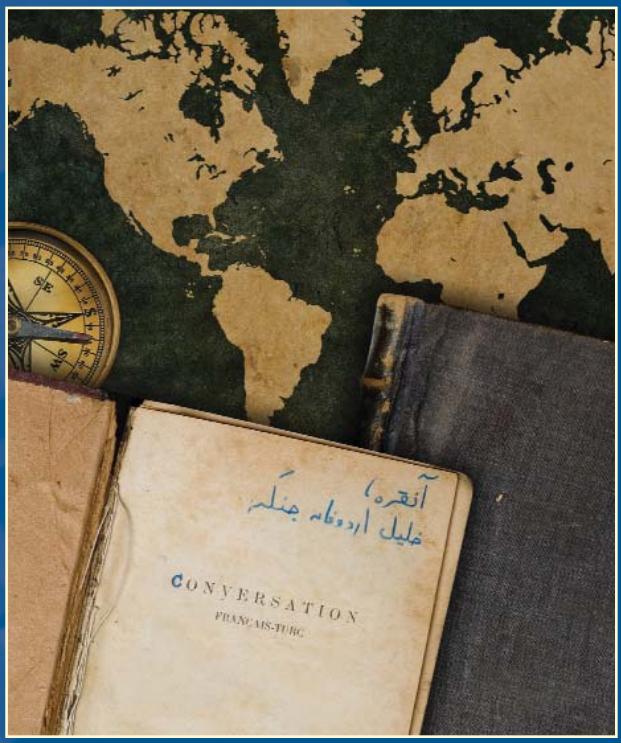
VOLUME 2
EDITION 1
SUMMER 2008
ISSN 1756-7335

ARCHES QUARTERLY



European East and West: Conflict and Continuum

مؤسسة قرطبة
The Cordoba Foundation
CULTURES IN DIALOUGE

IN THIS ISSUE

04 **Alliance of Civilisations** MÁXIMO CAJAL

08 **A Short History of European East West Relations** MURAD W. HOFMANN

11 **Democracy Without Islamists** NEIL HICKS

14 **The Twin Embodiment of Secularism and Islam** PROF. TZVETAN THEOPHANOV

20 **Jihad and Terrorism: A War of the Words** MOAZZAM BEGG

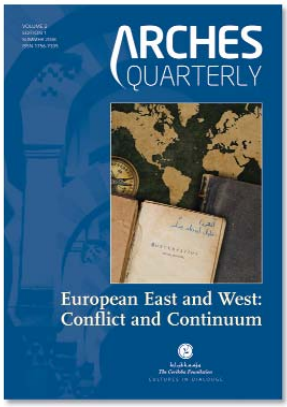
27 **Israel's Independence is Palestinian Catastrophe** PROF. ABDULLAH AL-AHSAN

31 **Police Partnership** DR LAURA ZAHRA MCDONALDS, DR BASIA SPALEK, DR SALWA EL AWA, ROBERT LAMBERT MBE

35 **Salafi and Islamist Londoners** ROBERT LAMBERT MBE

42 **Models of State-Church Relations in Europe and the USA** AHMET ALIBASIÇ

48 **Islamofascism and the 'Chimera of Neutrality'** NASEEM AHMED



THIS ISSUE
Volume 2 • Edition 1
Summer 2008
ISSN 1756-7335

Available online:
thecordobafoundation.com

Arches Quarterly is published by

مؤسسة قرطبة
The Cordoba Foundation

Westgate House, Level 7,
Westgate Road, Ealing, London W5 1YY
Tel 020 8991 3372 Fax 020 8991 3373
info@thecordobafoundation.com
www.thecordobafoundation.com

Submissions of articles and reports for Arches Quarterly should be made by e-mail, in Word format, to the editors: info@thecordobafoundation.com

DISCLAIMER: The views expressed in Arches Quarterly are those of the individual authors and should not be taken to represent a corporate view of The Cordoba Foundation. © The Cordoba Foundation 2008

Anas Altikriti Chief Executive
Abdullah Faliq Managing Editor
S. Alam Associate Editor
Syed Nuh Art Editor

FROM THE Editor

First and foremost, a heartfelt word of gratitude to everyone who contacted or wrote to us with their feedback on the first edition of Arches Quarterly. We are delighted that you enjoyed reading the new-look issue and we continue to hope that it will contribute towards providing a platform for proper analysis and constructive debate on international affairs and issues of strategic importance. We also hope to continue receiving your thoughts and feedback, so that Arches Quarterly remains both policy-relevant and forward-thinking.

This edition aims to further promote positive and open debate and to challenge conventional thinking by exploring European East-West relations and the issues emanating from contacts between the various cultures. Despite reaping the benefits of a mutually-nourishing relationship for centuries, tensions and suspicions of Islam continue to abound in the West today. Who better to address this than the former German diplomat and author of many titles on Islam, Dr Murad Hofmann. This is complimented by another world diplomat and the Spanish Prime Minister's Representative for the Alliance of Civilisations, Máximo Cajal, who provides an interesting report of the achievements and prospects of dialogue on the international arena with a focus, albeit not exclusively, on the Spanish experience.

Other excellent contributions in this edition include Prof. Tzvetan Theophanov (Bulgaria) who analyses current and future trends of secularism and Islam in Europe; Neil Hicks (USA) explores the question of whether there can be democracy without Islamists in the Muslim world; and Ahmet Alibašiç (Bosnia-Herzegovina) surveys the models of state-Church relations in Europe and the USA, explaining their consequences. Whilst Prof. Abdullah Al-Ahsan (Malaysia) equates Israel's 60 years' celebration as a catastrophe for ordinary Palestinians, Moazzam Begg, a former detainee of Guantanamo's notorious Camp Delta, explains the authority and meaning of the Islamic notion of Jihad and how it differs from the modern-day widely-acknowledged concept of terrorism. He gives moving anecdotes from his experience in the various detention camps he had the displeasure of experiencing. Naseem Ahmed critiques the usage of inflammatory terms such as "Islamofascism" and the impact these have on relations between communities.

Finally, a group of academics – Dr Laura McDonald, Dr Basia Spalek, Dr Salwa el Awa and Robert Lambert MBE from Birmingham and Exeter universities – present their preliminary research findings on Police partnerships with British Muslims within the effort of countering terrorism in which Salafis and Islamists in London play a crucial role. The experts also highlight how this important area of work often viewed askance by sections of the community, including so called Muslim experts, hinders and not help remedy the difficulty. We hope all this will make for an interesting read! *Best wishes,*

Abdullah Faliq
MANAGING EDITOR

The Alliance of Civilisations

Máximo Cajal

THE WORLD is approaching a new phase which demands a new global order. The unipolar world which emerged a quarter of a century ago after the fall of the Soviet Union, leaving the United States as the sole world power, is gradually giving rise to new realities. This is so not only because of the rise of new actors on the international scene . There are also other reasons, specifically American, which explain these profound changes: the gradual, and seemingly inevitable, loss of prestige, and the decline of the image of the United States as the great moral reference point of the past. This looming new state of affairs leads us, sooner rather than later, towards a multipolar concert, making it necessary to establish, and abide by, a new set of rules able to guarantee an international scenario built upon more than mere coexistence; a universal framework which ensures harmony between nations. This new order will rest necessarily upon new tenets and new patterns of conduct. Paramount among these is full respect for the international legitimacy of the United Nations, democracy, and human rights.

Otherwise, I think, it will be inconceivable to envisage a multilateral system where different powers –such as the United States of America, the Russian Federation, China, India, Japan, the European Union and, perhaps other nations such as Indonesia, Nigeria, Brazil or Mexico in a foreseeable future – will compete peacefully if they are not guided by an ethical and mutually acceptable model of moral conduct under the aegis of a more democratic and efficient United Nations.

This is not merely a dream, no matter how far-fetched it might sound in light of the prevailing neo-conservative modes of thought in the United States, and even Spain between 1996 and 2004. This new approach deals with the way world problems, especially security ones, should be managed. Two years ago, Francis Fukuyama reminded us in America at the Crossroads of the roots of this arrogant, self-absorbed, and catastrophic approach to international relations, what he defined as "scepticism about the legitimacy and effectiveness of international law and institutions to achieve either security or justice." Consistent with this credo, one among the most conspicuous Spanish neo-cons, Rafael Bardají, published an article in La Razón, on September 12, 2005, under the eloquent title "La farsa de la ONU" ("The UN farce"), where he asserted that the world, in those years, had not become more multipolar, but on the contrary, more unipolar, with the United States at a great distance from the other nations both in terms of power and the exercise of their international responsibilities. Therefore, he concluded, veto rights at the UN Security Council should exclusively belong to Washington.

This neo-conservative, and needless to say, imperialistic approach stands in contrast to the principles put forth by the Alliance of Civilisations. But this proposal, conceived as a rebuttal to the inevitability of Samual Huntington's theory of the Clash of Civilisations, was not a sudden impulse of good will nor just the result of an impassive academic analysis; much less a coup de théâtre. To fully comprehend its significance, this highly political initiative has to be placed within specific and very special historic circumstances; within the domestic and foreign context in which it was born. Otherwise, the step taken by the Spanish Prime Minister before the UN General Assembly, on September 21, 2004, would not be correctly understood. This timeframe covers precisely the twelve months between

March 16, 2003 – when President Bush and Prime Ministers Blair and Aznar met in Azores and when the invasion of Iraq took place three days later–, and March 11, 2004, the day of the terrorist attacks in Madrid. It was also during this year that new ways of combating terrorism were formulated based on the need to face up to this predicament by news means without neglecting, obviously, the unavoidable security concerns.

This particular historical and political background explains why the Alliance of Civilisations has had a clear security dimension since it was established. Suffice it for this purproses, to read its "Concept Paper", the "Terms of reference" for the members of the High Level Group (HLG), and the Report issued by them in Istanbul in November 2006. It is because the security commitment is an essential component of the Alliance of Civilisations' overall approach, that the diagnosis by the HLG entails a strong political message for the community of nations pointing directly, among other issues, at the lasting and unresolved state of affairs in the Middle East and the war in Iraq and in Afghanistan. And if the Report pays special attention to the dangerous divide between Islam and the West -- between Muslim and Western societies -- this is so because this is the one single area of potential conflict that could jeopardise international peace and stability.

But the roots of this initiative, are to be found before March 2004, that is, before the general elections were won by the Socialist Party and, therefore, prior to the withdrawal of the Spanish troops from Iraq in compliance with the Socialist electoral manifesto. This platform also emphasised the urgent necessity of a substantial shift in Spain´s foreign policy and the manner in which international relations had to be approached in the future .It also made recommendations regarding the mapping and regulation of a new global and political environment. These are the seeds of what later became the Alliance of Civilisations. The backbone of this ideological continuity comes down to a handful of moral principles: full support for international law, the need to strengthen the UN system, the rejection of unilateralism, the resort to preventive diplomacy, support for the peaceful resolution of conflicts, and the reinforcement of international peace instruments.

Not surprisingly, this ethical and moral approach happened to be the same that, only a few months later, underpinned Rodríguez Zapatero´s appeal in New York for a new system of values, of rules of international behaviour contrary to those prevailing at that time. He argued that " "Security and peace will only prevail with the strength of the United Nations, the strength of international legality, the strength of human rights, the strength of democracy." In his address, the Spanish Primer Minister was advocating a fair international order, global security and concerted international action in the fight against terrorism, a non-discriminatory implementation of Security Council resolutions, an effective multilateralism and the eradication of the illegitimate use of force as a means to resolve conflicts.

Security, but not at any price. Rodríguez Zapatero set it out at the United Nations:

From thirty years of terrorism we have learned that the risk of a terrorist victory rises sharply when, in order to fight terror, democracy betrays its fundamental nature, governments curtail civil liberties, put judicial guarantees at risk or carry out pre-emptive military operations. This is what our people have learned: that it is legality, democracy and political means and ways what makes us stronger and them weaker.

And, again, at the opening session of the International Conference on Democracy and Terrorism held in Madrid in March 2005:

The fight against terrorism demands from us to develop a moral, intellectual, legal and security framework which strengthens the legitimacy of our efforts. Every State is bound to protects its citizens from terrorism, but they are also bound to do it preserving our rights and liberties.

The enemy we are up against will not be deterred by preventive measures or retaliation, be they pinpointed or massive, because they are ready and willing to kill and die in the name of transcendent causes. Because of this fact, the Alliance of Civilisations seeks to combat terrorism by targeting hearts and the minds; and by trying to understand the underlying sources of this new form of vio-

lence. It is certainly a soft approach to security borne out of the war disasters. It stands in sharp contrast with the strictly militarised approach.

The Alliance of Civilisations is not only a political and global endeavour in the hands of the UN Secretary-General; it is also a results-oriented and an action-oriented enterprise.

This whole ideological structure rests upon a self-evident consideration: the urgent need to restore peace. There is an urgent need to promote a global culture of peace. Because, as Ismail Serageldin, a member of the HLG and director of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina, recently wrote "Without peace there is absolutely nothing; there is no knowledge, no equity, no environment; no nothing"

The Alliance of Civilisations is not only a political and global endeavour in the hands of the UN Secretary-General; it is also a results-oriented and an action-oriented enterprise. This is precisely its added value. This is what makes it different compared to other initiatives. In less than four years, it has come a long way, if I may say so, in increasing both its visibility and its credibility. As of today, 85 countries, the United Kingdom among them, and international organisations, besides the UN itself, have joined in a Group of Friends giving political backing to the initiative -- a number of them provide financial support too. During this period, two successive UN Secretaries-General have strongly supported it. After the launching phase presided over by Kofi Annan, Ban Ki-moon consolidated this process. On April 2007 he appointed Dr. Jorge Sampaio as his High Representative for the Alliance; two months later, Sampaio submitted an Implementation Plan for the years 2007-2009 to the Secretary-General. The Alliance's focus on specific steps was strengthened at the Forum held in Madrid last January. Finally, on March 20 this year, the High Representative presented his annual report to Ban Ki-moon.

At the Madrid Forum, the launch of a series of specific and practical measures was formally announced. Among these projects are the Youth Employment initiative endowed with $100 million; a multi-million dollar Alliance of Civilisation Media Fund; the launch of a Rapid Response Media Mechanism; an On-line Clearing House which launched with the topic of Media Literacy Education, and the North-South network for private foundations and philanthropists. On that occasion, the High Representative signed memoranda of understanding with five multi-lateral agencies and international organisations. Other Forums will be convened in the coming years. Turkey will host the next one in April 2009. Brazil, Qatar, Portugal and Morocco have already expressed their willingness to follow suit in the future.

In 2007, Jorge Sampaio invited those countries forming part of the Group of Friends to present what he called "National Strategies", covering the four fields of action identified by the High Level Group (education, media, youth and immigration). As a result of this demarche, some governments have already promoted these "National Strategies" in order to advance the Alliance's targets on a national level. Spain and New Zealand have already released their "National Plans", as they are called, during the Forum. Albania, Bulgaria, Portugal and Turkey are still working on them. More partners are expected to follow suit. .

Dr.Sampaio also invited the countries members in the Group of Friends to designate "Focal Points" in their capital cities to monitor their national strategies and serve as principal national coordinators for issues related to the Alliance. A network of such "Focal Points" will also be established in order to exchange views and improve cooperation between them. Within the European Union, sixteen members have already appointed their national coordinators, which does not mean that these countries have as yet approved their national strategies or intend to have one at any time. Each nation has placed appointed its coordinator taking into account its administrative structure without losing sight of the problems that the Alliance of Civilisations intends to tackle. In

Spain, at least for the time being, we have assigned the coordinator to the Prime Minister's Office. Here, in the United Kingdom, he presides over the "Prevent Team" in the Counter-Terrorism Department of the FCO.

Before concluding, let me make a short reference to the Spanish Plan Nacional para la Alianza de Civilizaciones, approved by the Council of Ministers on January 11, 2008. My Government decided that the proposal from the High Representative to the members of the Group of Friends deserved a positive response not only for historical, geographic and cultural reasons, but due to urgent security considerations and for the purpose of maintaining political coherence since the Alliance of Civilisations is a Spanish initiative with Prime Minister Rodríguez Zapatero as its co-sponsor, together with his Turkish counterpart, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan. To avoid inevitable problems such as the overlapping of responsibilities among the departments involved in its implementation, the Spanish National Plan addresses four main groups of concrete actions aimed at 1) fostering mutual understanding and appreciation of diversity; at 2) promoting civic values and a culture of peace; at 3) improving the integration and the capacities of immigrants, with particular attention to youth, and 4) the promotion and dissemination of the Alliance of Civilisation initiative as such.

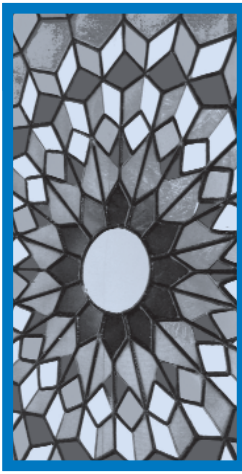
Altogether, 57 measures are set to be reviewed after two years under the supervision of a coordinator responsible for providing the whole package with a strategic vision. The National Coordinator will also be the focal point for ministries engaged in the plan. He will also be in close contact with the Autonomous Communities and the Local Governments, and with the civil society at large. What we are aiming at with the National Plan is "to translate, on a national scale, the specific goals of the Alliance, including them both in its foreign and cooperation policy and in the whole of its domestic policies".

Thank you.

Keynote lecture delivered at a symposium entitled Interculturalism: A Spanish Perspective at the Spanish Embassy in London - 5 June 2008

For more information about the Alliance of Civilisations visit www.unaoc.org

Máximo Cajal, born in Madrid in 1935, is the Prime Minister's Representative for the Alliance of Civilisations. Cajal has been working for the Spanish Diplomatic Service since 1965. His other prominent roles and duties include being the Secretary of the Embassy in Bangkok and Paris; Director General in the Spanish Diplomatic Information Office (1978-1979); Ambassador to Guatemala (1979); Consul General in New York (1981-1983); Ambassador to Sweden (1983-1985); Director General for North American Affairs (1985); Secretary General for Foreign Policy (1985-1988); Ambassador, Permanent Representative to the North Atlantic Council (1990-1991); Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs (1991-1994); Ambassador to France (1994 -1996); Consul General in Lisbon (1997-1999) and Consul General in Montpellier (2001-2002).



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.

Our activities include:

- Structured consultation and advisory services
- Face-to-face interaction with decision-makers and figures of authority
- In-house research
- Workshops, seminars and debates on pertinent issues
- Training and capacity-building
- Periodicals and journals
- Resourceful website

www.thecordobafoundation.com

A Short History of European East West Relations

Murad Wilfried Hofmann

Currently, and for some time now, the world seems to be revolving around North-South issues. This is true for the split between the (over) developed Northern hemisphere represented by the United States and Europe and the underdeveloped Southern hemisphere represented by South America, Africa, and parts of Asia.

The same is true for the more violent confrontation, if not "clash", between the self-professedly enlightened, secularist and agnostic, if not atheist, North and the purportedly "backward and fervently religious" Muslim South.

The preoccupation with the North-South dichotomy is so strong to the extent it has virtually effaced the memory of the historical and equally dangerous East-West conflict as if it had been nothing but a bad dream. Indeed, in historical terms, the East-West conflict, which lasted a mere 72 years - from 1917 to 1989 – was a very short episode if compared to the enduring, millenary North-South confrontation around the Mediterranean.

This is reason enough to retrace some aspects of the history of East-West relations in Europe before they fade away.

