have smeared the reputation of his prophet, Muhammad, by writing denigrating, fictional references to particularly sensitive passages from Islam's holy book, the Qur'an.

Then, much smaller and more hesitant Muslim communities in England were

made to feel that their religion was not an acceptable part of modern England. When they marched through the streets of London calling for the banning of the book, they were met with cold indifference and contempt. Blasphemy and the notion that murder was a fit punishment for it were not acceptable in a city that boasted ready access to every vice condemned in the Qur'an. Religion, it was assumed, had adapted to a less central role in the lives of ordinary Londoners and Christians would not dare to react in such a violent way if an author chose to impugn the Bible in the same way that Rushdie had, purportedly, the Qur'an. As a few marching Muslims burnt copies of *The Satanic Verses* in Westminster they were identified in sections of the London press as dangerously backward members of an inherently hostile religion. Racist groups such as the British National Party (BNP) and the National Front (NF) woke up to the distinctive threat posed by Muslims who had, hitherto, been lumped together with Sikhs and Hindus as 'Pakis': a group of immigrants who should be made to feel unwelcome by the white, indigenous English.

Islamophobia – first coined in 1997 [is] used to describe a form of racism that is aimed specifically at Muslims.

Both events – a terrorist attack and the publication of a book – led to Islam being described as wholly incompatible with the aspirations and values of non-Muslim England. Such a view is generally part of a rationale offered by racist groups and sections of the media concerned with attacking and vilifying Muslims. Thus, in the immediate aftermath of September 11th many Muslims in England were subjected to racist violence, abuse and harassment. In consequence a term – *Islamophobia* – first coined in 1997 has increasingly come to

be used to describe a form of racism that is aimed specifically at Muslims and Islam. It is therefore helpful to trace elements of this anti-Muslim sentiment to early modern England, and especially London, where the secular features of Western culture now regarded as being antithetical to Islam were first established.

Most notably, Elizabethan and Jacobean merchants generated and exploited a vigorous trading imperative that brought them into contact with a superior cultural and military Muslim force – the Ottoman Empire and its regencies in the Near East and North Africa. That interface produced cultural and religious exchanges that were identified as being contagious to a fledging and uncertain Protestant country. The power and certainty of Islam then produced anti-Muslim sentiment in England for the same basic reason that anti-American sentiment is generated today. It becomes all the more ironic that key features of that hostility are re-used four hundred years later when Islam has, during the intervening period, suffered unanticipated losses at the hands of a London-led Western mercantile, military and cultural offensive.

An examination of plays, travel narratives, letters, essays, sermons, biblical exegesis and the work of London's early Arabists reveals and delineates the territory of English opposition to what was then the most powerful religion in the world. London, then as now, was central and pivotal to England's relations with the Muslim world. Conversions to Islam by Englishmen in the seventeenth century suggest both the extent of the religion's allure and the rationale for strong opposition to it. An essentially Protestant strand to this opposition distinguishes it from earlier oppositional accounts of the religion in the medieval period. The same Protestant element shapes the form of ensuing antagonism that culminates in the attitudes modern society has characterised as Islamophobia.

Edward Said's thesis of post enlightenment colonialist control of academic orientalist discourse has

relevance to an account of English⁴ attitudes towards Islam in this prior period in two important respects. *Firstly*, due weight must be given to the influence of a vast panoply of nineteenth and twentieth century Burckhardian Renaissance history that excludes Islam from any participatory role in the early modern period that is described, therein, as formative in the birth of the modern civilised world. On Said's account this seminal discourse is tainted and invalidated by its orientalist agenda. *Secondly*, there is strong evidence that links early modern English denigration of Islam to new nationalist attitudes that are intrinsic to the formation of colonialist control and the orientalist discourse developed to nourish it.

Said's thesis has roots in the fertile soil of early modern England.⁵ While John Tolan is surely right to claim that a 'sentiment of Western superiority over Muslims runs deep in European and North American culture' and has its 'roots in the Middle Ages'.⁶ I argue that there are identifiably Protestant and humanist strands in the formation of a prejudicial academic *orientalist* Islamic discourse. Central to a cultural and theological relegation of Islam – after elements of Arab and Islamic civilisation had been acknowledged and promoted in Medieval Europe – was a humanist account of civilisation that emphasised Western Christendom's classical Greek and Roman heritage to the exclusion of all things Arabic.

Thus, typically, Renaissance humanists quoted Quintilian condemning *Asianics* for their lack of 'judgement and restraint'.⁷ Later, to support Said's thesis, the nineteenth century Swiss historian Jacob Burckhardt would authoritatively endorse that humanist account of Arab inferiority. Arabs might be 'a brilliant people, capable of self-denial' but they were inherently susceptible to 'the false religion of Islam'.⁸ Islam succeeded, he said, because it was a 'triumph of triviality' and its civilisation represented a regressive step in world history.⁹ This is significant, I believe, because Burckhardt's imprint on the Renaissance and early modern

studies is indelible. Medieval Christian scholarship classified Islam as a heresy and the Reformation had done nothing to diminish the vicarious threat scholars faced when they ventured into such a dangerous field of enquiry.¹⁰ Only the clearest possible condemnation of the subject they were discussing would remove humanist scholars from the potential threat of an accusation of complicity with the heresy itself. Failure to recognise this constraint would be likely to place the life and liberty of the scholar in jeopardy. In consequence, the tension between religious orthodoxy and a humanist pursuit of unauthorised knowledge has rightly become an exemplary theme in English Renaissance studies, with Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* and the life of the magus John Dee coming to symbolise the dichotomy enquiring scholars then faced. When, however, the heresy was also the religion of the world's greatest empire (the Ottoman) it was bound to follow that any examination of such a competing monotheism would have to be conducted with circumspection. Moreover, because Arabic was so closely associated with Islam, a study of that language alone might be expected to be subject to cautionary scrutiny by a tentatively Protestant Anglican church during the reign of James I.

Protestantism and printing combined, in the sixteenth and early seventeenth century, to place a new emphasis on the value of the Bible both as the prime conduit for the dissemination and reception of a reinvigorated Christianity and as a treasure house of sayings that were worthy of repetition and remembrance. That such an exemplary religious experience should be challenged by another book – the Alkoran (as it was called in Shakespeare's England) – that already enjoyed the accessibility and status that Protestants' imagined for the Bible was likely to be have been a disturbing discovery for Marlowe, Shakespeare and their contemporaries. Moreover, that the same book denied Christ's divinity and his redemptive role while according him a lesser role merely preparing the way for an

alleged ‘charlatan’, who Arab’s considered the subsequent and final prophecy, was surely to offend Protestant sensibilities.

Since Luther’s reformation had shattered any semblance of Christian unity in Europe, a sense of contrary Islamic coherence had appeared all the more strong and threatening. In addition, Protestantism was forced to concede, the most significant reversal of fortunes suffered by Islam had been inflicted by an uncompromising Catholic regime in Spain in the fifteenth century. Luther’s main English critic, Thomas More, highlighted the danger Christianity faced from an internal schism just at the time that there was an urgent need for Europe to present a united front to a Muslim enemy. A hundred years later the same powerful face of Islam – the Ottoman Empire – appeared as threatening and implacable as ever. In *A Dialogue of Comfort in Tribulation*, More’s mouthpiece, Anthony, suggests that God is allowing a Turkish invasion of Hungary as a punishment for the evils of Christian society.¹¹ The Muslim Turk as a scourge for sinful Christianity would become a powerful figure in later Protestant eschatology.¹²

Dealing with the topical problem of responding to life under Turkish rule Anthony condemns those Christians who purported to retain their faith in Christ privately while offering outward submission to Islam. ‘God’ Anthony warns, does not accept ‘half-measures’. But half-measures He increasingly received from those English traders, soldiers and sailors who, in the early modern period, fashioned themselves according to the dictates of a more commanding culture.¹³

Increasingly, anti-Muslim sentiments would be framed in the context of inter-Christian polemics. Thus, Nabil Matar notes, ‘the figure of the Turk became associated with the Papal enemy of God’ – ‘both of whom were identified with the “little horn” in the Book of Daniel and the “Beast” in Revelation’.¹⁴ Luther argued that the eschatological kingdom of Christ would emerge triumphant once Protestantism had defeated its joint

opponents: Catholics and Mahometans. ‘May our dear Lord Jesus Christ help and come down from heaven with the Last Judgement, and smite both Turk and pope to the earth’, he wrote in 1529.¹⁵

Whether by inverting and misrepresenting the fate of contented and successful converts to Islam or by inventing stage villains with allegedly Muslim characteristics, English playwrights in Shakespeare’s England were urgently denigrating the civilisation.

Hugh Broughton was just one of several English and Scottish writers who built on Luther’s framework and sought to assure their readers that God would reveal Himself in an “English Zion” once He had dispatched the Catholics and Mahometans to Hell. ‘Both in their deceyte encrease much’ he wrote in 1588 confirming the eschatological link between the two mutual aspects of the Antichrist.¹⁶ ‘In the eschatology of post-Reformation England’ Matar summarises, ‘an irreconcilable polarity was established between Protestant Christians and Muslims (and Catholics), so much so that in the nature of God’s scheme there could be nothing but warfare between them’.¹⁷

Whether by inverting and misrepresenting the fate of contented and successful converts to Islam or by inventing stage villains with allegedly Muslim characteristics, English playwrights in Shakespeare’s England were urgently denigrating the civilisation that posed the greatest military and commercial threat to their country. Such dramatic

representations extended to the widest possible public in 1613 when an elaborate water pageant was held on the River Thames to celebrate the marriage of King James' daughter, Elizabeth, to Duke Frederick: a union James' hoped would establish a Protestant military alliance against both the Catholic Habsburgs and the Muslim Ottoman armies in Central Europe. Accordingly, '16 ships, 16 gallies, and six friggots; of which the navy ships were Christians and the gallies were supposed Turkes' re-enacted 'the happy and famous battell of Lepanto' in an attempt, as Matar suggests, to 'provide the "pertubatious multitudes"' with entertainment' and engender a 'national polarisation against the "Turks"'.¹⁸ By recalling the Battle of Lepanto where Muslim forces suffered a rare setback against Christian opposition the organisers were seeking desperately to bolster national confidence in the face of a real and grave threat.

While plays like Darborne's *A Christian turn'd Turke* more slavishly follow ruling sentiment of this kind by focusing more closely on Christopher Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* we can glimpse Shakespeare's most famous contemporary playwright reflecting on the theological consequences of two competing monotheistic faiths. Thus, as his followers make a bonfire of the Qur'an and other holy books, Tamburlaine issues a clear challenge to the founder of the Muslim faith, 'Now Mahomet, if thou have any power/Come down and work a miracle' (*Tam* 2, V, I, 185-6). While a bonfire may have been thought appropriate for a book deemed by Christianity to be heretical it might easily have passed unnoticed that one of the central tenets of Islam was being grossly falsified (so long had Muhammad been portrayed as an idol and a usurper of Christ's prime role). Whereas Islam, in reality, rejoiced in the fact that God had chosen Muhammad, a mortal man, to be the bearer of his final message to mankind it had become common practice in the pulpit and on the stage to distort and confuse that account. Marlowe, of course, may have had overarching dramatic

purposes far more compelling than the simple attribution of magical Christ-like powers to the avowedly terrestrial prophet of Islam, but such misrepresentation was both symptomatic and endemic.

Equally, Tamburlaine's subsequent illness may well have suggested to a contemporary audience that the infidel *Mahomet* did in fact have superterrestrial power – not necessarily benign of course in the manner of Christ but perhaps of a demonic derivation. 'The effect is not' however, Stephen Greenblatt suggests, 'to celebrate the transcendent power of Mohammed but to challenge the habit of mind that looks to heaven for rewards and punishments, that imagines human evil as the scourge of God'.¹⁹ Marlowe went so far as to appreciate that it was the same monotheistic God – who orders Abraham to kill his son for the same purpose in the Bible and the Alkoran – that presided over the affairs of Christians and Muslims.

Indeed, it was this uncomfortable fact that led many Protestant commentators to reflect that Catholicism had so disappointed God that he had allowed Islam the military and territorial success it had enjoyed by way of punishment. In doing so Protestantism was merely adapting an established Christian concern that had long exercised scholars: how could God allow Islam to come into being and to spread in regions which the Christian church up to that time had occupied such an important place? Or, as Albert Hourani has more recently formulated the underlying question: 'What role, if any, did the victory of Islam over Christianity play in the providential order of the world?'²⁰

The Christians of *Tamburlaine* II conclude their debates with a pious-sounding resolution to surprise 'the pagan,/And take the victory our God hath given' but their mortal defeat occasions a recognition that what had been called 'necessary policy' was actually a 'sin' of 'hateful perjury'. Even the treatment of Muslims, who might be expected to embody 'foul blasphemous paganism' for a European audience supports the ascendancy of this moral; for, in contrast

to the treacherous, partisan Christians, the victorious Muslims are ecumenical universalists who invoke Christ as well as Muhammad and who judge everyone by spiritual standards.²¹

Marlowe's deeply probing observations reveal a fascination with the theological and consequences of two competing monotheisms. For Marlowe, of course, there was a gap between Christian edict and practice to be exploited:

*Can there be such deceit in Christians,
Or treasons in the fleshy heart of man,
Whose shape is figure of the highest God?
Then if there be a Christ as Christians
say,
But in their deeds deny him for their
Christ.*
(Tam 2. II. ii. 36-8)

As growing numbers of English sailors, soldiers and traders embraced Islam and the Muslim culture they encountered in Mediterranean and Turkish ports so Christian commentators would point to poor religious practice of the kind Marlowe dramatises to explain their susceptibility to an allegedly false religion. Thus, when, in 1649, Alexander Ross published the first full English translation of the Alkoran he prefaced the work with a stinging indictment of co-religionists that offers implicit approbation of Islam:

*And indeed if Christians will but
diligently read and observe the laws and
Histories of the Mahometans, they may blush
to see how zealous they are in the works of
devotion, piety and charity; how devout,
cleanly, and reverend in their Mosques, how
obedient to their Priests, that even the great
Turk himself will attempt nothing without
consulting his Mufti...how consistently do
they observe their Fasts from morning till
night a whole month together; how loving
and charitable the Muselmans are to each
other, and how careful of strangers, may be
seen by their hospitals, both for the Poor and
the Travellers.'*²²

Nowhere, however, is this dual and contrary response to Islam better illustrated than in a book as famous and influential

in Shakespeare's day as it has remained ever since, Dante's *The Divine Comedy*.²³ Therein, three well known medieval Muslims – the philosophers Avicenna and Averroes and the warrior Saladin – are spared the agony of the tortures of Hell. Instead, as an acknowledgement of their adoption by the West – and thus, correspondingly, a perceived diminution of their association with Islam – they are placed in Limbo as the only contemporary residents in the exalted company of Aristotle, Plato and the other giants of classical antiquity. In doing so, Southern suggests, Dante was 'acknowledging a debt of Christendom to Islam which went far beyond anything he could have expressed in words'.²⁴

Significantly, Minou Reeves points to the fact that in 1926, Miguel Asin, Professor of Arabic at the University of Madrid, demonstrated that this debt may have been far more personal. While it had been commonplace to note the originality in Dante's construction of Hell, Asin argued in *Islam and the Divine Comedy*, 'that the structure of Hell was inspired by Islamic images rather than Greek mythology'.²⁵ While that account remains controversial there is perfect clarity about the fate of Muhammad in the eighth circle of Hell. He is the absolute enemy of Christ who must be horribly punished: 'No cask stove in by cant or middle ever / So gaped as one I saw there, from the chin / Down to the fart-hole split as by a cleaver' (Canto XXVIII, 19-21). Whether or not a leading critic is right that Dante's work is still 'able to awaken in the sensibility of every generation awareness, elation, recognition, and new ways of understanding human life'²⁶ it must certainly be true that his depiction of Muhammad was imprinted on Western minds during Shakespeare's lifetime. Most intriguing, perhaps, is Dante's desire to separate Muhammad from the culture he represents and his consequent elevation of that culture once relieved of the burden of the Prophet.

When, in 1607, England's first Arabist, William Bedwell gave communion to Henry Hudson and his crew as they

embarked on a voyage in search of a north-west passage to Cathay, the vicar of Tottenham (then a village) would have been content that – whatever other perils they might face – the seafarers were at least heading away from the main Muslim threat in the Mediterranean. Witness then to what Greenblatt describes as the ‘acquisitive energies of English merchants, entrepreneurs, and adventurers’,²⁷ Bedwell was in this respect also at the crux of pivotal developments in early modern England. Greenblatt, for his part, finds rich evidence of related Renaissance self-fashioning; a search, he suggests, beginning with Burckhardt that identifies a ‘change in the intellectual, social, psychological, and aesthetic structures that govern the generation of identities’ in the early modern period and that leads to ‘an increased self-consciousness about the fashioning of human identity as a manipulable, artful process.’²⁸

Orientalists, significantly, have contrasted this perceived shift in English and European identity towards a sense of self-conscious individuality with a more civic Islamic identity which remained wedded to an established Qur’anic universal model during the same period. Moreover, the very qualities Greenblatt highlights are generally accepted by Renaissance historians and Orientalists alike as being central to an emergent and ultimately successful Western challenge to Islamic cultural and political supremacy. Bernard Lewis, typically, contrasts ‘the great efflorescence of European intellectual curiosity and scientific enquiry’ in the Renaissance with the settled might of the Islamic Ottoman empire.²⁹

Heywood’s play *The Four Prentises of London* (1594) highlights the extent to which a medieval religious imperative – the Crusade – continued to provide the basis for an English-Muslim polarisation. The simple dramatisation traces the fortunes of four Londoners who are ‘the best brood of martial spirits’ from England ‘whose walls the Ocean washeth white as snow/For which you strangers call it AlbionHau we assembled men of dauntlesse spirits/To

scourge you hence ye damned Infidels’,³⁰ That such an oppositional portrayal should have been produced by a burgeoning, creative London theatre at a time when increased trade and traffic with the Islamic world allowed for greater verisimilitude is both problematic and intriguing. It is, at the very least, suggestive of tension between religious precedent (the Crusades), political reality (the overwhelming might of the Ottomam Empire), and a rapidly developing trading imperative. Ultimately the most telling, the trading imperative is captured in Robert Greene’s play *Orlando Furioso* (1594) in which the hero boasts of his success against Saracen (that is, Islamic) traders:

*Our sails of sendal spread into the wind;
Our ropes and tacklings all of finest silk,
Fetched from the native looms of labouring
worms,*

*The pride of Barbary, and the glorious
wealth*

*That is transported by the Western
bounds... (lines 1586-90).³¹*

Fanciful fictions of this kind were based upon the profitable enterprises of real venture capitalists and can be evidenced by a wide range of contemporary accounts including Hakluyt’s *Principal Navigations* (1598-1600) and those edited by Parker.³² The latter anthology also bears testimony to contemporary attempts to describe an actual encounter with a religion – Islam – that was still subject to negative stereotyping in contemporary plays and within Western Christian discourse generally. Thus, for example, William Biddulph, a preacher to English merchants in Aleppo at the time Bedwell was translating the Bible in London, is anxious to present his readers with a purposefully distorted account of the superficial facts of Muhammad’s life in Mecca and Medina in the eighth century. Muhammad was, he claims, an instrument of the Devil, a ‘false prophet’ who ‘in his youth ...lived by theft and robbery’ and, later, became powerful by violence and deceit.³³

Powerful, but not yet respected, Biddulph suggests, for ‘many could not abide the

baseness of his birth, nor the odiousness of his former life'. Indeed, their loathing was compounded by a 'disease he had; which was the falling sickness'. Therefore, the Christian preacher continues, he had to 'redeem himself from this contempt', an easy matter 'among the foolish common people', and so he achieved this purpose by pretending to be 'a divinity in his doings, feigning himself to enter communication with God, and so when he talked with him, to be ravished out of himself, and seemed like unto one afflicted with the falling sickness'.³⁴ Biddulph's account of the establishment of the world's most successful religion concludes with the 'false prophet' saying 'plainly (but untruly) how he was no more a captain and prince elected through the favour of soldiers, but a prophet and messenger of Almighty God who, under the show of divinity, he might have all men the more obedient to his words'.³⁵

It may also be the case that the enormous impact Averroes and Avicenna had on medieval scholastic philosophy rebounded to the detriment of Islam once Renaissance humanists came to reject the metaphysical preoccupations of their predecessors. There was certainly a strand of humanist discourse that was emphatically condescending to any cultural development, however intellectually rigorous or demanding, that fell outside the strict remit of the classical canon. Thus, it became possible, following Quintilian, to denigrate Muslims (and anyone outside Western Europe) for their lack of stoicism and moral fibre. Usefully, in his much read *The Orator's Education* Quintilian distinguished between the desirable 'Attic' and the lamentable 'Asianic' orator.³⁶ In the former there was nothing superfluous, the latter were especially lacking in judgement and restraint.³⁷ For contemporary humanist readers in Elizabethan and Jacobean London this chimed with the embedded demonising notion that attributed moral laxness and sexual incontinence to Turks and Moors. For Quintilian 'the stylistic difference' was 'due to the character both of the orators and of their audiences'. Thus, 'the polished

and refined Athenians could not bear to hear emptiness and redundancy, while the Asiatics, who are in other respects a more bombastic and boastful race, were more vainglorious also in their oratory'.³⁸

Transferred to Renaissance Europe (via classical Rome) this humanist ideal enabled poets and writers to construct an imagined world of Western cultural superiority that ran counter to the overwhelming evidence of the Ottoman empire and its Arabic predecessor. In the circumstances, it is easy to concur with Watt that it is 'probable that the creation of the distorted image of Islam was largely a response to the cultural superiority of the Muslims'.³⁹

By referring separately to Turks, Moors, Saracens, Arabs and Persians there was a conscious attempt to deny the universality of Islam.

