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Crisis in Europe

I

My learning curve was steep. When I look back, it's as if one day the whole business wasn't even on my radar screen, and the next day I understood that it was the most important issue of our time.

It happened in Amsterdam, a city I flipped for in 1997 and moved to a year later.¹ But it wasn't till 1999, when I lived briefly in a predominantly Muslim neighborhood, that I took in the fact that the city was divided into two radically different and almost entirely separate communities. One of them, composed mostly of ethnic Dutchmen, was secular, liberal, and (owing to a very low birthrate) dwindling steadily; the other, composed of immigrant Muslims, lived in tradition-bound, self-segregating enclaves whose autocratic leaders despised democracy and whose population (thanks to high birth and immigration rates) was climbing rapidly. This division, I soon realized, was replicated across Western Europe. Clearly, major social friction—and more—lay down the line.

Yet nobody talked about it. Or wanted to. And when I went to the Amsterdam library in search of information about this subject (the Internet then being far less fecund a resource than it has since become), I found little other than books like *The Islamic Threat* (1992)—in which the American scholar John L. Esposito insisted that there was no such threat, period—and *A Heart Turned East* (1997), in which the British writer Adam LeBor celebrated Muslims for bringing to Europe something “intangible, but nonetheless vital,” namely “God and spirituality.”²

¹ I have discussed my Amsterdam epiphany in an earlier essay, “Tolerating Intolerance: The Challenge of Fundamentalist Islam in Western Europe,” *Partisan Review*, Vol. LXIX, No. 3 (Summer 2002).

² John L. Esposito, *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?* (New York, 1992). Adam LeBor, *A Heart Turned East*. (New York, 1997).

To be sure, a few thoughtful observers *had* made public their concern about Europe's ongoing transformation—but I didn't find this out until later, after I'd moved to Oslo. In the 1996 memoir *Min Tro, Din Myte* (*My Faith, Your Myth*), Iraqi immigrant Walid al-Kubaisi depicted a Norwegian elite that not only failed to encourage integration but, motivated by a misguided, condescending romanticism about exotic foreigners, actively discouraged it to the point of chiding freethinkers (like al-Kubaisi) for whom part of the appeal of living in the West was its democracy.³ Then there was Unni Wikan, a social anthropologist who, it turned out, had been calling for stronger integration efforts for years. Invited by the Norwegian government to propose a plan for immigrant families, Wikan urged authorities to attend to the civil rights of Muslim women and children, many of whom, she knew, suffered severe abuse in patriarchal homes; yet her recommendations were rejected on the grounds that it would be disrespectful for the government to challenge the authority of Muslim husbands and fathers. And of course there was the Dutch sociologist turned politician Pim Fortuyn, whose book *Tegen de islamisering van onze cultuur* (*Against the Islamicization of Our Culture*) took a position opposed to Esposito's, arguing that the rise of an illiberal Muslim subculture in his country did indeed threaten democratic values and that the Netherlands was doomed unless it seriously addressed this threat.⁴ Though Fortuyn's book had appeared in 1997, I didn't hear about it, either, until much later.

These were strong voices; but they were also voices in the wilderness, taking on a political, academic, and media establishment that refused to listen. If al-Kubaisi's arguments were virtually ignored by that establishment, and if Wikan's proposals were dismissed out of hand, Fortuyn—while finding a receptive audience among ordinary Dutchmen—was demonized by the Dutch elite. Though he was a liberal, committed to freedom and sexual equality, politicians and journalists labeled him a fascist. This systematic misrepresentation led directly to his murder on May 6, 2002, by a Green Party activist whose account of his motives read like a *précis* of the establishment line on Fortuyn.

The messenger was silenced—but his message lived on in the

³ Walid al-Kubaisi, *Min Tro, Din Myte*. Aventura. 1996.

⁴ Pim Fortuyn, *Tegen de islamisering van onze cultuur*. Bruna. 1997.

writings of other heterodox Europeans who, stirred by 9/11, began to find their voices. Legendary Italian journalist Oriana Fallaci, for example, responded to 9/11 with *The Rage and the Pride*, a *cri de coeur* in which she wrote: "I am very, very, very angry. Angry with a rage which is cold, lucid, rational . . . I spit in their face."⁵ "They" being not only the terrorists but also the European elite, which, she demanded, must shake off its fashionable anti-Americanism and anti-Semitism, recognize where the real threat to Western freedom lay, and act to defend that freedom. Civilization, America, freedom, individualism, the West: for Fallaci, all these things are indivisible, and those who defend them are heroes, those who fail to recognize their preciousness are fools, and those who seek to destroy them are a peril not to be taken lightly. In passionate, rambling, highly personal prose, Fallaci, a longtime left-winger, decried her fellow leftists' affection for Arafat, praised Rudolph Giuliani, condemned Muslims' treatment of women, and recalled interviewing Pakistani leader Ali Bhutto, who, tearfully telling her of the marriage he was forced into as a child, concluded, "No religion is as oppressive as mine." Fallaci followed this book with *La Forza del Ragione* (*The Force of Reason*), in which she charged that the left, like Islam, "regards itself as kissed by a god of Goodness and Truth. Like Islam it never admits guilt or error. . . . It is no coincidence that ninety-five percent of the Italians who convert to Islam come from the left. . . ."⁶

The French controversy over the wearing of head coverings in public schools occasioned two brief, ardent books by Chahadortt Djavann, an Iranian-born novelist domiciled in Paris: *Bas les voiles!* ("I wore the veil for ten years," it begins. "It was the veil or death") and *Que pense Allah de l'Europe?* (in which she compared the veil to the yellow star forced on the Jews in Nazi Europe).⁷ Ardent rallying cries also came from Sorbonne history professor Guy Millière, who in *Qui a peur de l'islam!* argued persuasively that "Islam will be the French problem of the twenty-first century, the problem that will determine whether France survives or

⁵ Oriana Fallaci, *The Rage and the Pride* (Rizzoli, 2002), trans. from the Italian by Fallaci. (The original book, *La Rabbia e l'Orgoglio*, was published by Rizzoli in Italy in 2001.)

