

# Europe's Mosque Hysteria

*Terrorist bombings, riots, and an uproar over satirical cartoons have inspired talk of a Europe under siege by Muslim immigrants. Will minarets rise in place of the continent's steeples, or is this vision of invading Muslim hordes a mirage?*

BY MARTIN WALKER

FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE THE OTTOMAN TURKS were hurled back at the siege of Vienna in 1683, Europe has been gripped by dark, even apocalyptic visions of a Muslim invasion. The Italian journalist Oriana Fallaci has sold more than a million copies of her 2004 book *The Force of Reason*, in which she passionately argues that "Europe is no longer Europe, it is 'Eurabia,' a colony of Islam, where the Islamic invasion does not proceed only in a physical sense but also in a mental and cultural sense. Servility to the invaders has poisoned democracy, with obvious consequences for the freedom of thought and for the concept itself of liberty."

Renowned scholars in the United States have sounded similar notes of warning. Princeton professor emeritus Bernard Lewis, a leading authority on Islamic history, suggested in 2004 that the combination of low European birthrates and increasing Muslim immigration means that by this century's end, Europe will be "part of the Arabic west, the Maghreb." If non-Muslims then flee Europe, as

Middle East specialist Daniel Pipes predicted in *The New York Sun*, "grand cathedrals will appear as vestiges of a prior civilization—at least until a Saudi-style regime transforms them into mosques or a Taliban-like regime blows them up." And political scientist Francis Fukuyama argued in the inaugural issue of *The American Interest* that liberal democracies face their greatest challenges not from abroad but at home, as they attempt to integrate "culturally diverse populations" into one national community. "In this respect," he wrote, "I am much more optimistic about America's long-term prospects than those of Europe."

These views flourish in the heated context of recent headlines. The crisis earlier this year over Danish cartoons depicting the Prophet Muhammad, with repercussions felt more in the Middle East than Europe, was preceded in October by the eruption of riots in France, in which the children of mainly North African immigrants torched some 10,000 cars and burned schools and community centers in some 300 towns and cities. A terrorist attack by four suicide bombers killed 52 in the London subway in July, and was swiftly followed by a second, abortive attack. In famously tol-

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Not since the student-worker riots of 1968 has France seen urban unrest on the scale of the immigrant riots that erupted this past October in a Paris suburb. The violence spread throughout the country, leading to nearly 3,000 arrests over the course of 20 days, and an official state of emergency remained in effect until January.

erant Holland, the gruesome murder by a young Islamist fanatic of the radical filmmaker Theo van Gogh in November 2004 was followed by the petrol bombings of mosques and Islamic schools. In Madrid, 191 people were killed on the city's trains on March 11, 2004, in a coordinated bombing attack by Al Qaeda sympathizers, an event that was as traumatic for Europe as the September 11 attacks were for the United States.

Less noticed in the United States was the shock that ran through Germany a year ago after the "honor killings" of eight young Turkish women by their own families in the space of four months. The women's crimes were that they refused the husbands their families had chosen for them or had sought sexual partners outside their religion and close-knit communities. This became a national scandal when a school headmaster, outraged when his Turkish pupils insisted on one of the victims that "the whore got what she deserved," wrote to press outlets and to other headmasters across Germany denouncing this "wave of hidden violence" beneath the placid surface of German life. His warning was reinforced by the German government's first detailed survey of the lives of

Turkish women, in which 49 percent of them said they had experienced physical or sexual violence in their marriage. One in four of those married to Turkish husbands said they had met their grooms on their wedding day. Their curiosity at last roused, Germans were shocked to find that the homepage of Berlin's Imam Reza Mosque (until quickly revised) praised the attacks of September 11, described women as second-class human beings who must defer to men, and denounced gays and lesbians as "animals."

While these events are disturbing, it is dangerous to merge them into a single, alarmist vision of a Europe doomed to religious division, mass terrorism, white backlash, and civil war. Most immigrants continue to come to Europe to better themselves and to secure a brighter future for their children, not to promote an Osama Bin Laden fantasy of re-establishing the Caliphate and converting the Notre Dame and St. Paul cathedrals into mosques. Most Muslims in France did not riot or burn cars. Muslim clergy and civic leaders in Britain overwhelmingly denounced the London bombings.