In Europe, the notion of a division into West and East dates back to the cultural (rather than political) conflict between the Latin speaking world in the west with Rome as its capital and the Greek/Hellenistic world in the east with Byzantium (Constantinople) as its center. Few would recall that the entire Roman Empire was ruled from the shores of the Bosporus in the part of the east, not from the Tiber, and that from 330, under Constantine I, until 1204 when Constantinople was sacked by the 4th Crusade and barbarically ruled by Venetians until 1261.

During the Middle Ages, while a provincial Rome lost most of its power and importance, Constantinople in the far east with more than a million inhabitants was the largest and most splendid European city. During the reign of Emperor Justinian, Roman Law which is still the basis of civil law in many countries was rewritten. Constantinople witnessed the convening of three ecumenical councils of the Church in 381, 553, and in 869 -70. No wonder that for the early Muslims "Rum" stood only for the Byzantine Empire and its capital city.

The divide that separated Europe into East and West was clearly manifested during the siege of Constantinople by Sultan Mehmet Fatih in 1453. Venetia and the Pope refrained from interfering. Their decision not to dispatch military enforcements stemmed from their belief that a Turkish rule in Eastern Europe was more palatable a Byzantine one. (Steven Runciman, A History of the Crusades, has documented this sad period in continental history.)

Occidental Europeans tend to assume that cultural relations between Western and Eastern Europe have always been a one way street. They can indeed point out that all three Russian tsars called styled "the Great" were from the West or essentially profited from it:

Did Tsar Peter I (1672-1725) not learn his military sciences from Europeans and go west incognito in order to learn industrial techniques as a ship's carpenter in Holland?

Tsarina Catherine I (1729-1796), the enlightened despot who was the driving force behind the modernisation of Russia in the 18th century was a German princess.

Tsar Alexander I (1777-1825) who had influential Swiss tutor and later became pietistic under the spell of Julie de Krüdener, née von Vietinghof.

All these are uncontested facts. But one can easily make a case in reverse by retracing the influence of Russian art, especially in connection with ballet, on Europe from the 20th century onwards.

When Serge Diaghileff (1872-1929) with his Ballets Russes came to Paris, introducing stars like Vas-lav Nijinsky, Anna Pavlova, and Tamara Karsavina in ballets choreographed by Michel Fokine and Bronislava Nijinska like The Dying Swan, Carnaval, The Firebird, Petrouchka, Polovetzian Dances, Schéhérazade, Spectre de la Rose or Les Sylphides, Westerners were mesmirsed by the dancing skills, theatrical quality, magnificently decorated and costumed, and above all by Léon Bakst.

In fact, from then on a constant stream of great Russian ballet artists introduced the rest of the world to their art. George Balanchine (New York), Eugenia Eduardova (Berlin), Mathilda Kchessinska (Paris), Serge Lifar (Paris), Nicholas Legat (London), Leonid Massine (Monte Carlo), Alice Nikitina (Monte Carlo), Olga Preobrajenska (Paris).

Their influence was matched by that of Russian composers such as Igor Stravinsky's whose ballet scores (Agon, Firebird, Orpheus, Petrouchka, Sacre) remain unequalled.

The ideological East-West conflict between the Marxist-Leninist world east of the Iron Curtain and the free, capitalist, consumer-oriented and Americanised Western world, short as it was, nevertheless obscured the former cultural integration of eastern and western Europe.

Thus people still overlook the fact neither Berlin nor Vienna is located in Western Europe. Their natural "hinterland" is Poland, Hungary, and the western Ukraine, respectively. Eastern Europe is their traditional export market and German lingua franca originated there. True, the integration of Western Germany into the Western European Union and into NATO, in the 1950s obscured this geographic fact.

The following five cultural and intellectual centers boast of a Europeanism whose influence had far-reaching implications for the rest of Europe.

Cracow in Southern Poland, founded in 700 and a bishopric since 1000, became the residence of the kings of Poland in 1320. It boasts a Gothic cathedral, carvings by Veit Stoss, and a university founded in 1364, with Copernicus as one of its students.

The strict divide between Eastern and Western Europe during the cold war has led many to wrongly assume that Communism originated in Eastern Europe.

Czestochowa in Southern Poland is a world famous center of pilgrimage to "Our Lady of Czestochowa" considered the eternal Queen of Poland.

Danzig (Gdansk), first mentioned in 997, became a member of the Hanseatic League in the 13th century and is famous for its (reconstructed) Gothic St. Mary's cathedral (1343) and town hall (1379).

Königsberg (Kaliningrad), founded in 1255 by the Teutonic Knights (and their seat since 1457), also joined the Hanseatic League (1340) and became the coronation city of the kings of Prussia. The great German philosopher Immanuel Kant was born there and taught and published his influential Critiques in that city.

Lvov (Lemberg) in the West Ukrainian Carpathian region which was founded in 1250 and with a university established in 1661, was the Austrian capital of Galicia. Muhammad Asad was born there as Leopold Weiss in 1900 among the city's 100.000 highly-cultured Jewish inhabitants.

The strict divide between Eastern and Western Europe during the cold war has led many to wrongly assume that Communism originated in Eastern Europe.

Communism, both as historical materialism (HISTOMAT) and dialectical materialism (DIAMAT), originated in Western

Europe and was developed by with Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, who were both heavily indebted to Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel and Ludwig Andreas Feuerbach. Even the first Russian socialists, including Mikhail Bakunin, the anarchist, and Vladimir Ilych Lenin, the Bolshevik, were exposed to, and active in, the West prior to their legacies on Russian soil.

In fact, Lenin's theoretical contribution - including his analysis of imperialism - was quite limited and Stalin's bulky output altogether negligible.

Bolshevism might have never assumed power in St Petersburg if the German Army during World War I had not shipped Lenin from his asylum in Zürich all the way to Russia with the justified expectation that he would torpedo the Russian war effort. In turn, Hitler's Wehrmacht would have been less effective in 1939 had it not been able secretly to rearm in Russia with the very heavy weaponry they were banned from using according to the provisions of the Versailles Peace Treaty.

Wherever Communism-Leninism was imposed by Soviet force after World War II, as in Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East-Germany, Hungary, and Poland, all sympathy for economic collectivism disappeared overnight. Only atheism remains a surviving legacy in East Germany.

The frightening story of mutually assured nuclear destruction as an informally agreed NATO-Warsaw Pact strategy is a further example of the East-West nexus in Europe.

The nuclear age began with American atomic bombs with a yield of 20 kt being dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, after Moscow went nuclear with megaton intercontinental missiles which marked its entry into the phase of "mutually assured destruction".

During that period, on the one hand, each side tried secretly to develop smaller (battle field) nuclear devices, i.e. more precise and "cleaner" sub-megaton weapons. On the other hand, both sides for the purposes of deterrence, not only tried to impress the other one with what it had but, for obvious reasons, even offered its own technologies for preventing the unauthorised use of nuclear armament.

Consequently, both sides were interested in ensuring the other side remained vulnerable. For that reason, a scheme like the American Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI) under President Reagen, while purely defensive in theory, was extremely destabilizing in practice - to the point of being strategically provocative. SDS might never have worked. But in nuclear strategy mere bluffing can be fatal.

Clearly both the NATO and Warsaw Pact wanted the nuclear threshold to be so high as to ensure that nuclear war became virtually unthinkable. At the same time, they were afraid that this would destroy the very deterring effect that might have ensured peace. Equally frustrating was the dilemma that smaller and cleaner nuclear weapons, including neutron ones, while considerably reducing damage on the ground, might unacceptably increase the likelihood of nuclear employment.

Strategists on both sides, through the technique of war gaming, tried hard to put themselves in the other side's shoes in order to anticipate how they would interpret signals and act in a particular situation: "If they know that I know that they know..."

The end result was Kafkaesque. But it proved, and this is the point to be made here, that East and West even during the Cold War willy nilly embraced each other.

Murad Wilfried Hofmann was born in Aschaffenburg near Frankfurt in 1931. His university studies of German and American law began at Union College in Schenectady, New York, and concluded at Harvard Law School in Cambridge, Massachusetts. From 1961 - 1994, he worked in the German Foreign Service, including as information director of NATO and as ambassador in Algiers and Rabat. In 1980 Hofmann accepted Islam. Among his books, available in German, English, and Arabic, include "Diary of a German Muslim", "Islam: The Alternative", "Voyage to Makkah", "Religion on the Rise - Islam in the 3rd Millennium", "Islam and Qur'an", and a translation of the Qur'an into German.

Democracy Without Islamists – Case Studies in the Middle East and Beyond

Neil Hicks

The Bush administration's freedom agenda with its stated goal of advancing "the non-negotiable demands of human dignity," especially in the Middle East, lies in ruins as President Bush's second term in office draws to a close. There will be many analyses and post-mortems to examine why the promised clean break from the failed U.S. policies of the past has not produced the desired results. Indeed the obituaries have already begun to appear as the now all too familiar controversies and scandals of U.S. policies in the region have mounted up, from the Iraq invasion through Abu Ghuraib, Guantanamo, acquiescence to the Israeli bombardment of Lebanon and so on. While it is obvious that these missteps and disasters have undermined U.S. efforts to promote democracy and human rights in the region, we should not lose sight of some still unresolved policy challenges that will confront the next administration, and indeed all of those who would wish to see greater respect for basic rights and freedoms in the region.

Chief among these challenges is the vexed question of what to do about popular Islamist political movements and parties that are likely to be the primary beneficiaries of democratic openings in currently authoritarian countries, but which have ambiguous or even hostile positions on human rights issues.

Many commentators have observed a waning enthusiasm for promoting democracy in the Arab world on the part of the Bush administration since the autumn of 2005, notwithstanding the sustained rhetorical emphasis on the "freedom agenda" that remains part of the discourse of senior administration officials, including the President himself, to this day.

The events that precipitated this reversion to the traditional U.S. preference for the "stability" of familiar friendly authoritarian rulers have credibly been identified as the strong electoral performance of Islamist political movements in parliamentary elections in late 2005 and early 2006. The 88 seats secured by the Muslim Brotherhood, running as independents in Egypt's November 2005 parliamentary elections, reinforced widely held beliefs that if free and fair elections were to be held in Egypt the Brotherhood may well emerge as the party with the majority of seats in parliament. The electoral victory of Hamas in the January 2006 Palestinian parliamentary elections required no hypothetical speculation about what might happen in free elections. The Palestinian elections were widely praised for their fairness and may even be said to have been the most inclusive, transparent and free elections ever held for an Arab national parliament.

The Palestinian results were a particular blow to the apparent American belief that elections would produce outcomes in accordance with U.S. policy preferences. Hamas was emphatically not the U.S. choice for governing party in the Palestinian Authority and the administration has spent the ensuing months and years seeking to reverse the unwanted electoral result, with disastrous consequences for Palestinians who have been plunged into an unresolved inter-factional conflict.

As the luster of Arab democracy has faded in Washington, commentators have been swift to add the Lebanese elections of June 2005, which produced a strong showing for Hizbullah, to the list of electoral missteps. Even the Iraqi legislative

elections of December 2005, hailed at the time as irrefutable proof of the Iraqi people's commitment to democracy, are now often denounced as having contributed to the exacerbation of ethnic and sectarian tensions in Iraq.

Anti-democratic leaders can exploit the democratic process to bring about tyranny.

Given the problematic outcomes of recent elections in the Arab world, from the perspective of U.S. interests and preferences, it is perhaps surprising that a commitment to promoting democracy in the region remains part of the policy proposals of both leading candidates for the U.S. presidency, but it does. The Bush administration's recognition that "sixty years of Western nations excusing and accommodating the lack of freedom in the Middle East did nothing to make us safe," will be part of the Bush administration's legacy in U.S. foreign policy, and it may yet prove to be a valuable one.

For U.S. statements favoring transitions away from autocracy in the region to be translated into positive change on the ground will clearly require a more thoughtful approach from all those who favor such change. Algeria in 1991 and the Palestinian Authority in 2006 should teach us that holding elections in which Islamist political parties are permitted to compete and in which they do well, and then attempting to reverse the results through undemocratic means is the worst possible policy option.

This begs the question: what are the available policy options? One option, which would entrench the status quo in most Arab countries, would be to continue to censure and even exclude Islamist political parties from participation in elections. The disadvantages of this approach are well known. Firstly, an electoral process in which popular political movements, in some cases movements that represent the majority of the electorate, are excluded, can hardly be recognised as democratic; Secondly, discouraging Islamist political movements from participation in electoral politics strengthens those within such movements who favor non-democratic strategies to gain power, thereby fueling political violence and extremism.

These are the processes which the Bush administration correctly notes "have not made us safe," and it should be added they are the processes that have entrenched a self-perpetuating circle of contention between repressive "autocrats" and violent, extreme "theocrats" (to borrow the terminology of Saad Eddin Ibrahim) that have ossified political development throughout much of the region for decades.

It would, however, be naïve to suggest that the inclusion of Islamist political movements into electoral processes will automatically result in democratic progress in a broad sense. Popular Islamist political movements in many countries continue to espouse policies that are either hostile to or ambiguous about what may be called democratic freedoms; these include such core issues as women's rights, freedom of speech, religious tolerance and even the perpetuation of governance representative of the free choice of the electorate.

Wide sectors of Middle Eastern societies continue to be suspicious and distrustful of the motives of Islamist political movements, and condone and even encourage official repression and marginalization of such movements as an acceptable price to pay for the preservation of rights and freedoms they fear would be threatened by an Islamist government.

Islamist parties that have participated most successfully in the electoral processes of their countries, with Turkey's AKP (Justice and Development Party) as perhaps the prime example, have recognized the importance of responding to the concerns of those parts of the electorate who do not share their views by making clear their commitment to constitutionally protected rights and freedoms, and in Turkey's case, by advancing liberal reform processes required for Turkey to

meet the accession requirements to become a member of the European Union.

An unequivocal commitment to respect the processes of constitutional government and legal guarantees of basic rights and freedoms, far from being a concession, should be seen by Islamist political movements as a highly beneficial step on the path to power. It can help to avert the type of extra-constitutional interference in the political process that had been a feature of Turkey's political life in the last few decades, and which have been common throughout the region. Failure to make such a commitment provides self-interested, authoritarian governments with the pretext to continue to block Islamist participation and erodes the consent of those who are not supporters of Islamist parties – consent that will be essential to the success of any Islamist government that may achieve power.

History has repeatedly reminded us that elections alone are insufficient to guarantee democracy. Anti-democratic leaders can exploit the democratic process to bring about tyranny. It is important to make the distinction between democratic processes and measurable outcomes in terms of the protection and promotion of the human rights and basic freedoms that are an integral part of democracy in its full sense.

Democracy will not be jeopardized by elections in states with strong internal safeguards for the rule of law and basic freedoms. A strong, independent judiciary, a system of checks and balances between the various branches of government, a free press, and strong and independent civil society organisations are all vital safeguards of democracy that are lacking or still weak in many countries of the region. Promoting democracy in the region necessitates enacting such laws, championing the cause of civil society organisations and supporting freedoms of expression on both the national and regional levels.

Regional organisations have a key role to play in promoting the development of democratic institutions. The development of regional legal and human rights norms that complement and reinforce international standards can refute claims that universal democratic values are somehow alien or inauthentic to Arab or Islamic cultures. Again, the Middle East region lags far behind other regions in its regional mechanisms for promoting human rights and democratic values. This is a shortcoming that must be tackled if a regional climate conducive to the development of democratic governance is to emerge.

Generalisations about Islamist political movements should be avoided since they differ in their views and mode of operation even more than the diverse country contexts in which they exist and operate. The debate about promoting democracy in the Middle East is often not advanced by undue focus on the peculiarities of Islamist political movements as compared to popular opposition movements in many other parts of the world. Those who support such movements as the Muslim Brotherhood-a support that reflects, among other things, opposition to the failings of existing governing elites, and concern about a wide variety of global trends, including the ascendancy of unilateral U.S. power-, are not dissimilar to those in Latin America who vote for populist neo-socialist movements in Venezuela or Bolivia, or those in South Korea who protest U.S. beef imports, or even those in Ireland who voted against the Lisbon Treaty.

The democratic response to all such movements, which may or may not pose a threat to democratic values, is not exclusion or repression. Such a repressive response is guaranteed to transform them into a threat to democracy. The alternative is for governments to institutionalise the proper safeguards to entrench the rule of law and basic rights freedoms against any threat that may be delivered by the ballot box.

Neil Hicks is International Policy Advisor at Human Rights First in New York, where he has worked since 1991. He is a graduate of the School of Oriental Studies of the University of Durham and of the Arabic Language Unit of the American University in Cairo. He worked as researcher on Egypt for Amnesty International in London (1985-1991) and was a Senior Fellow at the United States Institute of Peace (2000–2001).

The Twin Embodiment of Secularism and Islam in Europe: Analysis of Current and Future Trends

Professor Tzvetan Theophanov

THE PROGRESSIVE, though highly uneven, secularisation of Europe is an undeniable social fact.[1] An increasing majority of the European population has ceased to participate in traditional religious practices, at least on a regular basis, while still maintaining relatively high levels of private individual religious beliefs. In this respect, one should perhaps talk of the de-churching of the European population and of religious individualisation, rather than of secularisation. Grace Davie has characterised this general European situation as "believing without belonging".[2] At the same time, however, large numbers of Europeans, even in the most secular countries, still identify themselves as "Christian," pointing to an implicit, diffused, and submerged Christian cultural identity. In this sense, Danièle Hervieu-Léger is also correct when she offers the reverse characterisation of the European situation as "belonging without believing."[3] "Secular" and "Christian" cultural identities are intertwined in complex and rarely verbalised modes among most Europeans.

The most interesting issue sociologically is not the fact of progressive religious decline among the European population, but the fact that this decline is interpreted through the lenses of the secularisation paradigm and is, therefore, accompanied by a "secularist" self-understanding that interprets the decline as "normal" and "progressive", that is, as a quasi-normative consequence of being a "modern" and "enlightened" European. It is this "secular" identity shared by European elites and ordinary people alike that paradoxically turns "religion" and the barely submerged Christian European identity into a thorny and perplexing issue when it comes to delimiting the external geographic boundaries and to defining the internal cultural identity of a European Union in the process of being constituted.

Although the proportion of foreign immigrants in many European countries (Britain, France, Holland, West Germany before reunification), at approximately 10 percent, is similar to the proportion of foreigners born in the United States, most of these countries still have difficulty viewing themselves as permanent immigrant societies or viewing the native second generation as nationals, irrespective of their legal status. But it is in the different ways in which they try to accommodate and regulate immigrant religions, particularly Islam, that European societies distinguish themselves not only from the United States but also from one another. European societies have markedly different institutional and legal structures regarding religious associations, very diverse policies of state recognition, of state regulation, and of state aid to religious groups, as well as diverse norms concerning when and where one may publicly express religious beliefs and practices.

In their dealing with immigrant religions, European countries, like the United States, tend to replicate their particular model of separation of church and state and the patterns of regulation of their own religious minorities. France's etatist secularist model and the political culture of laïcité require the strict privatisation of religion, eliminating religion from any public forum, while at the same time pressuring religious groups to organise themselves into a single centralised church-like institutional structure that can be regulated by, and serve as interlocutor, to the state, following the traditional model of the concordat with the Catholic Church. Great Britain, by contrast, while maintaining the established Church of

England, allows greater freedom of religious associations which deal directly with local authorities and school governing bodies to press for changes in religious education, diet, etc, with little direct appeal to the central government.