⁶ THE FORCE OF REASON, by *Oriana Fallaci*. Rizzoli. \$19.95. I read this in the Norwegian edition.

⁷ Chahdortt Djavann, *Bas les voiles!* (Gallimard, 2003). QUE PENSE ALLAH DE L'EUROPE? Gallimard. 5.50 euros, paperback.

perishes,” and from Dutch author and media personality Theo van Gogh, who in a collection of newspaper columns provocatively entitled *Allah weet het beter* (*Allah Knows Best*), irreverently pierced both Islamic and European-establishment pieties.⁸ Other books, if less polemical, were no less urgent. In Denmark, *Islam i vesten* (*Islam in the West*), an anthology of essays—many by Muslim refugees—candidly discussed sharia law, human rights, and sex roles under Islam, and *I krigens hus* (*In the House of War*) examined the rise of European Islam today in the context of the Muslim world’s centuries-long *jihad* against the West.⁹ In Norway, an essay anthology, *Gode formål—gale følger* (*Good Intentions, Bad Results*), probed the history and consequences of that country’s immigration policy, while *Feminin integrering* (*Feminine integration*) presented statistics showing that immigrant-group members in several European countries were not integrating into mainstream society through marriage but were instead marrying their foreign cousins and perpetuating segregation.¹⁰

Meanwhile, Wikan’s *Generous Betrayal* acknowledged that while American immigration has worked on the whole, European immigration hasn’t.¹¹ Why? The difference, she admitted, boils down to American realism vs. European naïveté. Rather than learn from the spectacularly successful history of U.S. immigration, European policymakers—who viewed America as a cruelly materialistic nation that compels immigrants to shake off their identities and fend for themselves in a dog-eat-dog economic system—pursued instead an approach they saw as humane and multicultural. (Wikan calls it “unrealistic and utopian.”) Under this approach, neither work nor integration would be encouraged (or, for that matter, particularly welcomed); immigrants would be treated generously, handled with kid gloves, and kept at arm’s length—and, it was believed, would respond with gratitude.

⁸ QUI A PEUR DE L’ISLAM!: La démocratie est-elle soluble dans l’islam?, by Guy Millière. Editions Michalon. 12 euros. Theo van Gogh, *Allah weet het beter*. Xtra. 2003.

⁹ *Islam i vesten: På koranens vei?*, ed. by Helle Merete Brix (Tiderne Skrifter, 2002). Helle Merete Brix, Torben Hansen and Lars Hedegaard, *I krigens hus: Islams kolonisering af Vesten* (Hovedland. 2003).

¹⁰ *Gode formål—gale følger?*, ed. by Ottar Brox, Tore Lindbekk, and Sigurd Skirbekk (Cappelen, 2003). Hege Storhaug and Human Rights Service, *Feminin integrering—utfordringer I et fleretnisk samfunn* (Kolofoen. 2003). I am the translator of the English version, *Human Visas: A Report from the Front Lines of Europe’s Integration Crisis* (Kolofoen, 2003).

¹¹ Unni Wikan, *Generous Betrayal: Politics of Culture in the New Europe*. (Chicago, 2002).

The consequence of this policy, alas, is a generation of young European-born Muslim women many of whom are as cloistered and oppressed as their great-grandmothers were back in some North African or South Asian village, and a generation of young European-born Muslim men many of whom are unskilled, unruly, and possessed of a contempt for their starry-eyed benefactors that renders them highly vulnerable to seduction by radical Islamist teachers and recruiters for terrorism.

In *Generous Betrayal*, Wikan told several stories to illustrate how a misguided “respect” for immigrant-group traditions leads to a denial of individual rights. One such tradition is forced marriage. Wikan wrote of Aisha, a Norwegian-born girl whose parents transported her to their homeland, Morocco, to be married against her will. Aisha, then fourteen, knew what was coming and begged Norwegian child-protection authorities for help; but, not wishing to be seen as culturally insensitive, they refused to get involved. Another such tradition is “honor killing,” whereby family honor is restored through the murder of a female relative who is seen as having sullied it—by, for example, being raped. Wikan drew attention to this practice in her book *For ærens skyld* (*For Honor's Sake*), which is troubling not only for its account of girls and women brutally executed by their families but also, alas, for Wikan’s dismaying insistence on seeing the murderers, too, as victims, her argument being that their cultural ideology binds them to obligations that they cannot shirk.¹² (Using similar logic, one might maintain that a guard at Auschwitz was as deserving of pity as the children he shoved into the gas chamber, since he was, after all, a helpless instrument of Nazi racial theories.)