The Islamic immigration of some 15 million to 18 million

people is not exactly swamping Europe's population of more than 500 million. Nor is religious violence altogether new for a continent that spawned the Crusades, the 16th- and 17th-century wars between Catholics and Protestants, and the Holocaust. Furthermore, a Europe that within living memory produced Italy's Red Brigades, Germany's Red Army Faction, France's OAS, Spain's ETA, and the IRA in Northern Ireland is hardly innocent of terrorism.

Despite political scientist Samuel Huntington's warning of "a clash of civilizations," the Arab world is not so very alien to Europe. Judeo-Christian civilization has been shaped by the Mediterranean Sea. Its waters constituted a common communications system from which flowed a shared history. North Africa was a Roman province, and Egypt's Queen Cleopatra was a Greek. Southern Spain was a Muslim province for seven centuries, and the Balkans were dominated by Islam until the 19th century. The Crusades were a kind of civil war between two monotheist belief systems that originated in the deserts of the Middle East. More than just a war, the Crusades were also a prolonged cultural exchange from which Europe's Christians emerged enriched by "Arabic" numerals and medicine, the lateen sail, and the

evident threat of terrorist attack. In this unhappy context, several alarmist myths are defining the debate about the impact of mass Islamic immigration into Europe. It is important to examine each one with some care.

**T**he first myth is that there is any such phenomenon as European Islam. This misapprehension may be the most pervasive, and the most easily exploded, for, once examined, the various waves and origins of the Islamic immigration reveal themselves as remarkably diverse. In Germany, although the immigrants are usually described as "Turkish," they include not only ethnic Turks, but Kurds, who speak a different language and come from a significantly different culture. Neither Kurds nor Turks can communicate with the newest wave of mainly Moroccan immigrants in any language but German. In France, the immigrants are usually described as being "of North African descent," but this is misleading. At least a quarter of the estimated six million such immigrants and their descendants in France are Berber, primarily Kabyle and Rif. They are mainly Sunni in their religion, but few of them speak the Arabic of

Algeria or Morocco. Many more, from Mali and Niger, countries separated from the Maghreb by the Sahara, identified themselves to me during the French riots of last autumn as "blacks" rather than "*beurs*" (the French slang term for young Arabs).

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table fork. The Arabs, having already benefited from the wisdom of Greece and Rome mislaid by Europe in its Dark Ages, returned it to Europe while Venice and Genoa grew rich on the Levant trade and spurred the growth that fueled Europe's great surge of oceanic exploration.

At that point the European and Arabian-Islamic histories began to diverge, only to converge again in the 19th century in the poisoned relationship of colonial rule. The British, in India and the Persian Gulf and along the Nile, and the French and Italians, in North Africa, imposed notions of racial and cultural superiority that deeply complicate the assimilation of today's immigrants into the homelands of the old colonial masters. Those complexities have been sharpened by the urgencies of policing and domestic intelligence-gathering against the

The rich variety of Muslim immigration is most evident in Britain, where the ethnic and linguistic divisions among British Muslims mean that they form several distinct communities whose only common language and culture (outside the mosque and the Qur'an) is English. According to the 2001 census, 69 percent of Britain's 1.6 million Muslims come from the Indian subcontinent, and just more than half of them were born there. The rest were born in Britain. Recent research at the University of Essex by Lucinda Platt suggests that the British melting pot is working rather well, and producing considerable social mobility. She found that some 56 percent of children from Indian working-class families go on to professional or managerial jobs in adulthood, compared with just 43 percent of those from white, nonimmigrant families.



**Clash or coexistence?** Outside a rundown public housing project in East London last year, passersby stare as Bangladesh-born Muslims perform their Friday prayers.

The largest group of Britain's Muslims, more than half a million, are of Pakistani birth or descent, and of them almost half come from the poor district around Mirpur where the building of the Mangla dam in the late 1950s and early 1960s created a vast pool of homeless, landless, and barely literate peasants, who were then recruited to low-wage jobs in the textile industry of northern England. They clubbed together to bring over imams from home to run mosques and teach the Qur'an, imported wives from Mirpur through arranged marriages, and created urban versions of their traditional Mirpuri villages under the gray English skies. When the British textile industry declined, this community of poor and ill-educated people was locked into a grim cycle of unemployment, welfare, female illiteracy, and low expectations. The rust belt that stretches across Lancashire and Yorkshire is the region where the anti-immigration British National Party, a thuggish group with neo-Nazi links, gets up to 20 percent of the vote from an almost equally ill-educated and hopeless white working class. This is also the area that produces most of the dozen or so honor killings carried out each year by angry fathers or brothers, when a Pakistani girl falls in love with a British boy.