Similarly, when Tamburlaine asks Casane 'where's the Turkish Alcoran' (Tam 2, V, I, 171) Marlowe is following a contemporary inclination to describe Islam in terms of ethnicity – here Turkish, elsewhere Moorish – rather than give direct name to Muslims or their religious faith. As Lewis notes:

Europeans in various parts of the continent showed a curious reluctance to call the Muslims by any name with a religious connotation, preferring to call them by ethnic names, the obvious purpose of which was to diminish their stature and significance and to reduce them to something local or even tribal'.⁴⁰

It might also be added that by referring separately to Turks, Moors, Saracens, Arabs and Persians there was a conscious attempt to deny the universality of Islam. Of course, when necessary, there was a ready-made answer to that most pressing concern. The international spread of Islam was said to be due to Muhammad's wicked

mixing of true statements from the Bible with perversions such as the false promise of rewards including sexual delights in the afterlife. This medieval propaganda became especially useful once it became apparent that English sailors, soldiers, traders and pirates operating within Muslim lands or waters were extremely susceptible to the more temporal benefits of converting to Islam.

Matar cites numerous instances of English soldiers fighting for the Muslim military establishment. In 1596, for instance, 'an anonymous Englishman, a trumpeterdefected and betrayed the castle of Agria to the Turks'. 'Obviously', Matar continues, 'they joined the Muslims because they found satisfactory and reliable pay'.⁴¹ As he goes on to note, Marlowe, intriguingly, provides evidence of his awareness of this threat when Bajazeth the Turk boasts that he had as many 'warlike bands of Christian reined/As hath the ocean or the Terrene Sea/Small drops of water' (Tam 1, 3.I.9-11).

At this point it may be instructive to contrast English texts with a travel book written by the Turkish Admiral Sidi Ali Reis, entitled *Mirat ul Memalik* (the Mirror of Countries) in 1557.⁴² Like Tamburlaine Ali Reis was a warrior, proving himself in all aspects of combat. However, his repose in his religious faith and his settled ambassadorial role on behalf of the world's greatest power – the Ottoman Empire – sets him apart from the real and imagined heroes of the West:

I, humble Sidi Ali Reis ...had taken part in the expedition against Rhodes under the Sultan Suleiman, and had since had a share in almost all engagements, both by land and by sea...I had written several books on astronomy, nautical science, and other matters bearing upon navigation. The post now entrusted to me was much to my taste, and I started from Aleppo for Basrah, on the first of Moharram of the year 961 (7 Dec. 1553). I crossed the Euphrates at Biredjik and when in Reka (Orfah), I undertook a pilgrimage to the tomb of Abraham...⁴³

While Tamburlaine demonstrates

bravado and an ultimately flawed self-confidence, Ali Reis displays caution and submission to the will of God, typically consulting a horoscope in the Qur'an before deciding on an appropriate course of action. Equally significant, unlike the English travellers' tales collected by Parker, Ali Reis' account evinces a real sense of political and cultural authority:

Great was the joy of the Mohammedans at Surat when they saw us come; they hailed us as their deliverers, and said: "You have come to Gujarat in troublous times; never since the days of Noah has there been a flood like unto this last, but neither is it within the memory of man that a ship from Rum (Turkey) has landed on these coasts. We fervently hoped that God in his mercy would soon send an Ottoman fleet to Gujarat, to save this land for the Ottoman Empire and to deliver us from the Indian unbelievers."⁴⁴

Compared to the English travellers' tales, Ali Reis' account is also remarkably free of prejudice in his description of alien cultures, most notably Hindu. His sense of his belonging to the dominant world power allows for impartial description of and polite condescension towards Hindus, Christians, Jews and other unbelievers.⁴⁵

Fiercest of ideological opponents, Lewis and Said agree on one important issue: fear of Islam throughout medieval and early modern Europe was central to Christian responses to it. Lewis, for his part, notes that 'in confrontation with Islam' fear was a greater motivating force than the 'faith and greed, which sent (Christian) missionaries and traders all over the world'.⁴⁶ Said develops the same point and argues that 'modern Orientalism carries within itself the imprint of the great European fear of Islam'.⁴⁷ In a post September 11th world it is no longer possible to use the word *Islam* in the West without conjuring up strongly negative imagery – including the pejorative use of such terms as *jihad*, Islamic terrorism, holy war, Muslim fundamentalism. Matar usefully describes England's relationship with Islam in the seventeenth century as both 'centripetal and centrifugal',

simultaneously ‘embracing elements in the civilisation of the Arabs and the Ottomans or vilifying that civilisation’ and its religion.⁴⁸ ‘It was at the end of the seventeenth century’, Matar observes, ‘that the victory of the centrifugal force occurred: Britain was to become opposed to, and apart from, Islam.’⁴⁹

Regrettably, that negative force retains much traction today. As the novelist Ronan Bennett pointed out in 2007 it has become permissible to attack Muslims in ways that would be unacceptable under the rubric of anti-racism.⁵⁰ What, Bennett asks, are we to make of the following statement:

*Asians are gaining on us demographically at a huge rate. A quarter of humanity now and by 2025 they'll be a third. Italy's down to 1.1 child per woman. We're just going to be outnumbered. While we're at it, what do you think of this, incidentally from the same speaker: "The Black community will have to suffer until it gets its house in order." Or this, the same speaker again: "I just don't hear from moderate Judaism, do you?" And (yes, same speaker): "Strip-searching Irish people. Discriminatory stuff, until it hurts the whole Irish community and they start getting tough with their children".*⁵¹

The speaker was the novelist Martin Amis and Bennett has modified the quotations, with Asians, Blacks and Irish substituting for Muslims, and Judaism for Islam – “though, it should be stressed”, Bennett adds, “these are the only amendments”.⁵² Bennett is right to claim that “Amis’s views are symptomatic of a much wider and deeper hostility to Islam and intolerance of otherness”.⁵³ To the extent that seeds and antidotes to this intolerance can be located in early modern England it is to be hoped that education secretary Michael Gove will encourage a less Eurocentric learning curriculum so as to counter a fierce anti Muslim narrative that often leads to violence and discrimination. Sadly, Gove’s own book *Celsius 7/7* does more to stigmatise loyal British Muslims who opposed the war in Iraq than to foster a climate of respect and equality for Muslims.⁵⁴

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BOOK PROMOTION



COUNTERING AL QAEDA IN LONDON: POLICE AND MUSLIMS IN PARTNERSHIP

BY ROBERT LAMBERT

Robert Lambert presents an inside account of two pioneering projects in London where Muslim community groups worked in partnership with police to reduce the influence of al Qaeda-inspired terrorism. One project in North London empowered London Muslims to remove Abu Hamza and his violent hard-core supporters from Finsbury Park Mosque while the other project

bolstered long-term efforts by London Muslims in Brixton to challenge and reduce the influence of al Qaeda inspired violent extremists including Abu Qatada and Abdullah el Faisal. Significantly, both projects pre-date government funded Prevent projects and differ from them in being based on partnership, trust and voluntary civic duty as opposed to payment and control. Flagship Prevent projects and their backers reject this analysis and argue that the work of police in these projects was itself counter-productive by empowering Muslim groups they claim are extremist or radical.

Countering Al Qaeda offers a comprehensive defence to these charges and concludes that success was achieved by channelling genuine and reasonable Muslim grievances about UK foreign policy in the Muslim world in ways that are familiar and acceptable to Londoners and anathema to al Qaeda.

Countering Al Qaeda in London: Police and Muslims in Partnership by Robert Lambert, to be published in September 2011 by C Hurst & Co Publishers Ltd.



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The Grand Mufti is a member of many scientific organisations and societies, including the Islamic Center of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Foundation for Islamic Studies and Cemetery, the European Council for Islamic Studies, the Conference of Religions for Peace, the European Council of Religious Leaders, the Aal Albayt Foundation for Islamic Theology, the Commission for Peace Research and Dialogue. Cerić has authored "Roots of Synthesis: Choice Between War and Peace", and "The Prophet Muhammad (published in Arches), among other books. He is also the author of such as "Religion, Nation and Homeland".

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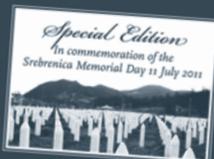
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**Spiritual Revolution:
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Who is the 'Other' today?

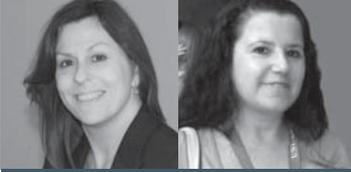
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Sounding the death knell for pluralism: Cameron's "muscular liberalism" and media constructions of the terrorist 'other'



*LAURA KILBY & **DR AVA D. HOROWITZ

ON February 5th 2011, at the Munich Security Conference, British Prime Minister David Cameron delivered a speech in which he struck a damning blow against the future of multiculturalism in the UK.¹ Trailing in the wake of unequivocal claims by Chancellor Merkel that multiculturalism had "utterly failed" in Germany² and swiftly followed by similar declarations from President Sarkozy of France.³ David Cameron demonstrated political alignment with his fellow European leaders as he roundly denounced state multiculturalism as being a failure.

However, whilst Chancellor Merkel's attack on multiculturalism was primarily situated within contentious immigration discourses and President Sarkozy concerned himself with elevating notions of social assimilation as the normative, justifiable expectations of French society, Cameron enmeshed his arguments against multiculturalism in Britain with concerns regarding radicalisation and Islamist extremism against a backdrop of terrorism discourse. Cameron's representation of a multicultural society treats unassailable problems as both self-evident in the face of contemporary terrorism and inextricably connected to the construction of terrorist threat pervading UK society. In his speech, Islamist extremism is seemingly viewed as arising out of Britain's endeavours to embrace multiculturalism. Conceptualised, at least in part, as some form of unanticipated consequence of the multicultural ideal, terrorism is illuminated as reflecting the failure of multiculturalism and, as such, the threat

of contemporary terrorism is argued to necessitate multiculturalism be replaced with a different vision of society.

In Cameron's speech, focusing as it does on issues of Islamist extremism and terrorism, the identity of the contemporary terrorist 'other' features as a normative aspect of the argument he presents. Towards the beginning of the speech, he highlights that "we should acknowledge that this threat comes in Europe overwhelmingly from young men who follow a completely perverse, warped interpretation of Islam, and who are prepared to blow themselves up and kill their fellow citizens".⁴ Hence, just as the challenges to multiculturalism delivered by Chancellor Merkel and President Sarkozy both, in varying ways, focus upon Muslim identity, so too does David Cameron. The following extract from Cameron's speech reflects how Muslim identity and multiculturalism are presented as inextricably bound together in his wider discourse concerned with terrorism.

In the UK, some young men find it hard to identify with the traditional Islam practiced at home by their parents, whose customs can seem staid when transplanted to modern Western countries. But these young men also find it hard to identify with Britain too, because we have allowed the weakening of our collective identity. Under the doctrine of state multiculturalism, we have encouraged different cultures to live separate lives, apart from each other and apart from the mainstream. We've failed to provide a vision of society to which they feel they want to belong. We've even tolerated these segregated communities

behaving in ways that run completely counter to our values.⁵

Whilst on numerous occasions during his speech David Cameron is at pains to distinguish between peaceable Muslim identity and followers of Islamist extremism, as the above extract displays, his construction of disaffected young Muslims, lost in the abyss of a multicultural society, suggests a potential for Muslim identity and extremist identity to unwittingly slide into one another. Moreover, his use of the term 'extremist' is interchangeable with the term 'terrorist'. Cameron talks of Islamist extremism as existing on a continuum whereupon "at the furthest end are those who back terrorism to promote their ultimate goal: an entire Islamist realm, governed by an interpretation of Sharia. Move along the spectrum, and you find people who may reject violence, but who accept various parts of the extremist worldview, including real hostility towards Western democracy and liberal values".⁶ This statement is swiftly followed with an assertion that "someone can be a devout Muslim and not be an extremist".⁷ Yet such distinctions lack clarity on Cameron's part regarding how society might distinguish 'devout beliefs' from 'extremist beliefs' and here is where he projects the problems of multiculturalism.

[Cameron argues] multiculturalism has inadvertently accommodated the growth of the unwanted 'other' in Britain.

As shown in the above extract, multiculturalism is conceptualised as an environment which fosters confused identity formation. It is multiculturalism that denies the assembly of a clear boundary with which to prevent the slip between acceptable 'British Muslim' identity, which might include the 'devout Muslim', and unacceptable 'Muslim extremist'

identity. Cameron's argument proposes that, whilst endeavoring to provide space for 'other identities', multiculturalism has inadvertently accommodated the growth of the unwanted 'other' in Britain.

Having highlighted that Cameron's challenge to the future of multiculturalism is both in line with his European counterparts in Germany and France, and yet at the same time reliant on a distinct discourse in which terrorism and terrorist identity are central, this paper introduces extracts from recent empirical analysis which examine the construction of the 'Muslim, non-citizen terrorist other' in UK media discourse.⁸ In this way, we attempt to demonstrate that, long before Cameron's speech, dominant media discourse repudiated the pluralist vision of society that the British political ideal of multiculturalism has been most closely approximated to.⁹

The data focused upon here will introduce extracts from published 'Letters to the Editor' that appeared in British newspapers over an eight day period from Sunday 1 July 2007 to Sunday 8 July 2007. This period coincides with British media coverage of a related series of UK terrorist events. Firstly, the discovery and disablement of two car bombs planned to explode in the vicinity of two central London nightclubs in the early hours of Friday 29 June 2007, and subsequently, the more prominent attempted incendiary attack on Glasgow airport on Saturday 30 June 2007.¹⁰ These extracts offer some indication of the way in which dominant constructions of terrorist identity, which predominantly feature in British newspapers, have long since been engaged as a backdrop from which to advocate policies of cultural assimilation, thereby challenging the vision of a pluralist British society. By relating these findings to Cameron's speech, we hope to suggest that the current UK government position advanced by Cameron's speech similarly utilises aspects of dominant terrorist identity discourse as a means to renounce the future of a pluralist multicultural society.

In the years following the terrorist

attacks in the US on 11 September 2001, and in Britain on 5 July 2005, the perceived ethnicity and/or religious identity of terrorist actors has become particularly energised in terrorism discourse. These features of identity are now conventionally treated as fundamental to the ensuing formation of terrorist identity. Such concerns are played out in media discourse via a growing acceptance that terrorists are expectably Muslim. Heightened focus on Muslim identity within terrorism discourse has been argued to engage strategies of Orientalism,¹¹ whereby negative Western notions of Muslim identity are readily elevated.¹² Turning specifically to British constructions of terrorist identity, analysis of political and media discourse highlight a clear distinction between the construction of majority Muslims, conceptualised as peaceable members of the community, and Muslim extremists who presented a powerful terrorist threat.¹³ In this manner, Muslim identity becomes distributed heterogeneously amongst ‘us’, the British population, and ‘them’, the terrorist ‘other’. The upshot of this is that Muslim identity remains fundamental to the construction of terrorist identity.¹⁴

Given the essentially covert nature of terrorism, terrorist identity presents something of a predicament in political discourse, particularly when terrorism is central to waging a ‘war on terror’. In a liberal democracy where a ‘just’ war requires a clear enemy, the terrorist ‘other’ is not a perfect fit. Moreover, representations of a clandestine enemy do little to encourage public trust in the role of government as protector of the people. Potentially then, elevating Muslim ‘extremists’ as the terrorist ‘other’ is problematic if Muslim ‘extremists’ cannot be readily differentiated from peaceable ‘majority’ Muslims. This was brought most sharply into focus in Britain when the terrorists responsible for the attacks in London in July 2005 were identified as British Muslims.¹⁵ The visceral outcome of these events provided direct challenge to the notion that British Muslims were a category to be straightforwardly categorised

as peaceable ‘majority’ Muslims. Hence, the possibility that Muslim extremists could be easily differentiated was further denied, and concerns with nationality and citizenship were brought into view as these events played out in the media. We have argued elsewhere that the separable identity constructs ‘Muslim’, ‘non-citizen’ and ‘terrorist’ are brought together in the construction of a terrorist identity pastiche, whereby the repeated overlaying of these disparate facets of identity has a cumulative effect in the construction of terrorist identity.¹⁶ Individuals who embody conventional expectations of ‘non-citizen’ and ‘Muslim’ identity are most heavily burdened by these multiple connections to contemporary constructions of the terrorist ‘other’.

CONSTRUCTING PASTICHE

The following extract provides a typical example of how the three conceptual and material categories ‘Muslim’, ‘non-citizen’ and ‘terrorist’ are readily drawn together in dominant media discourse:

“The new wave of terrorist attacks in the UK is the result of the Government’s open-door policy. We are under attack from people with extreme views, so it’s time to show the world we are not going to sit back and watch Britain become another Beirut”. (The Sun, Letters Page, 4 July 2007)

The extract above illustrates how these three identity categories are seamlessly connected to identify protagonists and provide causal explanations argued to be responsible for contemporary UK terror events. Here, the government is adjudged to hold an important level of accountability for terrorism but is not cited as directly responsible. The crux of this argument does not rely on the audience accepting any suggestion that there is a government policy to admit convicted terrorists into the UK. Rather, it implicitly connects to broader media discourses that challenge UK immigration policy. In this way, the letter subtly indicates that it is the admittance of the non-citizen ‘other’ into the UK that poses a terrorist threat to

the state. This 'non-citizen' is then further defined in the second sentence which states "we are under attack from people with extreme views". Within the context of terrorism discourse within which this letter appeared and aligning with dominant media discourses that negatively project Islam and/or Muslims as espousing intransigent fundamentalist ideology,¹⁷ the people holding these "extreme views" are implicitly understood to be Muslims. The focus on Muslim identity then becomes more acute and further connected to the category 'terrorist' by making reference to Beirut. The propositions of sentences have been argued to achieve logical coherence via relationship to the propositions of the previous sentence.¹⁸ Thus, in this letter, local meanings of the text swiftly connect notions of 'non-citizen' (first sentence) and 'Muslim' (second sentence) together as key markers of terrorist identity.

In a similar vein, Cameron states in his speech that "the biggest threat that we face comes from terrorist attacks, some of which are, sadly, carried out by our own citizens"¹⁹, thereby implying that the contemporary terrorist threat *affecting* British society is a threat of contemporary British society. The implication here is that endeavors to build a fully multicultural society in Britain have contributed significantly to the dangers we now face in the form of 'homegrown' terrorism. This then becomes the basis from which Cameron challenges the possibility that a multicultural society, which allows for such unwanted threats to develop, can really be viewed as embodying the Liberal ideal.

"A passively tolerant society says to its citizens, as long as you obey the law we will just leave you alone. It stands neutral between different values. But I believe a genuinely liberal country does much more; it believes in certain values and actively promotes them [...] It says to its citizens, this is what defines us as a society: to belong here is to believe in these things. Now, each of us in our own countries, I believe, must be unambiguous and hard-nosed about this defence of our liberty".²⁰

This vision of a "genuinely liberal country" provides then a 'Liberal' basis from which to argue that contemporary British society must necessarily be altered. Correspondingly, toward the end of his speech, Cameron outlines some of the alterations that are required to achieve his ideal of a truly 'Liberal' society. He contends that Britain's 'open door' must only open to those immigrants who wish to "speak the language of their new home" and be "educated in the elements of a common culture and curriculum".²¹ The ability to express such views under the banner of 'Liberalism' is indicative of what it becomes possible to argue in favour of when challenges to multiculturalism are presented against a backdrop of contemporary terrorism discourse. It becomes possible to argue in favor of societal assimilation and against cultural plurality as a necessary means of combating the 'homegrown' terrorist threat. Presenting multiculturalism in this context enables

The enactment of 'them' and 'us' binary divisions [is] a dominant feature of contemporary media terrorism discourse.

Cameron to positively engage with the general argument advocated in the readers' letter presented above. Just as the author of the letter demands that "its time to show the world we are not going to sit back and watch Britain become another Beirut", Cameron similarly contends that it is time for Britain to display "a much more active, muscular liberalism".²²

CATEGORIES FOR SOCIETAL SEPARATION

In previous analysis we identified the enactment of 'them' and 'us' binary divisions as a dominant feature of contemporary media terrorism discourse.²³ The following extracts highlight how such divisions further challenge pluralism.

"...It is often suggested that we should

attempt to win the 'hearts and minds' of the Muslim community. In my opinion it is the Muslim community who should be attempting to win our hearts and minds. The continuing appeasement of Muslim sensibilities especially of those who live in Britain and reap its benefits has gone far enough". (The Mail on Sunday, Letters Page, 8 July 2007)

"There is a lot of talk about not blaming the Muslim community for the terror we are being subjected to but they have come to live among us, we are not among them, and they have a responsibility to act as good friends. [...] It is silly to pretend that we Britons who have been here for centuries, should change to meet the needs of the Muslim community. And it is silly to pretend that community has no responsibility for the terror or that it does not need to fit into the British way of life". (The Daily Mail, Letters Page, 4 July 2007)

What is particularly notable in these extracts is the discovery that when the 'Muslim', 'non-citizen' 'terrorist' pastiche is elevated to represent members of the category 'them', members whose identity remains unaffected by this pastiche readily construct 'we' as a category which exists in opposition, not just to the terrorist 'other', but also implicitly and explicitly to the Muslim 'other' and the non-Citizen 'other'. In this way, contemporary media discourses of terrorism present central challenges to the ideals of a pluralist multicultural society and place multiculturalism at the heart of terrorism talk. Both these extracts appeared on letters pages directly in response to terrorist events in the days prior to their publication. However, they do not address specific issues of Muslim extremism or terrorism; instead they reflect broad grievances with the rights of the Muslim community to fully embrace Muslim culture within British society. Calls for restraint and tolerance towards the Muslim community in Britain regularly feature in media discourses of terrorism. Such argument contends that individuals involved in terrorism are Muslim 'extremists', the exception amongst law-abiding Muslim communities in Britain.²⁴

However, as these extracts demonstrate, this countering argument does little to challenge the underlying notion that terrorists are Muslims. Response to political and community calls for support and tolerance to be shown toward the Muslim community are, at best, diluted and, at worst, rejected by an underlying tacit approval that terrorism is rooted in Muslim, non-citizen communities.

Again, turning to Cameron's speech, we witness an uptake of the 'us' and 'them' discourse which pits Muslim culture against non-Muslim culture, and talks of a failure amongst British society to challenge a particularised version of unacceptable Muslim cultural practices.