All these books gave voice to the concerns of many ordinary Europeans and broke through the wall of silence erected by Europe’s political, media, and academic elite around questions of immigration and integration. Taken together, they painted a grim picture of immigrant neighborhoods that were growing more and more insulated from their surroundings; of young European-born men who were being drawn increasingly to Islamic fundamentalism and even terrorism; and of a mainstream European society too inhibited by political correctness to face up to any of it. Several of the books stressed that those most severely

¹² Unni Wikan, *For ærens skyld: Fadime til ettertanke* (Universitetsforlaget, 2003).

affected by these problems tended to be Muslims themselves—the abused wives who fled to women’s shelters, the toddlers subjected to the torture of clitoridectomy, the children sent abroad to prison-like Koran schools, the teenage girls compelled to wed illiterate bullies who think wife-beating is a God-given right.

II

What is the role of Islam itself in shaping the difficulties associated with Europe’s immigrant communities? On this question there is broad disagreement. Wikan, an expert on the Islamic world, absolves Islam of all blame, maintaining that the trouble lies with certain cultures in which the dominant religion happens to be Islam and not with the religion itself. Al-Kubaisi, raised a Muslim, takes the opposite view, insisting that the negative aspects of Muslim communities can’t be disconnected from Islam itself, since it’s by far the most powerful of the forces that shape those communities.

Several recent books have attempted to address the growing curiosity and concern in the West about the Muslim faith and its relationship to Europe’s integration crisis and the war on terrorism. In *The Crisis of Islam*, the distinguished scholar Bernard Lewis, while stressing that he’s not hostile to Islam (which “has given dignity and meaning to drab and impoverished lives” and “taught men of different races to live in brotherhood”) and that he doesn’t necessarily view it as problematic (“Islam as such is not an enemy of the West”), acknowledges that the worldviews of Islamist terrorists and their supporters have been shaped largely by Muslim theology and history.¹³ He adds, however, that Islamist views of the West (especially of America) have also been heavily influenced by both Nazism and Communism. And he underscores the immense impact on contemporary Islamist thought of Egyptian activist Sayyid Qutb, whose two-year sojourn in America in the late 1940s exposed him to a lifestyle based largely on “a good time” and “fun” (Qutb, writing in Arabic, rendered these words in the original English) and who was disgusted by

¹³ THE CRISIS OF ISLAM, by *Bernard Lewis*. Random House. \$19.95; \$12.95.

everything from church dances to the Kinsey Report. Islam's Satan being "neither an imperialist nor an exploiter" but "a seducer," notes Lewis, it's not American imperialism or exploitation that provokes Islamists but rather the seductive appeal of American culture, their own attraction to which appalls them.

What of the belief that Islamist terrorists are motivated by a hostility to American imperialism? Lewis points out that while outright Russian imperialism—including the Soviet Union's harsh suppression of Islam within its borders—has been a far more detrimental factor in the lives of Muslims than anything America has ever done, Russia has been criticized by Muslim leaders far less than America has. (Several Muslim countries refused to condemn the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan; the PLO openly defended it.) Similarly, the Iran-Iraq War "caused vastly more death and destruction than all the Arab-Israel wars put together but received far less attention." Why, then, are Muslims so anti-Israel? One reason, Lewis suggests, is that in societies where one is not free to criticize one's own masters, "Israel serves as a useful stand-in for complaints about . . . economic privation and political repression . . . and as a way of deflecting the resulting anger." (It doesn't help, one might add, that references to Jews and Israel in Arabic-language schoolbooks and media—both in the Muslim world and in Europe—read like Nazi propaganda.) Nevertheless, Lewis expresses sympathy for ordinary Muslims, arguing that most terrorists are adherents of radical Wahhabist theology, that most practitioners of the faith "are not fundamentalists," and that 9/11 was inconsistent with Koranic precepts.

On these points, Robert Spencer vigorously disagrees. In *Islam Unveiled*, while affirming his respect for Muslims' "great medieval civilization," he examines in turn such practices as slavery, polygamy, child marriage, the subordination of women, inequitable divorce laws, the death penalty for apostates, and the oppression of infidels, in each case extensively quoting the Koran and Koranic scholars, past and present, to show that all of these practices are sanctioned by Islam.¹⁴ Spencer rejects Lewis's claim that the beliefs of the Wahhabist

¹⁴ Robert Spencer, *Islam Unveiled: Disturbing Questions about the World's Fastest-Growing Faith*. Foreword by David Pryce-Jones. (San Francisco, 2002). Spencer is also the editor of *The Myth of Islamic Tolerance: How Islamic Law Treats Non-Muslims* (Amherst, NY, 2005), which includes several dozen short, informative selections by Ye'or, Warraq, and others on such topics as sharia law and anti-Semitism.

sect underlie most Islamist extremism, arguing that nearly all Muslims “view the Qur’an as literally and eternally true, including its exhortations to violence. There are liberal Muslims who read the Qur’an’s exhortations to battle as a call to wage spiritual warfare against sin and error, but they are difficult to find.”