The next largest cohort, nearly 400,000, comes from Bangladesh, mostly from the Sylhet region. These people are very different: They speak Bengali rather than Urdu, eat rice

rather than roti, apply less rigid dress codes to women, follow a notably more relaxed form of Islam, and are concentrated in East London rather than northern England. They tend also to be more entrepreneurial and open to educational opportunities for their children, who have a far better record of university attendance than the Pakistanis.

The third major group is the Muslims of Indian origin, many of whom came to Britain in the early 1970s as refugees from East Africa after being expelled by Uganda's dictator, Idi Amin. Along with the 16th-century Huguenots from France and the 19th-century Jews from Russia, they have become one of the most desirable and successful immigrant groups that Britain ever welcomed. They have produced more millionaires and college graduates than any other ethnic group—the British included. One in 20 is a doctor.

The 31 percent of British Muslims from outside South Asia are mainly from Somalia and Turkey, each cohort totaling about 60,000. Another 100,000 come from Nigeria, Malaysia, and Iran. The students, refugees, political exiles, and Arab intellectuals who have come from all over the Islamic world and given the city the nickname "Londonistan" make up most of the rest.

So the reality behind the monolithic term "British Muslim" is a potpourri: the wealthy London surgeon, the unemployed and barely literate textile worker in Oldham, the

Malaysian accounting student intent on attending business school, the fiery newspaper columnist who dares not return to Saudi Arabia, the government clerk living with her English boyfriend and estranged from her outraged Iraqi family, the prosperous Bengali restaurant owner in East London.

These are the individuals that Prime Minister Tony Blair hopes to rally—after the cultural and political shock of the London bombings—to the common identity of Britishness, by which he means a full-hearted commitment to democracy, and the freedom of speech and religion and lifestyles that it involves. And in these days of Al Qaeda, Blair has sought to convince such individuals that being British may include detention of terrorist suspects without trial for up to 90 days, closed-circuit television cameras in their mosques, and government licenses for their imams. An estimated 1,800 of

does it say this, and in fact what you will get is hellfire.”

It is ironic that in the wake of the London bombings, the British political establishment and media, and even many Muslim groups in Britain, are now speaking of the Muslim community as a single entity. This may yet emerge, especially if others persist in viewing all Muslims as one mass, although so far various Muslim groupings seem to compete for the title of spokesman, and to criticize one another for being more or less radical or devout or co-opted by the British government (a phenomenon that is also evident in France, as it was in the 1960s civil rights movement in the United States). The fact is that the various Muslim associations in Britain, speaking Urdu or Pashtun or Bengali at home, have little in common except the sense of alarm that somehow they will share in the blame, or suffer the backlash, for the bombings.

But some of the things they do have in common are striking. Around 15 percent of Muslims, both male and female, are registered as unemployed, compared with four percent of the rest of the population. The British government's Labor Force Survey found that Muslims are more likely than any other group to be in long-term

## ONE OF THE GREAT MYTHS is that Muslim immigrants' higher birthrates threaten to replace traditionally Christian Europe with an Islamic majority.

Britain's 3,000 full-time imams come from overseas, mainly from Pakistan, and many arrive with Saudi funds and sponsorship and after some study in Saudi Arabia, which usually means a commitment to that country's puritanical and dominant Wahhabi creed.

Many of the moderate elders of Britain's Muslim community go along with Blair's plans, which also have the backing of the Muslim members of Parliament. The mainstream of Muslim opinion is now prepared to admit that the four British-born bombers of the London transport system were influenced by extremists at their mosques in Britain and during visits to Afghanistan and Pakistan, and that this radicalization of some young Muslims is a community problem.

“The Muslim communities are not reaching those people who they need to engage with and win their hearts and minds,” says Sadiq Khan, the Muslim Labor MP for the London suburb of Tooting. “What leads someone to do this? The rewards they are told they will get in the hereafter—it is incumbent on Muslims to tell them that nowhere in Islam

unemployment or not even seeking work—in either case, not reflected in unemployment data. In the same survey, 31 percent of employed Muslims had no qualifications and, therefore, little prospect of advancement from menial work. Muslims are five times more likely to marry by age 24 than other Britons. Muslims have the youngest age profile of all religious groups: 34 percent are under the age of 16, compared with 18 percent of Christians. Muslims tend to live together; nearly two-thirds of the 600,000 Muslims who live in London reside in the two East End boroughs of Newham and Tower Hamlets. And Muslims are more likely to reside in rented public housing than any other ethnic or religious group.