"So, when a white person holds objectionable views, racist views for instance, we rightly condemn them. But when equally unacceptable views or practices come from someone who isn't white, we've been too cautious frankly – frankly, even fearful – to stand up to them. The failure, for instance, of some to confront the horrors of forced marriage, the practice where some young girls are bullied and sometimes taken abroad to marry someone when they don't want to, is a case in point. This hands-off tolerance has only served to reinforce the sense that not enough is shared".²⁵

Here, Cameron begins by appealing to stereotypical notions of phenotypical difference to distinguish between members who live by traditional British culture and members who embrace alternative cultures. Cameron contends that members of the category 'us', which he reserves for white Brits, are forthright and morally confident in challenging their fellow white Brits when displays of racial prejudice towards non-white Brits are witnessed. This argument indicates that the cultural traditions within white British culture allow for self-regulation to prevent the emergence of racial intolerance toward any 'other' in society. However, this is contrasted by his claim that those same white Brits are not able to regulate other forms of unacceptable behaviours or practices when it is seen to occur amongst other social

groups who embrace alternative 'non-white' cultural norms. Given the "forced marriage" example selected by Cameron to present notions of unacceptable cultural practices, this 'non-white' social group are implicitly understood to be Muslim, even though this is not explicitly stated at this stage. Furthermore, this argument conveys another, more implicit, moral message, whereby having established an 'us' who rightly condemn within-group deviance, an expectation is fore-grounded in which the 'other' should be similarly policing the unacceptable actions of their own members.

Hence, multicultural society is here suggested to present Britain with an unacceptable social structure whereby differential regulation occurs *within* and *between* cultures. This perspective rejects the endeavour to embrace pluralist ideals in which differing cultures are able to live harmoniously together in a shared national space. In its place, it advocates cultural assimilation requiring that minority cultural groups fall in step with the norms, expectations and regulations of the majority white British culture.

Just as with the media extracts introduced earlier, David Cameron presents this challenge to multiculturalism against the fear-evoking backdrop of terrorism discourse. In his speech, he swiftly connects talk of the unassailable cultural barriers that prevent the growth of shared accepted social norms between Muslims and non-Muslims in Britain with talk of terrorism, arguing that there is a clear and dangerous link between the two.

"As evidence emerges about the backgrounds of those convicted of terrorist offences, it is clear that many of them were initially influenced by what some have called 'non-violent extremists', and they then took those radical beliefs to the next level by embracing violence. And I say this is an indictment of our approach to these issues in the past. And if we are to defeat this threat, I believe it is time to turn the page on the failed policies of the past. So first, instead of ignoring this extremist ideology, we – as governments and as societies – have got to confront it, in all

*its forms. And second, instead of encouraging people to live apart, we need a clear sense of shared national identity that is open to everyone."*²⁶

According to Cameron then, and aligned with the dominant terrorism discourses presented in British media constructions, in order to overcome the prevailing terrorist threat facing the country it is necessary to assimilate society into a homogenous group wherein acceptable social norms can be applied uniformly and unacceptable practices of Islamic extremism can be regulated by both government and wider society alike with impunity. The vision of a pluralist multicultural society which embraces cultural difference, celebrates and encourages diversity and recognises the many opportunities for building a strong national identity through cultural liberty is obscured by the spectre of the 'other' who is portrayed via elevations of the 'Muslim, non-citizen, terrorist' identity pastiche.

CONCLUSION

Following the multiple and varied speeches against multiculturalism delivered by leading European politicians in recent months, this paper has attempted to demonstrate the ways in which contemporary terrorist discourse, already dominant in mainstream media, is engaged by David Cameron to denounce multiculturalism in Britain. The normative construction of terrorist identity pastiche in media discourse, which is a portrayal of the 'Muslim, non-citizen, terrorist Other', is witnessed to be central to Cameron's argument. In his speech, the 'reality' of the terrorist pastiche is presented as hard evidence of the failure of multiculturalism to provide a society that is truly suited to the ideals of "muscular Liberalism". It is our contention that such an argument is heavily reliant on the use of 'us' and 'them' distinctions wherein 'us' represents 'white Brits' and 'them' is a category reserved for the Muslim 'Other' -- and this is despite the explicit work, elsewhere in the speech, which stresses the

categorical distinction between “Islamist extremism” and “traditional” “majority” Muslims who “despise the extremists” and “share our aspirations”. What we are noting here is that, fundamental to the ‘multiculturalism has failed’ diagnosis, is a subtle construction of a Muslim ‘other’, distinct from the ‘us’ on whose behalf Cameron positions himself as speaking.

Living in Britain is hospitality rather than a right afforded to Muslims, thereby relegating Muslim’s to the status of guests in Britain.

Previous research into discussions about Islam and/or Muslims within ‘letters to the editor’ identified a range of Orientalist ideological notions, including the issue of Muslim terrorist violence and highlighted that such notions make it possible, indeed reasonable, to assert calls for a one-way process of adaptation and assimilation.²⁷ We would argue that David Cameron’s speech reflects these same calls. The media extracts presented here make claims about ‘our’ rights and ‘their’ responsibilities, suggesting that some element of the traditional white British way of life is foregone to make space for a Muslim way of life. The acceptability of this arrangement is then challenged via a determination of rights and responsibilities. Any social or moral responsibility to embrace, respect or make space for Muslim cultural norms is denied, thus indicating that it is not a requirement of ‘British’ society to accommodate Muslim cultural differences. An implicit claim here suggests that living in Britain is hospitality rather than a right afforded to Muslims, thereby relegating Muslim’s to the status of guests in Britain – and not ‘real Brits’. In addition, a further claim is made which suggests that, in accepting this

hospitality, Muslims are obligated to live in accordance with the expectations of their ‘British’ host. As David Cameron laments “we’ve even tolerated these segregated communities behaving in ways that run completely counter to our values”²⁸, there is no doubt that “our values” is a reference to the values of white British society -- albeit there is much debate as to what precisely these values actually are. When “our values” are elevated as the only acceptable and morally ‘right’ set of values for British society against a backdrop of terrorism discourse by concentrating attention toward the dangerous terrorist ‘other’, the argument is presented not as a strike against Liberal society, but as the necessary means to protect Liberal society and allow it to flourish.

We have argued elsewhere that the terrorist pastiche seamlessly constructs ‘them - the savage foreigner’ and contrasts it with ‘us - the civilised citizen’. As a result identity-focused, dichotomous meta-categories of ‘them’ and ‘us’ are formed. The terrorist identity pastiche has become invaluable in contemporary ‘war on terror’ discourse where it supports the pre-emptive basis of a ‘war on terror’.²⁹ Moreover, as we see in Cameron’s speech, this pastiche appears most useful when carefully targeted. Thus, in one part of an argument, it accomplishes effective persuasive work in which contrasting but internally homogenous groups of ‘us’ and ‘them’ are cast into opposition with one another. Meanwhile, in other sections of the same speech, the more fine-grained distinctions within the category ‘them’ provide opportunities for managing the speaker’s moral identity (e.g. demonstrating the proper awareness of distinctions amongst types of Muslim) and the assignment of responsibility and blame (e.g. requiring “those ... who despise the extremists” to curb the “extremists” and identifying “staid” “traditional” Muslims as leaving “young Muslims feeling rootless”). In other words, it is clear from the speech that, in the delicate shaping of an audience’s interpretations and conclusions, one can make excellent

use of acknowledging the differences between peaceable 'majority' Muslims and followers of extremist ideology, whilst elsewhere, deftly obscuring those very differences.³⁰ This leads us to a conclusion which challenges the 'inevitable failure of multiculturalism' discourse that Cameron's speech constructs. His speech, which so deftly merges multiculturalism and terrorism as a singular discourse, employs a strategy designed to empower a particular reading of contemporary social structure and contemporary social issues. It presents UK society as one in which multiculturalism is inevitably doomed to fail. Indeed, multiculturalism is required to fail in order for a 'safe' and 'Liberal' society to thrive. However, this is but one reading of society and of multiculturalism and it is not one that we subscribe to, or one that is necessarily widely representative of British society.

Cameron engages the spectre of the terrorist 'other' as a means to denounce multiculturalism.

This paper has demonstrated how, notwithstanding the many explicit comments made which indicate support for the peaceable 'majority' Muslim community in Britain, Cameron engages the spectre of the terrorist 'other' as a means to denounce multiculturalism. We have highlighted how the threat of radical extremism is presented by him as the basis for rejecting multiculturalism and we have challenged the grounds for such a position, disputing that there is any straightforward or causal relationship between radical extremism and multiculturalism.

In response to Cameron's speech, the cultural theorist Stuart Hall stated in an interview that "globalisation has greatly overlaid the decline of the nation state and of national culture".³¹ Cameron's alignment with other European leaders

over the future of multiculturalism seemingly reflects just that. To denounce multiculturalism in Britain and stand shoulder to shoulder with Germany and France is to further erode the national identity and position of Britain alongside the growing vision of overarching European culture. In his speech, Cameron states that "we've failed to provide a vision of society" to which young Muslims "feel they want to belong" and he highlights that "the weakening of our collective [national] identity" is at the heart of this failure. Whilst broadly being in agreement with Cameron, we contend that the solution is not to denounce multiculturalism -- to do so will inevitably weaken still further the collective hope for building a strong, vibrant national identity accommodating all its citizens. To denounce multiculturalism is to make redundant an opportunity to positively differentiate Britain as a nation state with a clear sense of own identity within Europe. Moreover, a move towards policies and practices of mandated assimilation, designed to reduce space and respect for cultural diversity, is not likely to encourage young Muslims to 'feel' a sense of belonging in Britain. Policies of assimilation do not reduce cultural difference, they merely obscure those differences from the view of the majority whilst oppressing the minority.

With regard to national identity, Hall suggests that the perpetual question is "how do you find somewhere to stand?".³² We would suggest that, at the very moment that multiculturalism is being condemned as a failure by other European nations, it is precisely the time to invest in the future of multiculturalism in Britain. Rather than viewing multiculturalism as an ideal which has weakened national identity, multiculturalism can be recognised as providing the basis for an emergent, independent national identity. Contrary to the notion that it feeds radical extremism, multiculturalism presents the means for building a nation which becomes strong through many differences that are not merely tolerated, but actively embraced.

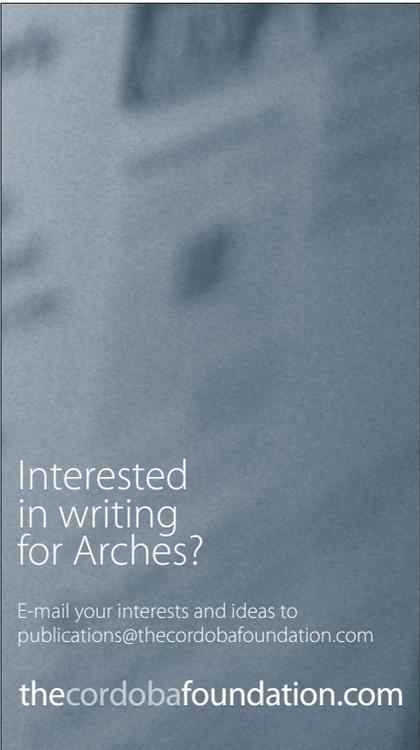
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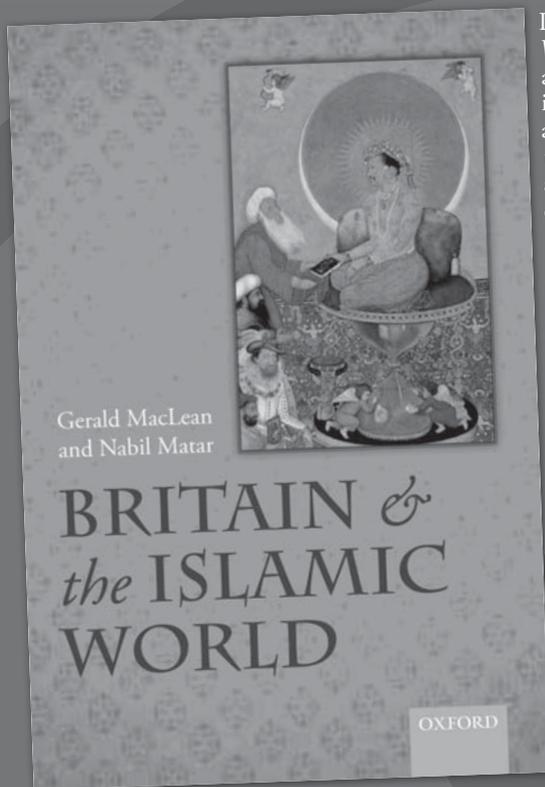
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BRITAIN AND THE ISLAMIC WORLD 1558-1713

BY GERALD MACLEAN & NABIL MATAR



In *Britain and the Islamic World* authors Gerald Maclean and Nabil Matar explore the interactions between Britain and the Islamic world from 1558 to 1713, showing how much scholars, diplomats, traders, captives, travellers, clerics, and chroniclers were involved in developing and describing those interactions.

The book is centred on the enterprise of five generations of British seamen and merchant-venturers exploring the Islamic East. It is a well-known story of British achievement but, instead of staying within the stately mansion of this progression towards glory and empire, the two authors offer fresh insights and depth of scrutiny.

Britain and the Islamic World 1558-1713 by Gerald Maclean & Nabil Matar.
Published in 2011 by Oxford University Press.



Turkey's EU Journey: An Extraordinary Tale

*AMANDA PAUL

TURKEY is one of the few secular and democratic Muslim countries in the world. As a longstanding member of NATO, an adherent of the European Convention on Human Rights and the Council of Europe, and a country negotiating EU membership, it is a nation firmly anchored in the West. While Suleiman built a magnificent mosque that continues to dominate Istanbul's skyline, the surrounding streets are not Byzantium relics but rather they are no different to many others in Europe's Mediterranean regions.

No longer considered the "sick man of Europe", Turkey has become the resilient and robust man of Europe.

Turkey is geo-strategically important; it has a booming economy which has fared the global economic crisis far better than many EU member states; and it has an increasingly dynamic foreign policy and global outreach. No longer considered the "sick man of Europe", Turkey has become the resilient and robust man of Europe. However, for all of this progress, the country continues to be spurned by the EU. While the two partners are increasingly close both politically and economically, the current lack of strategy and vision displayed by EU leaders, compounded by the hurdle of the decades old Cyprus problem has almost totally deadlocked Turkey's EU membership talks. A senior Turkish official recently told me "first they tied our arms, now they want to tie our legs." This sums up the gloomy picture of Turkey's

prospects of joining the EU -- a journey Ankara began over 50 years ago. The case of Turkey can be described as a story of mis-perceptions, misunderstandings, prejudices, disappointing and irrational expectations; but, from the beginning, the relationship was built on asymmetrical interests. Whether this picture can be changed may hinge on developments over the next few months.

THE ROCKY ROAD TO THE EU

Turkey's relationship with the EU began in 1959, considerably earlier than many other countries which are now members, when Turkey was accepted (as was Greece) as an Associate Member with the prospect of becoming a full member of the ECC at a future but undefined date. The Ankara Agreement was signed in 1963. On April 14 1987 Turkey applied for full membership of the EU and was bitterly disappointed when it was not immediately welcomed into the fold. 1996 brought the signing of a Customs Union but a year later at the Luxembourg Summit relations hit rock bottom when the EU refused to make Turkey a candidate country along side the former communist states of central and eastern Europe, Malta and Cyprus. Consequently, Turkey decided to cut-off political dialogue with the EU with the then Prime Minister, Mesut Yilmaz, labeling the EU as unjust and erroneous. However, two years later at the October Helsinki summit a breakthrough took place when the European Commission recommended that Turkey be granted candidate country status. The final communiqué read "Turkey is a candidate state destined to join the EU on the basis of the same criteria as applied to all other candidates". With a determination never witnessed before, Turkey's political

elites united to drive forward a reform process which was very much owned by the whole country. This determination resulted in Turkey meeting the so-called Copenhagen Criteria which paved the way for membership talks to be opened in October 2005 but not without a struggle.

Austria flatly refused to give the green light for Turkey to begin accession talks unless Croatia's membership negotiations were launched at the same time. After a lot of horse-trading and brinkmanship an agreement was finally reached. However, this sour beginning set a negative trend which has continued ever since.

It has now been a year since a negotiating chapter was opened and since negotiations began only 13¹ of the 35 chapters have been opened, with just one provisionally closed (science and research). Eighteen chapters are frozen because of vetoes by Cyprus, France, Germany or the European Council as a whole, with only three chapters remaining – competition policy, social policy and employment, and public procurement. All of these are difficult chapters with tough opening benchmarks. The competition chapter, for example, is usually left until the very end of the negotiating process because it is both challenging and very costly for candidates.

For political reasons the French have blocked a handful of chapters and Germany one including external relations and foreign, security and defence policy, economic and monetary union, agriculture and rural development and judiciary and fundamental rights. The rest are blocked by Cyprus because of Turkey's failure to fully meet its Customs Union obligations and open its harbors and airspace to Republic of Cyprus vessels. Turkey has always linked this to the EU delivering on the commitments it made to Turkish Cypriots following the 2004 UN Annan Plan Referendum for the reunification of Cyprus, when Turkish Cypriots voted "yes" while Greek Cypriots voted "no" only to become EU members a week later while the Turkish Cypriots were left out in the cold. As a goodwill gesture the EU offered the Turkish Cypriots an economic

package which included a Direct Trade Regulation. However, the Regulation has never materialised due to Greek Cypriot opposition. The Greek Cypriots see it as a step towards recognition of "the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus" (currently only recognised by Turkey) and have therefore fought tooth and nail to keep it buried. While the Greek Cypriots' unrelenting opposition has not won them many friends in the EU, they have managed to achieve their objective and it is highly unlikely that this Regulation will ever see the light of day.

The consequence of the EU's somewhat unprincipled approach, and the Cyprus obstacle has been a slowing of the reform process, becoming increasingly patchy with Ankara somewhat "cherry picking" which reforms to carry out. To a certain degree Turks have become increasingly unenthusiastic about supporting (often expensive) reforms that may negatively affect their business interests and economy if there is no guarantee of membership at the end. Furthermore, Ankara feels further insulted by the EU's continued refusal to offer Turkey a visa free regime. While the countries of the Western Balkans – which have not yet even started membership talks with the EU -- already, have free visa regimes with the EU and other nations such as Ukraine and Moldova (and shortly Russia) are negotiating them, Turkey remains sidelined. Moreover, even steps towards "visa facilitation" which would facilitate travel for certain categories of people (businessmen, students, etc) to receive a visa have been a struggle to progress. Turks find this extremely humiliating and see it an example of an increasingly xenophobic and Islamophobic trend in Europe. Furthermore, whenever Turkey has the opportunity to "hit-back" at one of its opponents it usually does. The most recent example was Ankara decision to veto the candidacy of a former Austrian foreign minister to be the secretary-general of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) citing concerns about his stance on Turkey.²

In the run up to the 12 June

parliamentary elections, the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) pushed an increasingly domestic and nationalist agenda. The EU was almost always mentioned in derogatory terms with numerous statements from Prime Minister Erdogan and other key Minister's, labeling it as a spent force lacking vision and leadership.

While Turkey still enjoys support from a significant number of member states including the UK, Italy, Spain and Poland at the same time a number of current leaders continue to strongly oppose the very idea of Turkish membership. The most vocal have been French President Nicolas Sarkozy and German Chancellor Angela Merkel although Denmark, the Netherlands and Austria are also strongly against it. While Merkel has had to rein in her opposition somewhat due to being in coalition government with partners that support Turkish accession, Sarkozy has shown no such restraint and has been extremely outspoken on his unease. Since winning power in 2007, Sarkozy has hardened France's position on Turkey's accession into an outright "no" urging European leaders to stop "lying" about Turkey's chances of achieving full membership, declaring that he would not "tell French schoolchildren that the borders of Europe extend to Syria and Iraq".

Sarkozy's opposition to Turkey has served to increase his image of a populist, visionless, Islamophobic leader.

However, Sarkozy's staunch opposition to Turkey has actually not won him anything. Since taking over the Presidency he has become far more unpopular today in France than he was before. Consequently it has cost France in economic terms, with Turkey these days refusing to consider France, under Sarkozy, for many contracts. Moreover Sarkozy's opposition to Turkey

has served to increase his image of a populist, visionless, Islamophobic leader. Of course this is not simply as a result of his opposition to Turkish membership but also a direct consequence of his behavior towards the Muslim community in France which he has almost gone out of his way to alienate. Therefore Ankara feels it has some justification for its animosity given that some member states are clearly trying to tip Turkey over the edge. These countries would like Turkey to draw a line under its own membership process. They may believe that if they anger Turkey enough, Ankara will snap. However, this seems like an unlikely prospect.

Whilst Turkey's leaders may moan about the EU, they are also in need of it for their own interests such as a) continuing the reform process in the country; b) maintaining stable and continuous foreign direct investment, and c) vis-à-vis its own legitimacy with stories of a hidden "Islamist" agenda continuing.

THE CYPRUS DEBACLE

The EU has made two decisions on Cyprus which helped create the present impasse: first by accepting Cyprus as a candidate and not making membership conditional on a solution to the decade's old Cyprus problem. Cyprus has been divided since 1974 when Turkey launched a military operation in response to a Greece-backed coup d'état, which resulted in the division of Cyprus -- Greek Cypriot south and Turkish Cypriot north. Prior to the intervention, most Greek Cypriots (some 80-85 percent) lived in the north but were forced to flee to the south as Turkish Cypriots who had lived in the south fled to the north. In total, the Turkish military took control of 37 percent of Cyprus. Almost four decades later the search continues for a solution to reunify the island.

While many people now say the EU made a mistake accepting a divided Cyprus as a candidate, one has to recall that back then the Greek Cypriots were far more solution-orientated than the Turkish Cypriots or Turkey. Turkey had a

hard-core foreign policy with a leadership that had little interest in resolving the problem, happily supporting the hard-line policies of the then Turkish Cypriot leader, Rauf Denktaş. Former Turkish Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit used to say that no solution is a solution. From 1974 until the arrival of the AKP in 2002, little effort was made by Turkey with Ankara maintaining a very intransigent position. Therefore, the EU did not see why Cyprus should be turned down. Additionally, as is well known, Greece threatened to veto all other candidates at that time if the EU did not proceed. Whether Greece would really have done this we will never know. No one could have predicted the change in Turkey or that when a solution was within touching distance, the Greek Cypriots would elect a president who had no interest in a fair deal.