An even more stringent critique is provided by the pseudonymous Ibn Warraq in *Why I Am Not a Muslim*, which was published in 1995 but has gained renewed attention since 9/11.¹⁵ Raised a Muslim in a Muslim country but now a secular humanist who admires John Stuart Mill and Friedrich Hayek, Warraq wrote this book (its title inspired, of course, by Bertrand Russell’s *Why I Am Not a Christian*) in response to the 1989 Salman Rushdie *fatwa*. “It is rare in one’s life,” Warraq writes, “that one has an opportunity to show on what side of an important life and death issue one stands—the Rushdie issue and the rise of Islam are two such issues and this book is my stand.” He does not pull punches: “The horrendous behavior toward women, non-Muslims, heretics, and slaves manifested in Islamic civilization was a direct consequence of the principles laid down in the Koran and developed by the Islamic jurists. Islamic law is a totalitarian theoretical construct, intended to control every aspect of an individual’s life from birth to death.” He admits that the theory has not always been put into practice—that Islamic culture, in other words, has often been less severe than the Koran prescribes—but adds that sometimes, as in the case of female circumcision, it has been more severe. “What Esposito and all Western apologists of Islam are incapable of understanding,” Warraq insists, “is that Islam *is* a threat, and it is a threat to thousands of *Muslims*.”

One of the highlights of Warraq’s book is his fascinating discussion of European authors and scholars whose less than fully informed infatuation with Islam yielded benign images that helped shape modern Western perceptions of Muslim culture and belief. Both Voltaire and Gibbon, for example, admired Islam’s lack of a priestly class and its supposed rationalism and enlightenment; Carlyle, who had a soft spot for tyrants, admired the Muslim predilection for strong leaders. These and others found Islam a useful stick with which to beat Christianity. Warraq,

¹⁵ Ibn Warraq, *Why I Am Not a Muslim* (Amherst, NY, 2003).

in short, strongly rejects Western “orientalism”—but unlike Edward Said, who rejected it on the grounds that outsiders’ interpretations of Arab and Islamic culture are by their very nature culturally biased and thus illegitimate, Warraq rejects it for its romantic refusal to look squarely at uncomfortable realities.

Like Spencer, Warraq devotes much of his book to a point-by-point critical analysis of Islamic history and theology. Though his meticulous arguments about such topics as the Koran’s historical errors, inconsistencies between Islamic law and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the validity of the theory of evolution will seem less than revelatory to secular readers, his chapters on imperialism (in which he compares the way European and Muslim empires treated their subjects), on *dhimmitude* (the second-class status imposed on non-Muslims in Muslim countries), on the Islamic persecution of heresy, and on the role of Muslim women (he cites laws protecting rapists and punishing rape victims) are fascinating. Warraq argues that Pakistan’s founder, Muhammed Ali Jinnah, who “envisaged a basically secular state” and enjoyed whiskey and pork, “would very probably be flogged in public” in today’s Pakistan, and that despite the Koran’s prohibition of homosexuality “some of the greatest poets in the Arabic language have glorified homosexual love, often in the most overt and frank language imaginable.” Just as Spencer’s book includes a chapter entitled “Is Islam Compatible with Liberal Democracy?” (it ends with a sobering quotation from David Pryce-Jones to the effect that no one has ever managed to establish a civil society in the Islamic world), Warraq has a chapter entitled “Is Islam Compatible with Democracy and Human Rights?” (he answers with a firm no). Warraq concludes with a sentence that resonates now even more than it must have in 1995: “The final battle will not necessarily be between Islam and the West, but between those who value freedom and those who do not.”

Leaving Islam, Warraq’s newest book, is a study of apostasy in Islam, the penalty for which is death.¹⁶ He recounts the histories of prominent apostates and freethinkers in the Muslim world, quotes at length from Omar Khayyam (whose poetry, he reminds us, was hardly an expression of orthodox belief) and proffers

¹⁶ *Leaving Islam: Apostates Speak Out*, ed. by Ibn Warraq (Amherst, NY, 2003).

several pages' worth of heretical quotations from the anti-religious poet al-Maarri (973–1058): "Mohammed or Messiah! Hear thou me, / The truth entire nor here nor there can be; / How should our God who made the sun and moon / Give all his light to One, I cannot see." But *Leaving Islam* consists mostly of testimonies by people who have left Islam. A few have become Christians or Hindus; most now call themselves deists, atheists, or humanists. Their reasons for having begun to question Islam differ. Some recoiled at their fellow believers' hypocrisy, treatment of women, or hatred of Jews, Hindus, or gays; others lost faith because fellow believers' virtue went unrewarded by God. Some found the Koran morally wanting; others found it illogical. Some rejected the idea of God; others rejected Islam's vision of the deity as too limited. Pakistani-American philosopher Irfan Khawaja, who remembers seeing through Said's *Orientalism* at age seventeen (he prefers Bernard Lewis), complains that "the Muslim communities of North America and the U.K. are perhaps the most remiss" when it comes to confronting the reality of what Islam has become, because they "ought to know better"; similarly, a Pakistani man who decided at age five that the Koran preached "an ideology I did not think anybody could adopt in good conscience," complains that religious-studies professors in the West "criticize every religion on the face of the earth" except Islam.