Germany, following the multi-establishment model[4], has tried to organise a quasi-official Islamic institution, at times in conjunction with parallel strivings on the part of the Turkish state to regulate its diaspora. But the internal divisions among immigrants from Turkey and the public expression and mobilisation of competing identities (secular and Muslim, Alevi, and Kurd) in the German democratic context have undermined any project of institutionalisation from above. Holland, following its traditional pattern of pillarisation[5], seemed, until very recently at least, bent on establishing a state-regulated but self-organized separate Muslim pillar. Lately, however, even liberal tolerant Holland is expressing second thoughts and seems ready to pass more restrictive legislations setting clear limits to the kinds of un-European, un-modern norms and habits it is willing to tolerate.[6]

If one looks at the European Union as a whole, however, there are two fundamental differences with the situation in the United States. In the first place, in Europe immigration and Islam are almost synonymous. The overwhelming majority of immigrants in most European countries, the UK being the main exception, are Muslims and the overwhelming majority of western European Muslims are immigrants. This identification appears even more pronounced in those cases when the majority of Muslim immigrants tend to come predominantly from a single region of origin, e.g. Turkey in the case of Germany, the Maghreb in the case of France. This entails a superimposition of different dimensions of "otherness" that exacerbates issues of boundaries, accommodation and incorporation. The immigrant, the religious, the racial, and the socio-economic underprivileged "other" all tend to coincide.

In the United States, by contrast, Muslims constitute at most 10 percent of all new immigrants, a figure that is actually likely to decrease given the strict restrictions on Arab and Muslim immigration imposed after September 11 by the increasingly repressive American security state. Since the US Census Bureau, the Immigration and Naturalisation Service, and other government agencies are not allowed to gather information on religion; there are no reliable estimates on the number of Muslims in the United States.[7] Available estimates range widely between 2,8 million and 8 million. Moreover, it is estimated that 30 to 42 percent of all Muslims in the United States are African-American converts to Islam, making more difficult the characterisation of Islam as a foreign, un-American religion.

Furthermore, the Muslim immigrant communities in the United Sates are extremely diverse in terms of geographic region of origin, in terms of discursive Islamic traditions, and in terms of socio-economic characteristics. As a result, the dynamics of interaction with other Muslim immigrants, with African-American Muslims, with non-Muslim immigrants from the same regions of origin, and with their immediate American hosts, depending upon socio-economic characteristics and residential patterns, are much more complex and diverse than anything one finds in Europe.

The second main difference has to do with the role of religion and religious group identities in public life and in the organisation of civil society. Internal differences notwithstanding, western European societies are deeply secular societies, shaped by the hegemonic knowledge regime of secularism. As liberal democratic societies, they tolerate and respect individual religious freedom. But due to the pressure towards the privatisation of religion, which among European societies has become a taken-for-granted characteristic of the self-definition of a modern secular society, those societies have a much greater difficulty in recognising some legitimate role for religion in public life and in the organisation and mobilisation of collective group identities. Muslim organised collective identities and their public representations become a source of anxiety not only because of their religious otherness as a non-Christian and non-European religion, but more importantly because of

Cardinal of Bologna…declared that Italy should welcome immigrants of all races and regions of the world, but should particularly select Catholic immigrants in order to preserve the Catholic identity.

their religiousness itself as the "other" of European secularity. In this context, the temptation to identify Islam and fundamentalism becomes more pronounced. Islam, by definition, becomes the other of Western secular modernity. Therefore, the problems posed by the incorporation of Muslim immigrants become, consciously or unconsciously, associated with seemingly related and vexatious issues concerning the role of religion in the public sphere, a dilemma which European societies assumed they had already solved according to the liberal secular norm of privatisation of religion.

By contrast, Americans are demonstrably more religious than the Europeans and, therefore, there is a certain pressure for immigrants to conform to American religious norms.[8] It is generally the case that immigrants in America tend to be more religious than they were in their home countries. But even more significantly, today as in the past, religion and public religious denominational identities play an important role in the process of incorporation of the new immigrants. The thesis of Will Herberg concerning the old European immigrant, that "not only was he expected to retain his old religion, as he was not expected to retain his old language or nationality, but such was the shape of America that it was largely in and through religion that he, or rather his children and grandchildren, found an identifiable place in American life," is still valid for new immigrants.[9] The thesis implies that collective religious identities have been one of the primary ways of structuring internal societal pluralism in American history.

One should add, as a corrective to the thesis, that not only religion, as Herberg's study would seem to imply, nor race, as contemporary immigration studies tend to argue, but a combination of religion and race and their complex entanglements which have served to structure the American experience of immigrant incorporation, and indeed form the basis of "American exceptionalism". Today, once again, we are witnessing various types of collision and collusion between religious identity formation and racial identity formation, processes that are likely to have significant repercussions for the present and future organisation of American multiculturalism. Religion and race are becoming, once again, the two critical markers identifying the new immigrants either as assimilable or as suspiciously "alien".

Due to the corrosive logic of racialisation, so pervasive in American society, the dynamics of religious identity formation assume a double positive form in the process of immigrant incorporation. Given the institutionalised acceptance of religious pluralism, the affirmation of religious identities is enhanced among the new immigrants. This positive affirmation is reinforced, moreover, by what appears to be a common defensive reaction by most immigrant groups against ascribed racialisation, particularly against the stigma of racial darkness. In this respect, religious and racial self-identifications and ascriptions represent alternative ways of organising American multiculturalism. One of the obvious advantages of religious pluralism over racial pluralism is that, under proper constitutional institutionalisation, it is more reconcilable with principled equality and non-hierachic diversity, and, therefore, with genuine multiculturalism.

American society is entering a new phase. The traditional model of assimilation, turning European nationals into American "ethnics", can no longer serve as a model of assimilation now that immigration is a worldwide phenomenon. America is bound to become "the first new global society" made up of all world religions and civilisations, at a time when religious civilisational identities are regaining prominence on the global stage. At the very same moment that political scientists like Samuel Huntington

are announcing the impending clash of civilisations in global politics, a new experiment in intercivilisational encounters and accommodation between all the world religions is taking place at home.[10] American religious pluralism is expanding and incorporating all the world religions in the same way as it previously incorporated the religions of the old immigrants. A complex process of mutual accommodation is taking place. Like Catholicism and Judaism before, other world religions, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism are being "Americanised" and, in the process, they are transforming American religion, while the religious diasporas in America are simultaneously serving as catalysts for the transformation of the old religions in their civilisational homes, in the same way as American Catholicism had an impact upon the transformation of world Catholicism and American Judaism which transformed world Judaism.

This process of institutionalisation of expanding religious pluralism is facilitated by the dual clause of the First Amendment which guarantees the "no establishment" of religion at the state level, and therefore the strict separation of church and state and the genuine neutrality of the secular state, as well as the "free exercise" of religion in civil society, that includes strict restrictions on state intervention and on the administrative regulation of the religious field. It is this combination of a rigidly secular state and the constitutionally protected free exercise of religion in society that distinguishes the American institutional context from the European one.

In Europe, one finds, on the one extreme, the case of France, where a secularist state not only restricts and regulates the exercise of religion in society but actually imposes upon society its republican ideology of laïcité, and, on the other, the case of England, where an established state church is compatible with a wide toleration of religious minorities and a relatively unregulated free exercise of religion in society.

As liberal democratic systems, all European societies respect the private exercise of religion, including Islam, as an individual human right. It is the public and collective free exercise of Islam as an immigrant religion that most European societies find difficult to tolerate precisely on the grounds that Islam is perceived as an "un-European" religion. The stated rationales for considering Islam "un-European" vary significantly across Europe and among social and political groups. For the anti-immigrant, xenophobic, nationalist Right, represented by Le Pen's discourse in France and by Jörg Haider in Austria, the message is straightforward; Islam is unwelcome and un-assimilable simply because it is a "foreign" immigrant religion. Such a nativist and usually racist attitude can be differentiated clearly from the conservative "Catholic" position, paradigmatically expressed by the Cardinal of Bologna when he declared that Italy should welcome immigrants of all races and regions of the world, but should particularly select Catholic immigrants in order to preserve the Catholic identity of the country.

Liberal secular Europeans tend to look askance at such blatant expressions of racist bigotry and religious intolerance. But when it comes to Islam, secular Europeans tend to reveal the limits and prejudices of modern secularist toleration. One is not likely to hear among liberal politicians and secular intellectuals explicitly xenophobic or anti-religious statements. The politically correct formulation tends to run along such lines as "we welcome each and all immigrants irrespective of race or religion as long as they are willing to respect and accept our modern liberal secular European norms". The explicit articulation of those norms may vary from country to country. The controversies over the Muslim veil in so many European societies and the overwhelming support among the French citizenry, including apparently a majority of French Muslims, for the recently passed restrictive legislation prohibiting the wearing of Muslim veils and other ostensibly religious symbols in public schools, as "a threat to national cohesion", may be an extreme example of illiberal secularism. But in fact one sees similar trends of restrictive legislation directed at immigrant Muslims in liberal Holland, precisely in the name of protecting its liberal tolerant traditions from the threat of illiberal, fundamentalist, patriar-

chal customs reproduced and transmitted to the younger generation by Muslim immigrants.

Revealingly enough, Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin, in his address before the French legislature defending the banning of ostensibly religious symbols in public schools, made reference in the same breath to France as "the old land of Christianity" and to the inviolable principle of laïcité, exhorting Islam to adapt itself to the principle of secularism as all other religions of France have done before. "For the most recently arrived, I'm speaking here of Islam, secularism is a chance, the chance to be a religion of France."[11] The Islamic veil and other religious signs are justifiably banned from public schools, he added, because "they are taking on a political meaning", while according to the secularist principle of privatisation of religion, "religion cannot be a political project". Time will tell whether the restrictive legislation will have the intended effect of stopping the spread of "radical Islam" or whether it is likely to bring forth the opposite result of radicalising further an already alienated and maladjusted immigrant community.

The positive rationale one hears among liberals in support of such illiberal restriction of the free exercise of religion is usually put in terms of the desirable enforced emancipation of young girls, if necessary against their expressed will, from gender discrimination and from patriarchal control. This was the discourse on which the assassinated liberal politician Pim Fortuyn built his electorally successful anti-immigrant platform in liberal Holland, a campaign which is now bearing fruit in the form of new restrictive legislations. While conservative religious people are expected to tolerate behaviour they may consider morally abhorrent such as homosexuality, liberal secular Europeans are openly stating that European societies ought not to tolerate religious behaviour or cultural customs that are morally abhorrent in so far as they are contrary to modern liberal secular European norms. What makes the intolerant tyranny of the secular liberal majority justifiable in principle is not just the democratic principle of majority rule, but rather the secularist teleological assumption built into theories of modernisation that one set of norms is reactionary, fundamentalist, and anti-modern, while the other set is progressive, liberal, and modern.

Does one need references to God or to Europe's Christian heritage in the new European constitution or does Europe need a new secular "civil religion" based on Enlightenment principles?

Strictly speaking, modern constitutions do not need transcendent references nor is there much empirical evidence for the functionalist argument that the normative integration of modern differentiated societies requires some kind of "civil religion". In principle, there are three possible ways of addressing the quarrels provoked by the wording of the Preamble to the new European Constitution. The first option would be to avoid any controversy by relinquishing altogether the very project of drafting a self-defining preamble explaining to the world the political rationale and identity of the European Union. But such an option would be self-defeating in so far as the main rationale and purpose of drafting a new European constitution appears to be an extra-legal one, namely to contribute to European social integration, to enhance a common European identity, and to remedy the deficit in democratic legitimacy.[12]

A second alternative would be the mere enumeration of the basic common values that constitute the European "overlapping consensus", either as self-evident truths or as a social fact, without entering into the more controversial attempt to establish the normative foundation or to trace the genealogy of those European values. This was the option chosen by the signatories of the Declaration of American Independence when they proclaimed "We Hold These Truths To Be Self-Evident". But the strong rhetorical effect of this memorable phrase was predicated on the taken-for-granted belief in a Creator God who had endowed humans with inalienable rights, a belief shared by republican deists, Establishmentarian Protestants, and radical-pietist sectarians alike. In our post-Christian and post-modern context, it is not that simple to conjure such self-evident

"truths" that require no discursive grounding. The 2000 Solemn Proclamation of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union attempts to produce a similar effect with its opening paragraph:

"Conscious of its spiritual and moral heritage, the Union is founded on the indivisible, universal values of human dignity, freedom, equality, and solidarity."

But the proclamation of those values as a basic social fact, as the common normative framework shared by most Europeans, could hardly have the desired effect of grounding a common European political identity. It simply reiterates the already existing declarations of most national European constitutions, of the 1950 European Convention on Human Rights, and most importantly of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations. Without addressing explicitly the thorny question of Europe's "spiritual and moral heritage" and its disputed role in the genesis of those supposedly "universal values", it is unlikely that such a proclamation can have the desired effect of inscribing those values as uniquely, particularly, or simply poignantly "European".

The final and more responsible option would be to face the difficult and polemical task of defining through open and public debate the political identity of the new European Union: Who are we? Where do we come from? What constitutes our spiritual and moral heritage and the boundaries of our collective identities? How flexible internally and how open externally should those boundaries be? This would be under any circumstance an enormously complex task that would entail addressing and coming to terms with the many problematic and contradictory aspects of the European heritage in its intra-national, inter-European, and global-colonial dimensions. But such a complex task is made the more difficult by secularist prejudices that preclude not only a critical yet honest and reflexive assessment of the Judeo-Christian heritage, but even any public official reference to such a heritage, on the grounds that any reference to religion could be divisive and counterproductive, or simply violates secular postulates.

Prof Dr Tzvetan Theopanov is Vice-Dean of the Faculty of Classical and Modern Philology and Head Department of Arabic and Semitic Studies at Sofia University St. Kliment Ochridski. He has authored several books on Islamic civilisation and has numerous articles on Islam and the situation of Muslims in Europe. He is the academic translator of the Holy Qur'an into Bulgarian.

ENDNOTES

1. Religion and its practice form an imporant part of the German Constitution. According to the Constitution of Germany, freedom of faith and religion is guaranteed to every individual. Discrimination based on difference of religious opinion is prohibited by the Constitution.

2. 'Pillarisation' - the structuring of society into organisational complexes that promote social functions and activities on a religious or ideological basis. The core of a pillar may be a church or a political party.

3. Martin, Cf. David (1978). A General Theory of Secularization, London; and Andrew Greeley, Religion in Modern Europe at the End of the Second Millennium, London 2003.

4. Davie, Grace (1994). Religion in Britain Since 1945: Believing without Belonging, Oxford, and Religion in Modern Europe: A Memory Mutates, Oxford 2000.

5. Danièle Hervieu-Léger, "Religion und sozialer Zusammenhalt", Transit 26 (2003/2004).

6. Bulgaria is the only European Union nation where Muslims' share is as high as 12 percent (according to the most recent census of the population from year 2001). During the last 15 years, after the democratisation process in the regions inhabited by Muslim population, there has been an intense revival of Islam. Grounded in global shifts, this process is equally influenced by local traditions and ethno-cultural characteristics of the communities which subscribe to Islam. As a direct consequence of the restored civil rights and religious freedoms in Bulgaria, similar to other countries of Eastern Europe, there has been a process of reversion to religious roots. In that process, the revival of Islam is closely linked to the historical, cultural and doctrinal peculiarities of Islam itself.

7. Leonard, Karen Isaksen (2003). Leonard, Muslims in the United States. The State of Research, New York.

8. Casanova, José (2003). "Beyond European and American Exceptionalisms: Towards a Global Perspective," in G. Davie, P. Heelas, and L. Woodhead, eds., Predicting Religion, Aldershot.

9. Herberg, Will (1983). Herberg, Protestant-Catholic-Jew, Chicago, 27-8.

10. Indeed, one of the most questionable aspects of Huntington's thesis is his nativist, anti-immigrant, and anti-multi-culturalist posture in order to protect the supposedly Western civilizational purity of the United States from hybridization.

11. Sciolino, Elaine. "Debate Begins in France on Religion in the Schools", New York Times, 4 February 2004.

12. This point was forcefully made by Dieter Grimm at his keynote address, "Integration by Constitution – Juridical and Symbolic Perspectives of the European Constitution", at the Conference "Toward the Union of Europe – Cultural and Legal Ramifications", at New School University, New York, 5 March 2004.

Jihad and Terrorism: A War of the Words

Moazzam Begg

DURING MY YEARS of incarceration at Bagram and Guantánamo Bay, I was interrogated well over 300 times. One of those interrogations, by the CIA, in my third year of US captivity, I still recall with a sense of amusement. The agent insisted on repeating the word 'terrorist' when referring to me. Nothing new, I thought. Then, he used an Algebraic equation to prove his rather puerile point in trying to get me to cooperate. "Your equation is X+Y=Z," he said as he wrote out his findings. "'X' is you, 'Y' is your non-cooperation and 'Z' is terrorist – a terrorist who will stay here for a very long time." After three years of this sort of thing, I was no longer intimidated by the US military or the alphabet agencies. I replied by telling him that Algebra was an Arabic word that clearly struck terror into the hearts of people in the West – and the East for that matter (at least if you were a teenager studying trigonometry). But I also told him Algebra wasn't the only Arabic word that frightened the West, and he knew it.

There are hundreds of English words that have etymological roots in the Arabic language. Most of them are taken for granted and attract little controversy when used by ordinary English-speaking people. 'Arabic numerals' revolutionised and replaced cumbersome Roman ones. The words 'alkali', 'chemistry', 'arsenal', 'cipher', 'admiral', 'magazine', 'sherbet', 'syrup', 'tariff', 'zenith', 'algorithm' and even 'checkmate' are but a few that hark back to an Islamic and Arabic past that helped civilise the world . A few words were regarded with a simultaneous sense of repulsion and admiration – of the exotic and mysterious, like 'assassins', 'Saracens' and 'harems'.[1] But there is an Arabic word used in the English language today that provokes more confusion, suspicion, hostility and fear than all others: jihad. And the time has come for Muslims to reclaim it.

The word jihad comes from the root verb jahada which linguistically means 'to struggle'. The Arabic lexicon describes jihad as, 'making the utmost effort to attain something beloved or to save oneself from something disliked.' It is from this literal interpretation that many Muslims – and non-Muslims – erroneously limit the concept of jihad solely to internal, spiritual struggle. Whilst recognising the importance of the spiritual jihad – the jihad of the nafs (self) – there is a critical danger in applying literal interpretations to words that have widely accepted meanings according to the consensus of Islamic teachings and jurisprudence. This approach does little to address the very real problems that issue from deliberate mistranslations and misconstructions of Arabic words and concepts against which Islam is not immune.[2]

The five daily prayers in Islam are referred to in their singular form as salaah. There is no dispute in this matter and anyone attempting to restrict the practice of prayer to the linguistic definition, which simply means 'connection', would be guilty of heresy. Likewise, a similar reinterpretation of the Islamic obligation of zakaah – a tax Muslims are required to pay that assists the poor, beggars, tax-collectors, orphans, travellers, recent converts to Islam, prisoners and even the mujahideen – to its linguistic meaning, 'purification', would also be entirely rejected. Those who engage in jihad are called 'mujahideen' and those killed doing it are called 'shuhadaa' (martyrs). It would seem absurd for people who interpret jihad as 'the daily struggle of life' to call themselves 'mujahideen' in life and 'martyrs' in death.

The Concise Oxford Dictionary describes jihad as a 'religious war of Muslims against unbelievers; campaigns for or against a doctrine.' Jihad is commonly described in the West as 'holy war.' But holy war in Arabic would be Harb al-Muqadassah and this phrase is simply not found in the Qur'an or the Sunnah (Prophetic Traditions) which are the best sources to understanding the concept of jihad – or any other Islamic teachings.

Jihad and qitaal (fighting) are mentioned collectively over one hundred times in the Qur'an. Both appear often with the words fi sabeel lillah (in the cause of Allah). The subject of jihad is addressed in great detail throughout the Qur'an; some very large chapters deal almost exclusively with the topic. All the authentic books of ahadith (Prophetic sayings and actions) contain hundreds of chapters under the title of 'jihad'. This is also true regarding hundreds of general books of fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence) as well as those written exclusively about jihad.