Figures such as these have seeded a number of misleading submyths, of which the most common is that the “Pakis” live in ghettos and are beginning to dominate in a significant number of parliamentary constituencies. A by-election in the northwest London suburb of Brent East shortly after Blair's government invaded Iraq alongside U.S. forces became the prime exhibit of this argument. Traditionally a safe Labor con-



stituency, Brent East fell to the Liberal Democrats when many Muslims voted against Labor in protest of the war. In the general election of last year, a former Labor MP, George Galloway, who had been expelled from the party after his outspoken attacks on the war and on "Tony Blair's lie machine," narrowly won reelection in East London as an independent MP, unseating the only MP who was both black and Jewish, the Labor Party's pro-war Oona King. In his first two election victories, Blair carried more than 70 percent of the Muslim vote, but in the 2005 election, exit polls suggest that he got just 32 percent. This seems to have been a direct result of the Iraq war and draws a sharp limit on previous assumptions of common ground between Islam and Blair's Labor Party.

But the fact is that there are only 17 electoral constituencies in Britain, out of 646, where a complete shift of the immigrant vote would be sufficient to unseat the incumbent MP. Although television images depict whole districts where most shop signs are printed in Urdu or where Sikhs and other immigrants predominate, there are few places that fit the classic definition of a ghetto. In some detailed research at the University of Manchester, Ludi Simpson analyzed the 1991 and 2001 census data for 8,850 electoral wards in England and Wales. A ward is a subdistrict of a constituency, containing roughly 10,000 voters. Simpson found that the number of "mixed" wards (defined as wards where at least 10 percent of residents are from an ethnic minority) increased from 964 to 1,070 over the decade. In only 14 wards did one minority account for more than half the population, and there was not one ward where white people made up less than 10 percent of the inhabitants.

The reality is that as immigrant families become established and their children get education and jobs, they tend to move out to more prosperous districts with better schools and housing. In short, just as Britain learned with its West Indian immigrants in the 1960s and 1970s that what was defined as a problem of race was just as much one of social and economic class, so it is finding with its Muslims that race and class and religion all play into a context of social and economic mobility. Britain has been fortunate—this mobility has been possible because the country has enjoyed a booming economy over the past decade, with much lower levels of unemployment than France or Germany.

Despite all this, a small number of educated and apparently well-assimilated young Muslims, mainly but not exclusively of Pakistani origin, have been drawn to the extreme militancy of Al Qaeda. Sources in MI5, Britain's security service,

cite a formula devised by their French equivalent, the *Renseignements Généraux*, to calculate the number of fundamentalists in a given population. Based on an extensive analysis of the French scene, the formula says that in a given Muslim population in Europe, an average of five percent are fundamentalists, and up to three percent of those fundamentalists should be considered dangerous. By that calculation, in France's Muslim population of six million, there are 300,000 fundamentalists, of whom 9,000 are potentially dangerous. Applying the formula to Britain's 1.6 million Muslims produces 80,000 fundamentalists, of whom some 2,400 may be dangerous—a figure very close to the number of MI5 agents.

Assessing the scale of the problem brings into focus the second great myth that confuses the issue of Islam in Europe, which is that native Europeans have been so sapped of their reproductive vigor that Muslim immigrants' higher birthrates threaten to replace traditionally Christian Europe with an Islamic majority within this century. The birthrate of native Europeans has fallen sharply since the baby boom of the 1960s. The usual measure is total fertility rate (TFR), the number of children an average woman will bear in her lifetime. A TFR of 2.1 is required to maintain population stability; the current average level in the 25-nation European Union is just under 1.5, and as low as 1.2 in Italy and Latvia. A study for the European Parliament suggests that the EU will need an average of 1.6 million immigrants every year until 2050 to keep its population at the current level. To maintain the current ratio of working-age population to pensioners, more than 10 million immigrants a year would be required. Omer Taspinar, director of the Brookings Institution's program on Turkey, suggests that the Muslim birthrate in Europe is three times higher than that of non-Muslim Europeans, and that since about one million new Islamic immigrants arrive in Western Europe each year, by 2050 one in five Europeans likely will be Muslim.

But this is to ignore the clear evidence that immigrant birthrates fall relatively quickly toward the local norm. A recent survey by Justin Vaisse of the French Foreign Ministry, who is also an adjunct professor at the Institut d'Études Politiques in Paris, suggests that, on the basis of French statistics, this change can occur within a single generation. In Britain, Muslims of Indian origin now have a TFR of less than 2.0, and while there are striking regional differences in the birthrates

of young women of Pakistani origin who have been born in Britain and educated in British schools, the overall trend is toward fewer children.