Cyprus' membership made it more difficult to find a solution, which in turn impacted Turkey's membership talks. This has been compounded by the EU's failure to deliver the direct trade regulation. In hindsight, this was probably also a mistake. The EU promised something it could not deliver because new the member, the Republic of Cyprus, was clearly never going to support an initiative that it believed was a step toward recognition of the "TRNC". This failure to deliver also contributed substantially to Mehmet Ali Talat -- the man who led the Turkish Cypriots to the Annan plan "yes" vote -- losing the election in 2010. This came as a severe blow to the new round of peace talks. Without a solution to the Cyprus problem Turkey will never be able to join the EU.

PUBLIC OPINION

If EU enlargement depended on public opinion, the last two enlargements would never have taken place. While the digesting process continues, there can be no doubt that enlargement has been positive for both the candidates and the EU itself both economically and politically bring increased security, stability and prosperity to the European continent.

Clearly Turkey is a big fish to swallow but yet Turkish membership would be a win-win for both the EU and Ankara. Turkey shares many of the same values as the EU. It has the potential to become the economic dynamo in the EU engine as well as create increased security and stability on the EU's borders. Without taking on board economic heavyweights such as Turkey (and eventually Ukraine too) the EU will remain ill-equipped to deal with and compete with rising powers such as China and India. This is not, however, the picture painted by many of Europe's politicians which is why Turkey is still perceived by many as being too poor, big and culturally incompatible to be part of the EU. Turkey's Muslim identity plays a big part in the increasing skepticism displayed by many EU citizens when discussing the question of Turkey's EU membership.

Europe, the champion of tolerance and defending human rights for a long time has today become increasingly discriminatory, opposing coexistence and perceiving Islam as a threat. Indeed it has almost become socially acceptable to be Islamophobic. Twenty million Muslims living among the 500 million people in the EU have been labeled as "a disturbing factor". Unfortunately, it is clear that many in Europe feel unhappy about living with Muslims -- conflating Islam with terrorism is a case in point. Europeans, knowingly or unwittingly put the deeds of the Taliban in Afghanistan, and events in Iran in the same basket and call it typical of Muslims, such as women being forced to wear the *burqa*. Indeed for the most part the EU is ignorant about Islam and there seems to be little eagerness to learn about it rather preferring to remain content with what is printed in the tabloid media. Many believe that Muslims are flooding in, taking jobs, and would like to turn Europe into a land ruled by Islamic law -- Eurabia and Islamisation of Europe are common headlines in the media. This is despite Muslims only representing three percent of the population.

The rise in Islamophobia will be a trend difficult to reverse, especially when

populist politicians peddle it to win votes. Moreover, visionless leaders, unable to offer viable solutions to the present economic downturn have been quite content to “distract” away from this issue by sidetracking the nation with talk of the ‘threat’ posed by Islam and most recently Islamic dress, particularly the *burqa* recently outlawed in France.

Many Turks increasingly see the EU as a dishonest and non-credible partner preaching double standards. They believe that Turkey’s detractors simply do not want a large, Muslim country in their midst which has resulted in little pressure being placed on the AKP to speed up the reform process. As for Turkey’s opposition parties, for the past five years, their contribution to the EU process has been little more than lip-service. Nevertheless, at the same time, the majority of Turks still believe that pursuing closer ties with the EU should remain a foreign policy priority of the government. This fact was reflected in a recent study carried out by the Istanbul based think-tank TESEV.³

Furthermore in the current “Arab Spring” era the EU has helped Turkey become the inspirational model for countries in the Middle East where the Arab Spring is prominent, Tunisia, Egypt, Syria, Yemen, Bahrain and Libya. This has not always been the case and it is only in the last decade that Turkey has been able to take on this role thanks to its own democratisation and modernisation processes which have impressed populations of neighboring Middle Eastern and North African states. The Turkey of the 1990’s, both politically and economically, was not a model for anybody to emulate. The new approach of the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) has contributed to this new reality (at the same time the role of the EU via Turkey’s membership process), resulting in key political and economical reforms as well as being more prosperous. In reality, the AKP wants to be a political stabiliser and its desire as the leading economic power in the Muslim world. It is highly unlikely it will be able to continue to do this without the EU process.

PROSPECTS FOR THE FUTURE

While debate over Turkey joining the EU rages, the negotiations have entered a period of siesta; and the current deadlock may last for some time. There are only two “exits”: progress on Cyprus and a change in leadership in France and/or Germany. The second may be more likely than the first, but only the first can totally open the way to EU entry.

Fortunately there is a glimmer of hope on both of these issues. *Firstly*, in the post-election period, Prime Minister Erdogan may find himself in a very strong position which will present him with the opportunity to make significant decisions, for example it is not inconceivable that he may take significant steps vis-à-vis Cyprus including possibly implementing the Additional Protocol, thereby opening Turkey’s airspace and harbours to the Republic of Cyprus. This would be a significant step forward in light of Turkey’s stalled EU membership talks given it would allow for at least 8 negotiating chapters that are presently frozen to be opened bringing much needed dynamic backing to the process. It would also put an end to those that are currently using the Cyprus impasse as a skirt to hide behind.

Furthermore, while this move would not resolve the “Cyprus issue” *per se* it would clearly demonstrate Turkey’s commitment to its EU aspirations and hopefully pave the way for greater international pressure on the two Cypriot leaders to be more flexible in their ongoing negotiations.

Secondly, it seems unlikely that French President Nicholas Sarkozy, will be re-elected in 2012. While it is worrying that the far right candidate Marie Penn is gaining ground and is expected to even make it to the second round, it is highly unlikely that she will win. Therefore Sarkozy’s departure could open the door to a more pragmatic French leader who will demonstrate vision rather than pedal populism. Indeed Turkey’s relations with the EU have always proved more progressive when a Socialist leader has been at the helm in France.

However, in the short term if no

progress is made, Turkey's relations with the EU will remain in limbo. Already in this "in between" period the EU and Turkey continue to conduct their business and they have plenty of shared goals and common areas of interest to work on including on foreign, energy, trade, and security issues. Continuing to engage Turkey and keep Ankara "in the loop" should have a positive effect on relations and perhaps help erode opposition. The EU should continue to broaden its relations with Turkey – allowing, for example, the country to have a greater role in foreign policy planning which will prove useful for both partners particularly where their common neighborhood policies overlap (for example in the Mediterranean). Leaders and circumstances change and with Turkey's possible membership at least

Therefore the current stalemate does not represent the end of the road for Turkey's EU goal. Turkey and the EU simply share too many strategic interests. Unfortunately, today's leaders lack courage and vision. I do not know how long we will have to wait but I would like to believe that in the end a new era of leadership will emerge to put the project of European unification back on track.

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The current stalemate does not represent the end of the road for Turkey's EU goal. Turkey and the EU simply share too many strategic interests.

ENDNOTES

1. Free movement of Capital, company law, intellectual property law, information society and media, food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary policy, taxation, statistics, enterprise and industrial policy, trans-European networks, science and research, environment, consumer and health protection, financial control,
2. <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/n.php?n=turkey-vetoes-former-austrian-foreign-ministers-candidacy-for-osce-2011-06-05>
3. http://www.tesev.org.tr/UD_OBJS/PDF/DPT/AB/Foreign_Policy_Perception_2010.pdf

fifteen years away nobody can predict the future today.





Challenges Facing Muslims in Europe

*ÖMÜR ORHUN

A POPULAR concept nowadays is “change”. Indeed, we are living in a world that is fundamentally different from that of the last century. The international context (political, economic and social), along with our concepts, attitudes and expectations are constantly changing.

How the future unfolds will, to a great extent, depend on the choices we make and the path we tread. A reappraisal of how best to pursue a common vision for the whole of mankind and for its collective interests is now in need more than ever.

The last decade of the twentieth century was characterised by a sense of optimism, fuelled by the spread of democracy and free market economy, together with a strengthened emphasis on human rights and freedoms. However despite this optimism, we forgot that our world is also complex and vulnerable to unforeseen developments. The events of the last decade including the terrorist attacks of 9/11 (and others in Europe), the financial crisis and the recent ‘Arab Spring’ bear testimony to this complexity.

We have also witnessed how extreme and violent groups, racist and discriminatory ideologies have succeeded in challenging the values of the civilised world. In addition to evaluating the dramatic impact of these events on international relations and transatlantic links, it is also necessary to thoroughly and seriously examine their negative consequences in terms of the link with an emergence of a climate of fear, suspicion and unrest that has led to manifestations of intolerance, discrimination and stigmatisation.

To rid ourselves of this negative climate, governmental agencies, politicians, cultural and religious communities, public and private organisations, opinion

makers, civil society representatives and the media bear a special responsibility for the preservation, continuation and enhancement of constructive, peaceful and forward looking relationships among and between ethnicities, cultures, religions and societies.

HUMAN RIGHTS, MUTUAL RESPECT AND DIALOGUE

We all agree that common values of mankind must be based on a firm commitment to preservation and advancement of human rights, as well as on the recognition of the inherent dignity of all human beings. In this respect, human rights, dignity of individuals and fundamental freedoms should be recognised as essential safeguards for tolerance and non-discrimination, which are indispensable elements of stability, security and cooperation. However, despite all efforts for the protection and promotion of human rights, intolerance, racism, xenophobia and discrimination still manifest in the attitudes and actions of people and government policies in many a society. Additionally, in spite of the tangible progress achieved in eliminating institutionalised forms of racism and discrimination, many countries still experience new and mounting waves of bias, exclusion and racist violence. These constitute a major threat to constructive, friendly and peaceful relations not only amongst states, but amongst communities and peoples as well.

In light of the troubling events of the last decade, the need for true dialogue and interaction between different peoples, religions and cultures has to remain high on the international community’s agenda. The current lack of meaningful dialogue in a spirit of true confidence is encouraging

A true dialogue can only occur when there is genuine respect for and understanding of other ethnicities, cultures and religions.

extremists take control of the narrative thereby dividing the international community along artificial cultural and religious fault-lines. This has increasingly become a concern for the maintenance of international peace and stability.

A true dialogue can only occur when there is genuine respect for and understanding of other ethnicities, cultures and religions. It would be a mistake to assume that any one culture is intrinsically more apt to respond to basic human needs. In fact all cultures are cumulative, interactive and progressive in nature. As such, values including respect for human rights, democracy, rule of law and accountability are and should be essentially considered universal. Thus no single culture should claim that these values are theirs alone. Instead, these values are the product of mankind's collective wisdom, conscience and progress. However, such values are not universally applied or understood. The task, therefore, is to identify the roots of these values within our respective cultures and promote their collective ownership. What also needs to be accomplished is to facilitate harmony, understanding, mutual respect and dialogue, by emphasizing the common values of different cultures and religions.

In an increasingly globalised world today, with its high level of interdependence requires societies to understand one another in greater depth than ever before. Consequently, employing cross-cultural skills that facilitate mutual understanding among societies has become a condition for peaceful relations. Likewise, societies with multi-cultural experiences are particularly well placed to contribute to this objective. Their distinct social and historical experiences are conducive to

cultivating and articulating cross-cultural skills that would be needed to avoid misunderstandings and conflicts of values. They can assist in avoiding generating stereotypes, in opposing animosity and in preventing violence and extremism. They can also help to achieve a balance between preserving the cultural identity of all segments of multi-cultural societies.

INTER-CULTURAL DIALOGUE

Inter-cultural dialogue has often been defined as an open and respectful exchange of views between individuals and groups belonging to different cultures that would lead to a deeper understanding of the other's world perceptions. Whether the objective should be confined only to achieving a "deeper understanding", or whether the aim should be broader, to include conflict-prevention and de-escalation, combating prejudices and stereotypes in public and political discourse and facilitating coalition-building across diverse cultural and religious communities can of course be further debated.

During the last decade in particular, many international organisations and representatives of civil society have underlined the importance of promoting and facilitating inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogue and partnerships aimed at promoting tolerance, mutual respect and understanding, and freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief, at both national and international levels. The member countries of international organisations, in implementing their commitments to promote tolerance and non-discrimination, agreed to strengthen their activities on legislation, law enforcement, education, media, data collection, migration and integration, religious freedom, inter-cultural and inter-faith dialogue. They also underlined the importance of human rights, fundamental freedoms and democratic institutions in creating a context for inter-cultural, inter-religious and inter-ethnic understanding, focusing on the role of civil society in promoting inter-cultural, inter-religious and inter-ethnic understanding with a

view to ensuring inclusiveness, respect for diversity and freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief. However, when we look around, especially in Europe, we realise that most of these commitments are theoretical with very little application in practice.

We live in hope of there still being an opportunity to a) identify ways to use intercultural, inter-religious and inter-ethnic dialogue and civil society partnerships as a means to promote conflict prevention and de-escalation; b) explore intercultural, inter-religious and inter-ethnic partnership and dialogue as a means to combat prejudice and stereotypes in public and political discourse; c) facilitate coalition building across diverse cultural and religious communities; and identify the roles of different players in promoting inter-cultural, inter-religious and inter-ethnic understanding.

In all our endeavors we need to stress that dialogue is a crucial tool of any effort aimed at conflict prevention and post conflict reconciliation. It is the means through which immediate tensions which could lead to conflict can be diffused, differences and disagreements discussed, misunderstandings and misconceptions corrected, compromises identified and solutions negotiated. Without intercultural, inter-religious and inter-ethnic dialogue, tensions can grow to a point where they create a climate in which some will perceive violence as the only way of resolving problems.

However, dialogue alone, will not prevent conflicts or bring about post conflict reconciliation. It is of fundamental importance that governments also take concrete steps and carefully develop measures designed to create and preserve a harmonious and inclusive society. A harmonious and inclusive society in turn enables the individual to participate in and to identify him/herself with the community as a whole. Such an identification is a key factor in the prevention of future conflicts and in advancing post-conflict reconciliation.

CHALLENGES FACED BY MUSLIMS IN EUROPE

Within the context that I tried to describe so far, it is a sad fact that this is the environment in which Muslims now live in Europe which has deteriorated considerably in the post 9/11 era. Muslims, together with some other minorities, have been and still are facing intolerance, discrimination, distrust, hostility, hatred and racist violence. So-called “Islamic terrorism” or “Islamic extremism” is currently being portrayed as the source of all evil, adding fuel to the already existing prejudice and intolerance against Muslims. People of this moral persuasion are stigmatised because of their beliefs, ethnicities or appearances.

This phenomenon has two additional adverse consequences: *first*, it undermines efforts of integration and brings about negative trends in attempts to create an atmosphere of harmony. *Secondly*, an even wider fault line between the Muslim world and the Christian world is emerging. Therefore, both from a micro-social angle and also from a global perspective it would be wise to put an end to such practices.

Islamophobia needs but lacks a commonly agreed definition. It has often been defined as “fear or suspicion of Islam, Muslims, and matters pertaining to them”. I think that this is a rather narrow definition. I prefer to base my definition on the following concepts: “Islamophobia is a contemporary form of racism and xenophobia motivated by unfounded fear, mistrust and hatred of Muslims and Islam. Islamophobia is also manifested through intolerance, discrimination and adverse public discourse against Muslims and Islam. Differentiating from classical racism and xenophobia, Islamophobia is mainly based on radicalisation of Islam and its followers.” This definition situates this in a human rights context especially in the current post 9/11 period where the social climate facing Muslims especially in the Western countries has deteriorated, meaning that pre-existing prejudices and discriminatory tendencies against Muslims have become strengthened.

Taking into account that violations

of human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as manifestations of hate, discrimination and intolerance threaten global and regional stability and security, the international community has undertaken numerous commitments to combat racism, xenophobia, discrimination and intolerance, including against Muslims. However, much more remains to be done to foster democratic and pluralistic societies, where ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity is not only tolerated, but also is truly respected, valued and accepted.

COMBATING ISLAMOPHOBIA – A CASE STUDY

Within the scope of international community's overall fight against discrimination and intolerance, the Chairman-in-Office of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) appointed me at the end of 2004 as OSCE's Personal Representative on 'Combating Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims', to promote better coordination of activities related to this endeavor. I was privileged to serve under this portfolio for over four years till the end of 2008 in a part time and honorary capacity. During this period, on various occasions I underlined my vision concerning the implementation of my mandate, among other things, as follows:

- a) To consider the historical, cultural and psychological depth of the issue of discrimination and intolerance against Muslims.
- b) To utilise the existing sound normative framework to combat intolerance and discrimination both in international and national fora.
- c) To develop an intellectual and ethical strategy to avoid political exploitation of the issues related to discrimination and intolerance against Muslims.
- d) To develop a holistic approach which understands the nuances that discrimination and intolerance against Muslims is multifaceted and thus not only a matter of discrimination against a specific religious group but also

deeply affects international relations as well as the internal stability of Western societies..

On the other hand, I tried to highlight the quality of life of Muslims living in European societies which must be improved. This will lead to better understanding and better integration, thus to lessening of mutual mistrust. Likewise Muslims should not be seen as second class citizens; they must not be demonised, marginalised, feared or despised. The war on terror must not become a war on Muslims, and it should be recognised that Muslims have the same basic needs and desires as others, which are material well being, cultural acceptance and religious freedom without political or social intimidation. Accommodation is the best strategy for integration.

Stressing the need for sound legal strategies, a sound legal framework and the implementation of that framework (judicial measures) were important which underlined the need for education (not only of law enforcement officials but especially of the younger generation).

With this understanding, while trying to raise awareness of the phenomena of discrimination and intolerance against Muslims and Islamophobia in Europe, I conducted official visits to Netherlands, USA, France, United Kingdom, Germany, Denmark, Spain, Slovenia, Finland, Norway, Switzerland, Sweden and Kazakhstan upon the invitations extended by the Governments of these countries (only Russia and Greece declined to extend such invitations). During these visits, I met not only high-level representatives of the administrations and politicians, but also leaders of relevant institutions and more importantly large segments of the civil society. My contacts during these visits, together with my findings, comments and recommendations have been reported to the OSCE participating States through the Chairmanship. My overall conclusions confirmed the existence of a malaise and the need to cure it.

IMAGE OF ISLAM AND MUSLIMS IN EUROPE

Different forms and shapes of globalisation have changed our societies and brought about new challenges. Among these are challenges of ignorance; ignorance about the other; ignorance of other people, cultures and religions. Ignorance in turn leads to fear, mostly based on false premises. Thus ignorance of this kind can only be overcome through dialogue, education and understanding.

Muslims are not a monolithic entity, but are prone to all kinds of extremism.

Although there are some who argue to the contrary, the notion that Islam is the enemy of the Western civilisation is a false one. In that respect, it must also be underlined that Muslims are not a monolithic entity, but are prone to all kinds of extremism.

Thus, we have to make a distinction between those who claim that Islam is a threat to the West, and those who advocate that Islam is a threat to the West. As one of the three Abrahamic faiths, Islam of course is not a threat; but it may be a challenge, since Islam and Islamic countries have the potential of coming to terms with the modern contemporary world. In that sense, the Islamic world is in a vibrant process of recovering its true identity and intellectual heritage.

In short, Islam and Muslims cannot be considered as a distant phenomenon, but their presence in Europe is now an undeniable fact. Muslims have also contributed to the formation of European enlightenment and culture.

IDENTIFICATION OF THE PROBLEM

The resurgence of intolerance and discrimination against Muslims, coupled with attendant racist tendencies, challenges the exercise of fundamental

human rights and freedoms of Muslims particularly in the European countries. Many European countries still experience new and mounting waves of bias, exclusion and violence against Muslim groups and peoples.

The increasingly hostile environment that the Muslim communities in Western Europe are experiencing is characterised by suspicion and prejudice going back in history: ignorance; negative or patronising imaging; discrimination including in education, housing and employment; stereotyping all Muslims or Islam in general as “terrorist, violent or otherwise unfit”; lack of provision, recognition and respect for Muslims in public institutions; and attacks, abuse, harassment and violence directed against person perceived to be Muslim and against mosques, Muslim property and cemeteries.

Islamophobia has existed for a very long time, albeit in a rather subdued form, and is deeply rooted in prejudice. However, it has become a very topical issue recently, with devastating effects not only on the lives of the Muslim communities, but also on the societies where they live. All major international human rights organisations have recognised that negative connotations of Islamophobia may lead to exclusion and self-exclusion of people especially the youth, with obvious negative results in terms of self-esteem and social integration. It is also acknowledged that, persistent forms of Islamophobia and in particular its repercussions through the mass media, represent a threat to peace, stability and democracy.

IDENTIFICATION OF THE REMEDIES

So what are the solutions for these problems? It is not enough just to agree the treatment, but it should be efficient and timely.

Therefore, first of all governments, societies and peoples must recognise the problem and be ready and willing to adopt a multifaceted approach.

Secondly, they must take into account the importance of the intellectual front

in the fight against intolerance and discrimination against Muslims and devise a sound strategy in the fields of value systems and perceptions.

Thirdly, they must define hate crimes broadly and address the information gap. That is to say, clear criteria for collecting, analysing, reporting, registering and disseminating information related to hate crimes (especially those of a religious nature) must be established and reporting of hate crimes by victims must be encouraged.

Fourth, they must enact adequate legislation and implement this legislation effectively. In conjunction with national legislation, they should also implement international commitments and agreed norms.

Fifth, they should build the capacity of Muslim communities and civil society organisations and try to enable them to work with local and national authorities. In this respect, community outreach programs will be of great use in confidence building and in creating community cohesion. In addition to this, education is of utmost importance, especially targeting the younger generation which would foster tolerance, understanding and respect to “the other.” This can also be extended to training of civil servants, law enforcement officials, and other related stakeholders. Importantly though, in the field of public discourse related to Muslims and Islam, two points need to be underlined:

a) *Political rhetoric*: Responsible politicians, both from the government and the opposition, must underline the importance of correct and unbiased discourse and should also refrain from hate speech and other manifestations of extremism and discrimination. A message of encouraging tolerance, non-discrimination, understanding and respect to all must be voiced.

b) *The media*: The media can play a positive role in promoting inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogue and harmony. This is what is expected from responsible journalism.