David Horowitz shares this last irritation. A sometime Marxist who told the story of his own political journey in *Radical Son* (1998), Horowitz is appalled by left-wing American academics and activists who claim to support the rights of women and gays but who, since 9/11, have romanticized, whitewashed, and marched alongside Islamic fundamentalists who reject those rights.¹⁷ As Horowitz underscores in *Unholy Alliance*, this partnership between certain leftist elements and Islamic fascists is founded not on shared beliefs but on shared hatreds (America, capitalism) and shared mindsets (puritanical, apocalyptic, utopian): "Both movements are totalitarian in their desire to extend the revolutionary law into the sphere of private life, and both are exacting in the justice they administer and the loyalty they demand." Like Lewis, Horowitz recalls the historical

¹⁷ UNHOLY ALLIANCE: Radical Islam and the American Left, by David Horowitz. Regnery, \$27.95.

connections between Western totalitarianism and Muslim extremists: “During the 1930s and after, Arab nationalism in Palestine, Syria, and Iraq modeled itself on Italian and German fascism. In the 1950s Arab nationalists forged military and diplomatic alliances with the Communist bloc and incorporated the Marxist indictments of the West in their own.” Later, the Ayatollah Khomeini won the support of Western leftists “by portraying his movement as a revolution of the oppressed.” And today, many of those who view Castro as a heroic David to America’s Goliath have little trouble casting Islamist leaders as valiant underdogs. Though Horowitz has been accused of labeling opponents of the Iraq War anti-American, he makes it clear that while he respects principled antiwar positions, he doesn’t respect those who deny the reality of oppression in the Muslim world or who glibly equate Western democracy with, say, the tyranny of the Taliban.

III

In their views of Islam, the authors of the above books differ on many points, but all of them enhance one’s understanding of the beliefs and prejudices that animate Europe’s immigrant multitudes. They also help one to understand why so many of these newcomers have so firmly resisted integration. But no book explains the European Muslim situation, in all its complexity, more ably than *Eurabia: The Euro-Arab Axis*, in which an Egyptian-born Jewish writer who lives in Switzerland and calls herself Bat Ye’or (Hebrew for “daughter of the Nile”) argues that the high immigration and low integration levels are the result not of European leaders’ well-intentioned naïveté but of an extensive pattern of political, economic, and academic collaboration between the left-wing European establishment and Arab governments that has been underway for decades. The long-term goal of this collaboration is to bring the two sides of the Mediterranean together into a single confederated entity.¹⁸ Ye’or calls it Eurabia.

It’s hard to overstate this book’s importance. Ye’or would seem to have done nothing less than discovered the Grand Unifying

¹⁸ EURABIA: The Euro-Arab Axis, by *Bat Ye’or*. Fairleigh Dickinson University Press. \$49.50; \$23.95.

Theory of Euro-Muslim relations. At first blush, indeed, her explanation seems *too* simple; one wonders whether she is peddling a paranoid conspiracy theory—a *Protocols of the Elders of Brussels*, as it were. But her documentation is thorough, her research apparently unimpeachable. At the center of her story is something called the Euro-Arab Dialogue (EAD), a joint initiative of the EU and Arab governments whose meetings are closed, proceedings unpublished, and activities thus “shielded from scrutiny and democratic control.” One result of the EAD’s efforts has been the institutionalization, in European media, schools, and universities, of a strict political correctness that has bred a reflexive antagonism toward the U.S. and Israel and that brooks no criticism of Arab governments or immigrants. Europeans, writes Ye’or, have unwittingly endured “thirty years of constant indoctrination,” and while most of them “harbor no hate,” a culture of animosity toward America, Jews, and Israel has indeed been thrust upon them and has, despite “the enormous gap between Eurocrat theorists and the European population,” had an inevitable effect, as manifested, for example, in the massive anti-American demonstrations that have taken place in European cities in recent years.

This Euro-Arab collaboration dates back to the Cold War, when French leaders, instead of establishing a solid postwar alliance with America in the cause of freedom (which they had lost to the Nazis and were in danger of losing again to Communism), became quasi-allies of the U.S. while steering a middle course between the two superpowers that they believed would restore something of France’s vanquished power and glory. As Napoleon had once sought to bring all of Europe under French rule, and as his nephew, Napoleon III, had attempted to establish “an Arab empire stretching from Algiers to Turkey,” so France’s rulers now aimed to form an essentially French-run European confederation with the entire Arab world as a protectorate, the idea being that France, as the head of such a formidable entity, could play a leading role on the world stage as power broker between the Americans and Soviets. Out of this cynical, amoral calculus was born the EU—and the EAD.

To be sure, obtaining an empire of sorts for France has not been the only purpose of either the EU or the EAD. In their dealings with Arab governments, European leaders have also

been motivated by a desire to win markets, placate terrorists, and secure the European oil supply. To these ends, the EU has funneled massive amounts of money to tyrants and terrorist groups, has leavened the Euro-Arab dialogue with grotesquely inflated praise of Arab cultures and oppressive Arab regimes and with hearty denunciations of the U.S. and Israel, and has taken in and supported millions of Arab immigrants. According to Ye'or, Europe's failure to integrate these immigrants has been absolutely intentional, the result of "special arrangements through the EAD for the preservation of the migrants' separateness, particularisms, and for maintaining them under [the] jurisdiction [of their countries of origin]." Ye'or predicts that as the Arab population of Europe continues to increase, the Gallic dream of an empire straddling the Mediterranean will indeed come true; it will not be a European-led confederation of free peoples, however, but an oppressive Arab caliphate.

Eurabia is eye-opening and required reading for anyone seriously interested in understanding Europe's current predicament and its probable fate. To be sure, I'd strongly question the implication that the entire European political establishment has been in on the effort to unite Europe and the Arab world, and to this end has labored to encourage immigration and discourage integration. As Ye'or herself admits, some European governments have, in recent years, actually taken steps to compel integration and stem immigration. While some European leaders may indeed be consciously working toward Euro-Arab fusion, one suspects that most of them are either irresponsible multiculturalists who refuse to recognize the consequences of the policies they've pursued or cynical operators who are somehow profiting by their actions.