Islamic scholars have classified jihad into four categories: Jihad of the nafs (self), jihad against the shaytan (devil) [desires], jihad against unbelievers and hypocrites and jihad against oppressors and evil-doers.[3] Thus, limiting jihad to any singular interpretation would be incorrect. The best approach is in recognising that the varying levels complement, rather than contradict one another. Even the physical jihad can be waged by the heart and tongue[4], as well as through wealth and actions. The hadith of the Messenger: 'The mujahid is the one who strives against his own soul,' does not negate or contradict other ahadith [plural of Hadith] that mention jihad as 'the peak of the matter'[5] or as a deed that is unmatched in reward.[6] Jihad was even described by the Messenger of Allah as 'monasticism' (abandonment of worldly affairs) – the ultimate jihad of the self: 'Every nation has its monasticism and the monasticism of this nation is jihad.'[7]

By consensus of the Islamic schools of thought, jihad becomes an individual obligation, like prayer and fasting, on Muslim men and women when their land is occupied by foreign enemies. That obligation extends to neighbouring lands until the enemy has been expelled. If the whole body of believers abandon it, they are in a state of sin; if enough of them do it to complete the task, they are absolved.[8] Jihad using wealth is also obligatory in securing the release of Muslim prisoners. Imam Malik said: 'If a Muslim is held as a prisoner of war...it is obligatory on others to secure his release, even if it requires all the Muslims' wealth.'[9] Some scholars even argue that had jihad been emphatically prohibited in Islam, it would become permissible by necessity when Muslims lands are invaded, in the way that pork becomes permissible for the Muslim if there is nothing else to eat.

There are even dire warnings in the Qur'an for Muslims who abandon jihad: If you do not march forth Allah will chastise you grievously and will replace you with another people, while you will be in no way able to harm Him. Allah has power over everything[10] and in the Prophetic hadith: 'A nation does not abandon jihad except that it is humiliated.'[11]

Historically speaking, whenever the Qur'an calls for aiding the oppressed: And what is wrong with you that you fight not in the Cause of Allah, and for those weak, ill-treated and oppressed among men, women, and children, whose cry is: "Our Lord! Rescue us from this town whose people are oppressors; and raise for us from You one who will protect, and raise for us from You one who will help'[12] people have always obliged. Over time, that number has dwindled, but Prophet Muhammad said: 'There will not cease to be a group from my people, fighting upon the truth evident over those who fight them...'[13]

Although in the West jihad is often seen as terrorism it is correct to describe it as tourism. Prophet Muhammad said: 'The tourism of my nation is jihad.'[14] This is one reason why many Muslims from thousands of miles away travelled to places as far and wide as Palestine, Chechnya, Kashmir and Afghanistan.

During the 1980s, 'mujahideen' became almost exclusively associated in the West with the fighters of Afghanistan resisting the Soviet Union's occupation of their land. Their name was ennobled throughout

Europe and America and, the rallying cry, under the banner of jihad, was endorsed by fatawa (religious edicts) from Islamic scholars as well as Western leaders and politicians.[15] Even Hollywood waded in, lionizing 'the glorious mujahideen' with a dose of Sylvester Stallone in Rambo 3. A fact conveniently brushed aside today is that Afghan and Arab mujahideen units were brought over to the UK during the 1980s and given training by SAS (Special Air Services) commandos in the picturesque mountains of Snowdonia's National Park and the Scottish Highlands. Testimony from the instructors tells of how they found the mujahideen, mountain-men themselves, so easy to teach. In fact, it was due to the British supplied Blowpipe anti-aircraft missile system that the face of the war in Afghanistan changed. But not in the way which was intended.

The Mi 24 soviet helicopter gunship, sometimes called 'the Devil's Chariot', with its terrifying arsenal of mini-guns and rockets, wrought havoc upon the lightly defended mud-brick villages of the Afghans. They had very few anti-aircraft capabilities and that is why the British supplied them with Blowpipe – which turned out to be highly ineffective. It is at this point that the US introduced clandestine supplies of heat-seeking Stinger anti-aircraft missiles which produced a kill-rate of 7:10. This became the catalyst in changing the face and direction of the war, the jihad, in Afghanistan.[16]

Of course, there was widespread international support for the Afghan, Arab and Muslim resistance fighters back then and they were not referred to derogatively as 'jihadists' (instead of mujahideen) who practiced 'jihadism' (instead of jihad) and 'Islamism' (instead of Islam). However, it can be argued that the mujahideen were not carrying out strikes against civilian targets in the West either.

In the early days of Islam – and even before that – duels of strength would be fought between champion warriors of opposing forces in one-on-one combat. This was part of the test of manhood (rajoolah) encompassing individual skill and courage. The Messenger of God and his companions were renown for their ferocity and steadfastness in battle against the enemy as much as they were for their mercy and magnanimity towards the vanquished. In one of the most celebrated duels ever recorded in Islamic history, during the Battle of the Trench, Ali, the Prophet's cousin, accepted the challenge to fight 'Amr, 'the greatest warrior in Arabia'. After a long, harrowing duel between the two fighters,Ali managed to subdue his opponent. However, just as the final death-blow approached, 'Amr spat in Ali's face. What Ali did next has resounded throughout Muslim history – both Shi'ite and Sunni – as the quintessential example of selflessness, even if it is seldom practiced today. Ali rose calmly from 'Amr's chest, wiped his face, and said. "Know, O 'Amr, I only kill in the way of Allah and not for any private motive. Since you spat in my face, my killing you now may be from a desire for personal vengeance. So I spare your life."[17] There is no rajoolah or honour in killing unarmed civilians.

Perhaps the most revered personage in the Muslim world – after the Prophet Mohammed – is Salahuddin (Saladin) Al-Ayubi. Liberating Jerusalem and the Holy Land from the crusaders has earned him the respect and love of all Muslims. Even in these days of great trauma and turmoil, it is not unusual to hear Imams of mosques pray for a modern Saladin. But it is the admiration the West has extended him that has truly set Salahuddin apart. His largess towards his enemies is the stuff of legend and his chivalry was exemplary. His qualities of humility, piety, bravery, honour, integrity and generosity are what most Muslims aspire to, especially the mujahideen. His recapture of Jerusalem in 1187 was comparatively tame to the wanton bloodlust carried out by the crusaders in 1099. He even pardoned many of those who fought against him as well as freeing a huge number of captives and giving rights of free passage and worship to civilians. And yet, non-Muslims who have bravely challenged Western misconceptions of Islam have fallen into the trap of denial. In his spectacular book about the life of Salahuddin, the historian Geoffrey Hindley writes astonishingly:

'In the twenty first century, this term jihad has powerful resonance in the Islamic world. Although the word is not found in the

Qur'an, it was in use from a very early date.'[18]

Such flagrant errors only enhance the notion that there is little desire in the West to really understand Islam.

In the wake of the attacks on September 11,, the US administration attempted to launch its 'war on terror' under the name of 'Operation Infinite Justice.' However, the ill-advised Bush junior, referring to 'this crusade' soon realised how offensive it might sound to potential Muslim allies that the USA was now establishing itself on a par with the Divine. The rewording that followed was equally inapt. 'Operation Enduring Freedom' demonstrated clearly how the Bush administration believed 'freedom' was not a right that all human beings have from birth till death. Rather, it was something to be endured – at least if you happened to be a captive of US forces. It was more like 'Operation End Your Freedom' for us and the thousands more who were later detained around the world. It began with a desire for justice, mutated into a wanton act of revenge, and is now a war against a faith and the resources its people are gifted (or cursed) with.

Muslims have learned the meaning of Bush's 'American justice' in Guantánamo, Bagram, Abu Ghuraib and the multitude of secret detention sites dotted around the world. The process of extraordinary rendition [kidnap, false imprisonment, torture]; religious, racial and sexual abuse; cruel inhumane, and degrading treatment are all designed to terrorise victims and have produced false confessions to justify more occupation of Muslim land. It is terrorism of the very worst kind, especially since it is carried out in the name of virtue. Inside the detention camps of Guantánamo – where the iguana is protected by law under the 'Endangered Species Act'– the detained men have no human or legal rights. Everything afforded to them is a 'privilege', including toilet paper. Outside each of the camps there is plaque that reads 'Honour Bound to Defend Freedom'. The stark irony lies in there being about as much honour in this as there is freedom.

There was little honour too in the violent strikes against civilians which claimed 2,976 lives in the US, 191 in Spain and 52 in the UK. But at least we know these numbers because each individual counts. In stark contrast, thousands of tonnes of tomahawk missiles, 'hellfire' rockets, cluster bombs, smart bombs, phosphorus bombs, vacuum bombs, 1500lb 'daisy-cutters' and billions of rounds fired from machine guns and assault rifles have killed more people in Iraq and Afghanistan than anyone could ever know exactly.. Estimates put the numbers at anything from 100,000 to 2million. The reason why there are no reliable figures in either country is because no one counts. Not the killers nor those killed. They are worth much less than collateral damage. They are not even numbers. They are nothing. If September 11 was terrorism – and I believe it was – then what do we call this?

The word 'terrorism' entered the English language in the late nineteenth century after the French revolution and the ensuing 'Reign of Terror' gave birth to French democracy. However, since the notion of terrorism was first applied to a state rather than to an individuals or groups, it has been almost impossible to arrive at a single definition. Hence, there are over 100 of them. The only common factor agreed upon is the inclusion of violence – or its threat. The Concise Oxford Dictionary describes the terrorist as 'one who favours or uses terror-inspiring methods of governing or of coercing government or community.'

It is not surprising that more recent definitions of terrorism, such as the one found in the American Heritage Dictionary, omit the inclusion of governments as potential candidates: 'The unlawful use or threatened use of force or violence by a person or an organised group against people or property with the intention of intimidating or coercing societies or governments, often for ideological or political reasons.'

It is not surprising too that Muslims have become angry and have even responded with actions rejected by Islam to in unleash their outrage. If resisting the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan was jihad, if the repelling the massacres by the Serbs in Bosnia was jihad, then how can resisting the current occupation of these Muslims lands be anything else? Was jihad simply a

tool that could be used and discarded according to interests?[19] The problem is that very few people care to distinguish between people who fight – or are willing to fight[20] – invading forces abroad and those who choose to bring their fight to unarmed civilians who have little to do with it (and in many cases oppose the war too). Recent history shows how 'terrorism' has been closer to home than previously thought.

If resisting the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan was jihad, if the repelling the massacres by the Serbs in Bosnia was jihad, then how can resisting the current occupation of these Muslims lands be anything else?

On 28 June, 1940, Nazi forces occupied the British Channel islands. The enemy was on Britain's southern door. Whilst the bulk of British soldiers were engaged in operations around Europe, North Africa and the Far East, over 1.5 million men joined the Home Guard or 'Dad's Army' as it affectionately became known. The contingency plan against a successful German occupation of Britain included the re-training of these men in guerrilla tactics. That training began in Osterley Park, London, where communist veterans of the Spanish civil war taught British volunteers how to make improvised explosive devices (IEDs), Molotov cocktails, hand-grenades and how to sabotage and terrorise potential Nazi occupiers. The success of this training spread and several more camps were opened.[21] Thankfully, the Nazis were defeated on their own soil but, they would have been in for a surprise had they landed in Britain. The Nazis would no doubt have been welcomed by the far-right in Britain – as they had been in many other countries – and would have labelled the British insurgents 'terrorists' as they had the French résistance. Admittedly, there is sometimes a fine line between resistance and terrorism, and we often can't tell the difference.

The Arabic word irhab is today used to describe terrorism. However, the usage of this word has altogether dissimilar roots and applications to its European counterpart. The Qur'an states: 'And prepare against them [the enemy] what ever you are able from power and from steeds of war [weapons and stratagems] in order to strike terror into the hearts of the enemy of Allah and your enemy...'[22] Although the 'striking of terror' referred to in this verse is sometimes incorrectly used by some Muslims to justify terrorism, it is clear according to both classical and contemporary Qur'anic exegesis that the reference is to an army preparing for battle.. But even armies – Muslim or not – are not mobilised, supposedly, to threaten and terrorise civilian populations.

Another Qur'anic verse sometimes misappropriated in the same way is: 'And if they transgress against you then transgress against them the way they transgress against you...'[23] to justify indiscriminate acts of violence against civilians as a justifiable retaliatory tactic of war, going beyond the 'collateral damage' argument. But the same verse ends with: 'And fear Allah and know that Allah is with those who fear him' making it clear that however brutal the enemy may be, Muslims are still required to do that which is conducive to fearing their Creator. The Qur'an states also: And fight in the Way of Allah those who fight you, but transgress not the limits. Truly, Allah likes not the transgressors.[24] Indiscriminate slaughter and rapine are not practices sanctioned by Islam.

During the war – or jihad – in Bosnia in the 1990s, thousands of Muslim women were systematically raped by Serbian soldiers under the leadership of indicted war criminals Slobodan Milosovic, Radovan Karadic, and Ratko Mladic. In addition to this, hundreds of thousands of Bosnians were brutally killed and ethnically cleansed from their own homes. Subsequently, thousands of Muslims from around the world once again volunteered under the banner of jihad to come to the rescue of their beleaguered coreligionists. However, Islam forbids Muslims from reciprocating in kind regardless of the crimes perpetrated by the

enemies of Muslims. Muslims would never contemplate setting up rape-camps for captured Serbian women – or any other women.

It was after encountering the body of a non-Muslim woman killed in battle that the Prophet said: 'She is not one who would have fought.' He then said to one of companions: 'Catch up with Khalid [Ibn al-Waleed, the foremost Muslim general] and tell him not to kill women, children and prisoners.'[25] The Messenger was even more specific later, exhorting his soldiers not to target women, children, old people, clergy and unarmed villagers. He also emphatically forbade the use of fire to kill, mutilation of corpses, cutting down vegetation unnecessarily or torturing captured prisoners.

Although jihad seeks to terrify those who are engaged in oppression, abuse and violation of the sancity of human life, ordinary, decent human beings should not have to fear it, even when their own governments have committed crimes in their names. Being just to the enemy might be the hardest jihad of the nafs but it is incumbent upon all Muslims. O you who believe! Stand out firmly for Allah as just witnesses and let not the enmity and hatred of others make you avoid justice. Be just: that is nearer to piety, and fear Allah.[26] Even as we resist our oppressors, we should never allow them to become our teachers.

In conclusion, jihad is an inseparable component of Islam which embodies the very highest principles of faith, morality and rules of engagement. It is the belief of Muslims that 'jihad will 'continue until the Day of Resurrection.'[27] But even as it is waged, in all its forms, the Muslim must never allow the oppressor to become his teacher.

Moazzam Begg was born 40 years ago in Birmingham to secular Muslim parents. His mother died when he was six,and his father sent him to the Jewish King David School in Birmingham, because he thought it inculcated good values. In his 20's, Begg became more interested in politics – Islamic politics. He never fitted one dogma neatly – conservative when it came to family values, leftist when it came to issues of equality.

Moved by the plight of the Afghani people, in 2001 Begg travelled to Kabul with his family to start a school for basic education and provide water pumps. When the allied attack on Afghanistan began in October 2001, Begg and his family moved to Islamabad in Pakistan for safety. It was there that he was seized in January 2002 by Pakistani police and CIA officers, bundled into a back of a car and taken back to Kabul, where he was held in a windowless cellar at Bagram airbase for nearly a year.

Hooded, shackled and cuffed, he was taken first to the US detention facility at Kandahar, then on to Bagram, and finally to Guantanamo Bay. During his internment, he was kicked and beaten, suffocated with a bag over his head, stripped naked, chained by his hands to the top of a door and left hanging, and led to believe he was about to be executed. One psychiatrist encouraged him to kill himself. In all he spent three years in prison, much of it in solitary confinement, and was subjected to over three hundred interrogations, as well as death threats and torture. He witnessed the killing of two detainees.

Begg is one of nine British citizens who were held at Camp X-Ray, Guantánamo Bay by the government of the United States of America. Labelled an 'enemy combatant' by the US government, Begg was imprisoned for a crime he didn't commit and whose precise nature has never been determined. He was released on January 25, 2005 without charge though he received no compensation or an apology.

As spokesman for the prisoner human rights organisation, Cageprisoners,Begg appears extensively both in the media and around the country, lecturing on issues surrounding torture, anti-terror legislation and community relations. He has authored several pieces that have appeared in major broadsheets around the world, and a book detailing life as a Muslim living in the UK and his experiences in Guantánamo entitled Enemy Combatant.

ENDNOTES

1. al-Ba'albeki, Munir (1992). Al-Mawrid: A Modern English-Arabic Dictionary (1992)

2. There is a common misconception espoused by many Muslims today that Islam means peace. It does not. Islam means submission. Salaam means peace. Also, according to the post-prayer supplication Muslims say daily, Allah is peace: 'Oh Allah! You are peace and peace comes from you…' Sahih Muslim. When greeting each other Muslims say salaamu alaikum (peace be upon you) and not Islam alaikum (submission be upon you)

3. al-Qahtani, Sa'eed ibn 'Ali ibn Wahf. The Levels of Jihad

4. The Prophet Muhammad said: 'The best jihad is to say a word of truth in front of an oppressive ruler.' Ahmed and Ibn Maajah. Also, 'The master of martyrs is Hamza bin Abdul-Muttalib and a man who stood up to an oppressor ruler where he ordered him and forbade him so he (the ruler) killed him.' Sunan Abu Dawood

5. 'The topmost the matter is Islam and its [central] pillar is the prayer and the peak of the matter is Jihad in the way of Allah' reported by Ahmed and Tirmidhi.

6. When asked by someone as to who was the best of people, the Messenger replied: 'A believer who performs jihad with his life and wealth.' Sahih Al-Bukhari. Also in al-Bukhari, when asked by someone to describe a deed equal to jihad it merit the Prophet replied: 'I do not find such a deed.'

7. At-Tabaraani , Al-Mu'jam

8. Al-Bannah, Imam Hasan. Kitabul Jihad

9. Tafseer al-Qurtubi

10. The Noble Qur'an, Surah at-Tawbah (9:38)

11. Hadith considered as Hasan (sound) - at-Tabarani.

12. The Noble Qur'an: Surah an-Nisaa (4:75)

13. Sunan Abu Dawood

14. Sunan Abu Dawood

15. In his magisterial discourse on jihad during the soviet occupation, Defence of the Muslim Lands, the charismatic scholar, Sheikh Abdullah Azzam resurrected the famous 13th century fatwa of Ibn Taymiyyah which states: 'As for the aggressive enemy who destroys life and religion, nothing is more incumbent [upon the believer] after faith than his repulsion.' Al-fatawaa al-kubraa, Ibn Taymiyyah.

16. See The Bear Trap: The Defeat of a Superpower by Mohammed Yousaf and Charlie Wilson's War: The Extraordinary Story of How the Wildest Man in Congress and a Rogue CIA Agent Changed the History of Our Times by George Crile

17. Akram, Lieutenant-General A.I. The Sword of Allah: Khalid bin Al-Waleed: His Life and Campaigns

18. Hindley, Geoffrey. Saladin: Hero of Islam

19. 'We have no eternal allies, and we have no perpetual enemies. Our interests are eternal and perpetual, and those interests it is our duty to follow.' Lord Palmerston, remarks in the House of Commons defending his foreign policy, March 1, 1848.—Hansard's Parliamentary Debates..

20. Counter-terrorism legislation passed since 2000 in the UK has criminalised engaging in, preparing to engage, glorifying, supporting or simply researching jihad. Muslims have faced the full brunt of the law in this regard. Despite the apparent duplicity involved, one can hardly be surprised at a government doing all it can to prevent people within its own borders harming its interests and – including its military – abroad, even if those interests are based around illegal, immoral and unwinnable wars.