Integration policies which look at how Muslim communities can truly integrate into the Western societies will need to be re-examined. The more Muslim communities feel at home in the countries where they reside, the easier it is to marginalise extremism and to defuse radicalism.

It is argued, and rightly so, that Europe has not been successful in its bid towards integration. While the objective was to create multi-cultural societies, mutually exclusive societies have been born instead.

How does one remedy this situation, which has led to the creation of cultural ghettos for Muslims? I believe civic and structural integration is the answer. Muslim migrants must have a sense of being part of the larger community in which they live, take part in all parts of life and participate in the decision making process. In other words, creating cohesive societies, where mutual understanding between diverse groups will facilitate not only the promotion of tolerance, but more importantly mutual respect for differing view points and backgrounds is key. The key word here is “mutual”.

For immigrant Muslim communities, Europeaness does not constitute a prescribed identity, but an ongoing process of becoming.

Muslim communities must also shoulder their share of the burden, adopt the civic values of their new societies and distance themselves from radicalism and terrorism. The real threat to tolerance and to multi-cultural societies emanates from the extremes of both groups. For peaceful co-existence to become a reality we must reach those groups who do not wish to engage in dialogue and we must educate those who do not wish to learn or understand or accept the diversity that characterises the Western societies.

EUROPEANNESS

For immigrant Muslim communities, Europeaness does not constitute a prescribed identity, but an ongoing process of becoming. It is a dynamic process and thus, these communities continuously contribute to the re-definition of Europeaness (and in a way of the EU itself) with their own and distinct identities. Regretably however, we observe that many EU countries and their citizens have a general tendency to regard Islam as a threat to their national security, as well as identity. Despite this, Muslim communities and individual Muslims, display a willingness to incorporate themselves to the system and in that process seek justice and equality.

CONCLUSION

One can assert that EU countries should give up their security discourse and engage in justice discourse in their relationship with Muslim groups. On the other hand, most EU countries nowadays are facing the challenges of managing increasingly diverse and multicultural societies. The richness of such diversity encompass religious, racial and cultural aspects, which sometimes lead to social conflicts. This mirrors what is taking place on the international scene vis-a-vis, increasing polarisation, along cultural and religious lines. These two trends, must be addressed in conjunction with each other. Cultural and convictional differences are a reality. This reality should not be designed in a divisive manner, but rather in an over-embracing fashion. In other words, isolation should not be seen as an option.

What is needed today is a positive consciousness on the necessity of a new relationship amongst all our citizens to attain solidarity through respect for cultural diversity. Responsible members of all communities must have the wisdom and the courage to work and live together, thereby averting perceived and actual clash among civilizations, cultures or religions. We must also learn to enjoy our differences, while respecting the others. Differences should not lead to discrimination.

The intense debate revolving around how true integration can be achieved is a healthy first step. The next step must not lead to even more restrictive policies, but to true, structural and civic integration. In turn, Muslims living and contributing in Europe, as citizens of Europe, will benefit themselves and the wider society.

*Ambassador Ömür Orhun served as the Personal Representative of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) between 2004 and 2008. Presently he is the Adviser of the Secretary General of the OIC on 'Combating Discrimination and Promoting Human Rights'. Orhun is also a member of the Human Rights Committee of the Turkish UNESCO National Commission.



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NO ENEMY TO CONQUER: BUILDING PEACE IN AN AGE OF CONFLICT

MICHAEL HENDERSON

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A Minority within a Minority: Converts to Islam in Britain

*FIYAZ MUGHAL

IN 2010, Faith Matters commissioned Swansea University researcher Kevin Brice to conduct research into conversion to Islam in the UK. Rather than seek to answer the much posed, yet immeasurable question of why individuals convert to Islam, we sought to suggest answers to questions such as: what is the scale of conversion to Islam in Britain; what issues and problems do converts to Islam face and what help and advice do they receive (and from where) in order to overcome their problems; what sort of relationships do converts have with other Muslims and with non-Muslims; and what roles can converts play within the Muslim community and within the wider British society? To address these major lines of inquiry, desk-based research was undertaken which drew on previous research presented at a number of international conferences, census data and other official records. Interviews were also conducted from a sample of 250 mosques, media representation of converts since 2001 was reviewed and analysed through performing a search of the Lexis Nexus database of British newspapers, and an online survey of converts to Islam conducted.

ESTIMATING THE NUMBER OF CONVERTS TO ISLAM

According to the Census of 2001, there were 63,042 White British Muslims in England and Wales. Potentially, this could be seen as some form of rough indicator of the number of White British people who have converted to Islam in England and Wales. However, the Scottish Census of 2001 was a source of more interesting and accurate information on conversion to Islam, since it posed two questions related to religious affiliation, “what religion,

religious denomination or body do you belong to?” and “what religion, religious denomination or body were you brought up in?” Therefore, a cross-checking of the answers to these two questions could be tracked, thereby allowing for a measure of those individuals who have converted to Islam in Scotland. Adding the calculated, potential, figure for converts in England and Wales, this figure being 59,445 (this latter calculated figure being derived at through calculating the percentage of converts from the Scottish census and applying this to the Muslim population of England and Wales, broken down by ethnic group, to arrive at a calculated figure for converts from other ethnic groups) to the calculated number of converts from Scotland, 1,224, gives the total number of converts in the United Kingdom in 2001 as 60,669. As noted in the original report, it is almost impossible to obtain figures for converts to Islam in Northern Ireland. Census data from 2001 denotes the number of Muslims as 1,943 but does not allow ethnicity and religious affiliation to be linked. Anecdotal evidence suggests there are indeed a handful of converts to Islam in Northern Ireland; however given the size of the Muslim community as a whole in Northern Ireland, it is unlikely that the real number would have any real influence on the overall total.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that the number of conversions to Islam in the UK has been increasing per year since 2001. It has been suggested that the increase in the profile of Islam as well as greater visibility of Muslims in daily life has increased both awareness of Muslims as well as instances of interactions between Muslims and non-Muslims. Raised awareness of a faith and increased contact with individuals of a faith are considered to be two major factors

contributing to conversion. However, figures detailing conversions since 2001 are not forthcoming. Therefore, to arrive at the total number of converts to Islam in the present day, the research turned to a survey of conversions which have taken place in mosques since 2001. Since not all conversions take place in mosques, and since there is currently no way to know the relative breakdown of individuals who perform the *shahada* (declaration of faith) in a mosque, and those that do not, for the purposes of the research it was assumed that no more than a third of all conversions take place outside mosques.

Based on the distribution of the Muslim population in the UK, it seemed reasonable to assume that approximately half of the conversions to Islam in the UK occur in London. A survey of mosques in London led us to a figure of 1,400 conversions in the capital in the 12 months leading up to the publication of the report. There were also up to 1,000 conversions in 'conversion centres'. If conversion in London mosques accounts for one third of conversions, one third occurs in mosques outside of London and one third occurs in conversion centres, then there were approximately 5,200 conversions in the UK in this period (a figure which is also in line with estimates that have emerged from both Germany and France). If one takes this figure as a

[There are approximately] 100,000 converts to Islam in the country.

reasonable estimate and assumes a steady rise in the number of conversions since 2001, then there may have been between 30,000 and 40,000 conversions to Islam in the UK since 2001 resulting in a total of between 90,000 and 100,000 converts to Islam in the country. Our estimate that the number of converts had therefore slightly less than doubled since 2001 is approximately mirrored by the responses provided by converts to our online survey

in which 56% had converted since 2001.

ESTIMATING THE DEMOGRAPHICS OF CONVERTS TO ISLAM

As part of the research process for the Converts report, an online survey of 122 converts to Islam was conducted. This survey relayed that 56% of these converts identified themselves as White British, 16% identified as Other White and 29% as Non-White. This percentage breakdown closely matches the figures for the calculated convert population as broken down by ethnic group from the 2001 census.

Respondents fell between the 20-24 and 70+ age brackets. Fifty-seven per cent of respondents fell into the 25-59 age group, with a calculated average of 36.8%. When the year of conversion was factored in, Brice arrived at an average age of conversion of 27.5 (namely, falling midway in the 25-29 age bracket). Again, this is a figure which is comparable to that suggested by past research.

When analysing the ethnic composition of converts to Islam, the distribution of ethnic groups remained relatively consistent pre and post 2001, with Other Whites represented in slightly greater numbers post 2001, and Non Whites slightly represented in slightly greater numbers prior to 2001. There is a popular suggestion that the conversion of females to Islam is increasing at a higher rate than the conversion of males to Islam. The responses to the online survey appear to corroborate this, 53% of White British people who participated in the survey and converted to Islam prior to 2001 were women. The figure for those White British respondents who converted after 2001, and who are women, was 66%. Of the Other White group, the percentage of those who had converted to Islam prior to 2001, and were women, was 57%, rising to 100% of those who had converted after this time.

When considering the marital status of respondents, and the religious affiliation of spouses, it appears that there is no direct link between conversion to Islam and

marriage in 45% of cases. The follow-up survey sent to respondents, to which 32 replied, shed more light on the relationship between conversion and marriage. While just 4 respondents stated they had converted in order to get married, two elaborated that the conversion was not a condition of marriage; rather marriage was a catalyst for conversion. A further five, female, respondents had converted after marriage, but not for some time after. It is therefore clear that in terms of the converts who participated in the survey, at least, marriage plays a very minor role in conversion to Islam. This opposes the traditional view that most conversion to Islam occurs out of a desire to marry a Muslim.

REPORTING THE OPINIONS OF CONVERTS

The survey carried out has provided a wealth of information concerning the beliefs, values and opinions of converts in the UK. Worryingly, in recent years newspapers have consistently linked Muslim converts to security threats, such as linking new Muslims to terrorism, which have long term impacts for these new Muslims. Not only does this need to change, it is not reflective of the Muslim convert community. The survey found, for instance, that the majority of converts see

The majority of converts personally disagree with the *niqab*, although they feel that ultimately it is a matter of personal choice and support the right of women to wear it.

themselves as both British and Muslim, and that the majority feel there is no natural conflict between being a devout Muslim and living in Britain. Other noteworthy findings include the fact that a significant majority feel that it is important for others to be aware that they are Muslims

and feel that religion is important in the upbringing of their children. It was found that the vast majority of women changed their appearance after their conversion, with a significant majority adopting the *hijab* (either straight away or after some time). However, the majority of converts personally disagree with the *niqab*, although they feel that ultimately it is a matter of personal choice and support the right of women to wear it. The majority do not support strict segregation of the sexes, but do not support “free mixing” of the sexes either; and finally, while the majority stated that most or all of their close friends are Muslim, almost all felt it was important that Muslims do not keep themselves separate from non-Muslims.

ISSUES AFFECTING CONVERTS TO ISLAM AND THE HELP THEY RECEIVE

The survey posed questions about difficulties respondents experienced related to their conversion to Islam. The difficulties experienced included practical difficulties in their conversion to Islam, which was true across each ethnic group, although there were significant differences in terms of the distribution of difficulties experienced across the ethnic groups. Negative family reactions to their conversion to Islam featured significantly, with over half of all respondents (regardless of ethnic group) reported difficulties in dealing with the reaction of friends and family members. The total who reported such difficulties was 61%, however Non-White British respondents experienced the greatest challenges in this regard, with 74% of Other White and 66% of Non-White converts reported such difficulties. However this often changed over time, with only 18% remaining negative.

Other difficulties reported by the respondents were ranged from learning Arabic (66% of total); being accepted within the local Muslim community (50% of total); locating support networks (49% of total); attitudes towards the opposite sex and mixing of the sexes (49% of total);

gaining sound knowledge about Islam (47% of total); understanding the Qur'an (40% of total); making Muslim friends (32% of total); finance and banking (32% of total); learning about acts of worship (28% of total); Islamic greetings and etiquette (23% of total), and dietary requirements (17% of total).

To the question of the most important problems they faced, a number of converts said their problems were similar, if not same as those faced by all Muslims. Many, however, felt that converts experience different and unique problems. Overwhelmingly, the majority of these challenges can be grouped under an overarching theme of a lack of suitable support and information for converts. Respondents thus felt that there must be an introductory course for New Muslims to relay proper Islamic knowledge as well as a network for support and social networking between new Muslims.

Many of the respondents also expressed feelings of isolation and/or exclusion from their former networks and social circles, but also from the networks and social circles of born Muslims, with both groups either misunderstanding or rejecting them. Many converts also reported the negative way in which they are presented in the media as causing a problem for converts to Islam with typical representations being of extreme or terrorists, or as not taken seriously in their faith. Another major issue faced by converts is the pressure they feel under to conform to the cultural norms of born Muslims. Though it should also be noticed that a small number of the respondents felt that the problems were caused by converts themselves, reporting feelings that converts can be too overzealous following their conversion.

CONCLUSION

The findings of the report by Faith Matters demonstrate that converts are generally at ease living in the UK and do not see any inconsistencies between practicing Islam and living in the country. However, it also demonstrates that converting to Islam is not a problem-free experience, and

that the majority of converts experience many, quite challenging, issues to overcome following their conversion. The most important problems facing converts to Islam include: the lack of support networks for converts; feeling of isolation and rejection by born Muslims; the way that converts are portrayed in the media; and the pressure put on them to comply with the cultural norms of born Muslims.

One of the major difficulties, as suggested, is the perceived and actual lack of support networks for new Muslims. However, it must be noted that many of those who expressed such a challenge converted prior to 2001 and so, by virtue of the number of networks and New Muslim projects which have mushroomed since then, the figures may not be representative of the feelings faced by most new Muslims converting at the present time. Yet, it is true that while some New Muslim projects, and mosques, do provide support and information specifically targeted to ease conversion, there is no co-ordinated programme for the education and support of converts, comparable to, for example, the Christian Church's Alpha Course.

One way of addressing this gap, is to initiate a national survey of mosques should therefore be undertaken to identify levels of support for converts to Islam. Muslim organisations and mosques should consider collaborating to form such a national programme to address the gaps in the provision of information, knowledge, support and guidance.

The findings of the research present a worrying picture for mosques as they appear not to be engaged with many converts and are at times seen as a hindrance to the proper dissemination of Islam. The majority of converts did not receive help and advice from mosques when they were considering converting, and less than a quarter say that their local mosque has provision specifically for converts. The lack of trust that the mosque can provide support is emphasized by the fact that less than a third would seek advice from the local mosque if they had a question about Islam. While converts have good

relationships with born Muslims, only a minority say they have a good relationship with their local mosque and 11% report a bad relationship (the highest figure of any group that converts were asked about). Mosques therefore have a lot of work to do in ensuring that the mosque is seen as an approachable and supportive place for converts and for non-Muslims who are interested in finding out more about Islam.

The research ultimately demonstrates that there is a vibrant and growing Muslim convert community that feels at ease living in the UK and being Muslim. Indeed, nearly half of the converts regarded themselves as being of a White British ethnic origin and many see themselves as individuals that can act as a bridge between Muslims and non-Muslims. Muslim converts therefore have a role in supporting community cohesion and disentangling cultural norms that have been carried over from the Middle East, Pakistan and India and which blur the true essence of Islam. Many converts are able to clearly assess what the cultural norms are which are sometimes mistaken by individuals to be a part of Islam, (almost all of those consulted expressed feelings that some practices of born Muslims are more to do with culture than Islam) and are concerned to warn other converts to consider and recognize where norms are cultural, and to not feel pressured to adopt norms which are not truly of Islam.

[There is] no link to support the claim that most conversion is driven by a desire to marry a Muslim.

It is also important to note that this report, based on extensive consultations with Muslim converts, finds no link to support the claim that most conversion is driven by a desire to marry a Muslim. This is usually suggested as the norm in social narratives that are based on conjecture

and a handful of case studies. This work demonstrates no such tangible link. Yet, it is important to note that the findings presented in this article, and in the original report, only begin to unpack the wealth of information contained in the responses to the two surveys. There is a lot more analysis (particularly qualitative analysis of written responses) that needs to be undertaken and responses should be broken down according to demographic categories as well as year of conversion to identify any influences that these categories may have on responses. For instance, a number of the converts have described their own experiences in terms of a journey over time – how they moved from a (overly) zealous, at times ‘hard-line’ view early on following their conversion to a more moderate position, more willing to compromise, but they also report being more disillusioned with many born Muslims and mosques.

*Fiyaz Mughal OBE is the Founder and Director of Faith Matters (faith-matters.org) which works to reduce extremism and developing platforms for discourse and interaction between Muslim, Sikh, Christian and Jewish communities across the UK. For over fifteen years Mughal has been active in the community and voluntary sectors in positions that have ranged from social policy lobbying, project and general management, and conflict resolution. He was previously a Councillor in Haringey (2006-2010), in Oxford (2002-2004), and a former Deputy President of a mainstream UK political party.

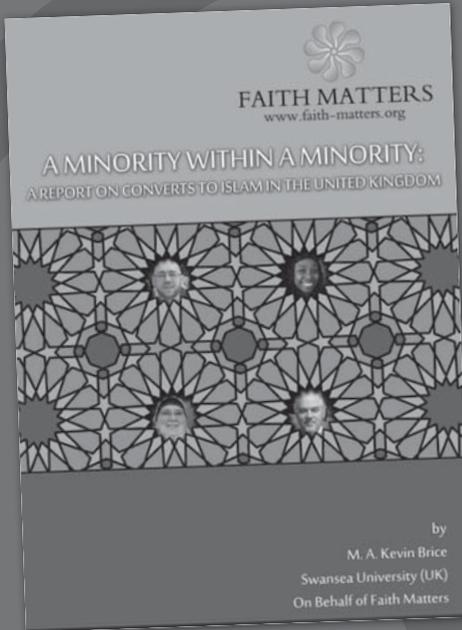
Recently Mughal was appointed as the Advisor to Leader of the Liberal Democrats, Nick Clegg MP on interfaith and preventing radicalization. He was an active campaigner on Black and Minority Ethnic (group) inclusion within political parties and discourses. He is also the Founder Trustee of two micro-finance projects to assist social entrepreneurship, namely the Future Vision Trust and the Jerusalem Interest Free Micro-finance Fund.

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A MINORITY WITHIN A MINORITY: REPORT ON CONVERTS TO ISLAM IN THE UK

BY M. A. KEVIN BRICE



This report by Kevin Brice, from Swansea University, was commissioned by Faith Matters to assess the roles that converts to Islam have within British communities and it shows that there are numerous positive and highly productive roles that they play. There has also been no definitive study on the number of converts and whilst the assessments in this report are projections, the report looks at this area using statistical data that is available and through interviews conducted for this research. Currently there is estimated to be approximately 100,000 converts to Islam in the UK.

The report shows that further work on how mosques can support converts is needed and also highlights the fact that converts can be a bridge between Muslim and non-Muslim communities. Press perception around converts is also addressed and Faith Matters hope that the report is useful in highlighting

the important role converts to Islam have and some of the areas of support that need strengthening within mosques and Muslim communities in Britain.

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"A Minority Within a Minority: Report on Converts to Islam in the UK"
by M. A. Kevin Brice.
Published in 2011 by Faith Matters.



The Dragon and the Crescent: Welsh Encounters with Islam

*GRAHAME DAVIES

IF the questions I have been asked while researching this book are any guide, then it seems that, for Welsh people, the main object of curiosity regarding the relationship between Wales and Islam – after the burning issue of radicalism – is the experience of Muslim presence in Wales itself. Where are the main communities? Where was the first mosque? Where do most Muslims in Wales come from? And, after the quantitative questions, always, the qualitative, value-judgement inquiry: What do they think of the way they're treated? That last question is, of course, self-reflexive, barely concealing the enquirer's true anxiety to know: What do *they* think of *us*? As so often in this study, Muslims are used as a mirror: the curiosity about Islam is less a case of interest in another culture, and more a fundamental desire to know something about ourselves, namely: In relation to *them*, what kind of people do *we* find ourselves to be?

It is hoped the material reviewed in this book, devoted to portrayals of Islam within Wales, and portrayals of Wales by Muslims, will go at least some way towards answering that final question, as well as giving an opportunity to show the emergent literary voices of Muslims in Wales themselves. Nearly all the previous extracts have been based on Welsh people encountering Muslims outside Wales, or commenting from within Wales about Islamic matters elsewhere; as such they primarily reveal the attitudes which Welsh society exports. The literary extracts collected here will attempt to show how the two cultures have inter-reacted within the boundaries of Welsh society itself, and in so doing, may help illuminate not only the question of communal co-existence which is being asked with urgency due to contemporary political events, but also the

questions of identity and belonging which many Welsh people never stop asking.

Substantial modern Muslim settlement within Wales begins with the communities of sailors, often from Yemen, who settled in Cardiff in the mid nineteenth century as a result of the maritime coal trade. In Cardiff and the other port cities and towns of south Wales – Swansea, Newport, and Barry – those initial pioneering communities were reinforced over the decades by Somalis, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis and others according to the ever-varying forces of economic and political opportunity and necessity in those countries of origin and in Wales itself. At the time of writing, the 22,000 Muslims identified by the 2001 census account for less than one per cent of the population of Wales. Particularly in the cities, the number and proportion of Muslims is increasing, and the political

And it is not just in literature that Islam has left its mark in Wales: there is considerable evidence in the material culture of the nation.

events of recent years have made the Islamic community as a whole a focus for intense interest from the wider society. However, the current visibility and profile of these communities should not create the impression that the influence of Islam in Wales is a phenomenon of the industrial age alone. Many Welsh people have been familiar with Islam either through literary work or through first-hand encounter from as early as the Crusades. And it is not just in literature that Islam has left its mark in

Wales: there is considerable evidence in the material culture of the nation as well which shows the involvement of Wales and Islamic countries over the centuries.