As Ye'or recounts decades of behind-the-scenes Euro-Arab collaboration through dialogue, Kenneth R. Timmerman, in *The French Betrayal of America*, recounts decades of secret French-Iraqi collaboration through arms deals, kickbacks, and payoffs.¹⁹ Timmerman—an American investigative reporter who lived in

¹⁹ THE FRENCH BETRAYAL OF AMERICA, by *Kenneth R. Timmerman*. Three Rivers, \$14.95p. Timmerman's argument is that Chirac's betrayal of America represented a break with a strong and longstanding Franco-American friendship; John J. Miller and Mark Molesky beg to differ. Their book, *Our Oldest Enemy* (New York, 2004), is an eye-opening *catalogue raisonné* of Gallic anti-American perfidy through the generations.

France for many years—is no glib France-basher, happily acknowledging America- and Israel-friendly actions by France during the Cold War, mostly when François Mitterand was president. For example, Mitterand secretly assisted Israel when it took out Iraq’s French-built Osirak nuclear reactor, covertly arranged to keep strategic mobilization plans out of the hands of his Communist transportation minister (who would’ve turned them over to the Soviets), and, most impressively, shared with the U.S. a breathtaking trove of information acquired by French spies about Soviet attempts to acquire Western military technology. Though a Socialist, in short, Mitterand “chose America as his ally” and thus “helped President Reagan win the cold war.” Yet if Mitterand stood by America’s side in the confrontation with the Soviet Union, he rejected U.S. involvement in North Africa (notably the 1986 attack on Libya), since his country’s political class regarded that continent, a rich source of “commissions and kickbacks to French political parties,” as “its baronial domain.” Nor did Mitterand’s staunch cold-war support last: in the late 1980s, pecuniary considerations led him to “switch sides” on the issue of military sales to the Soviets.

Still, he was a better ally than his predecessor, Valéry Giscard d’Estaing (whose government agreed, in a nuclear cooperation treaty with Iraq, to bar Jews from participating), or his successor, Chirac, who repeatedly called Saddam his “friend” and helped him skirt UN sanctions after the Gulf War. Chirac’s corruption, which would appear to be of Dantesque proportions, nearly destroyed his career; 9/11 saved it. The terrorist attacks, and America’s response to them, deflected attention from his sleazy shenanigans and enabled him to posture on the world stage as a statesman and peacemaker. And what the 9/11 terrorists couldn’t accomplish, the right-wing extremist Jean Le Pen did: in the 2002 election, Le Pen ended up as Chirac’s challenger, causing everyone in France except the Le Pen fringe to rally behind Chirac, who, after winning over eighty percent of the vote, was seen as his country’s savior, “the very incarnation of the permanent values of *La France*.”

All of which makes it even more fascinating to read Timmerman on Chirac’s shabby little demimonde of bribes and bagmen. From the cash stashes in Chirac’s office toilet to the Quai d’Orsay diplomat caught poking through garbage bags outside a Houston

home to the classified U.S. and UN data that Chirac, unforgivably, shared with Saddam right up to the invasion of Iraq, Timmerman's account makes the entire history of Washington scandals from Watergate onward look like a Girl Scout cookie drive. He makes a point that's actually occurred to me before, too: that the French are so accustomed to their politicians being profoundly cynical and corrupt that they naturally assume all American politicians are like that, too. One recalls the cheers at Cannes for Michael Moore's *Fahrenheit 9/11*, that pastiche of falsehood and cheap innuendo; the bitter irony is that the scale of French leaders' real-life avarice and perfidy dwarfs even the worst of that film's accusations against their American counterparts.

The French Betrayal of America, however, is not just a chronicle of unexampled greed. It is also a story of obsession with power and nostalgia for French glory. A U.S. official who works closely with the French tells Timmerman: "France is not the United States. And they just can't seem to get over it." Passages quoted by Timmerman from a book by Chirac crony Dominique de Villepin (now the French prime minister) provide disturbing insight into the mentality of a political elite that, as Timmerman puts it, has "consistently favored authoritarian regimes over democracy, not just in the third world but also in Europe." He observes that Villepin's naked envy of American power and his nostalgia for a return to a time (Napoleon's) "when France was ruled by an all-powerful state, that had only to appear to be obeyed" bespeak "a dangerous delusion and a penchant for authoritarianism." They certainly paint a picture of a government that seems to have learned little from modern European history. "French diplomacy today," a French politician tells Timmerman, "continues to consider Iraq as a cake to be divided and not as a democracy to be constructed." And get a load of this comment by a Villepin adviser: "We get all the blame [for making illegal arms deals], but not the signature [on the contract]! . . . We pass for a country that is cynical and immoral without getting the business such an attitude is presumed to bring."

Timmerman agrees with Guy Millière that Chirac's support for Saddam was based largely on the latter's high standing among French Muslims. "French leaders," he quotes Millière as saying, "will never take a decision that could make young radical

Muslims angry”; had Chirac supported the Iraq invasion, there would have been “riots in the suburbs.” (Most Muslim neighborhoods in France are on the outskirts of cities.)²⁰ In France, this appeasement mentality is reflexive. Timmerman quotes a local French official who, prior to the sixtieth-anniversary D-day commemoration, worried out loud in *Le Monde* that “What image will we send of Normandy to Arab and Islamic countries by receiving Bush and Putin with pomp and circumstance?”