21. Carroll, David. The Home Guard

22. The Noble Qur'an: Surah al-Anfaal (8:60)

23. The Noble Qur'an: Surah al-Baqarah (1:194). An-Nahl (16:26) mentions: And if you punish, then punish them with the like of that with which you were afflicted [by their hands]. This derives from the Islamic principles of Qisaas (the Law of Equality) and requires further research.

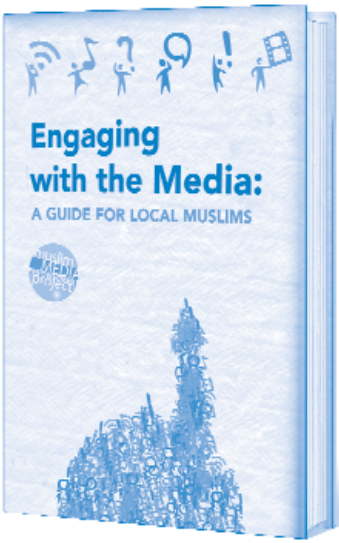
24. The Noble Qur'an: Surah at-Taubah (9:36)

25. Sunan Abu Dawood and Ahmed

26. The Noble Qur'an: al-Ma'idah (5:7)

27. Sunan Abu Dawood

Engaging with the Media:
A Guide for Local Muslims



A publication of
The Cordoba Foundation

OUT SOON!

Israel's Independence is Palestinian Catastrophe: A Historical Narrative

Professor Abdullah al-Ahsan

The State of Israel has just celebrated its 60th birthday with high-profile coverage while the Palestinians commemorated their 60th year of al-Nabka or catastrophe. Although Israelis and Palestinians have been living side-by-side for this long period, their perception of the events of 1948 is completely different. Why do they view these events so differently and why are these events cause for celebration for one people but despair for another? It is important that the rest of the world understands this, for the Israeli-Palestinian relationship has had a great impact on world affairs since then: almost half of all the vetoes cast at the United Nations Security Council have been cast on this single issue.

One must understand the roots of the conflict which goes back to the 19th century. Interestingly, the movement for creating Israel did not originate where the current state is located, but in Europe. It came into existence out of a movement called Zionism which was a result of growing nationalist sentiments in various parts of Europe. The Jews constituted a minority in many European countries, and suffered because of the rise in nationalist extremism in those countries. For the Jews, the main challenge lay in the fact that although they constituted a significant minority in many countries and held powerful positions, nowhere did they constitute a majority, thus, they couldn't claim any of those countries as their own. As a result, they turned to history and many of them believed that at one time in history their ancestors not only lived but also ruled over Palestine. The decision was made to turn Palestine into a homeland for the Jews.

But the main challenge for Zionism was that Palestine was heavily populated by a people who called themselves Palestinians and the Jews constituted only 5 per cent of the total population in the area. Moreover, in almost five thousand years of known history, the Jews lived and ruled over Palestine only for a short period. The area has been mostly populated by a people known as Canaanites. Most Palestinians are considered the descendants of the Canaanite ethnic and tribal groups who converted to Islam about a millennium and half ago. That is why Zionist leaders, who came mostly from Europe, began to conspire to achieve their goal, i.e. to convert Palestine into a Jewish state. They began to take advantage of their presence in many European countries where many of them were able to secure prestigious positions. They also took full advantage of Europe's dominant position in international politics at that time.

Zionist leaders made Britain their main seat of activities because of its dominant role in international politics. Prominent Zionist leaders immigrated to Britain and as soon as World War I began and began to circulate the idea that Jewish state in the midst of the Muslim world could serve British imperial interests, particularly in securing the Suez Canal. They began to exploit their personal relations with British leaders to promote Zionist interests. During the war they secured a major commitment from the British, known in history as the Balfour Declaration, for a Jewish state in Palestine. Zionist activities increased substantially following the war.

The Zionists sent a powerful delegation mainly composed of Jews from the United Kingdom and the United States to the Paris Peace Conference (1919), to advance their objective; but nobody from Palestine was included in the delegation. However, the main challenge to their plans came from President Woodrow Wilson of the United States who dedicated himself to the idea of self-determination. The President had already gauged public opinion in Palestine through a commission (known as King-Crane Commission), and rejected the notion of a Jewish state in the area. Unfortunately, the President became ill and

left Paris without fulfilling his dream. Although the League of Nations was established on his recommendations to promote national self-determination, it was left up to European colonial powers to manipulate the role of the organisation: this made it easy for the Zionists to pursue their goals. In April 1920, the Allied Supreme Council granted Britain mandate over Palestine, and in 1922 the British mandate was ratified by the League following an international campaign by Zionist leaders. British Zionists now secured a fellow Zionist, Herbert Samuel, as the first British High Commissioner in Palestine.

Palestinians never demanded the eviction of the newly immigrant Jews

The Zionists wanted to ensure the highest possible number of Jews immigrate to Palestine in as short period as possible. Their number increased from 55,000 in 1918 to 156,000 in 1930. The figure began to increase at a greater pace the following years with 9,553 in 1932, 30,327 in 1933, 42, 359 in 1934 and 61, 854 in 1935. But this was far below their expectations: they wanted a bigger number of Jews to settle in Palestine. The Zionist leadership wanted to create more space for the immigrating Jews. In order to achieve this goal they schemed to create chaos by provoking the Palestinians to rise against the British so that the latter would take action against the Palestinian activists and cause them to flee from their homeland. By then, the Palestinians became concerned about the immigration of Jews from various parts of the world and, thus began to express their opposition by sending delegations, writing memoranda, and occasionally holding demonstrations. When the Zionists noticed that the authorities had begun to take the Palestinian concerns into account, they devised a new strategy: while the relatively moderate elements continued to use their connection with the British both in Palestine and in Britain, the extremists confronted the British directly to achieve the same goal. Frequently, they would provoke the local Palestinians to take a stand which would be construed as acts of violence by the British who take action against the Palestinians. Revisionist Zionists formed groups such as the Haganah, Irgun and Stern Gang to promote the idea of the Jewish state.

It is noteworthy that the Palestinians never demanded the eviction of the newly immigrant Jews to their homeland but rather demanded that restrictions be put in place to control the number of immigrating Jews. Since British authorities were constantly ignoring such demands, the Palestinians called for some form of legislative assembly for Palestine through proportional representation of both Jewish and Palestinians with a veto power for the British High Commissioner -- a kind of system the British had already introduced in many colonies. But the Zionists were totally opposed to the idea of a united Palestine: they wanted to convert the whole of Palestine into a Jewish state. In 1936, all Palestinian political parties established the Arab Higher Committee and demanded: (a) a complete halt to Jewish immigration; (b) the prohibition of the transfer of Arab lands to Jews; and (c) the establishment of a national government.

But in 1937, a British Royal Commission proposed a partition of Palestine between Palestinians and Jews: The Palestinians rejected it outright arguing that historically Palestine had always been a multi-religious and multi-ethnic country and any division of an already a small territory wouldn't be economically viable. Interestingly, Samuel Herbert, the first British High Commissioner to Palestine, also subscribed to this idea. Yet the British had abandoned the one state idea due to Zionist pressure. The Zionists accepted the Royal Commission report as a basis for further negotiation; but for the Palestinians the establishment of a Jewish state in their land constituted robbing them of their lands in broad daylight. They not only rejected the report, they embarked on various forms of civil disobedience against the British presence in Palestine. In response the British cracked down on the Palestinians: most leaders were arrested and imprisoned; some went into exile. Meanwhile, the moderate Zionists were able to create a Jewish Auxiliary Force to assist the British.

In 1939, and after containing the revolt, the British released a White Paper declaring their intention to create a unified state for all inhabitants in Palestine within the next ten years, limiting Jewish immigration, and allowing the Jews to buy land only in some designated

areas. This time the Palestinians responded favorably, but the Zionists rejected it outright. The Zionist also convinced the then Defense Minister Winston Churchill to block the implementation of White Paper proposals. The Palestinians continued with their demand for complete British withdrawal from the territory.

World War II provided another opportunity for the Zionists to promote their goal: moderate Zionists came together to assist the British in the war demanding the creation of an independent Jewish armed unit. On the other hand, the extremists continued to irritate the British. In 1941, the Stern Gang attempted to assassinate the British High Commissioner but they ended up killing Lord Moyne, the British Minister for the Middle East. Meanwhile, the American Zionist Organisation called for the establishment of a Jewish state embracing the whole of Palestine. In 1944, the British allowed the formation of an independent Jewish brigade. This enabled Jewish armed gangs to launch indiscriminate attacks against the Palestinians. Also in 1944, American Zionists tabled a resolution in the US, both in the House of Representative and the Senate, for unrestricted Jewish immigration to Palestine. This failed because of the last minute intervention by General George Marshall (of the European recovery program), who knew the area well. However, the Zionists were able to persuade the President in 1945 appeal to the British to allow 100,000 more European Jewish refugees to enter into Palestine. In December 1946, at a World Zionist Congress in Basel, American Zionists declared the British rule in Palestine illegal. Thus the Zionist scheme for occupying Palestine turned out to be independence movement for Israel. By 1948, the Jewish population in Palestine had reached 646,000, from 5% to 31.7% of the total population; but they possessed only 6.5% of the land. Their next tactic was to occupy more land through manipulation of the office of the newly established United Nations.

It is not clear who took the problem of Palestine to the UN: perhaps it inherited the predicament from its predecessor, the League of Nations. In 1946, the UN adopted a resolution on the refugee problem in the area. It is to be noted that these refugees were not the one that migrated from Europe, these were displaced Palestinians who were uprooted by Jewish militias. The militias were targeting not only Palestinian civilians, but also the British authorities. Under pressure Britain proposed a joint British-US committee to handle the issue. In April 1947, Britain formally requested a General Assembly session to consider the question of Palestine. The United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) was formed to deliberate the issue: No Arab country was included in the committee; only a Muslim country – Iran – was included. When the Committee invited both parties to present their cases, the head of the Jewish Agency's office in New York highlighted the Jewish contribution to humanity and civilisation and argued for the freedom and independence of the Jewish people. A Christian lawyer from Jerusalem who was a member of Arab Higher Committee presented the Palestinian case emphasizing the injustices committed against the local population by the British and the Zionists. The UNSCOP came up with two plans to divide the territory between the Jews and the Palestinians without giving any justification why Jewish contributions to humanity were to be rewarded by depriving the Palestinians of their homeland. However, plan one, known as the majority plan, prepared mostly by Western countries, proposed to divide the land between Jews (over 56% of the territory for 31.7% of mostly immigrant population), the Palestinians about 43% and Jerusalem as a neutral international city under direct supervision of the UN. Plan two, known as the minority plan, backed by India, Iran and Yugoslavia advocated a federated state composed of two component states, each enjoying local autonomy with Jerusalem as its capital. The Palestinians somehow reluctantly accepted the minority plan (they wanted a unitary state with democratic rights for every citizen in the territory) while the Zionists, also reluctantly (they wanted the whole of Palestine as a Jewish state), favored the majority plan. Many powerful Zionists campaigned for the majority plan. On November 29, 1947 the UN adopted the majority plan to divide Palestine on condition that Israel recognises the right of the Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and both states maintain an economic union.

The UN resolution also noted that Britain would withdraw from the territory by August 1948 and a five-member UN Commission

would supervise the division of Palestine. The Palestinians were extremely disappointed and rejected the plan and the Arab states argued that the resolution had violated the UN Charter and they also rejected the partition plan.

However, as soon as it was clear that the British were leaving the territory, Jewish and Palestinian groups begun to fight over land: Jewish armed gangs began to attack Palestinian villages to make room for immigrant Jews. As a result, Britain decided to terminate its mandate and leave Palestine earlier than the set date. Britain set May 15 for withdrawal but a day earlier on May 14, a group of Jewish activists in Tel Aviv proclaimed the establishment of the State of Israel in Palestine. Within hours the US and the USSR recognised the new state, and other Western countries followed suit. An all-out war broke immediately between 75,000 strong Israeli armed forces and the disorganised Palestinian groups. Although volunteers and regular armies from neighboring Jordan, Egypt, Syria, Iraq and Lebanon took part in support of the Palestinians, they were no match to the well-organised and well-armed Israeli troops. The Israelis had acquired arms, munitions and even airplanes from some European countries and had them smuggled into Palestine ignoring a UN ban on arms shipment to the region. Israel was also supported by Jewish volunteers, some with military training, from various parts of the world.

Meanwhile the UN continued with its effort to end the violence, and on May 20, 1948 the Security Council appointed Count Folke Bernadotte, president of the Swedish Red Cross, renowned for negotiating with the Nazis and saving many Jewish lives, as UN mediator for Palestine. The UN also established the United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation (UNTSO) to help mediate between the conflicting parties in Palestine. Bernadotte was mandated to "promote a peaceful adjustment of the future situation in Palestine" and authorised to negotiate beyond the terms of the Partition Plan. Bernadotte recommended certain amendments to the Plan such as reducing the size of the Jewish occupied territories. The next day, on September 17, 1948, he was assassinated in Jerusalem. No action was taken against those who were identified as Bernadotte's assassins: One of the accused – Yitzhak Shamir – was later elected Israel's prime minister. This clearly indicated the limitations the UN was going to face in handling the issue. Even though the establishment of Israel wouldn't have been possible without the direct intervention of the UN, the former developed an antagonistic attitude towards the international organisation.

By mid 1949 the war had come to an end. Military might determined the future of Palestine; Israel occupied almost 78 percent of historical Palestine while Egypt occupied Gaza and the Trans-Jordanian forces central and eastern parts of Palestine which came to be known as the West Bank.

On November 29, 1948 Israel applied for UN membership but was rejected because of Israel's position on the questions of its boundary, refugees and the status of Jerusalem. When it reapplied in February 1949, the Secretary General held discussions on those questions with Israeli leaders, and after receiving assurances, Israel was granted UN membership on May 11, 1949. The process of Israel's UN membership differed from all other members of the world body. Since then Israel has flouted many UN resolutions without the world body ever taking any action against it.

The creation of the State of Israel should be considered a success story of an international pressure group. That is why, since the middle of the last century, lobbying practices have become part and parcel of many democracies. Many scholars have called this tactic successful diplomacy; but for the Palestinians it has been a catastrophe or al-Nabka, as they call it. Israel has not given up its expansionist policy even after the establishment of the state. In a war in 1967 Israel occupied the rest of Palestine, and has continued to settle more and more Jews from other parts of the world. Palestinians lead a miserable life under Israeli occupation and that is why they call it the catastrophe. After 60 years the question now is whether or not Palestinians have the right to exist.

Abdullah al-Ahsan is professor at the International Islamic University of Malaysia's History & Civilisations Dept. He has contributed extensively on the relationship between contemporary Islamic and Western civlisations; his works include Ummah or Nation: Identity Crisis in Contemporary Muslim Society, and Muslim Nations in Contemporary History and Rise & Fall of Civilisations (forthcoming).

Dr. Laura Zahra McDonald • Dr. Basia Spalek • Dr. Salwa El Awa • Robert Lambert MBE

Police partnership with Muslim communities: key in countering terrorism

IN THE CONTEXT OF 'New Terror' and the British government's responses, police relations with the Muslim community have become increasingly strained. While a great deal of well managed, skilfully handled policing goes unnoticed, successes are eclipsed by the negative impact that counter-terrorism can inevitably have on communities. This impact is all the more harmful when 'hard' styles of policing go wrong: as the incidence of stop-and-search on young Muslims soars along with a surge in arrests, the atmosphere of fear and suspicion grows, but it is further compounded by every high profile example of heavy-handed policing or botched raid. It is this unfortunate set of circumstances that have contributed to the rise in accusations of Islamophobia, and a sense among many Muslims that law enforcement is persecuting rather than protecting.

Additionally, the problematic shifts in Government-thinking post-7/7, often criticised for being ill -conceived, hurried and worryingly media sensitive, have also created a discourse in which a homogenised 'Muslim Community' is perceived as being both the problem and the solution – simultaneously a source of terrorist activity and counter-terrorism intelligence. Muslims are, thus, linked to the images of violence and faced with the burden of a Bush-esque notion of responsibility to be 'with or against'. The frustration for many concerned with preventing violence is that these divisive strategies are playing into the hands of terrorist tacticians, who are well aware that the more indiscriminate and insensitive the policing, the greater the chances for passivity, or even tacit support and recruitment in alienated and marginalised communities.

In the context of such a polarising background, a study at the University of Birmingham is examining a far more positive phenomenon – the development of effective, workable partnerships between those really in the know within Muslim communities and sections of the Police, who are working together to reduce the impact of extremist propaganda and prevent acts of violence. The study is not limited to a few unusual cases, but includes research partnerships with a wide range of organisations and individuals, including Scotland Yard's Muslim Contact Unit and the Muslim Safety Forum.

Sponsored by the Arts and Humanities Research Council as an independent piece of research, the project is unique in its interdisciplinary approach. Headed by Dr Basia Spalek and Dr Salwa El Awa, the team draws upon knowledge from a variety of academic fields including criminology, theology and sociology, as well as the expertise of consultant Bob Lambert, the founder of Scotland Yard's Muslim Contact Unit, whose articles on this subject area feature in this and previous editions of Arches.[1]

Exploring a range of issues relating to partnership work and counter-terrorism, the study is not only looking at the successes, but is keen to acknowledge and understand the challenges inherent in what is essential-

counter-terrorism extends to religious knowledge for both the police and for community members

ly difficult, sometimes dangerous work. While equality-driven, voluntary partnerships are the ideal, the tensions felt by those engaging can be great – the research is also looking at the disengagement and victimisation experienced by members of Muslim communities, the impact of the current social and political climate including British foreign policy, discourses of extremism from within and outside Muslim communities, and Islamophobia.

By making the voices of those actually involved in countering terror central to the project - members of Muslims communities and police officers dedicated to developing partnership work - the project aims to help redress the imbalance within post 9/11 policy-driven debates that have tended to marginalise or ignore practitioner expertise. In-depth interviews and the observation of police-community engagement are, therefore, being used to document the views and experiences of such groups and individuals. Each person's contribution to the project is a valuable perspective on counter-terrorism methods and often a major source of tried and tested theory and practice, particularly since his/her authority on the subject comes from the ground rather than from the ivory tower.

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

While the study is not yet complete - it will run until October 2008 - a number of findings have already surfaced. On the subject of partnership work, it has become apparent that successful counter-terrorism is characterised by certain key factors. A primary aspect is the importance of power relations: good partnership relies on viewing each contributor as equal and legitimate in their participation. Where the status of one or more parties is questioned or undermined and the balance of power shifted to 'sides', partnerships become less effective.

Of equivalent significance is the building and maintenance of trust without which engagement becomes tokenistic and ineffective. Although the study has found that 'bridging' individuals such as Muslim police officers can facilitate the development of good partnership, for the most part trust is built over time, and relies on a high level of respect and confidence between all involved and must be maintained despite any tensions or differences. Moreover, the establishment of such complex relationships in a challenging context demands determination and dedication from all those involved to combine their efforts towards achieving the common goal of preventing violence. While such observations may seem commonsensical, under the present circumstances and against a tradition of police/informer-type interactions, the highlighting of good interpersonal relations and mutual co-operation have been rare in mainstream counter-terrorism discourse.

A further challenge that the research presents to the status quo is the emphasis on inclusivity. While policy makers and politicians may debate issues of ideology, social welfare, faith or politics, the field of counter-terrorism must, by its very nature, focus on the prevention of actual violence. It is, therefore, vital that security practictioners engage with those positioned to be most effective in helping to counter terror through the development of layers of partnership work with a diversity of Muslim groups.