As an illustration of this, one might create an itinerary through Wales which takes in places demonstrating the connection between Wales and Islam. Such a journey could begin at the very northernmost tip of Wales at Llanbadrig near Cemaes on Anglesey. Here the village church¹ was restored in the late nineteenth century largely due to donations from a prominent convert to Islam, Henry Edward John Stanley (1827-1903), 3rd Baron Stanley of Alderley and 2nd Baron Eddisbury, the first Muslim member of the House of Lords. Despite his conversion in 1862, he was the main funder of the church restoration, which was completed in 1884; the decoration includes tilework and stained glass in Islamic style, in recognition of Lord Stanley's faith.² Moving to the mainland, then, at Llanystumdwy on the Llyn peninsula, can be found the childhood home and adjacent burial place of David Lloyd George, whose animosity to 'The Turk', whose support of the creation of the 'Jewish National Home' in Palestine, and whose role in deciding the custody of the Islamic holy places and the last Caliphate were shown in Chapter 6 of the book. Only a few miles to the east is the birthplace of T.E. Lawrence, who promoted Lloyd George's policy of encouraging Arab Nationalism. Heading east for another half an hour or so, the traveller comes to Ysbyty Ifan, a village whose name translates as 'John's Hospice', and whose church is built on the site of a hospice founded in the late twelfth century by the Knights of St John of Jerusalem, one of the Crusading orders. As the hospice had the right of granting sanctuary, it became a haven for criminals who terrorised the country for miles around; when they were eventually driven out, they migrated to Dinas Mawddwy where they formed the nucleus of the notorious *Gwyliaid Cochion*, the Red Bandits, who were eventually suppressed in the sixteenth century, and whose exploits formed an

enduring collection of legends. About half an hour's drive away, at Cerrigydrudion, the traveller passes a public house called The Saracen's Head, with its inn-sign of a black-bearded, turbaned, scimitar-wielding warrior.

If the traveller were to head south for an hour or so, they would pass the Aleppo Merchant public house at Carno. A sweep west to Pencader would pass the Llain Arabian stud farm, legacy of the former thriving horse trade with the Ottoman empire. Turning south-east to the upper Swansea Valley, the mining village of Onllwyn has a street named after General Gordon, and a colliery spoil heap called 'Khartoum Tip', named after the city where Gordon was killed by the followers of the Mahdi. Passing through Neath, the traveller would see the remains of Neath Abbey, built by a reputedly 'Saracen' architect called Lalys, supposedly captured in Palestine by Crusaders, and employed by the Norman baron Richard de Granville in 1129 to build his abbey. As a reward, Lalys was given a manor near Bridgend which, under the name of Laleston, still bears his name to this day. Then if the traveller headed through the Rhondda valley, they could find, in St Peter's Church, Pentre, the flag of the Khalifa, the Mahdi's successor, captured at the battle of Toski in 1889 by Francis Wallace Grenfell (1841-1925), a member of a Swansea family of industrial magnates, who commanded the Anglo-Egyptian army which finally defeated the Mahdist movement.

On the south Wales coast, then, is the former coal port of Barry, where, in the foyer of the town's Memorial Hall can be seen, among the 1,218 entries on the roll of honour, the names of many Muslim seamen from the town who died alongside their shipmates from Britain and other nations while serving on the merchant ships which were the country's wartime lifeline of supplies. Finally, in Cardiff, as well as the numerous mosques which testify to the presence of the current Muslim community,³ earlier Muslim influence can be seen in Cardiff Castle, which boasts a magnificent Arab Room

designed and fantastically decorated in gold leaf and semi-precious jewels by the architect William Burges for his patron, the industrialist and orientalist, the Third Marquess of Bute, John Crichton-Stuart (1847-1900). Nearby, in Cathays Park, stands Cardiff's magnificent Edwardian City Hall, a monument to Cardiff's status when it was the greatest coal-exporting port of the world; there on the front of the building, in a relief sculpture depicting the four points of the compass, the crescent moon and star of Islam are carved into the Portland stone.⁴

Those contact-points are merely a selection of the specific Welsh locations which illustrate a relationship between wider Western culture and Islam, a relationship which, due its very age and intimacy, is often unknown or unacknowledged. That wider relationship contains such common, and essential, elements of the Western world as: the legacy of teachings from the ancient world preserved for medieval and renaissance Europe in Arabic texts; the scientific advances made by Islamic scholars and researchers; the large number of Arabic words in European languages, including English and Welsh, and the numbering system which replaced the Latin method and which greatly facilitated the advance of mathematics. The closer the subject is examined, the more numerous the connections appear until eventually it is the idea of Islam as something strange and alien that itself seems strange. Any of those brief impressionistic details could be developed much further in order to show the full extent of the material evidence for the influence of Islam in Wales. As the focus of the present study is on the literary legacy, such a task must await another researcher. However, it is hoped the above summary provides some context for the discussion of literary material which follows, and shows that the Welsh relationship with Islam exists in more than just words.

An early literary reference to the practice of Islam in Wales itself is found in a 1913 novel, *Daniel Evelyn, Heretic*, a satire on

Christian chapel orthodoxy by Cadvan Rhys, a pseudonym of David Delta Evans (1866-1948), who was better known by his bardic name of Dewi Hiraddug. Evans, a native of Flintshire, was a leading figure in Unitarianism, a theology, with its roots in Christianity, which denies the divinity of Christ, and stresses the strictly monotheistic unity of God, a position which traditionally led Unitarians to be marginalised and condemned by the Trinitarian majority of Christian churches in Wales as elsewhere. Evans was an energetic promoter of Unitarianism in Wales, Liverpool and London.

In the following passage from the novel, Captain Rees, a freethinking character of whom the author clearly approves, is in conversation with a young, narrow-minded Calvinistic Methodist minister, John Assyn Llwyd, towards whom the author cannot conceal his antipathy – the character's middle name is a play on the Welsh word 'asyn', meaning 'ass'. Rees is shown to approve of the Islamic religious poet Omar Khayyam, thereby aligning himself with a non-Trinitarian monotheism in keeping with the author's own:

'Jesus and other great souls of history had no fear of death; nor should we, had we learned to live!'

'But death is the penalty of sin!' maintained the Pastor; 'and of course those who believe *correctly* pass through death into eternal life; but pagans and infidels and heretics and all unbelievers go to everlasting damnation, because they have not believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. The teachings of the Church make that quite plain. Nothing can be more terrible than to contemplate the terrors of an unbeliever's death!'

Captain Rees was really beginning to get impatient with the puerile simplicity of this would-be eschatologist and self-constituted interpreter of the divine Mind; but again checking himself, he said, calmly:

In the twelfth century of our era there lived in Persia a "pagan" poet whom the officially-ordained "pastors" of the land regarded as an

infidel; but I don't think it was infidelity that inspired him to say that – "Death hath no terror when the life is true; 'Tis living ill that makes us fear to die!"

'What do you think of that, Llwyd, as the utterance of a "pagan" poet? How does that kind of teaching compare with that of the Church of which you are an ordained pastor? Don't you think that in those two lines are summed up the whole science of life as well as the whole philosophy of death? No, my young friend, Omar Khayyam was not so much of an infidel as most of the professional theologians of this boasted Christian country of ours! What have you to say to that, Llwyd?'

'But I think I must be going now, Captain Rees,' was the answer wherewith the Pastor sought to evade the question, evidently feeling that here at all events was one too many for him, his much-vaunted education and training notwithstanding.⁵

The next passage shows William Marlès,⁶ the Unitarian minister protagonist, telling his friend Dorcas about a visit to Matthew Emrys, a quarryman and former Wesleyan lay-preacher who, ostracised for his liberal views, has become a recluse, and who again incorporates elements of Islam into his personal religious practices:

'May I stay to form a "congregation" for you this evening?' I asked. 'Agreed!' he replied, beaming with joy at the anticipation, as I did myself.

'Well, I *did* stay, and shall never forget that beautifully devotional and most impressive service as long as I live! I felt uplifted to the very throne of God!'

'What was the order of service, Mr. Marlès?' Dorcas inquired.

'It was as follows: Short prayer, ending with a slow and reverent recital of the Lord's Prayer, in which the "congregation" joined; hymn; reading, from the Old Testament; hymn; another reading, from the New Testament, supplemented by a passage from a Persian scripture and two or three sentences from the Koran; chant; prayer; hymn; sermon; hymn; benediction. I was the only listener, humanly speaking, but a more practical, thoughtful, inspiring,

and uplifting discourse it has never been my good fortune to hear. It seemed, as I have just said, to lift one to the very Throne of Heaven!⁷

Such a private syncretistic service prefigures some of the public interfaith activities which have emerged, particularly in the field of civic life, in Wales around a hundred years later. However, in the Wales of 1913, which was still in the aftermath of the 1904-05 Christian religious revival, this was a radical scenario. Even 15 years later, in 1928, as was shown in Chapter 6, the popular minister Tom Nefyn Williams could be deprived of his duties in the Presbyterian church for doubting the divinity of Christ. David Delta Evans, of course, faced no risk of expulsion in publishing his views: Unitarians were already regarded as being beyond the Christian pale. Already a heretic, he had little to lose, therefore, in using Islam as a means of endorsing his non-Trinitarian project. It should, however, be remembered that while his depiction of the character Matthew Emrys's adoption of aspects of Islam may appear broadminded, and while this eclectic approach certainly foreshadows the syncretism of Western alternative spirituality of the twenty-first century, it is nonetheless a project conducted on Western terms for Western aims, and many adherents of the historic monotheism of Islam might well have a different view than the approving Unitarian novelist on the co-option of their holy book into a heterogeneous home-made cult.

The figure of Matthew Emrys seems to owe something to the prominent real-life Welsh mystic and sometime occultist, Arthur Machen (1864-1947), who, in his extensive and eclectic writings occasionally referenced Islamic sources, as in his successful novel *The Secret Glory*, published in 1922 but written nearly two decades earlier, where one of the characters recounts an instructive story about a learned mystical beggar who challenged Caliph Haroun to melt down all his treasure in an alchemical process which would leave 'one drop no longer than a

An early, and fragmentary, insight into life of Muslims in Wales itself comes from an unexpected source: the autobiography of the composer, musician and entertainer Donald Swann (1923-94).

pearl, but glorious as the sun to the moon and all the starry heavens and the wonders of the compassionate, and with this drop the Caliph Haroun might heal all the sorrows of the universe'.⁸

An early, and fragmentary, insight into life of Muslims in Wales itself comes from an unexpected source: the autobiography of the composer, musician and entertainer Donald Swann (1923-94), one half of the famous entertainment duo, Flanders and Swann. Commonly regarded as a quintessentially English performer, Swann was actually born at Llanelli in Wales, the son of Russian émigré parents: his father, Herbert, was a Russian doctor of English descent, and his mother, Naguime, was a Muslim nurse from Transcapia. Donald was given the middle name Ibrahim, and he and his family seem to have been comfortable with their exotic origins. In his 1993 autobiography *Swann's Way: A Life in Song*, the composer provides a glimpse, albeit second-hand, of life for an immigrant Muslim woman in early twentieth-century Wales:

How was this Moslem lady getting on in Llanelli? Not too well: the culture shock was enormous. The thing that finally got her down was not being able to hang out laundry on Sundays because the Sabbath was sacrosanct. Her Sunday, of course, would have been on a Friday anyway. She was indignant, and thought this the ultimate nonsense, which of course it was. I hope nowadays people can do what they like with their washing whatever the day. Another thing was the peculiar food; although she cooked her own, probably

the range of food was more restricted there than in London.

Another bit of drama concerned uncle Sokolik, my mother's brother, the only member of her family to turn up, and on the day of my birth too – just like the fairy stories. He had been an officer during the war, but had managed to leave Russia after the Revolution and had roamed around Persia and Turkey until his three-week stay with us. He caused a tremendous stir in Llanelli and was certainly remembered there twenty years ago when I made enquiries. He was called 'the wild brother of Mrs Dr Swann' and his like had never been seen before. He entertained the people of the area by singing rousing songs and playing his guitar, and dancing exotic Eastern dances whilst brandishing sabres and knives. I was also told by one old chap that Sokolik had psychic powers. Evidently, he was once asked to sit down, but said, without having examined the chair, that there was a great hole under its cushion – and indeed there was. I always called him uncle Mohammed because he later changed his name in Persia.

After his visit to Llanelli in 1923, he surfaced again in 1925. I've got photographs of him with uncle Freddie taken on this visit. Then he vanished completely for thirty-five years. When he reappeared he was living in South Persia in a town called Ahwaz, about fifty miles from Abadan across the desert, and as far south as you could get from the Russian border. He was working as the director of music in the hotel Shoush. Various oilmen came to the hotel, and he asked one to try to trace his brother-in-law, Dr Herbert Swann, living in London. This oilman went back to London, found there were eight Dr Swanns listed in the Medical Directory, wrote to them all and one of the letters found Father. From then on Herbert corresponded with Sokolik, who had changed his name to Mohammed Zadek. Fascinating letters would arrive and how I'd laugh at some of the things in them. At Ramadan, he would turn his hand to interior decorating because music was frowned upon; and the fact that he

tuned pianos tickled me – I mean what scale? Was it the well-tempered mode? Or some oriental Persian scale? Then one day he promised to write the whole story of the great gap between the sword dance in Llanelli and his present life. But it never arrived, and the next time we wrote, a note came back: ‘deceased’. I feel deprived of his lost story to this day and ruminate on that Persian pillar box where it went missing.

There is a sequel. In 1964, I went to South Persia and took my wife and two small daughters by taxi from Abadan to Ahwaz. I started asking around about him and, after a long time of getting nowhere, someone suggested the Hollywood shoe shop. Again, we kept repeating the name Mohammed Zadek – no luck. Then I let slip the name Sokolik to the taxi-driver who was interpreting, and the shoe man said: ‘Oh, we remember him; he was a musician: who used to work in this town, a nice old gentleman, then he died in hospital.’ That was just eighteen months after his death.

Religion is a kaleidoscope where [different] strands merge to form a beautiful pattern.

The final part, which also touched me very much, was during an autobiographical entertainment in Cambridge. I’d been making jokes about Mohammed and sang about the camels and the desert. The professor of Persian in King’s College came up to me afterwards and said: ‘I was in Ahwaz and went to the hotel Shoush, and a tall gentleman came up and spoke to me. Obviously, he was your uncle.’ Now, isn’t that absolutely amazing? So, he’s real, isn’t he? This legendary uncle, in spite of the embroidery of camels, wild dances and songs, is real! And I’ve two framed photographs of him in my home: one playing the balalaika and another which you can see in this book. He’s doing a Russian-style dance, with a big fur hat on. There he is: a professional entertainer, just

like me.

We had other things in common: Moslem names were passed on to us; my sister’s second name is Fatima and mine is Ibrahim. My mother opted for two popular names to remind herself of her people. There it is, on my passport, just an exoticism to which I never paid much attention. But things like that come back and joke at you from time to time. There was the moment on an El Al plane when they looked at my name and said: ‘OK Mr Ibrahim – we’re keeping an eye on you!’ That was quite a good moment. Then, only recently, I took a Turkish bus from Salonika to Istanbul. For fun I had booked on as Mr Ibrahim and having arrived, went off to admire carpets. I let my name slip to the carpet dealer who exclaimed: ‘Ibrahim Pasha, you are one of us! How about one of these?’ He’d got me beaten. I had to buy one. So every now and then my Moslem name comes back. It’s nice to think it’s Abraham too, and I’m always cheered to think it’s as much Jewish as Arabic, just the other side of the language really.

I became rather proud of the mix of religions in my family. There is the Moslem part on my mother’s side; my sister is married to a Jew. My uncle Alfred became a devout Russian Orthodox; later, at school, I was plunged into high Anglicanism; and now I’m a Quaker.

All this gives me the feeling that religion is a kaleidoscope where all these strands merge to form a beautiful pattern.⁹

>The above is a segment from the concluding chapter of *The Dragon and the Crescent: Welsh Encounters with Islam* by Grahame Davies, published in 2011 by serenbooks.com

*Dr Grahame Davies is a poet and a critic in Welsh and English, and is a winner of the Wales Book of the Year Award. His work includes the novel, *Everything Must Change*, and *The Chosen People*, an anthology about Wales and Judaism. His latest book, *The Dragon and the Crescent: Welsh Encounters with Islam*, was published early 2011 by Seren.

Davies earned his doctorate from Cardiff University, where he is an Honorary Research Fellow, and has been awarded an Hon. DLitt from Anglia Ruskin University, Cambridge. His next book of poetry, *Lightning Beneath the Sea*, is forthcoming from Seren.

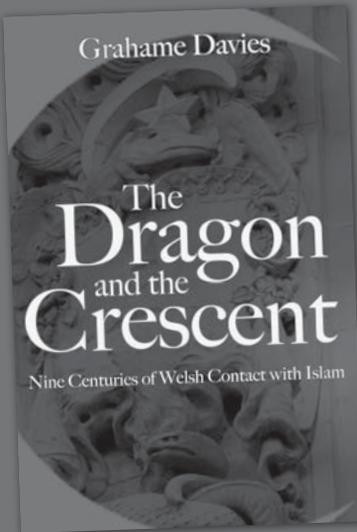
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4. The cover image for this book
5. Rhys, Cadvan [Evans, Dewi Delta] (1913). *Daniel Evelyn*, *Heretic* (London), p.76.
6. The figure seems closely based on that of Gwilym Marles (1834-79), a prominent Unitarian, and the great-uncle of Dylan Thomas, whose was given the middle name, 'Marlais' in honour of his relative.
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BOOK PROMOTION

THE DRAGON AND THE CRESCENT: WELSH ENCOUNTERS WITH ISLAM

BY GRAHAME DAVIES



In *The Dragon and the Crescent* Grahame Davies reveals for the first time, the full and surprising story of the Welsh relationship with Islam. Using 200 extracts from a range of Welsh literature over a 900-year period, this book features literary testimonies of Welsh Crusaders, of soldiers and seafarers, of missionaries and merchants, explorers and exploiters, pious pilgrims and hedonistic pleasure-seekers. Ranging from Gerald of Wales's recruiting tour for the Crusades in 1188, up to recent controversy of the Muhammad cartoon, *The Dragon and the Crescent* is a fascinating and thought-provoking collections drawn from diaries, journals, dramas, travelogues, novels and poetry.

Davies's informative and acute analysis opens up a whole new field of study, revealing the huge Muslim influence on Wales, and the equally momentous Welsh influence on Islamic lands. It examines responses to the growth of Islam in contemporary Wales, casting a new light on Welsh relations with minority communities, and challenging myths of Welsh tolerance. It will be essential reading for anyone interested in intercultural and interfaith relations.

The Dragon and the Crescent: Welsh Encounters with Islam by Grahame Davies.
Published in 2011 by serenbooks.com



Europe and the Arab Awakening: Some Reflections

*JONATHAN FRYER

WHEN the itinerant vegetable-seller Mohamed Bouazizi set fire to himself outside the local government offices in the sleepy Tunisian town of Sidi Bouzid last December, he can little have imagined that this act of frustration and despair would trigger a series of events that would lead to the downfall of both Tunisia's President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali and Egypt's Hosni Mubarak, as well as uprisings in Libya, Yemen, Syria and elsewhere – what has come to be known as the Arab Awakening. Of course, it is easy to be over-simplistic about cause and effect, but what is undoubtedly true is that an extraordinary movement has since swept across North Africa and the Middle East to which almost no state seems immune. Of course, there are special circumstances in each and every case, so one must be wary of generalising. But one constant factor is the people's demand for change.

I am a little hesitant to adopt the term 'Awakening' myself, as it implies that the Arab nations have been asleep for a generation or more, whereas in fact there have always been brave and articulate Arab critics of their own autocratic regimes, many of them admittedly forced into exile. The crucial difference is that now there is a critical mass behind such rejection of established authority. Thanks to new communications technology including social media such as Facebook and Twitter, people across the region have been able to link up, stand up and speak out: for more freedom, more democracy, equality of opportunity and an end to corruption and cronyism. Put like that, this sounds a very 'Western', even 'European', agenda. But what the protestors and campaigners in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) have shown is that it is actually

a 'universal' agenda, based on shared understandings and values that are just as strong – if not stronger – than oft-cited cultural and national differences.

This realisation has caught most Europeans by surprise. Too many of us in Europe had bought into the narrative that democracy and human rights were somehow alien to – or at least viewed differently by – Arabs, who respect a strong (and often hereditary) ruler. Similar theories have often been put forward about sub-Saharan Africans and the Chinese too, and the governments of the countries concerned deploy this supposed difference as an argument to justify their own continued exercise of absolute power and intolerance of dissent. The most glaring case of Europe's turning a blind eye to repressive and anti-democratic regimes has been with regard to the most oppressive of the Arabian Gulf states. In the wake of the brutal suppression of Shia demonstrators and attendant medical staff by Bahrain's authorities and a Saudi-led GCC military force, however, such indifference may no longer be an option. It was not just attendance at William and Kate's London wedding that the Al Khalifas sacrificed by authorising the murderous crackdown on protestat Manama's Pearl Roundabout.

The Gulf States – and Saudi Arabia in particular – are problematic for Europe and especially Britain. They are not only valued as a secure source of oil and gas; their sovereign wealth funds are huge players in international finance and the property markets. And that is before one starts to talk of lucrative arms sales. There was never any question of NATO or any combination of European nations intervening militarily in Bahrain in the way they have done in Libya – and that is not only because Bahrain is so tiny. The

same would be true, I am sure, if – perish the thought – there were a major popular uprising in the Shia-dominated eastern province of Saudi Arabia. Plenty of calls for ‘restraint’, yes. Some form of sanctions, possibly. Action, no. But, of course, warnings to Iran not to intervene either.

So what made Libya so different? Right at the outset, at least from Europe’s viewpoint, there was a hope that Libya could be Egypt Mark II: that the movement for change would take off in the way that it did in Cairo’s Tahrir Square and along the seafront in Alexandria, and that Muammar Gaddafi would just succumb to the tide of human opposition, *a la* Mubarak. Having spent quite a lot of time in Libya over the past decade or so, I knew that was not going to happen. Too many people, particularly in Tripoli and Sirte, have strong tribal or vested interests in keeping Gaddafi in place. Benghazi is and always was a totally different place from Tripoli, which was why the regime had a habit of staging frequent public executions there, to help keep the population bowed. There was a palpable nervousness when Gaddafi’s goons – easily recognisable in their designer shades and neat black leather jackets – were around, but once they had disappeared, Benghazi became a more relaxed, very Mediterranean, city.