IV

To turn from all these books, which illuminate the challenges now facing Europe in a variety of ways, to Timothy Garton Ash’s *Free World* is to step through the looking glass from reality into fantasy.²¹ Most of the writers I’ve discussed here are scorned by the academic establishment for their politically incorrect views; Garton Ash, by contrast, is a professor at Oxford, where he directs the European Studies Centre, and is a fellow at Stanford’s Hoover Institution. He is considered a world-class expert on Europe and its future, and he refers frequently in his book to his participation in glamorous-sounding international conferences on weighty topics. In short, he is at the heart of the European academic elite—and his book’s main value, it turns out, is that it is an absolutely perfect example of today’s European-elite mentality in all its arrogance, self-delusion, and folly. As such, it is worth looking at in some detail.

Garton Ash focuses on what he claims is the most important issue in Europe today—the conflict between “Euro-Gaullists,” who want Europe to band together as a counterweight to American power, and “Euroatlanticists,” who seek to maintain strong ties to America. Britain, as the linchpin between America and Europe, occupies a key position in this conflict. Which way, he asks, should it turn? His answer: both. Opposing the idea that either America or Europe is superior, his main point is that America and Europe belong to a “family of developed, liberal democracies” and that “America is better in some ways, Europe in

²⁰ The present essay was written prior to the fall 2005 riots in French suburbs.

²¹ FREE WORLD: America, Europe, and the Surprising Future of the West, by *Timothy Garton Ash*. Random House. \$24.95.

others.” I can agree with this thesis; but when Garton Ash begins developing it, he leaves reality behind.

For while he intends this book to be a vision of, and prescription for, Europe’s future, he all but ignores two critical problems—its growing, and increasingly alienated, Muslim minorities, and its vulnerability to Islamist terrorism. Far from sharing the concerns about these matters articulated by Fallaci and Fortuyn, he views both writers as troublemakers, describing Fallaci’s *The Rage and the Pride* as “garish” and echoing the Dutch establishment’s demonization of Fortuyn, whom, like them, he dishonestly equates with Jean Le Pen and Austria’s Jörg Haider. These three politicians, he writes, practice “poisonous populist politics” and “have come close to destabilizing the traditional party system in long-established European democracies”—a curious way to describe the fact that Europe’s political elite has become so insulated from the people, and so unwilling to address the problems that people are worried about, that many voters are taking their support elsewhere. Unfortunately, in some countries there has been nowhere for them to turn other than to right-wing extremists like Le Pen and Haider; in the Netherlands, there was Fortuyn, who became a martyr for liberalism and was recently named by the Dutch people as the greatest Dutchman of all time. For Garton Ash to lump him in with fascists is reprehensible.

As he sees it, the rise of a self-segregating, anti-democratic minority in Europe is not a problem; the problem is that some people are concerned about this development. “The populations of Europe,” he explains, “are aging fast, so more immigrants will be needed to support the pensioners, and these will largely be Muslim immigrants. For this increasingly Muslim Europe to define itself against Islam would be ridiculous and suicidal.” It’s true that Europe is going to need immigrants to support pensioners; but this fact, in and of itself, doesn’t close the door on legitimate questions about Muslim immigration. Europeans, he charges, don’t make Muslims feel at home in Europe; they don’t make them feel they’re really Europeans. Now, it’s true, as Walid al-Kubaisi makes blindingly clear, that immigrants who wish to assimilate into European society are often discouraged from doing so; but they’re discouraged not by the kind of ordinary middle-class folks that Garton Ash tends to dismiss as racists but by establishment types like Garton Ash who prefer that

they retain their “cultural distinctiveness.” But it’s also true that many Muslim immigrants don’t *want* to be Europeans—a fact that Garton Ash prefers not to acknowledge. No, the trouble, as he sees it, lies with the “populist, anti-immigrant parties” which win “the votes of less affluent native-born voters who resent rapid change in their traditional ways of life and blame immigrants for rising crime and job losses—even if those jobs actually went to Asia.” This is a dishonest and insulting way of treating the legitimate anxieties of working stiffs in places like Leeds and Birmingham whose lives have been transformed by social problems that, at Oxford, are mere abstractions.

Astonishingly, however, after ignoring or denying these problems in chapter after chapter, Garton Ash does a sudden about-face, admitting (on pages 197–8) that there *is* a problem with Islam in Europe, and that if it isn’t addressed properly, “we face a downward spiral which will be the curse of the national politics of Europe for years ahead . . . To halt this downward spiral is the single most urgent task of European domestic politics in the next decade. We may already be too late . . .” This admission follows 196 pages of pretending that the “urgent tasks” of European politics lie elsewhere; and after he’s made it, he drops the topic cold and returns to the more comfortable conceit that the *real* European dilemma is this business about Britain bringing the U.S. and Europe together.

Though his book is entitled *Free World*, freedom doesn’t figure importantly on his radar screen. Indeed, despite his conspicuous use of the word “freedom,” he seeks, in good European-establishment fashion, to shift the focus from freedom to poverty: instead of freeing people from dictators, he argues, we should secure them “freedom from want.” It’s a clever argument—argue with him, and you sound as if you don’t care about poverty. But he’s playing a semantic shell game, hijacking the word “freedom” and implying that freedom is somehow inimical to economic welfare, when in fact the opposite is the case. As for his subtitle’s reference to “the surprising future,” there’s nothing at all surprising here: his references to such things as America’s failure to ratify the Kyoto accords and the need for America to respect the UN are standard establishment boilerplate.