Maximising effectiveness means being inclusive; to work with a range of organisation types and engage those most able to help, including groups with different ethnic and inter-ethnic affiliations, political and religious inclinations, and crucially, ones who in other discourses are deemed 'radical' or fringe, such as people labelled Salafi or Islamist.

This type of methodology is founded on the recognition that identities are multiple, complex and diverse, and while sometimes very different from each other, can be utilised in mutually beneficial, constructive ways. For instance, the research has found a number of cases in which police-community partnerships have empowered and facilitated direct and successful intervention by hard-line Salafi and various Islamist groups to reduce

the threat of terrorist recruitment. They have been able to do this because the individuals of concern to security were able to identify with and relate to those seeking to prevent violence through facets of shared identity. This may occur on a number of different levels, one example being that of youth and community workers who, in using shared aspects of religious, local, ethnic and even gang identities, similar socio-economic backgrounds and life-experiences, are able to approach, connect with, and positively influence individuals who are vulnerable to, or already involved in potentially violent activities.

Particularly in the case of young people, the trust and respect developed through this technique are vital components in successful interventions, which, based on persuasion and not coercion, are also more likely to have lasting preventative effects. This is a very different approach to the usual security context in which identities are usually viewed as fixed, and useful only as labels to help generate the much sought after but ever-elusive 'terrorist profile'.

Additionally, inclusivity encompasses gender - a topic that is generally sidelined in the male-dominated world of security. Where gender is addressed in academic literature, it is pathologised – from the psychological analyses of disturbed and dysfunctional 'Muslim masculinities' through to the great interest in the small number of cases in which Chechen and Palestinian women have become suicide bombers. In contrast, the preliminary findings of this research suggest that this is not only an equality issue, but that refraining from the marginalisation of Muslim women, and including, engaging with, and listening to them is of central importance to security. Unfortunately, there is evidence of women facing a host of barriers to their participation in partnership work, including cases of disengagement after intimidating approaches by members of the security services hoping for homestead spies.

Yet, despite such hindrance, experienced practitioners are repeatedly highlighting that many of the women working within communities have the skills and positionalities that make such women potentially key to dealing with some of the most difficult aspects of counter-terrorism.Not only can women exert positive influence as family members, friends and community leaders, the research has found examples in which women are willing and able to intervene and mediate in the most delicate of situations. A potent illustration is the case of women sympathetic to and perhaps willing to practice the use of violence in furthering religious or political causes. In such circumstances interventions are only possible using highly sensitive approaches by other Muslim women, who if skilled and informed to a high degree, can develop the level of trust and respect needed to win over hearts and minds.

it is necessary to recognise and subsequently make provisions for the impact of security operations and wider discourses on the lives of Muslims

The in-depth knowledge necessary to achieve these elements of partnership-based counter-terrorism extends to religious knowledge for both the police and for community members. This does not mean practitioners need embrace a believer perspective, but that all must recognise and accept that faith plays an important role in security. In addition to emphasising the importance of understanding the diversity of theological interpretations driving elements of violence and anti-violence, it is necessary to recognise and subsequently make provisions for the impact of security operations and wider discourses on the lives of Muslims, many of whom live in and view the world through some form of Islamic paradigm.

Furthermore, the centrality of Islam and Islamic knowledge extends from a general framework to individual points of reference, including the inspiration and motivations expressed by many involved in partnership work: notions of protection, social justice, community welfare and prevention of wrongdoing are all examples.

As the project progresses, the level of output will increase and will continue to be

underpinned by an ethos that it must not be 'research for research's sake'. While the interdisciplinary and critical approach should contribute to academic debates, the work should also inform the understandings of policy makers and practitioners. Equally importantly, it is hoped that the research may be condusive to the development of collaborative work between academics and community members, including networks and grassroots-led activist research on approaches to counter-terrorism and related subjects.

All these manifestations must be seen as valid strategies for the integration and as complementary parts of the vast tree of the Islamic heritage. They are open to serious debate and criticism without stereotypical assumptions about an inherently irrational and violent Islamism. Ultimately, this means the importance of recognising that theses multi-vocal heritages will be part and parcel of the future of Islam in Europe and therefore an integral component of the European civilisation.

Dr. Laura Zahra McDonald is a research fellow at the Institute of Applied Social Studies, University of Birmingham. Her research interests include Islam, gender and activism, Muslims in Europe, discourses of 'radicalisation' and the politics of diversity and identity.

Dr. Basia Spalek is a Senior Lecturer at the Institute of Applied Social Studies, University of Birmingham. She is the Principal Investigator for an AHRC Religion & Society programme funded project 'An Examination of Partnership Approaches to Challenging Religiously-Endorsed Violence involving Muslim Groups and Police'.

Dr. Salwa El-Awa is a Lecturer in Islamic Studies at the University of Birmingham. Her research interests include contemporary interpretations of Qur'an, the history and theological/textual foundations of Islamic radicalism. Her publications include The Militant Islamic Group in Egypt 1974-2006, (Al-Jama'a Al-Islamiyya al-Musallaha fi Misr 1974-2006), and Textual Relations in the Qur'an: structure, coherence and relevance (2005).

Robert Lambert was awarded an MBE in June 2008 for his service to the Metropolitam Police. He is working with Dr. Jonathan Githens-Mazer at the University of Exeter on ESRC funded research project, Cultures of Repression: the Legacy of Colonial Violence and State Repression in the Maghreb, and its Effect on North African Diasporas in Europe. He is also completing a PhD on Countering al-Qaida Propaganda and Recruitment in London: An Insider's Interpretive Case Study. Prior to retiring from the Metropolitan Police in 2007 Lambert was co-founder and head of the Muslim Contact Unit.

ENDNOTE
1.Arches, Issue 5, Jan-Feb 2007

Salafi and Islamist Londoners: Stigmatised Minority Faith Communities Countering al-Qaida

Robert Lambert MBE

THIS PAPER HIGHLIGHTS the paradoxical position of certain Salafi and Islamist communities in London who have consistently demonstrated skill, courage and commitment in countering al-Qaida propaganda and recruitment activity while simultaneously facing ill-founded criticism from other Muslim communities and secular political lobbyists for creating the conditions that gave rise to the al-Qaida phenomenon.

MUSLIM LONDON

Muslim communities are more richly diverse in London than in almost any other European city. Heterogeneous not just in terms of ethnic and geographic backgrounds, but also in respect of allegiances to different strands of Islamic beliefs and practices. Nonetheless, in the aftermath of 7/7 the myriad components of Muslim London were united as one in shock and incomprehension in response to an appalling terrorist attack in the capital, carried out by Muslims from outside London in the name of al-Qaida. Only in small pockets of Muslim London was any comprehension to be found. For Salafis and Islamists - two minority communities in Muslim London, comprehension of 7/7 was sharpened by the experience of countering the adverse impact of al-Qaida propaganda and recruitment activity over a sustained period in London.

While ethnic, cultural and political diversity also flourishes within Salafi and Islamist communities, it is pertinent to highlight the common features of Salafi communities and the common features of Islamist communities in London. Firstly, in religious terms, London Salafi communities adhere to a universal model where stripped of pejorative usage, the term "Salafi" is simply "a name derived from salaf, 'pious predecessors,' given to a reform movement that emphasises the restoration of Islamic doctrines to pure form, adherence to the Qur'an and Sunnah, rejection of the authority of later interpretations, and maintenance of the unity of ummah"[1] — that is, a Muslim fraternity. Similarly, London Islamist communities adhere to a universal model where ''Islamist'' is merely a term ''used to describe an Islamic political or social activist''[2] Although minority status applies particularly to London Salafi communities, it may also be ascribed to London Islamist communities. There is, of course, interplay and cross-pollination between Salafi and Islamist identities within burgeoning multi-ethnic Muslim communities in the capital. Nonetheless, more traditional, quietist strands of Deobandi, Barelvi and Sufi oriented Islamic practice eclipse both groupings numerically and in terms of influence in the capital as elsewhere in the UK.

For their part, Sufi Londoners are as diverse as Salafi Londoners, yet their defining allegiance to individual religious practice and quietist politics has led to many being courted by politicians and political lobbyists as role models and bulwarks against the influence of violent extremism and "radicalisation". As the same politicians and lobbyists generally conflate violent extremism with Salafi (often pejoratively referred to as "Wahhabi") communities and Islamist communities, this approach has exacerbated pre-existing intra-communal tensions. Indeed, some Sufis have been involved in local turf wars with Salafis and Islamists for significant periods over the last two decades in the capital as elsewhere in the UK.

Prominent Sufi spokespersons in the US and UK had issued regular warnings about the dangers posed by Salafi and Islamist communities for many years before finding receptive audiences in Washington and

[Sufi scholar, Abdul-Hakim Murad] The lava-stream that flows from Ibn Taymiyya …..has a habit of closing minds and hardening hearts..... The movement for traditional Islam will, we hope, become enormously strengthened in the aftermath of the recent events , accompanied by a mass exodus from Wahhabism, leaving behind only a merciless hardcore of well-financed zealots . …Only a radical amputation of this kind will save Islam's name, and the physical safety of Muslims…

Westminster post 9/11. Thus, the Sufi scholar Abdul-Hakim Murad (otherwise Tim Winter, a lecturer at Cambridge University) was concerned to ensure that Islamophobia generated by 9/11 was directed at "Wahhabis" and not "traditional" Islam:

The lava-stream that flows from Ibn Taymiyya[3] ...has a habit of closing minds and hardening hearts..... The movement for traditional Islam will, we hope, become enormously strengthened in the aftermath of the recent events[4], accompanied by a mass exodus from Wahhabism, leaving behind only a merciless hardcore of well-financed zealots . ...Only a radical amputation of this kind will save Islam's name, and the physical safety of Muslims, particularly women, as they live and work in Western cities.[5]

If 9/11 opened doors for aggrieved Sufis to meet US and UK policy-makers, 7/7 allowed them unprecedented access to mainstream UK media increasingly fixated with "home-grown terrorism" and the "radicalisation" process. Thus, in January 2007, Abdul-Hakim Murad explained his concerns about "Wahhabism" in the alarmist television programme Undercover Mosque:

[Wahhabism's] principle is totalitarian; it's highly judgemental; it has no track record of dealing with other sorts of Islam or unbelievers with any kind of respect. If you are outside the small circle of the true believer you are going to hell and, therefore, you should be treated with contempt.[6]

One small part of London policing, the Muslim Contact Unit (MCU) in the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) has found the exact opposite to be the reality on the streets of Brixton in South London where a Salafi ("Wahhabi") community has been at the hub of pro-active partnership work aimed at tackling the influence of violent extremism since 2002. According to police, courtesy and respect, not "contempt" has been the defining characteristic of Salafi attitudes towards non-Muslim partners in this crucial endeavour.

Interestingly, the doyen of the BBC media school of uncompromising interviews, Jeremy Paxman, failed to expose the same kind of Sufi bias behind a Policy Exchange anti-Salafi report The Hijacking of British Islam when interviewing Dean Godson, the right-wing think-tank's research director, on BBC Newsnight. Rather, the fact that the report's researchers were described as being Sufi Muslims was taken as proof positive of its sensitivity to the report's Salafi victims. However, if Salafi communities bore the brunt of that particular expose, Islamist communities can point to as much pejorative research attention from the same think-tank and like-minded lobbyists. The publication and promotion of When Progressives Meet Reactionaries in 2006 was part of a successful campaign by lobbyists to present UK Islamist groups as a subversive threat to the UK and democracy generally. Taken in conjunction with a plethora of best-selling books on the topic, Londoners searching for an explanation for 7/7 were left in no doubt that Islamists bore a heavy responsibility for fomenting the conditions that created it.

"Reformed Islamist radicals" led by Muslim Londoner Ed Hussein have been at the forefront of this media campaign describing Islamism as posing a threat to Western stability in much the same way that Communism was understood to do during the Cold War. In consequence, a significant number of non- Muslim Londoners have

gained their first and only insight into Muslim London through the lens of Ed Hussein's best selling autobiographical account in The Islamist. Again, an astonishing suspension of critical analysis allows experienced journalists and commentators to attach unwarranted significance to Hussein's minor role in fringe student politics in early 1990s Muslim London when assessing the causes of 7/7. In the UK, Hizb ut-Tahrir campaigns for Islamic rule (a caliphate or khilafa) in the Muslim world without recourse to terrorism. It is a fringe, extremist Muslim group that struggles to sustain the interest of its young student members who get easily bored with its relentless, repetitive political campaigning. It, therefore, has a high turnover of young students like Ed Hussein, the overwhelming majority of whom do not subsequently become terrorists or neo-conservative media pundits. To describe Hizb ut-Tahrir as a radicalising conveyor belt for terrorism, as Hussein does, is hardly warranted and discloses a lack of knowledge of terrorism:

Home-grown British suicide bombers are a direct result of Hizb ut-Tahrir disseminating ideas of jihad, martyrdom, confrontation, and anti-Americanism, and nurturing a sense of separation among British Muslims.[7]

Instead, in important respects, Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT) resembles the secular Socialist Workers Party (SWP) who for many years faced the same difficulty in maintaining the initial interest of UK students in a vanguard movement with no credible strategy for achieving its revolutionary goals. Just as left wing terrorist groups ridiculed the SWP as timid 'armchair revolutionaries' or 'weekend activists', so too al-Qaida propagandists dismiss HT on exactly the same basis. Interestingly, the slavish media promotion of Hussein's opportunistic account fails to acknowledge the significance of his conversion to the same Sufi school as Abdal-Hakim Murad[8]. It is worth reflecting whether experienced journalists investigating Provisional IRA terrorism during the Troubles would ever have placed the same credence on the memoirs of a former armchair Irish republican activist with no experience of terrorism, the zeal of a convert to Loyalist Protestantism and the lure of celebrity status clouding his judgment.

a Salafi ("Wahhabi") community has been at the hub of pro-active partnership work aimed at tackling the influence of violent extremism since 2002.

Stigmatizing London's Minority Faith Communities

Unlike their Muslim detractors, Salafi and Islamist communities refuse to offer concessions to the tastes of secular London's elite. However, in standing by their religious principles in the face of powerful opposition, Salafi and Islamist communities are following a little regarded London tradition. Just as London has played host over many centuries to a plethora of vibrant, divergent and competing strands of Judaism and Christianity, the capital is now offering the same hospitality to diverse believers in the third and concluding Abrahamic faith. In the same way that popularist[9] politicians and opinion formers dangerously conflated minority sections of London's Jewish communities and minority sections of London's Christian communities with terrorism in the past, so too do their latter day counterparts describe the capital's Salafi and Islamist communities as being intrinsically linked to al-Qaida terrorism.

Significantly, the reasons for each pejorative conflation are comparable in each of the three cases. By the same token, reference to the two earlier cases helps illuminate the position of Salafi and Islamist communities in contemporary London. "Minority" is, therefore, used to describe particular subsections of religious communities in London. This is to take the term away from its familiar application to ethnic and cultural minorities. In doing so this paper challenges an established academic and practitioner bias in favour of secularism and against faith-based identity.

In the last decade of the nineteenth century, terrorist attacks against the capital by a small group of London-based Jewish anarchists was used by popularist politicians and commentators to invoke and incite anti-Semitism towards peaceful, hardworking London Jewish immigrants. While all sec-

tions of contemporary, diverse Jewish London faced anti-Semitic 'guilt by association', it was minority, anarchist and politically radical Jewish communities in the capital that faced the greatest risk of stigmatization, disapprobation and suspicion both from other London Jewish communities and in wider London society. Then, as now, the capital's guardians of public tranquility, the Metropolitan Police Force (only now a Service) had the task of protecting all sections of the capital's diverse citizenship from terrorism and the fear terrorists intend to generate and which popularist politicians often amplify by overeacting.[10] On that basis, newly-arrived London Jewish immigrant communities had as much right as any other majority or minority section of London society to expect fair and impartial policing.

Such an expectation would have been warranted given the notion of policing by consent first established in the capital by Sir Richard Mayne in 1829. The extent to which this policing model took root in the capital is highlighted in a Times editorial in 1908 which noted:

The policeman in London is not merely guardian of the peace; he is the best friend of a mass of people who have no other counsellor or protector.

It is not hard to imagine how such an avuncular approach to community engagement might appear attractive to new immigrant Jewish Londoners familiar with more oppressive and intrusive policing models in Russia and elsewhere in contemporary Europe. However, then, as now, policing in London owed more to the consent of powerful, majority interests than the consent of stigmatized communities that lacked influence. Moreover, immigrant London Jews who were politically active in pursuit of international socialist causes at the end of the nineteenth century faced far greater risks of stigmatisation than their non-Jewish socialist comrades who were regarded as belonging to indigenous London communities.

Similarly, for three decades since 1970), Irish Catholic communities in London, as well as in Northern Ireland, were regularly stigmatised and conflated with the terrorism of the Provisional IRA. Just as Irish Protestant loyalists were only rarely and mistakenly conflated with Provisional IRA terrorists (and a consequent threat to Londoners) during that period, so too are most Deobandi, Barelvi, Sufi, Shi'a, "cultural" or "secular" London Muslims increasingly less likely to be stigmatised as terrorists and subversives (and then only mistakenly) than Salafis and Islamists, minority Muslim Londoners who are routinely conflated with terrorism, extremism and violent radicalism by influential commentators.

While the events of 9/11 and 7/7 inevitably put all London Muslims under the spotlight, it is increasingly apparent that London's Salafi and Islamist communities (like London's Irish Catholic nationalist and republican communities in the recent past) face the greatest risk of being cast in the role of 'suspect communities'. Moreover, just as London Irish Catholic communities faced this very same stigmatisation, it must also be noted that their young community members were often at high risk from Provisional IRA propaganda and recruitment strategies as well. So too have young members of Salafi and Islamist communities in the UK been at risk from highly developed al-Qaida propaganda and recruitment strategies since 9/11. The adverse impact of these instances of parallel stigmatisation of minority communities as terrorists and susceptibility to terrorist recruitment is noteworthy. Salafism and Islamism, as causal or predictive factors, are no more significant to the profile of an al-Qaida terrorist than Catholicism was to the profile of a Provsional IRA terrorist.

On the contrary, the fact that al-Qaida spokespersons often invoke and subvert Salafi and Islamist approaches to Islam in an attempt to legitimise their violence helps illustrate why it is that Salafi and Islamist community groups (in London as elsewhere) often have the best tools with which to undermine al-Qaida propaganda within their own youth communities.

SALAFIS AND ISLAMISTS – POLICE PARTNERS OR SUSPECTS?

To date, there has been scant academic interest in whether Salafi and Islamist communities might be as deserving of equal treatment as other Muslims. Instead, prevailing media wisdom acknowledges a

counter-terrorism need for police to talk to "extremists" but with the caveat that such unsavory business be done "in a dark alley". Elsewhere, comment is confined to the need for police to treat ethnic groups — especially UK Asians (principally Muslims, Hindus, and Sikhs) — fairly so as to avoid alienating large sections of the community. Indeed, many Muslim groups have been quick to support the view that Salafis and Islamists are part and parcel of the extremist problem of which al-Qaeda is but one violent manifestation. Thus, when the Sufi Muslim Council (as approved by the Department of Communities and Local Government in 2006) attacked UK Salafis and Islamists as dangerous extremists, it was reminiscent of loyalist Protestant condemnation of Catholic communities as terrorist sympathisers in Northern Ireland during the Troubles. Interestingly, both the Sufi Muslim Council and the Quilliam Foundation set themselves up as being in the business of "counter radicalisation" that is, presumably, preventing young Muslims from becoming Salafi or Islamist.