What the Tunisian and even more the Egyptian examples gave was the confidence to Benghazi’s anti-Gaddafi majority to dare to hope – to abandon fear and caution, even though this cost some of them their lives. Once they had seized a few key installations, the city fell into the revolutionaries’ hands like a ripe fruit. But that was never going to happen with Tripoli and at the time of writing it is still far from certain what the end-game will be.

The Europeans – and the Americans and at least some of the Arab world, notably the Qataris – have decided that as far as they are concerned, the end-game must be the stepping-down or removal of Gaddafi from power. In a nutshell, regime-change. They have quite specifically not said that in a number of other cases, however – not just

the Arabian Gulf States already alluded to, but with relation to Syria, too. Comparing and contrasting the Libyan and Syrian cases is a fruitful exercise. Both regimes have kept control by a mixture of ruthlessness and patronage. The al-Assad dynasty has been in place since 1963 and although the President lifted the state of emergency – as demanded by demonstrators – in mid-April, this ‘concession’ was immediately followed by a brutal crackdown. There were protests from Europe about this but Britain’s Defence Secretary, Liam Fox, was quick off the mark in declaring that the UK government was not considering

There is, therefore, no one-size-fits-all foreign or security policy option for Europe when responding to the Arab Awakening.

any military intervention in Syria. That is not only because Britain and some of its European and NATO allies are already stretched regarding Libya, Afghanistan, etc. More important, whereas Libya could in a sense be considered separately, with little collateral effect on its neighbours, other than a refugee flow, any military action in Syria could all too easily put the whole Middle East in flames, not only drawing in other Arab states, but Iran and/or Israel as well. There is, therefore, no one-size-fits-all foreign or security policy option for Europe when responding to the Arab Awakening.

To complicated matters further, the EU member states are not united about how to react. This does not matter so much when we consider smaller or traditionally ‘neutral’ EU states, such as Ireland or Sweden. But it matters a great deal when there is disagreement between the Big Four: Germany, Britain, France and Italy. There is a delicious paradox in the fact that a Conservative British Prime Minister, David Cameron – who encouraged his party’s Members of the European Parliament to

leave the EPP group that is home to MPs loyal to Angela Merkel, Nicolas Sarkozy and Silvio Berlusconi – should form a new *entente cordiale* with Paris over Libya, with the Italians providing back-up support. It is the Germans who are off on a limb on this one, though the longer military operations go on in Libya, the wiser they might later appear to have stayed out of them. Even without the Germans, though, the Libyan intervention has been the first real test of Europe's willingness to be pro-active in its own backyard and to show that they take seriously the evolving principle in International Law of the Responsibility to Protect. The Americans, meanwhile, were delighted that they could pass lead responsibility for this over to the Europeans and Brussels-based NATO.

Meanwhile, the still relatively new and inexperienced EU High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy, Baroness Ashton, has been thrown in at the deep-end, and is trying to enunciate and implement a coherent EU policy to the Middle East and North Africa – Europe's southern neighbourhood. The easy stuff is to applaud and insofar as is possible support new-style democracies in the region, as she is trying to do in Egypt, for example. The EU has various funds available to bolster democracy-building, as do various member states (including Britain's Westminster Foundation for Democracy and political trusts, such as the German Liberal Friedrich Naumann Foundation. But when Cathy Ashton went off to the annual EU-GCC Summit in Abu Dhabi, no-one seriously expected her to be able to do more than give the Bahrainis and the Saudis a very gentle metaphorical slap on the wrist.

Nonetheless, what the EU now desperately needs is a coherent policy towards the three sub-regions of the Arab world: the Maghreb, the Mashraq and the Gulf. These three sub-regions are distinct – as Arabs have always maintained – even if they have certain common characteristics, so any European policy must take that into account, as well as the specificities of each individual country. But it would

be possible to define mutually beneficial goals for Europe and the Maghreb and the Mashraq in particular and then find mechanisms by which to achieve them.

This is not a new idea. It was at the heart of the ill-fated Barcelona Process, as well as the French proposal for a Union Méditerranée. Both of these two initiatives were greeted with much derision by successive British governments, both Labour and Conservative. But in a sense, their time has now arrived. A new form of partnership needs to be devised and implemented.

With the Maghreb, this must inevitably include new responses to the reality of youth unemployment in North Africa and European fears about immigration. The European Union must invest more in developing the productive capacity of countries such as Algeria and Morocco, to provide fresh opportunities in North Africa, while at the same time working with the governments of member states to confront problems of racism and Islamophobia, to improve the situation of North African immigrants in the European Union and enhance their relations with the host community.

The EU and the southern Mediterranean need each other if there is to be a prosperous and secure future for all countries concerned, which means that people must see the Mediterranean Sea not as a barrier but as a bridge. This should not be viewed as any sort of colonial renaissance (in either direction!), but rather as a recognition of the positive elements of both our shared past and our potential shared future. This means that many European political leaders – including Merkel, Cameron and Sarkozy – need to change their rhetoric. If multiculturalism has 'failed' it is because it has not always been understood, practised and promoted properly, not because it is an intrinsically unsound concept. Multiculturalism is a vital element of any future European-North African partnership, which will require a commitment and good faith from all sides.

In the Mashraq or 'Near East' there is the hugely complicating factor of the Israel-

Palestine conflict. I find encouragement from the fact that many, if not all, EU member states are taking a more objective view of the situation there than was the case even 10 years ago. Israeli military action in Lebanon, Gaza and the Occupied West Bank has been an eye-opener for many Europeans, who previously had vaguely thought that Israelis were people more or less 'like us' and who swallowed the argument that Israel is the only true democracy in the Middle East and therefore should be supported. There is still a weight of guilt and/or solidarity evident re the Jews in countries such as Germany and Poland. But the injustices suffered by the Palestinians are increasingly understood and empathised with by Europeans. The EU gives a considerable amount of money to the Palestinian Authority to try to alleviate some of the problems. But that is not enough. Europe should be taking a much firmer line in defending Palestinian rights and putting pressure on the Americans to bring the Israelis to heel than is the case at present. At the same time, the work of Israeli human rights groups and cross-community endeavours deserve support. Replacing Tony Blair as the Quartet's Special Envoy to the Middle East would be another positive step. But there is so much more that Europe could (and should) be doing. Its relations with all the Arab countries of the Mashraq would be transformed – and by that I mean essentially with the peoples of the Mashraq, rather than some of the individual leaders, such as Syria's Bashar al-Assad.

Turkey can play a crucial role in forging a new EU-Mashraq relationship. There has been a lot of debate recently about whether Turkey can be a model for countries now undergoing the Arab Awakening: establishing essentially secular regimes in predominantly Muslim states, in which 'European' principles of democracy and human rights, including equality of opportunity and freedom of expression are the norm. I work enough in Turkey to know that Ankara still has a long way to go in fulfilling its own commitments on such issues as cultural and political

rights for minorities, not least the Kurds; or in ending the harassment of journalists, writers and publishers. But the advances made by Turkey are remarkable in many ways. Some are a legacy of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's vision for a Western-oriented Turkish republic, emerging like a phoenix out of the ashes of the Ottoman Empire, though he was himself something of an authoritarian. But much has been done more recently, including during the premiership of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who has steered through parliament a whole raft of reforms, from the abolition of the death penalty to improved competition law, as part of ongoing modernisation. Erdoğan's personal engagement with the Alliance of Civilizations and the principles of Cordoba have been inspirational.

Many of the legislative changes in Turkey have been brought about to comply with the European Union's *acquis communautaire*, that vast body of law which each aspirant member state must incorporate into its statute books as a requirement of entry. The goal of EU membership, for long dangled like a carrot in front of the Turks, has resulted in a lot of positive changes. But at a time when that goal seems as distant as ever – not least because of antagonism to Turkish membership from Germany and France, as well as Austria and (predictably) Cyprus – there is a growing feeling in Turkey that maybe it is not necessary to join the EU after all, but that even so many of the new laws and related principles are worthwhile in themselves.

I am gratified by the fact that all three main political parties in the United Kingdom favour Turkey's EU membership. But even if Turkey does not become an EU member, it can serve as a bridge between Europe and the Mashraq. In a sense, that is what it did when it was the heart of the Ottoman Empire. It is a salutary lesson to study just how cosmopolitan the Ottoman Empire was, especially cities such as Istanbul, Izmir (Smyrna), Salonika (Thessaloniki) and Alexandria. Indeed, a century ago, the eastern Mediterranean was more ethnically mixed than it is today.

There are so many ways that Turkey can be part of a constructive tripartite cultural as well as economic arrangement with Europe and the Middle East.

This leaves us with the question of what Europe's new relationship with the Arabian Gulf should be. As things stand at present, it seems unlikely there will be any seismic shift in the nature of any of the GCC member states, though neighbouring Yemen is at last entering a period of transition. However, Europe – particularly Britain – already has a good working relationship with Qatar, which has become distinctive in the region and is defining a new form of leadership role for itself in the Arab world, despite its tiny population. While hardly qualifying as a 'liberal democracy', Qatar nonetheless has undertaken sweeping reforms since Sheikh Hamad ousted his father. Hosting Al Jazeera TV (in both Arabic and English) in Doha has opened a whole new chapter in the history of Arab media and has certainly assisted the momentum of the Arab Awakening, even if the channel's critical eye rarely falls on Qatar itself. Al Jazeera's coverage of the events in Cairo's Tahrir Square was a landmark in the evolution of the interface between citizen journalism and political action. The Qatar Foundation has been active not only in helping people in the region learn more about their Arab and Islamic traditions but it has also brought elements of Western civilization (including university education) to the emirate. Qatar could play an important role in fostering Euro-Arab dialogue and in funding appropriate projects of benefit to both Europe and the wider Arab world.

In parallel to such activities, much more needs to be done to educate Europeans about Arab and Islamic civilizations. Few Europeans have any idea of the contribution the Arab world made to science, medicine, mathematics and other fields, despite exhibitions such as the one hosted by the Victoria and Albert Museum in London last year. Similarly, few European schoolchildren learn about Arab civilization and literature, or Islamic

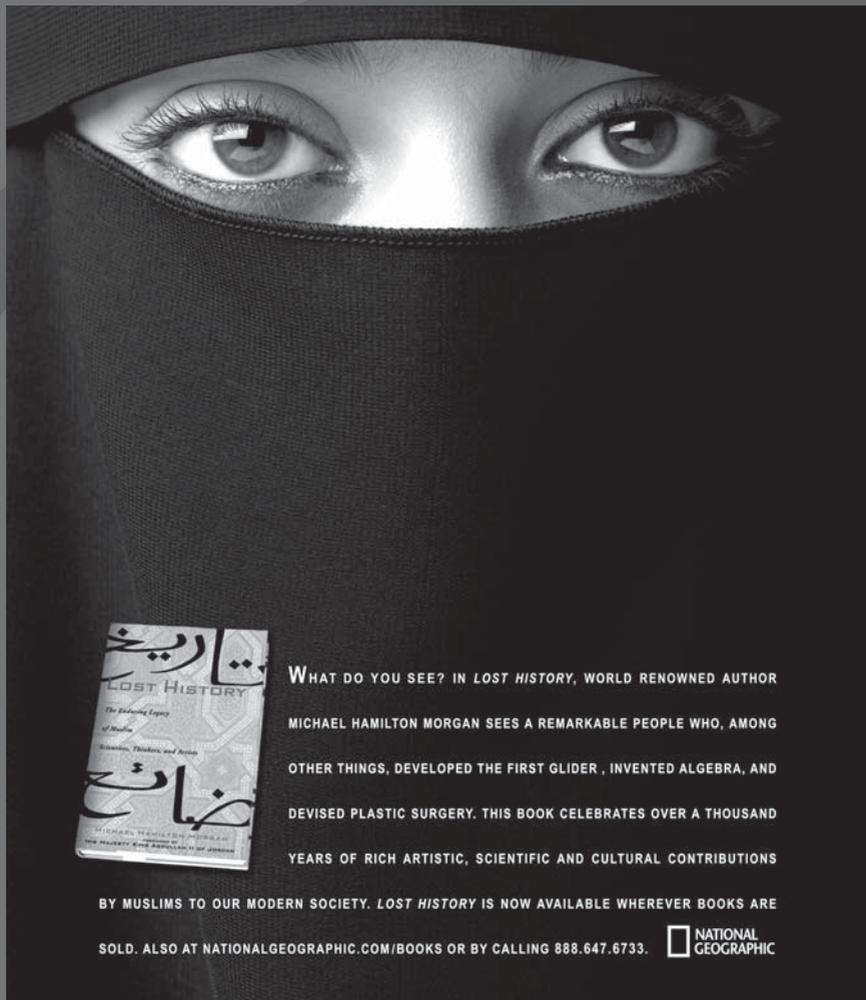
The EU and its member states could be doing more to show that it is right behind the Arab Awakening.

Art. If a new partnership is indeed to be launched between the EU and its Arab neighbours, that cannot only be based on economic interests, or involve a one-way traffic of ideas. Greater knowledge, understanding and respect of each others' cultures are essential. Though there are a few institutions and non-governmental organisations, such as the Council for Arab-British Understanding (CAABU) in Britain and the Institut du Monde Arabe in Paris, these only scratch the surface of the problem. Millions of students in the Middle East and North Africa spend years studying 'European' subjects or doing graduate or post-graduate courses at European universities, including SOAS. The traffic the other way is minuscule. Until that situation changes, it is unlikely there will ever be a balanced understanding of the Arab world in Europe. But in the meantime, the EU and its member states could be doing more to show that it is right behind the Arab Awakening and looks forward to a new era of genuine partnership.

*Jonathan Fryer -- a writer, lecturer and broadcaster -- is a familiar voice to regular listeners to BBC Radio 4's 'From Our Own Correspondent', reporting from around the world. He has written more than a dozen books, the last two being 'Fuelling Kuwait's Development' and 'Kurdistan'. Jonathan lectures part-time at London University's School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) and as Chairman of London Liberal Democrats has participated in a number of Westminster Foundation for Democracy training schemes, notably in Egypt and Jordan.

LOST HISTORY: THE ENDURING LEGACY OF MUSLIM SCIENTISTS, THINKERS AND ARTISTS

BY MICHAEL MORGAN



WHAT DO YOU SEE? IN *LOST HISTORY*, WORLD RENOWNED AUTHOR MICHAEL HAMILTON MORGAN SEES A REMARKABLE PEOPLE WHO, AMONG OTHER THINGS, DEVELOPED THE FIRST GLIDER, INVENTED ALGEBRA, AND DEvised PLASTIC SURGERY. THIS BOOK CELEBRATES OVER A THOUSAND YEARS OF RICH ARTISTIC, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL CONTRIBUTIONS

BY MUSLIMS TO OUR MODERN SOCIETY. *LOST HISTORY* IS NOW AVAILABLE WHEREVER BOOKS ARE SOLD. ALSO AT NATIONALGEOGRAPHIC.COM/BOOKS OR BY CALLING 888.647.6733.  NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

Lost History: The Enduring Legacy of Muslim Scientists, Thinkers and Artists

by Michael Morgan

Published in 2007 by National Geographic



Brave Hearts – Pickthall and Philby: Two English Muslims in a Changing World by M A Sherif

REVIEWED BY *CHOWDHURY MUEEN-UDDIN

By his own admission this second Occasional Papers by Dr M. A. Sherif, published by the Islamic Book Trust (Kuala Lumpur) is an attempt to draw together the expression of a pair of ‘near contemporaries’ Pickthall and Philby, to obtain a perspective of the Muslim society at the turn of the century. Educated in the countries best institutions, Harrow (Pickthall) and Westminster School as well as Trinity College, Cambridge (Philby) these two remarkable Englishmen refused to be content with what could have been their natural ‘pre-ordained’ trajectories. Instead, like all adventurous wondering hearts they longed for truth, also, as literary critic Ethel Mannin noted ‘peace and solitude’.

Like the Prophets, quest for truth obviously led them both to dissent and challenge against status quo and to a struggle for fairness. Both were deeply concerned with the ‘conduct and policies’ of the British government in Muslim lands. Yet understanding of what constitutes fairness in the Muslim world vastly differed between the two men placing them on the opposing sides, ‘in the face of a “new world order” imposed on us in the aftermath of the Ottoman defeat in 1918’.

Motivated by his deep zeal to unearth the native roots of European Islam, Sherif’s earlier work *‘Why an Islamic State?’* recounted the struggle for Islamic State by two outstanding Europeans, Alia Izzetbegovic and Mohammad Asad. The author rejects the widely held view that 1950’s immigration is the starting point of British Islam. For him Pickthall and Philby ‘indigenous Englishmen and product of Edwardian Britain offer[ed] a different narrative’. He laments at the ignorance of the Muslim society of these early pioneers, in his words, ‘in most Muslim circles

today, Mohammad Marmaduke Pickthall is only known for his translation of the Qur’an, while Abdullah Philby’s name is most likely draw a blank... or in reference to his son Kim Philby of Cambridge spy ring’. In similar vein Sherif contributed a book-review ‘Rich histories of Muslims in Britain’ in which one of the two books he reviewed was Ron Geaves’ *Islam in Victorian Britain, The Life and Times of Abdullah Quilliam*, another of the pioneers of British Islam.

Sherif summarises the life-journey of these two remarkable Englishmen under four themes; *enchantment, dissent, relocation and analyses*. Their restless wonderings in ‘young adulthood’ in the Muslim lands of ‘Eastern sunshine, palm trees, Camels and desert sands’ – a Paradise, of which in Pickthall’s own word, he dreamed. Throwing off the European and plunging into the native way of living Pickthall described how he ‘rode about the plain of Sharon, sojourning among the fellahin and sitting in the coffee-shops of Ramaleh, Lydda, Gaza, meeting all sorts of people, and acquiring the vernacular without an effort’ and became deeply enchanted with the culture of the land. What struck him is the ‘joyousness of life’ even in its decay and poverty compared to what he had seen in Europe, of ‘our anxious clutching after wealth and our fear of death’.

On his arrival in the India as a young (aged only 23) district officer, Philby not only mastered Urdu and Punjabi, but demonstrated exceptional talent of the ‘study of Indian life’ by analysing the culture of the peoples in his district. In the bathing habits of Muslim and Hindu women he correctly detected the Muslim women’s priority for privacy and on his own admission, ‘it was rather the Muslim than the Hindu culture that attracted

and interested me'. He 'began reading the Qur'an with my junior court clerk Muhiy-al-din'. He was also 'greatly attracted by Islam and its simplified emphasis on to me eternal verities of life and philosophy'. This enchantment was further reinforced when he arrived in Mesopotamia and 'like enchantment of Pickthall with the Turks Philby noted, I had fallen in love with Arabia'.

Of the Arab culture he wrote, 'the foundation of the society in those days was virtue itself as defined by the Qur'an and the tradition of the Prophet'. Sherif describes how Philby was 'captivated' by the Nejdīs and the Islam practiced by them, 'a religion which one could accept without intellectual dishonesty as a guide to life and conduct, and whose ethical standards seem to conform better than those of other religions – Christianity for instance – to the basic needs of humanity'.

Subconsciously 'something of Islam settled in their personalities and outlook' – which was eventually translated into a formal declaration many years later. Sherif was mindful to put right the wilful misinformation about Islam's eagerness to proselytise. He enumerated how in the best Islamic tradition of not forcing conversion, their early proactive enthusiasm to convert was resisted, in Pickthall's case, by the Shaykh of the Great Mosque of Damascus who asked him to defer the decision, considering Pickthall's young age the Shaykh even insisted that he should 'wait till he has consulted his mother and was older'. In Philby's case, his host and mentor Abdul Aziz ibn Saud, offered exactly the same advice.

Pickthall's dissent of the dark side of British and European colonial activities in Muslim lands first appeared in his early and successful novel, 'Said the Fisherman'. In a passage that bears remarkable resemblance to the most current situation in the Muslim lands, a character in the novel exclaims, 'his excellency Ahmed Basha, his honour the Wally and all those who bear the rightful authority over us are but the servants of the Franks.The cross is set above the crescent. ... If any

oppose them they cry to their masters, the powers of Europe, and great ships are sent across the sea to lay waste to our coasts'.

Then, as now, British and Western policy makers, always 'reacted with hostility' to any sign of positive turn in Muslim lands for fear of losing their perceived moral high ground. Pickthall noted how in response to constitutional reforms initiated in Turkey British Foreign Secretary Lord Grey noted, 'we have been able to tell them (Muslims) that the subjects ruled by the head of their religion (the Khalifa) were under a despotism which was not a benevolent one; while our Mahometan subjects were under a despotism which is benevolent'. Pickthall was also critical of British concurrence in Austria's illegal annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Again, then as now, the West used every opportunity to make the plight of non-Muslims and more particularly Christians in Muslim societies, a central issue. But Pickthall was able to see through such misrepresentation as he had first-hand knowledge of how non-Muslims were privileged and benefited from the concessions not available to ordinary Turks.

Quoting a church sermon comparing Turks with the Satan, the Bulgarian advance to that of the Christian souls assailing Paradise; Pickthall gasped in despair and commented, 'it amounts to as if Muslim blood can be shed more lightly'. His concern for the imperialist aims in Palestine and the rest of the Arab world led him to initiate his own peace plan only to be rebuffed by the senior Foreign Office mandarins like Sir Maurice de Bunsen who described him as 'most undesirable' and 'must be interned as an enemy alien'. While prominent policy-maker and co-author of the Sykes-Picot Agreement, the infamous secret deal between Britain and France to carve out the Levant, Sir Mark Sykes admonished him severely for 'assuming absolute friendship with an enemy state and speaking in a distinctly hostile tone to your own government'.

In a different theatre Britain was playing off animosity between different Arab sides, promising both sides the sovereign power

in the Arab Peninsula. Philby was assigned by the British authorities to encourage Ibn Saud to attack his fellow Nejd and Ottoman ally Ibn Rashid of Hail while famous agent T. E. Lawrence was employed to instigate Sharif Hussain to ferment rebellion against the Ottomans; two wings of 'Arab Movement' if not 'Arab Spring' of another era - made in Britain. Both sides were tempted with arms and money - at times promised but not necessarily honoured. Philby was extremely uneasy of such duplicity and 'disagreed with this policy ...jettisoning the promises about the freedom of choice made in the Anglo-French Declaration'. He tried to persuade Faisal Ibn Hussain to distance himself from the British authorities and ally himself to the people to demonstrating his independence.