Garton Ash is also typical of the European elite in his removal from the reality of human suffering. Apropos of the toppling of

Saddam, he's able to write that "What qualifies as genocide is also a matter for the most serious debate." (How many graves full of dead children are necessary? Let's have a conference about it.) And he holds up as role models the leftist West German politicians who, eager to reunite their country, "plugged away at it for twenty years" by appeasing Soviet Communism and eventually achieved their goal only because Communism collapsed—no thanks to them. "Never mind the different route," he says blithely—eager to blur the distinction between whitewashing Communism and liberating people from it. Like other European elitists, moreover, he distrusts genuine (i.e., national) patriotism but adores the EU, thinking out loud about the need for a factitious European patriotism ("flags, symbols, a European anthem we can sing") to encourage "emotional identification with European institutions." He further argues that the EU should be led by Germany, France, and Britain. How is any of this compatible with democracy? It's stunning how remote that question often seems in this book—which is largely a prescription for manipulating the masses. His romanticism about the EU recalls earlier European romanticisms (about Napoleon, the Third Reich, Communism) in that it, like them, has nothing to do with a love of freedom and everything to do with an elite's desire to forge a Greater Europe.

Why does Europe need an EU? Garton Ash's answer: "To prevent our falling back into the bad old ways of war and European barbarism." But how is the EU necessarily a guard against that barbarism? Can't he see in his own attitudes toward terrorism and European Muslims a suicidal echo of "bad old" European appeasement? He applauds the Europeans whose street protests against the U.S. invasion of Iraq gave birth, in his view, to a new Europe—but doesn't it trouble him that many of them waved signs equating American leaders with Saddam, thus evincing the familiar European inability to choose democracy over dictatorship? He favorably quotes a postwar observation by Bertolt Brecht: "The womb is fertile still, from which [Hitler] crawled." For Brecht, the womb was capitalism; Garton Ash disagrees, saying that it was "human nature, additionally misshaped by some distinctively European forms of stupidity." But he avoids mentioning that Brecht was a committed Stalinist, and thus hardly a shining light for the new Europe but rather a

cautionary example—an embodiment of the time-honored European knack for rejecting one form of tyranny while embracing another. For Garton Ash to identify nation-states with Europe’s historical problems while holding up an undemocratic EU superstate as a magical solution to those problems seems benighted in much the same way as Brecht’s damning Hitler only to praise Stalin. What Garton Ash fails to see is that the “distinctively European forms of stupidity”—as exemplified by Brecht himself—amount to an attraction to tyrants and a failure to appreciate and defend liberty.

This failure is on view throughout *Free World*. He writes that “even if it were possible for the United Nations to be composed entirely of crypto-Americas [i.e., democracies], this would be deeply undesirable, on grounds of, so to speak, the biodiversity of world politics—not to mention sheer boredom.” This may well be the most offensive sentence in the book: better, apparently, to have millions living under autocrats’ heels than under democracy, because it makes the UN more interesting for the likes of Timothy Garton Ash. (This is not the only place in the book at which Ash sounds like a farcically self-absorbed star academic out of a David Lodge novel.) Similarly, he sneers—with spectacular unoriginality—that “the recipe for human happiness is mysterious and cannot be purchased at Wal-Mart.” Well, you can certainly get more happiness at Wal-Mart than you could’ve gotten at a food market in Soviet-era Moscow. One could argue, by the same token, that human happiness can’t be engineered by social-democratic nanny states, either—a statement that would at least be relevant in this context, for while the U.S. doesn’t pretend to supply happiness (the founding American idea is that the state stays out of your business, giving you space to find your own happiness), the premise of European social democracy is that government, if it’s intrusive enough, can come up with a recipe that optimizes the happiness of its citizenry.

In his last chapter, Garton Ash, referring to America, asks: will “the free remain indifferent to the misery of the unfree?” Whatever one’s position on the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the fact is that thousands of American soldiers in those countries have put their lives on the line precisely because they are determined to bring freedom to the unfree. But, again, he isn’t talking about this; he’s talking about *important* stuff, like going to

high-level conferences and participating in dialogue. By way of dismissing the differences between Western and Islamic cultures, he writes that “to see your daughter raped in front of your eyes by a militia gang is as soul-rending for a Muslim mother as for a Jewish mother.” Perhaps—but it wouldn’t occur to a Jewish parent that the girl should then be murdered for having dishonored the family. (Such honor killings, though now routine in Europe, aren’t a part of Garton Ash’s reality.) Europe, he writes, needs “more cross-cultural knowledge . . . How many non-Muslims know when or what Eid-ul-Fitr [a Muslim holiday] is?” (Don’t worry, Professor: at the present rate, all of Europe will know soon enough.) I would suggest that a more important question for the fate of European democracy is: How many Muslims in Denmark, say, can speak Danish? Among his suggestions is that Europe encourage “the formation of an Arab Union.” He makes no mention of Arab democracy; nor does he explain why a union of corrupt Arab governments would be preferable to a non-united assortment of corrupt Arab governments. Imagining “Europe in 2025 at its possible best,” he pictures it as a “partnership” with Arab countries and Russia that would extend “from Marrakesh, via Cairo, Jerusalem, Baghdad, and Tbilisi, all the way to Vladivostok.” He gushes: “That would not be nothing.” Nope—it would be Eurabia.