Those few Salafi and Islamist groups who engage proactively with police to help tackle the adverse influence of al-Qaeda propaganda feel dismayed at this development. They complain that the authorities refused to take heed when they sought to highlight the extremist problem posed by influential al-Qaida propagandists in London throughout much of the 1990s. Groups like the Sufi Muslim Council, they argue, have little knowledge of al-Qaida activity and even less street credibility to be able to tackle it.

Significantly, in interviews, specialist police officers with firsthand experience of Provisional IRA community support activity in London acknowledge that one of the major lessons of that long campaign was UK counter-terrorism's failure to adequately distinguish terrorists from the Republican Catholic communities where they sought support. Counter-terrorism had no yardstick for measuring adverse community impact, the extent of the alienation it causes, and the potential for terrorist support and recruitment it creates. Then, as now, a Catch 22 situation arises in which the absence of measurement inhibits an awareness of the problem within counter-terrorism. It is also likely that an awareness of the connectivity between terrorism and counter-terrorism is harder to envisage in the major parts of counter-terrorism that operate in isolation from communities. Indeed, a key motivational factor for the specialist officers running the MCU has been to reassure Muslim communities that they ought not to be conflated with the terrorists in the way Irish Catholics often were. .

Certainly, the stereotyping, profiling, and conflating of Salafis and Islamists with al-Qaida terrorism is misleading and counter-productive. The fact that al-Qaida terrorists adapt and distort Salafi and Islamist approaches to Islam does not mean that Salafis and Islamists are implicitly linked to terrorism or extremism — nor does it mean that individual Salafis and Islamists are likely to be terrorists or extremists. Equally, it is true that UK recruits to al-Qaida have a range of backgrounds that will sometimes include prior affiliation to, or family associations with Deobandi, Sufi or Barelvi traditions. However, it is axiomatic that by the time they become al-Qaida suicide bombers (or other active terrorists), UK Muslim recruits have bought into an ideology that distorts strands of Salafi and Islamist thinking. Salafis and Islamists often have the best antidotes to al-Qaida propaganda... To conflate them with the problem is, to inhibit their willingness to immunise their communities against it. This does not make the additional error of conflating Salafis with Islamists since important differences exist between the communities. Instead, it acknowledges what they have in common — effectiveness against al-Qaida propaganda and recruitment.

In both Salafi and Islamist London communities, expertise arose from close ''street level'' observation of al-Qaida propaganda and recruitment strategies and methodologies from as early as 1994. Many Salafis candidly admit that they were nearly won over by the extremists' blandishments before they acquired the knowledge and skill to countermand them. Essentially insiders, these observers have witnessed and interpreted the social, religious, and political imperatives that terrorist propagandists and

Salafis and Islamists often have the best antidotes to al-Qaida propaganda once it has taken hold. To conflate them with the problem is, to inhibit their willingness to immunise their communities against it.

recruiters have employed to win support within Muslim communities. Such a vantage point has enabled them to discern three key terrorist objectives — the recruitment of foot soldiers, the recruitment of operational support members, and the encouragement of wider tacit community support.

Of special value to researchers seeking to locate the trigger point at which susceptible young Muslims become radicalised is an insider observation that, in the real world, an alienated young Muslim recruited by a high calibre al-Qaida strategist is far more likely to become a suicide bomber than his twin brother who is recruited by Hizb ut-Tahrir.

COUNTERING AL-QAIDA

According to al-Qaida propagandist Saif al-Adl, 9/11 was intended to provoke the U.S. to "lash out militarily against the ummah" in the manner if not the scale of "the War on Terror". "The Americans took the bait," he continues, "and fell into our trap" Doubtless, he using hindsight to describe al-Qaida's ability to predict the massive scale and range of the response to 9/11. Apart from falling for a familiar terrorist ploy (and thereby boosting al-Qaida's propaganda and recruitment strategy), the war on terror failed to distinguish between inveterate al-Qaida ideologists (such as Saif al-Adl) who may well be beyond the scope of immediate negotiation and young recruits who may be susceptible to skillful intervention strategies. More importantly, the war on terror failed to take account of the extent to which young recruits to al-Qaida might easily be rehabilitated to non-violent politics if credible figures in their communities were encouraged or facilitated to undertake negotiations to that end. Such negotiations form the cornerstone of pioneering police and Muslim community interventions in London.

These initiatives have achieved modest success at the local, grassroots level in countering al-Qaida propaganda and recruitment strategies among sections of Muslim youth in London who have been targeted by recruiters and propagandists. Unlike the war on terror itself, which adopted a coercive approach to Muslim communities, these London-based police and Muslim community initiatives have adopted a non-judgmental approach and utilised negotiating skills to persuade young Muslims that al-Qaida propaganda is wrong to sanction suicide bomb attacks like 7/7. While this Muslim community outreach work took place for many years in London prior to 9/11 without police support, since 9/11 the MCU has facilitated it. .

The chief characteristic of MCU support for Salafi and Islamist engagement activity with youth vulnerable to al-Qaida recruitment is empowerment and facilitation of community expertise. In the case of the Brixton Salafi community, for instance, the MCU supported effective community outreach work against the influence of al-Qaida propagandists that had been undertaken voluntarily and in isolation since 1994. Had such close partnership engagement been forged before 9/11, it may well have brought future terrorists like Richard Reid and Zacarius Mousawi to the attention of counter-terrorism policing. Nonetheless, the application of a partnership approach to countering terrorist propaganda and recruitment is pioneering, and, therefore, in need of assessment. London policing is at its best when it supports minority groups in Christian, Jewish and Muslim communities – to isolate or alienate them is to risk playing into the hands of terrorist propagandists like Saif al-Adl.

Robert Lambert was awarded an MBE in June 2008 for his service to the Metropolitam Police. He is working with Dr. Jonathan Githens-Mazer at the University of Exeter on ESRC funded research project, Cultures of Repression: the Legacy of Colonial Violence and State Repression in the Maghreb, and its Effect on North African Diasporas in Europe. He is also completing a PhD on Countering al-Qaida Propaganda and Recruitment in London: An Insider's Interpretive Case Study. Prior to retiring from the Metropolitan Police in 2007 Lambert was co-founder and head of the Muslim Contact Unit.

ENDNOTES

1. Esposito, John. Oxford Dictionary of Islam

2. Esposito, ditto

3. Ibn Taymiyyah, d.1328, is a highly regarded figure for Salafi Londoners, as elsewhere in the UK. Thus, typically, the Ibn Taymiyyah Masjid is the name Brixton Salafis gave to their South London mosque – a hub of effective activity against al-Qaida influence.

4. 9/11

5. Murad, A-H. (2001). Recapturing Islam from the Terrorists.

6. Dispatches, 2007 Undercover Mosque Channel 4, UK , first broadcast 15 January

7. Hussein, Ed. (2007). The Islamist. London: Penguin p.119

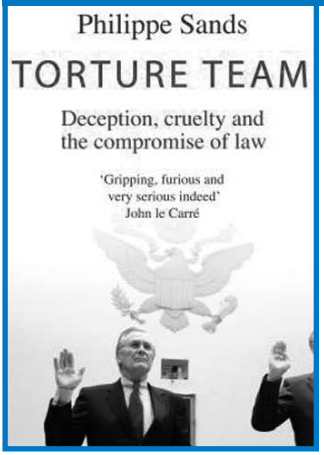
8. In January 2008 Ed Hussein and other former Hizb ut-Tahrir activists founded the Quilliam Foundation claiming that having "traveled the path of extremism and, in recent years, after witnessing the logical conclusion of unfettered ideology and its impact on adherents, have resoundingly rejected Islamism while remaining committed Muslims". Abdul-Hakim Murad is cited as a key scholarly influence. It would be left to Muslim commentator Yahya Birt to point out the irony of their adoption of Britain's first Islamist, Abdullah Quilliam (1856-1932), for their anti-Islamist project [http://www.yahyabirt.com/ accessed 28.1.08].

9. Popularism (italian: popolarismo) is a political doctrine conceived by Don Luigi Sturzo as a middle way between Socialism and Liberalism and opposed to Fascism because of its stress on Democracy.

10. Significantly, in July 2007, breaking with precedents set by predecessors, Gordon Brown, then a new UK Prime Minister, and Jacqui Smith, then a new UK Home Secretary, responded to al-Qaida inspired terrorist incidents calmly and judiciously in tone and in terms that failed to oxygenate public fear and terror in the way terrorist strategists calculated they would.

TORTURE TEAM: Deception, Cruelty and the Compromise of Law

Philippe Sands



Published: May, 2008

ISBN: 9781846140082

Price: £20.00

Publisher: Allan Lane – an imprint of Penguin Books www.penguin.com

What happens when lawyers do the bidding of politicians? In the style of the best investigative journalism, international lawyer Philippe Sands uncovers the story behind the human-rights abuses sanctioned by the highest individuals in the Bush Administration and the terrible consequences of their actions. Who were the lawyers, military personnel and politicians who constructed the policy and provided the rationale for the one-page memorandum signed by Donald Rumsfeld on 2 December 2002 authorizing interrogation techniques forbidden under the Geneva Convention?

Torture Team traces the origins of the memorandum through interviews with the key figures speaking out for the first time. This is a chilling and compelling story of men and women corrupted by power and the few who bravely stood out against them.

Philippe Sands, QC, has been Professor of Law at University College London since 2002 and has taught at Boston College School of Law, Cambridge University and New York University Law School. He is also a practising barrister at Matrix Chambers and has been involved in leading cases including those concerning Senator Augusto Pinochet and the Guantanamo and Belmarsh detainees.

Models of State-Church Relations in Europe and the USA and their Consequences

Ahmet Alibašiç

HISTORICALLY, state-church relations have been a significant source of political conflict. There has been significant differences between European and American tradition in this regard. Whilst the mainstream Western European tradition is much more in favor of state accommodation of and cooperation with religious organisations, the American tradition tends to lean towards separation. Both models are essentially different from both theocracy and from the open state antagonism towards religious organisations that was the reality in all Communist countries and still is in North Korea, Cuba and China. There are many, mainly historical and social, reasons for these differences.

The relations between religion and politics in general, and between the state and religious organisations in particular are so complex that they have produced a variety of regulatory mechanisms. This complexity stems from a wide spectrum of vital areas and aspects of social life that feature prominently in the relationship between state and religious organisations. Those, inter alia, include the legitimacy of the state itself, monopoly on truth, administrative autonomy (previously of the state, today of religious organisations), education, financing of religious organisations, religion in the armed forces, religious freedoms and rights, especially of minorities.

In comparison with the Middle Ages, contemporary interaction between religious organisations and the state unfolds in completely new circumstances, which have essentially changed the terms of that dialogue. Those new circumstances lie in the fact that power, which could be (mis)used against other religious organisations, previously lay in the hands of religious groups, while today it rests mainly with secular governments. Exceptions notwithstanding, it has become more likely that political authorities will use force against religious groups than the other way around.[1] Understandably, in the past the main preoccupation of thinking men was how to secure the state in its development from an aggressive church. Today, in contrast, it is usually the modern state that represents a potential threat to the religious and other rights and freedoms of its citizens and their groups.

Generally speaking, when it comes to the relationship between state and religious organisations there are four clearly differentiated possibilities: (1) complete integration/ fusion of the two, (2) a state church, (3) separation with various degrees of strictness or cooperation between state and religious organisations, and (4) antagonism. Each of these possibilities has produced a series of modalities both in theory and practice. They are best viewed as a continuum, which spans from the theocratic state on one side to the Erastian state, hostile to religion, on the other side. Models in this latter part of the continuum are result of the long secularisation process, which – like secularism itself – varies from moderate models (separation) to 'state fundamentalism', 'leftist secular fundamentalism', an extreme, aggressive and hostile state.[2] These will be briefly addressed in the course of this paper.

THEOCRACY

Theocracy is the relationship between the state and its religious organisations in which one religious institution has supremacy over religious and worldly affairs -- where that institution controls the political system. In Europe today there is one theocracy – the Vatican. Another state that could – with some reservations – be qualified as theocratic is Andorra, since one of its two constitutional rulers is a bishop.

STATE CHURCH

A state church exists where the state

grants one religious organisation or institution a privileged position and monopoly over public religious life. In this arrangement, the church is often a part and parcel of the state administration, and where it is not, the state usually retains a certain level of control over it, especially in the area of finances and highest official appointments. The church, in return, legitimizes the political system, stressing obligations of loyalty and solidarity, as well as the believer's duty of obedience to the civil authorities. A modified version of 'state church' is the 'established church' which differs from the previous inasmuch as its privileged status rests upon the fact that majority population belongs to it. Consequently such religious organisations are usually capable of maintaining a higher level of autonomy in their relations to the states than ordinary 'state churches.'

This state church model is most often found in the protestant European countries (primarily for doctrinal reasons), although some concordats between the Vatican and predominantly Catholic secular states come close to establishing the Catholic Church as a state church. Such was once the case with France (1801–1905), Spain (1945–1978) and Italy (1848–1984). In Protestant societies it was believed that the state, when legislating, should be guided by Protestant ethics. Membership in the state church was considered to be a civic duty; the ideal was religious monism. In Sweden, for instance, until 1860 it was impossible to leave the church, while the law granted full religious freedom only in 1951.

With the advent of the modern age, state churches were not – in most cases – separated from state. However, they did go through a transformation process ending usually as 'established' or – in Scandinavian parlance – 'folk churches'. Thus a church serves as the bearer of national tradition and as a spiritual center towards which a majority of the population gravitates. This status leaves the church with certain privileges and autonomy in its relation with the state. Similar changes could be discerned in countries with a Catholic majority.[3]

A subtype of state church is the Erastian model, in which the state attempts to make the church one of its departments with no autonomy in policy making. This model was characteristic of Protestant German states in the Reformation age and of England during the reign of Henry VIII. In this model, the state must engage, among other things, with the problem of internal religious changes, often expressed in the form of disputes about liturgy and doctrinal issues. In such situations the state can either tolerate differences to some extent, or try to arbitrate. Either way, both the state and the religious organisations risk their credibility.[4]

SEPARATION OF RELIGIOUS ORGANISATIONS AND STATE

Separation of state and religious organisations, sometimes called the 'liberal model', denotes detachment of religious organisations from secular authorities in all forms. Although as a theoretical model, it was conceived in Europe, it has been rarely practiced on the European soil. Professor Silvio Ferrari observes that the structures supporting such a separation could not be found in the legal systems of most European countries.[5] Hence this model is often considered to be an American contribution to liberal political theory and a core value of American political life. However, others regard this as an oversimplification of the reality and that it presumes a much clearer understanding of the principle than the one that really exists. It is said that this principle owes its wide acceptance even in the United States to its ambiguousness and multiple meanings. Some of those specific meanings are even contradictory, which in turn has created a series of legal controversies.[6] Paul J. Weber has identified five forms of separating religious organisations from the state: structural separation, absolute separation, trans-valuing separation, accommodation, and equal separation or neutrality. Each of these deserves a brief comment.

1. STRUCTURAL SEPARATION

Structural separation is a minimalist form of separation with a huge area of overlapping authority or claims to it. For instance, secular rulers almost regularly try to influence the selection of religious leaders and application of religious laws, while clerics do their best to manipulate the appointment / election of secular rulers. This model can even coexist with the model of an 'estab-

lished church' as is the case in England where the monarch is a titular head of the Anglican Church.

As part of Western political culture, structural separation could be considered an outcome of the theory of 'two swords' (spiritual and temporal power) formulated by Pope Gelasius I (pope 492–496). A good portion of the Western political history developed around the dialogue/conflict of 'two swords': the pope and different temporal rulers. However, while the battle for domination as well as cooperation over certain issues – such as fighting non-Christians – went on simultaneously, the structures of religious and state organisations developed independently in such fields as the recruitment and education of professional administrators, legal systems, and property.[7]

2. ABSOLUTE SEPARATION

Absolute or strict separation evolved as a consequence of strict interpretation of the First Amendment of the US Constitution, which states that Congress "shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."

One of the advocates of this model, the U.S. Supreme Court justice Hugo L. Black, stated in the1947 Everson v. Board of Education case that:

Neither a state nor the federal Government can set up a church. Neither can pass laws which aid one religion, aid all religions, or prefer one religion over another... No tax in any amount, large or small, can be levied to support any religious activities or institutions... Neither a state nor the Federal Government can, openly or secretly, participate in the affairs of any religious organizations or groups and vice versa.

This reading of the First amendment is in line with President Thomas Jefferson's words from 1802 that the First Amendment (1791) aims to "erect a wall of separation between church and state." However, this model has never been thoroughly applied even in America. The best example of its violation is the Supreme Court's decision to allow financial support to the elementary and high school of religious background.[8]

3. TRANSVALUING SEPARATION

This is based on the cessation of all religious influence on public education and the nation's political culture; it regards religion as a strictly personal, private affair with no role to play in public life. In a way, this form of separation was built into the constitution of the Soviet Union, which had an overt atheistic leaning. On the other hand, transvaluing separation has little appeal to the American public, for instance. The best-known advocacy group that supports this model in America is the Humanist Association, which sees every attempt on behalf of religious organisations to influence national legislation as violation of the First Amendment.[9]

4. SUPPORTIVE SEPARATION

Supportive separation or the accommodation principle holds that the state and religious organisations may support each other as long as the state does not give preference to one religious organisation over others. Although polls show that many American citizens favor this model, it never gained the support of the majority of Supreme Court justices. This seems to be the opposite in Europe, where this is looked to as the model of the future.

5. EQUAL SEPARATION

Equal separation is sometimes called the neutrality or non-discrimination principle. Paul J. Weber summarises it as "reject[ing] all political or economic privilege, coercion, or disability based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice, or lack thereof, but guarantees to religiously motivated or affiliated individuals and organisations the same rights and privileges extended to other similarly situated individuals and organisations. ... It treats the right to religious belief and practice as a human right to be protected along with other human rights..."[10]

American president James Madison is considered the father of this theory. Lately, a number of scholars and judges in the USA actively worked to build a consensus centered on the neutrality of the state and equal treatment more than around strict separation. They are trying to avoid what they see as a trap set up by some liberal advocates, which has it that expulsion of religion from public sphere is neutrality. Professor Douglas Laycock, an advocate of this consensus, regards the First Amendment to mean

that "the religion clauses require government to minimize the extent to which it either encourages or discourages religious belief or disbelief, practice or non-practice, observance or non-observance". Religious organisations may therefore receive government funds for social services the same way other similar agencies do.[11]

It is interesting to note that separation of state and church in America was achieved due to an unusual alliance of secularists/rationalists and religious leaders. The paradox lies in the fact that the first group, led by Thomas Jefferson (president 1801–09), wanted separation to prevent oppressive and divisive religious tendencies from taking root in the federal American government. On the other hand, some religious leaders, with Roger Williams (1603–83) being very vocal on the issue, promoted the wall of separation between the 'garden of belief and the wilderness of the secular world.' According to him, the separation was supposed to prevent intrusion of the corrupting influence of power into religious affairs and enable religious organisations to freely exercise their mission.[12] So, the first group wanted to protect the state from religion and the second to protect religion from state – albeit with different goals in mind.

ANTI-CHURCH MODEL

This model is a form of state-church relation in which the state not only wants to control religious organisations, but has a critical and even hostile attitude towards the religious hierarchy and religion in general. The previous East European systems fall under this category, as well as China today or France and Mexico in the early 20th century. State hostility towards religious organisations often expresses itself as prosecution of religious leaders, confiscation of religious property, and prohibition of religious activities.