After slicing up the Arab Peninsula between them Britain got the Mandate over Palestine and appointed Zionist Sir Herbert Samuel as head of the Palestinian administration. Finding it impossible to work with Samuel in 1925 Philby resigned his post. He criticised, even condemned, the Mandate as nothing 'but an instrument of British imperialism ...drawn up by His Majesties' Government in consultation with the Zionists'. And, 'the British Government has not the slightest intention to keep promises to Arabs and have every intention of implementing its promises to the Jews if it can'. Philby's article attracted immediate condemnation from British Zionist lobby including its long serving future General Secretary Israel Cohen. Philby's well-wishers warned him to watch out as such outspoken criticism of Jewish interest is bound to attract vengeance. He was under surveillance and British agents kept regular reports on his activities, after the declaration of Second World War Philby was even arrested.

At a time when embryonic Muslim community in Britain faced powerful challenges and sinister intrigues, Pickthall and Philby with their knowledge, connections at the highest level of the nation and vast experience, proved to be forceful defenders of the community. Yet,

defence of the community has never been the priority of the Muslim Community. Sherif enumerates how British Muslim community squandered the opportunity to benefit from such invaluable assets. Both men had to struggle, relocate and accept humiliating appointments just to fend for themselves.

Philby's criticism of British Government policies in Arabia led to a warning from Reader Bullard, the British Consul in Jeddah that, 'the normal sequel of ignoring government orders was dismissal'. Philby had a spirited argument with the Consul and after explaining reasons for his dissent he added, 'in particular it was very mean on its (government's) part to use against me the only weapon that they could use with effect, namely the threat of my pension and reduce my family to penury. I could not take that risk, as it knew all too well'.

Pickthall was forced to move from job to job and accept work in India resulted by 'simply economic pressure. I can not afford to live in England and the offer of 1400 rupees a month came to me as a positive godsend at the moment of almost of despair'. Sherif, who has first-hand knowledge of community's similar indifference about its own defence today, laments: "India's gain was to be Britain's loss - particularly for Muslims of Britain who lost a leader around whom the community could have rallied and organised. Muslim philanthropists of the time lacked the vision to ensure that someone of Pickthall's abilities would be free from financial worries".

Such hard times and challenges of life failed to dent their unflinching commitment to their faith - each new experience helped them to grow stronger in Iman (faith). While conscripted to the British army in the First World War, Pickthall found Muslim point of view on equality of men a godsend. He wrote, 'one of the greatest blessings which Islam brings to an Englishman is the deliverance from this insanity (prejudice against the other) ...to accept men on their merits'.

Philby dedicated his book *Forty Years in the Wilderness* published three years before

his death in 1957 to his mother with the moving Qur'anic verses, "Thy Lord hath decreed that ye worship none but Him and that ye be kind to parents ...And lower unto them the wing of submission through mercy, and say, my Lord have mercy upon them both as they did care for me when I was little". He further wrote, 'it is in Arabia and in Islam I have found in actual being an easy social system well adjusted to the needs of humanity'.

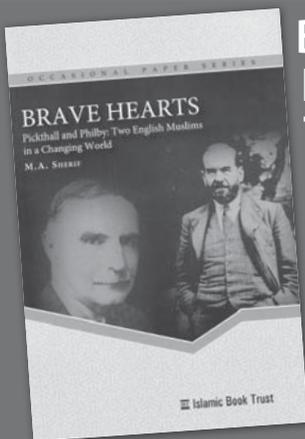
The last words Pickthall wrote the night before his death (18th May 1936) was the Qur'anic verse: "Whosoever surrenderth his purpose to Allah, while doing good, his reward is with Allah; and there shall

no fear come upon them neither shall they grieve".

Brave Hearts – Pickthall and Philby: Two English Muslims in a Changing World by M. A. Sherif was published in 2011 by Islamic Book Trust, Kuala Lumpur. www.ibtbooks.com

*Chowdhury Mueen-Uddin worked as a journalist in Bangladesh, editing the weekly *Taleem* (then one of the two newspapers in Feni town) and the *Prithivi*, a prestigious journal of the Islamic Research Academy. As a staff reporter, he later joined a leading daily, Purbodesh -- a publication of the Observer Group of newspapers. Since settling in Britain in 1973, Mueen-Uddin has been active in community organising such as leading and setting-up community organisations. He served on the Board of a number of distinguished charities while occasionally contributing to newspapers and journals.

BOOK PROMOTION



BRAVE HEARTS – PICKTHALL AND PHILBY: TWO ENGLISH MUSLIMS IN A CHANGING WORLD

BY M. A. SHERIF

Marmaduke Pickthall and Abdullah Philby were Englishmen of distinction and courage who travelled widely in the Muslim world and came to love and admire what they found. In *Brave Hearts*, M.A. Sherif tells the story of these two English Muslims who became vocal dissenters of their Government's policies and it is possible to view some of

the great dramas of the time through their eyes - the intrigues of

World War I, the emergence of new nations in the Middle East, the forebodings with the Zionist project in Palestine. They grasped Islam as a way of life with social and political responsibilities and what they said and practised remains deeply moving and relevant today. Their life journeys demonstrate the richness and variety of the British Muslim experience. Drawing on their published works and archival sources, this biographical essay interleaves two lives spanning a period from the 1890s to the 1940s.

Brave Hearts – Pickthall and Philby: Two English Muslims in a Changing World by M.A. Sherif. Published in 2011 by ibtbooks.com



Lost History: The Enduring Legacy of Muslim Scientists, Thinkers, and Artists by Michael Hamilton Morgan

REVIEWED BY *DAVID LEVERING LEWIS

FRANCE's professoriate was roiled recently by a capaciously sourced polemic masquerading as a major work of revisionist intellectual history. According to the startling thesis propounded in Lyon University Professor Sylvain Gouguenheim's *Aristote au Mont Saint-Michel: les racines grecques de l'Europe* (Seuil, 2008), the revival of learning in Europe had little to do with Islam's transmission of Hellenic philosophy and science. Indeed, Gouguenheim believes that, given Islam's inculcation of revealed authority, Muslim scholars could not have really assimilated the intrinsic rationalism animating Greek thought. Rather, he attributes the preservation and translation of that learning into Aramaean and Syriac by Christian holy men living under the protection of Muslim caliphs. He follows the documentary underground of Syriac translations to a handful of receiving stations in Dark Ages Europe, of which the great Norman bastion of Mont St-Michel was one of the most important. The Renaissance for Sylvain Gouguenheim, then, mainly amounts to the splendid work of a few assiduous Catholic monks restoring the lost corpus of classical antiquity to the West long before those Arab scholars to whom most contemporary historians give credit had achieved real mastery of Aristotle, Plato, Ptolemy, and Euclid.

In France, where willful historical distortion can be punished by law, informed academic reaction to *Aristote au Mont Saint Michel* was quite censorious. The book will likely have a more favorable reception in the United States, where innocence of the fruitful cohabitation of Islamdom and Christendom in the

millennium after the collapse of the Roman Empire is widespread and deep. As Michael Hamilton Morgan reminds us in *Lost History*, his interpretively venturesome and felicitously written panorama of Islamic thought and science, "most Westerners have been taught that the greatness of the West has its intellectual roots in Greece and Rome, and that after the thousand-year sleep of the Dark Ages, Europe miraculously reawakened to its Greco-Roman roots". [p.xv]

The more general problem of agnosticism about the historic interaction of Islam and the Occident has been compounded in America by the Huntingtonian thesis of civilisational clash and the ascendancy of a neo-conservative scholarship and policy agendas clamorously asserting an oil-and-water incompatibility of the culture of the West and that of the Muslim world. In this conception of the Muslim "problem" (of "what went wrong?" in Bernard Lewis's famous interrogation), Muslim retrogression into radical religious fundamentalism and political terrorism is stipulated as having been inevitable, notwithstanding the acknowledgement of various important Muslim contributions to the post-Roman West. Islam's long ago remarkable attainments merely serve as ammunition to indict a civilisation deemed to have forfeited the post-industrial world's confidence.

Lost History is an anti-text to the literature of inevitable decline and titanic clash, a robustly researched work of popular history, the author of which announces from the outset a game choice "to emphasise the bright side of a very complex [Muslim] civilisation". [p. xiv] Morgan proceeds from the Meccan origins of the

world's third Abrahamic monotheism to its irrepressible advance across the Fertile Crescent at a pace that mimics the *jihad* launched in 636 C.E. by the "rightly guided" Umar, Islam's second caliph. One world empire (Sassanian Iran) crashes upon contact; the other (Greco-Roman) survives territorially much reduced and on life support for another eight centuries. *Jihad*, as the author makes clear, obeyed the Prophet's Qur'anic interdiction of forced religious conversion. The poll tax (*jizya*) exacted from nonbelievers also powerfully incentivised a policy of religious *laissez faire*. That many of the conquered peoples looked upon Muslim rule as preferable to the religious oppression or labor exploitation they knew previously explains both their readiness to surrender and to convert. Think of the analogy of the Roman Empire ruling a heterogeneous mass of humanity and demanding respect for its laws and remission of taxes, but otherwise indulgent of cultural variety and accepting a high degree of local autonomy.

A mere 79 years after Muhammad's death, the Muslim Empire leapfrogged in 711 from North Africa to a Mediterranean beachhead and on to the swift occupation of Iberia after defeating its brutal and fiercely anti-Semitic Visigoth oligarchy. Germanic-Latin Iberia became Muslim *al-Andalus* in a flash, after which the jihad swept over and around the Pyrenees on its seemingly unstoppable course of conquest and incorporation. In 732, a large Muslim expeditionary army encountered a much smaller Frankish force on the old Roman road to Poitiers. "For some reason," observes Morgan of books written by countless generations of European historians, "this particular struggle will be painted in apocalyptic terms." Although he mistakenly believes that the actual site (*viz.*, the tiny village of Moussais-la-Bataille) "cannot be located on a map," the author reconstructs the Battle of Poitiers with a cinematic detail of considerable plausibility. [p. 4] As for what it all meant – Dark-Ages Christianity saved by a wily German tribal chieftain; Muslim occupation of Gaul temporarily

interrupted; a quest for booty gone awry? — *Lost History* decides that "this debate will never be settled". [p.32]

It seems clear, however, that, whether or not the Umayyad caliphate planned to add the lands beyond the Pyrenees to the *dar al-Islam* (Morgan thinks not), Europe has drawn vastly more significance than Muslims did from Charles the Hammer's victory. Indeed, the neologism "europenses" first applied by an Andalusian scribe to the Poitiers winners comported with a civilisationist mindset of perpetual clash that would become dogma for Westerners by the 11th century. More to the point, the Carolingian regime founded by Charles and his descendants on the mythos of Poitiers and in alliance with the Catholic papacy shaped a future of militant Christianity in which no other faiths were tolerated and a master-class of cavalymen ruled by intimidation and slaughter (though not with the newfangled Arab stirrups Morgan erroneously believes the Hammer's men stripped from fallen Andalusian cavalry). A major skirmish devoid of religious animus between Arab and German warriors at the foot of the Pyrenees became the signature of a civilisation. Poitiers was traumatic, writes Morgan, "leaving a wound that has never fully healed". [p. 32]

But if the Pyrenees traced a scarlet cicatrice on the European continent, a Muslim civilisation of cultural sophistication and fabulous prosperity evolved west of the mountain range. Although roiled for more than a decade by sanguinary violence that obliterated the 100-year-old Umayyad dynasty, Umayyad rule eventually returned to the Iberian peninsula in the remarkable persons of Abd al-Rahman I and III, whose policies fostered the legendary *convivencia* that could have served as model for an alternative Europe of interfaith tolerance and philosophical rationalism.

Lost History engagingly recycles the familiar story of Cordoba, "the ornament of the world," with its lighted streets, bath houses, and large libraries, its chess-playing cosmopolites, Sephardic notables,

and Arabised Christians. A vignette unexpected by this reader was Morgan's account of the late ninth-century aerial feat of one Abbas ibn Firnas, a septuagenarian polymath whose winged flight over Cordoba from the Sierra Morena Leonardo da Vinci would have envied. Cordoba cradled the high philosophising of Ibn Rushd (Averroes) and Musa bin Maimun (Maimonides) – both of whom made reason revelation's handmaiden – as well as the medical ingenuity of al-Zahrawi, whose forceps transformed pediatrics and experimental mastectomies into advanced surgery. The translation from Greek into Arabic of Dioscorides's *De Materia Medica* by a Byzantine Greek, a Muslim scholar, and a Catholic priest under the direction of Hasdai ibn Shaprut, a Cordoban Jew, was an inconceivable undertaking in Christian Europe.

Morgan's "lost history" of Abbasid Baghdad undermines Gouguenheim's claim of indispensable Syriac scribes and merely imitative Muslim thinkers. Rising on the banks of the Tigris under the command of the second Abbasid caliph, al-Mansur (712–775), Baghdad surpassed Constantinople in scale and wealth. By comparison, Umayyad Cordoba was only a simulacrum. With Gundeshapur, the destroyed Iranian Empire's city of science and medicine, as prototype, Caliph Harun al-Rashid is said to have inaugurated Baghdad's House of Wisdom (Bayt al-Hikma), the Muslim world's great research center from which almost four centuries of caliphal patronage nurtured breakthrough achievements in astronomy, mathematics, and medicine. Royal patronage of learning being a standard feature of empires, it was not incumbent upon Morgan to do more than to describe examples of it. Hence, in contrast to George Saliba's recent *Islamic Science and the Making of the European Renaissance* (2007), we encounter few real-world facts of life in Morgan's book that necessitated and incentivised the Umayyad and Abbasid regimes' investment in the sciences: the role of the zero, decimals, and simple Hindu numerals in order to pay soldiers' salaries and circulate standardised

specie, for example, or the mathematics and rudimentary astronomy involved in aligning lunar and solar calendars or in plying Indian Ocean trade routes. Morgan's strength is the captivating descriptive flair with which he recounts histories of patronised achievements. Summoned from remote Khurasan by the scholarly Caliph al-Mamun (813–833), Muhammad al-Khwarizmi, eponymous father of the algorithm and re-discoverer of the Hindu zero and the Babylonian sixty-second minute, distills his lifetime epiphanies into the House of Wisdom algebraic masterwork *Al-Jabr wa al-Muqabala* (*The Compendious Book on Calculation by Completion and Balancing*). Soon after the House of Wisdom opened its doors, a peripatetic Uzbekistan stargazer named al-Farghani rendered the first Arabic summary of Ptolemy's foundational *Almagest*.

Another wandering genius recruited to al-Mamun's House of Wisdom, Jabir ibn Haiyan of Yemeni descent, mixed alchemy and chemistry so liberally that the author tells us Jabir is the source of the word "jibberish". Although he fails to transmute gold from lead, Jabir creates *aqua regia* that dissolves gold and platinum, discovers hydrochloric acid, originates the concept of alkali, and, as Christian Europe's "Geber", achieves renown as a father of alchemy and chemistry.

By no means does Baghdad capture all the best scientific talent, especially not after the Abbasid caliphs become pawns of their Buyid and Mamluk ancillaries and then ciphers under the conquering Seljuk Turks in the 11th century. From the House of Knowledge of the upstart Fatimid caliphate of Egypt came Ibn al-Haytham's rejection of Ptolemy's theory that light rays emanate from the eye. Christian Europe knew him as Alhacen, author of the arboreal *Book of Optics*. From sophisticated Isfahan, another 11th-century center of power and learning, came Omar Khayyam's demonstration of the rotating axis of the earth and calculation of the year almost as precise as the length established eleven hundred years later by the Hubble

telescope. Another Isfahan scholar, Ibn Sina, identified tuberculosis as a virus and assembled the known medical knowledge in his *Canon of Medicine*, an ecumenical commentary that would hold sway in the medical schools of Europe for centuries. Taken to India by warring Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna, the captive scholar, Raihan al-Biruni, learned of the Hindu theory of lunar tides. *Lost History* reproduces al-Biruni's diagram of a lunar eclipse.

Southeast of Anatolia, another genius in service to a warrior Seljuk sultan designed revolutionary machines and instruments (the crankshaft, giant water pumps). The author tells us that, although parts of it became known, al-Jazari's remarkable *Book of Ingenious Mechanical Devices* was only translated into English in the 20th century. Otherwise, al-Jazari "would be as well known to the world as Leonardo da Vinci". [p. 172]

It has become a commonplace observation among Western scholars that the cause of much of the disjunction between the Western democracies and the Muslim world lies in the latter's failure to experience a religious upheaval analogous to the European Reformation of the 16th and 17th centuries. However, as Morgan's second chapter reminds us, the umma experienced a comparable philosophical and theological upheaval some six centuries before Europe did. A dozen or more competing schools of traditionalist and radical philosophy, theology, and law – Hanafites, Hanbalites, *Mutakallimun*, *fugaba* – contended for primacy in Abbasid Baghdad. Citing the translated writings of Aristotle and Plato in support of their causes, learned men such as al-Kindi and al-Farabi not only argued that no conflict existed between reason and revelation ("the work of God and the word of God"), those like Ibn Sina, belonging to the Mu'tazalite school, claimed that the Qur'an was created in time and that Aristotelian reason was the path to revealed truth.

Before the rationalist wave broke against traditionalist outrage in the early 11th century, some Mu'tazalites even proposed to interpret parts of the

Qur'an metaphorically. But while the work of astronomers, mathematicians, chemists, and physicians progressed apace, independent rational inquiry (*ijtihad*) formally ended in caliphal proscription in the reign of al-Qadir (991–1031). *Ijtihad* survived somewhat longer in al-Andalus and was even tolerated by some of the Almohad caliphs. In a book that is avowedly celebratory, it may not surprise us that the fateful "closing of the gates of *ijtihad*" passes as a dutiful observation rather than as an opportunity to explore its immense cultural ramifications. Writing of the deaths within eight years of each other of three of Islam's greatest rationalists — Andalusis al-Bitruji, Ibn Rushd, and Maimonides – Morgan might have made more of their adversity than the understatement that "their deaths mark a passing and the beginning of even more turbulent times to come". [p. 138]

The Mongol tsunami that rolled across Mesopotamia in 1258 killed the last Abbasid caliph, obliterated Baghdad, decimated its population, and wiped the empire from the face of the earth. Two years later, the Mongol steamroller commanded by Hulegu, Genghis Khan's grandson, was stopped against all odds by the Mamluk rulers of Egypt at the battle of Ain Jalut in Palestine. Ain Jalut was "the Battle of Poitiers cubed" in terms of civilisational meaning. The Mongol rupture and the aftermath of relatively short-lived Mongol-Turkic sultanates eventually divided the dar al-Islam into three principal civilisations: Sefavid Persia; Mughal India; and Ottoman Asia Minor and North Africa. Each of these empires was larger, richer, more powerful, architecturally superior, and, arguably, more civilised than the warring, religiously divided nation-states of Europe.

Lost History resumes its endlessly engaging story of scientific, intellectual, and artistic achievements in the grand capitals of Isfahan, Samarkand, Delhi, Maragheh, and Istanbul. From his observatory in Mongolian Azerbaijan, one of the few survivors of Baghdad scans the heavens and calculates precisely the two

equinoxes. Muhammad al-Tusi dedicates his catalog of stars to his master, Hulegu the Ilkhan, tries to square Ptolemy's geocentric universe with observed discrepancies, and leaves to Copernicus' time his influential *Memoir on the Science of Astronomy*. In later times, Portuguese mariners will tack down the African coast in caravels modeled on the Muslim *qarib* with its lateen sails. Ottoman armies will besiege Vienna with Chinese rockets less than a century after capturing Constantinople. To call the 16th century "the century of Suleiman the Magnificent" would not be an overstatement.

In the end, Morgan offers no explanation for the asymmetrical development of Europe and the Muslim world, resulting in the West's primacy, although he seems tempted to stress the importance of the terrible 13th-century Mongol body blow. Yet, from the abundance of his own examples of imperial magnificence and sustained technological achievements well into the 17th century, it seems that substantial recovery after Ain Jalut – such as Muzaffar Iqbal's in his fine theoretical work, *Islam and Science* (1998) – is more likely than not. Michael Hamilton Morgan's *Lost History* leaves us better informed and intellectually stimulated, but still at an explanatory loss. It is clear, though, that he believes that deterministic thinking is the bane of historiography. "History might have taken another course," he hypothesises:

"At that moment of rare equipoise between China, India, the Muslim world, and Europe in the late 15th and 16th centuries, any one of Europe's rivals could have made the same fateful decisions that Spain, Portugal, and England undertook to support voyages of exploration and conquest... Christianity could have become ever more locked in anti-materialism and zealotry; a few blips in royal succession could have brought the Inquisition to England; and Oliver Cromwell could have become the key patron of English political philosophy and not John Locke. In this parallel universe, the Muslim world could have led and

enjoyed the benefits of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment it seeded... This author does not believe there was any inevitability to the rise of the West". [p. 290]

This is a fine antidote to the hubris of our post-9/11 era. Yet, if we cannot predict the past, does that leave us facing a future in which little can ever be said to be certain?

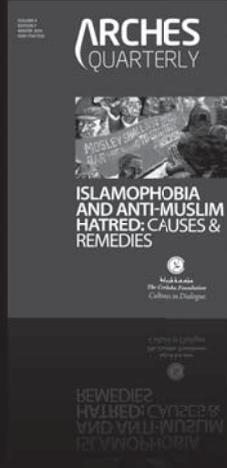
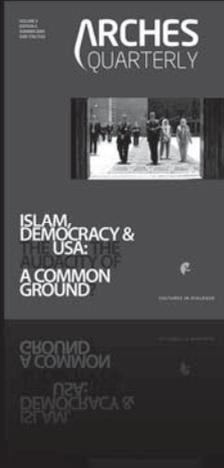
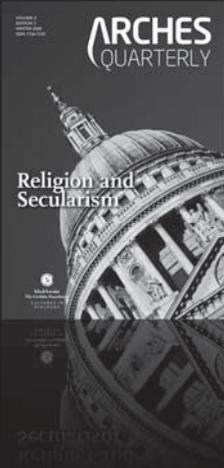
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