After writing this paper the author came across a different and more complex typology developed by Veit Bader, who discerns five major models: Strong establishment (Israel, Greece), weak establishment (England, Scotland, Scandinavian states), plural establishment (Finland), non-constitutional pluralism (Netherlands, Belgium, India, Australia, Austria, and Germany), and non-establishment and private pluralism (allegedly, the USA).[13]

Impact of different models on religion, religious organisations and state

As aforementioned, Western Europe has never been a very hospitable place for the liberal model of separation of state from religious organisations. The models applied differ from state to state and they are evolving. During last 50 years, many European churches achieved an enviable degree of administrative autonomy, keeping or acquiring at the same time the right to financial support from public funds. Paradoxically, however, the participation of believers in traditional churches in Europe today seems at an all-time record low. At the same time, in the USA where the Supreme Court jealously guards a 'wall of separation' between state and religious organisations, public opinion polls consistently show significantly higher percentages of both self-declared and practicing believers.[14] Similarly, in Eastern Europe, where religion was a victim of state repression for decades, certain religious organisations keep raising the levels of membership.

John G. Francis from Utah University, believes that regulatory regimes developed in Europe after World War II have motivated European religious organisations to neglect recruitment of members for participation in institutionalized religion and even their mission, and instead focus on their newly acquired social role: education, humanitarian work and political lobbying.[15] He claims that contemporary state regulation influences religious organisations' priorities and activities irrespective of the religiosity of population.[16] Religious organisations react to regulatory incentives and inhibitions the same way they react to the political environment.

Regulation of religious organisations used to be a result of state intention to impose its beliefs on its subjects, to redistribute social resources, or to prevent a possible challenge by religious organisations to the existing political system. Today, however, much regulation is a result of state reaction to the initiative of religious organisations which try to secure funding for their activities when faced with dwindling numbers of membership. Seeking financial support in exchange

for a degree of regulation appears to be a new strategy on the part of religious organisations in Europe.[17] This trend certainly represents a considerable departure from the 'liberal tradition of state neutrality.'

There are many factors that motivate religious organisations to actively seek regulation in times when states are loosing interest for it: (a) religious organisations may consider regulation as competitive advantage in competition with other religious organisations; and (b) some religious organisations are simply worried about fulfillment of their obligations towards their officers, institutions and educational programs.

As a result of this accommodation to different regulatory regimes, churches in different European countries have become identified with different activities. So, for instance, in France, where the church has been separated from state for the better part of the 20th century, the Catholic Church has succeeded in building up a reputation as an institution that provides good education, rather than as a political advocate. According to some observers, the support that schools run by church in France receive from the government stems not from the latter's conviction that those schools are bastions of morality, but from its satisfaction with the quality of secular education that they offer. In Germany, religious organisations pay special attention to social services and health care. Both major churches are actively involved in these sectors and receive significant state funds in return. In Eastern Germany, Protestant churches had a pronounced political role due to the absence of alternative political forces. However, with the fall of the Berlin Wall, the political environment radically changed – the church is no longer in a position to attract political forces, and therefore is expected to follow the example of churches in Western Germany and focus on social services and health care too.

The Anglican Church has over time built an image of "official clerical opposition" --an assessor of social conditions and public policy. In Italy, the Catholic Church has been trying for decades to distance itself from the Christian Democratic Party which it helped establish. In Spain, however, the Church receives considerable financial support for the services it provides to the Spanish society; even from the Socialist government, which two generations ago advocated an end to established churches' privileged position.[18]

The experience of religious organisations with regulatory frameworks in Europe indicates that opportunities created by those frameworks quickly attract religious organisations, which then re-organize their priorities in line with the opportunities at hand. Where they are denied a political role, or where they conclude that their intervention in politics is counterproductive, religious organisations refocus on social work, health and education services, or advocacy of specific areas of public policy.

Religious organisations, thanks to the aforementioned factors, have succeeded in achieving a substantial level of administrative autonomy, while maintaining their previously achieved level of state financial support and sometimes even their privileged status vis a vis new religious organisations. As a result, religious hierarchies have become independent from the support of their believers more than at any earlier time.[19]

CONCLUSION

Although strict separation of religious organisations from the state is a model with many advocates on the European soil, it does not capture the reality of the political relationship between them in Europe's recent history. On the contrary, European states have so far experienced a number of models. Relations between states and religious organisations in Europe have always been intense, often cooperating and at other times, clashed. However their relations have never been insignificant. Historical experience and social reality have pushed European states to secure privileged status for traditional, mainly Catholic and Protestant churches to date. In Spain, Greece, Belgium, and Luxemburg, the dominant religious organisations are financed by the government. This was also the case in – until recently – in Italy, which is now shifting to a system of religious taxes collected through public administration as is the case in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Denmark, Sweden, and Finland.[20] Some religious organisations receive indirect support from the state in France, the United

Kingdom, the Netherlands, and Sweden. Free access to TV and radio is another privilege granted to some religious organisations in parts of Europe.[21]

Thanks to the ever-increasing number of small non-conformist churches and non-Christians in once monolithic Christian societies, the situation is slowly tilting in favor of the recognition of non-traditional religious organisations as well as Islam. That process is often very slow and incremental in nature. These new organisations mostly advocate greater distance between religious organisations and the state – although there are examples to the contrary.

States are increasingly withdrawing from doctrinal and administrative affairs of religious organisations even when these are closely connected to the state. One reason is the complexity of such intervention. The risk of over-regulation leads to its actual reduction. The explanation for such state behavior could, among other things, be found in the decreasing number of 'church-goers' in the traditional churches, a phenomenon that is partially explained by the privileged status of those churches in European societies.

Rarely, today, do political circles in Western Europe take religious organisations as representatives of comprehensive ideological movements; rather these are viewed as interest groups with a moral agenda that, like other interest groups, compete for resources and legal privileges. This does not necessarily mean that religious leaders do not provide independent comment on everyday issues of wider public interest. To the contrary, many religious leaders believe that they enjoy more freedom of expression today. However, it needs to be pointed out that religious leaders speak as moral authorities, not leaders of mass movements which question or support main tenets of the state.[22]

This research was funded by a grant from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Kotor Network on Religion in Plural Societies.

Ahmet Alibašiç is a lecturer at the Faculty of Islamic Studies, University of Sarajevo and at the International University of Sarajevo teaching Islamic culture and history of civilisations. He was educated in Riyadh and Kuala Lumpur. Currently completing a doctorate on Opposition in Islamic Political Thought and Practice, Alibašiç heads the Centre for Advanced Studies in Sarajevo and is actively involved in inter-religious dialogue in Bosnia and beyond.

ENDNOTES

1. Wuthnow, Robert. "Introduction," in idem, ed., The Encyclopedia of Politics and Religion, 2 vols. (London: Routledge, 1988), xxix.

2. Sanneh, Lamin. "Separation of Cchurch and Sstate: Aa Pprinciple Aadvancing the Sstruggle for Hhuman Rights," in Wuthnow, Encyclopedia of Politics and Religion, 690.

3. Riis, Ole. "State churches," in Wuthnow, Encyclopedia of Politics and Religion 714–15.

4. Francis, John G. "The Evolving Regulatory Structure of European Church-State Relationships," Journal of Church and State 34, no. 4 (Autumn 1992): 781.

5. Ferrari, Silvio., "Separation of Church and State in Contemporary European Society," Journal of Church and State 30 (Autumn 1988): 542.

6. Weber, Paul J. "Separation of church and state: a potent, dynamic idea in political theory," in Robert Wuthnow, ed. The Encyclopedia of Politics and Religion, 2 vols. (London: Routledge, 1988), 684.

7. Weber, 684.

8. Weber, 684–85.

9. The Supreme Court rejected such an interpretation of the Founding Fathers' intentions in Harris v. McRae (1980), clearly refuting the argument that any religious influence on legislation is unconstitutional.

10. Weber, 685.

11. Weber, 686.

12. Weber, 685–6.

13. Bader prefers the fourth model on both practical and moral grounds. That model combines constitutional disestablishment with restricted legal pluralism, administrative institutional pluralism, institutional political pluralism, and religio-cultural pluralisation of the nation. Bader should be commended for drawing our attention to the important but often-neglected difference between constitutional regulation and legal regulation, administrative, political and cultural interference, as well as to the fact that aims of states in relation to religion and religious organisations vary widely. See his excellent paper "Religions and States: A New Typology and a Plea for Non-Constitutional Pluralism", Ethical Theory and Moral Practice 6 (2003): 55-91. The typology is on pp. 67–72.

14. In 1986 43% of Americans went to church every week while only 36% of Italians, 12% of the French, 21% of Western Germans and 14% of the English did the same. When asked about the importance of religion in one's life, the following percentage of young men and women said that it should be 'very important': 9% in W. Germany and 8% in France and England compared to 47% in the USA. Princeton Religious Research Center, Emerging Trends (Princeton, N.J. Princeton Religious Research Center, 1989); Francis, "Regulatory Structure", 781, 798.

15. Francis, 775.

16. Francis, 778.

17. Francis, "Regulatory Structure", 779.

18. Graham, Robert (1984). Graham, Spain: A Nation Comes of Age (New York: St. Martin's Press), 220–21.

19. Francis, 801–803.

20. Norway falls in neither group. All registered religious communities (not just the dominant) receive roughly the same funds per capita over the government budget. This funding is widely claimed to be "a refund of the church tax" rather than a subsidy, but that claim is wrong. No separate entity called a church tax exists in the government budget. Moreover, and the support for other religious communities is determined not as a share of tax returns but according to the budgeted expenses of the state church, whether or not those expenses are covered by tax returns or other state funds. It is not yet clear, but hotly debated, what funding model will be introduced in Norway if, as is likely, Norway follows Sweden in separating state and church.

21. Ferrari, "Separation," 533–48.

22. Francis, 803–804.

Islamofascism and the 'Chimera of Neutrality'

Naseem Ahmed

THE PREVAILING DISCOURSE on international terrorism which has provided us with vacuous terms like 'Islamofascism' is a major obstacle to bridging relations between Muslims and non-Muslims. The various generative terms associated with Islam are simple heuristics, modern day catechisms that are grossly reductive, which not only smear Islam but are terribly imprecise.

A "discourse", as Michel Foucault said does not just provide "a bunch of words,"[1] they determine our social responses. Discourses do not represent what is "real", they actually produce what we come to understand as real. They determine what can be said, and what can be thought. They give us the words and conceptual frameworks by which we attempt to understand ourselves and our experiences, as well as the world "out there".

The dominant perception of Islam is sustained by people in the business of perpetuating tension. Headlines such as 'the Islamic threat', 'the menace of Islam' are pretty much an established norm in mainstream media. The prevailing discourse is an atavistic exercise in the vilification of Islam. It is set within a paradigm that is redolent of past Orientalistalist hubris. The Orientalist enterprise, according to Parvez Mansoor,[2] 'is born of spite, bred in frustration and nourished by vengeance'. Even though we have ostensibly removed ourselves into a more rational and scientific period, depictions of the Muslim world still suffers from malicious generalisations of Islam. There appears to be a lack of real effort and sincerity in understanding the Muslim world. Instead, old caricatures are simply re-packaged to satisfy an increasing demand to understand the Muslim world. The enterprise has left an indelible mark on the minds of the West and even the most lucid post-modernist critique – and here I have in mind Edward Said's Orientalism – failed to displace the iconic images of Islam.

Whatever identity the West assumes, Islam is presented as its binary opposite, 'Islam is a kind of scapegoat for everything the West does not happen to like about the world's new political, economic and social patterns. For the right, Islam represents barbarism, for the left medieval theocracy, for the centre, a kind of distasteful exoticism. In all of the camps, however, there is agreement that even though little is known about the Islamic world there is not much there to be approved of'.[3]

What the future holds for Muslim and non-Muslim relations is very much dependent on how our mediators process facts about the 'Other'. Knowledge about each other can either be developed for co-existence in mind or it can be constructed to facilitate and legitimise a process of subjugation and demonisation. If there is to be co-existence in this shrinking world, than there is no choice but to be better informed of the fears, dreams and aspirations of our neighboring cultures and religions in order to engender a more positive perceptions of each other.

There needs to be some simple soul searching questions asked by everyone. Do we want a clash of civilisation? If not, then why is the paradigm being set for one? Why is the language used to describe violence perpetrated by Muslims invariably set within the paradigm of "us" and "them"? Why is violence committed by Muslims not subjected to more nuanced explanations of their causes?

The origin of our current discourses, I believe, is a hangover from ripened Orientalism. The fact that Islam is defined as fascistic clearly demonstrates how the self-image of the West is continually being defined in a binary relation with Islam. As Norman Daniels and other commentators have argued[4], the imagery of Islam never ceases to be constructed by anything other than the

West's own fears and anxieties; beginning with the infidel Muslim then the sensual and sexual Orient, through the barbaric and irrational and now the fascistic. Islam's image is continually being transformed as Western paradigms shift.

The construction of a fascistic image of Islam demonstrates two very important points. First, that Islam is still a major force in the formation of European and Western identity. Secondly, Islam is mired in a great tug of war within the self identity of the West itself. The perception of Islam is in a state of flux simply because the perception of religion in the West is in a state of flux.

The fascistic image of Islam is maintained through myopic use of language and gross ignorance of the Islamic faith. It is commonly argued that "Islamofascism" on the one hand is political Islam, and Islam is simply a personal faith. If the manifestation of "Islamofascism" are 9/11 and 7/7 then it simply has no connection with Islam. It is gravely inappropriate and misleading to suggest that the roots of such calamitous violence lie at the door of Islam.

Islam cannot become personified by causes that are temporally constituted, which means that politics, even though it has assumed an imperious position in the modern world, cannot determine the nature of Islam. The wall between religion and politics is not simply to protect politics from the blind certainties of religions but also to protect religion from the expediencies of politics.

The ignorance that surrounds the usage of these terms can be easily established by some elementary exploration into just a few of the key characteristics and historical developments in Islam. It is often repeated that Muslims who perpetrate acts of violence are motivated by their faith. This argument may seem reasonable in the context of a worldview dominated by ideology, where virtue isn't so much about righteous action but simply a philosophical construct. Islam however, unlike other beliefs and ideologies, is not a faith deeply immersed with orthodoxy; it has a unique preoccupation with Orthopraxy. Theological musing has always been kept in the periphery. This is reflected, not only in the Qur'an, which invariably views righteousness rooted to the twin combination of correct belief and correct action but also in the evolution of Islamic thought, which culminated in the establishment of the different schools of thought. This discourse, which has evolved to form an 'Islamic Orthodoxy' is prescriptive and primarily concerned with correct action.

Islam is a religion that views the highest form of virtue in human action as opposed to simple faith. It warns against hypocrisy which it describes clearly as a contradiction between faith and action. The 'Islamicness' of an action is not deemed to be one simply carried out by a Muslim but one that is carried out correctly. This summation of the Islamic faith no doubt raises the relevant question as to whether armed rebellion and violence that do not follow the limits of armed conflict, clearly defined in the famous Prophetic traditions, is permissible.

The Islamic notion of a just war not only takes into consideration the cause but also the means and only when both are legitimate do war and violence become justified. If war cannot be engaged in justly, war shouldn't be fought at all. Most Muslims would no doubt argue that it is better to live in subordination in this world if insubordination leads to mass slaughter of innocent civilians. The Prophetic traditions on this subject should no doubt pose a truly difficult question as to whether modern warfare, and weapons of mass destruction, which invariably cause unmitigated and indiscriminate deaths, are at all, allowed in Islam and, if so, how?

The myopia of such argument is poetically represented by Maxime Rodison in his book Europe and the Mystique of Islam; "For their faith or their homeland, people are commonly induced to perform splendid deeds as well as hideous crimes, even if they do not always have a good understanding of either their faith or of the plans of the leader of that homeland".

Only an unsuspecting mind would view these commonly held explanations to be the product of sincere and credible scholarship, especially in a political climate that thrives on fear. These categories smear and vilify Muslims who wish to participate in the political process. It builds suspicion of Muslim organisations throughout the world. It reinforces the argument that the only Islam which can be tolerated is one that is emasculated from all its political ambitions. It reinforces the myth that the problem is actually Islam,

Islamic terms like baghi (those who transgress and commit injustice), haarib (those who wage war) clearly isolates perperators of violence from the Muslim community

that there are elements in Islam which produces unmitigated violence.

For every extremist, there are millions of Muslims who do not become vengefully animated by their anguish. The vast majority express their faith through the mundane actions of their lives. Most live under repressive secular governments in their own country, many as law abiding citizens in the West, some in diasporas.

The fast food approach to life cannot be used to comprehend complicated socio - political events. Ready-made social categories that require no effort on our part, put together by rather unwholesome products will in the long term prove more destructive to us than McDonalds and Fried Chicken. Our desire for information and better understanding of Muslim extremist would be better served by a more organic approach that requires engagement with the Islamic legal discourse.

If we are truly striving for authenticity in describing Muslim extremism, this fertile and long standing intellectual tradition will no doubt fill the void in our present discourse. More importantly it will delegitimize terror groups through the very discourse which they seek legitimacy from.

This discourse is scholarly represented by Khaled Abou Al-Fadl in Rebellion and Violence in Islamic Law. The Qur'an unambiguously condemns groups that target civilians and are a threat to peace and security. It makes numerous references to parties that engage in extreme violence with varying categories with contempt and condemnation. Islamic terms like baghi (those who transgress and commit injustice), haarib (those who wage a war) clearly isolates perpetrators of violence from the Muslim community. Furthermore the Qur'an chastises people with such tendencies as ''those who strive to cause corruption on earth''. For these people, the Qur'an prescribes the most severe punishment.[5]

The Islamic legal discourse on rebellion and violence delegitimizes violence that manifests outside the rule of law and state authority. It prohibits terror and violence becoming expressions of personal religiosity and piety. It recognises that violence is sometimes necessary, more importantly, it recognises the immensity of bringing violence under the rule of law. Violence can not be waged simply on account of political expediency and ambitions of hegemony.

According to the Islamic law or rebellion, terrorist organisations like Al Qaeda act outside the rule of law. They are disapproved of by the vast majority of Muslims, and Qur'an condemns such groups as baghi and haarib.[6]

There needs to be a bona fide realisation of the fact that our present categories are not helping in the struggle against Muslim extremists. Our approach to understanding this new phenomenon has, thusfar, been extremely archaic. They are products of lazy scholarship. It has contributed to gross misunderstanding of Islam and under a 'chimera of neutrality' provides an avenue for spiteful comments about Islam. We cannot simply pay lip service to the imperative need in separating Islam from Muslim terrorists. We have to become extremely selective and calculating in our use of social categories. We need to recognise that the many discourses within Islam will greatly help in winning this battle for civilisation.

Naseem Ahmed is Project Manager for Department of Education – a private firm in London working with the Central Government. An active member of the community, Ahmed has a MA in Islamic Studies from Birckbeck University and an MSsc in Public Policy Management from Queen Marry and Westfield College, University of London.

ENDNOTES

1. Foucault, Michel. Madness and Civilisation

2. Parvez Mansoor, Parvez. - Method Against Truth: Orientalism and Qur'anic Studies. http://www.pmanzoor.info/Method-Truth.htm

Said, Edward. Said – Covering Islam – How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World.

3. See Zachary Karabell's People of the Book, The Forgotten History of Islam and the West

4. Daniels, Norman. Daniels – Islam and the West, The Making of an Image

5. Qur'an 5:33-34

Highlights of recent media and debating projects run by The Cordoba Foundation

This publication is printed on 100% recycled

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.

Our activities include:

- Structured consultation and advisory services
- Face-to-face interaction with decision-makers and figures of authority
- In-house research
- Workshops, seminars and debates on pertinent issues
- Training and capacity-building
- Periodicals and journals
- Resourceful website

www.thecordobafoundation.com

مؤسسة قرطبة

The Cordoba Foundation

Westgate House, Level 7, Westgate Road, Ealing, London W5 1YY
Tel 020 8991 3372 • Fax 020 8991 3373
info@thecordobafoundation.com • www.thecordobafoundation.com