Moreover, in Sweden, France, and Britain, the native birthrate has started to rise again, with a marked surge among women who start having children in their early thirties. In Britain, the TFR climbed from a record low of 1.63 in 2001 to 1.77 in 2004, when the number of babies born rose by almost three percent from the previous year. There is no doubt that immigrants tend to have higher birthrates; one in five of those new babies was born to a mother from outside Britain, a significant rise from the one in eight of a decade earlier. But the disparity of birthrates across Europe is so wide—from TFRs of 1.98 in Ireland and 1.89 in France to 1.18 in the Czech Republic—that it is not meaningful to speak of a single European phenomenon.

Furthermore, public policy is not helpless in the face of demographic challenges. Scandinavia has higher birthrates than the rest of Europe, despite relatively low immigration rates, thanks in part to government policies that provide generous maternity leave, family allowances, and good child care for working mothers. Parenting in these days of easy contraception is an essentially voluntary matter. And if a society chooses to have fewer children, it does not have to resort to mass immigration to maintain a high proportion of workers to consumers. Other accommodations can be made, from delaying the age of retirement to accepting lower growth rates and less intensive patterns of consumption.

And thus we arrive at the final myth about Islam in Europe: that a shrinking and aging population of native-born Europeans and a large and growing Islamic population can only be alarming. It certainly looked that way last fall in France during the riots, which seemed to demonstrate, in the ugliest possible way, that something fundamental in the French social system, and thus in its broader European counterpart, is in deep trouble. There are, in fact, two different crises of the European social model, and they collided in the riots. The first is the familiar problem of economic sluggishness that has stuck France, Germany, and Italy with double-digit unemployment for a decade. One cause is the power of the labor unions and the longtime understanding that workers and management are “social partners” in an agreement under which those with jobs are protected, paid well, and given generous pensions and social

security. In return, managers get high productivity rates and very few strikes in the private sector. But as a consequence, it is extremely hard to get a secure job, since managers find it almost impossible to lay off surplus employees. The low-wage entry-level jobs that have brought so many of the unskilled British and American dropouts into the workforce barely exist in France, where the minimum wage and employer-paid social insurance costs are very high.

This first crisis has now intersected with the second: that of the largely immigrant underclass, whose young dropouts find it difficult to get any work at all. The problem is most acute in France, where immigrants constitute more than 10 percent of the population, compared with five percent in Britain. They live in what the French now admit are so many ghettos of high-rise public housing blocks with few whites, poor schools, sparse social amenities, harsh policing, and little evidence that they can ever partake of the broad prosperity of mainstream Europe. “They are the lost lands of France,” says Jacqueline Costa-Lascoux, a professor at the prestigious school of public administration at the Institut d’Études Politiques. And yet these grim urban nightmares contain, in demographic terms, much of the country’s future, even though their precise numbers are not counted under that other French myth—dating back to the revolution of 1789 with its Rights of Man—that there are no ethnic subgroups, only citizens. No affirmative action is necessary, the line goes, because La République has abolished racism.

“France is not a country like others,” intoned the prime minister, Dominique de Villepin, in November. “It will never accept that citizens live separately, with different opportunities and with unequal futures. For more than two centuries, the Republic has found a place for everyone by elevating the principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity. We must remain faithful to this promise and to Republican demands.”

The best estimates suggest there are now more than five million Muslims and two million blacks in France, and their birthrates are more than twice as high as that of French whites. So while the brown and black inhabitants of France account for one-eighth of the total population, they account for almost a quarter of those under the age of 25. They also account for more than half of the prison population, and close to half of the unemployed. France’s future therefore depends on a sullen and ill-educated underclass of future workers and consumers whose taxes are supposed to finance the welfare state and the pensions of French whites, who at age 60 retire after a lifetime of leisurely 35-hour workweeks. After the

scenes that disfigured France last fall, this does not seem to be a promising proposition.

And this problem of France is the problem of Europe on a slightly less urgent scale. Alarmists say that without mass immigration, the European social system cannot be funded; but with mass immigration, the European social fabric is visibly and violently tearing apart. And with Jean-Marie Le Pen, the right-wing extremist who leads the Front National, winning almost five million votes in the last presidential election, France has less room for political maneuvering than most countries. If the myth of de Villepin's Republic is gently retired, and France tries some of the detested Anglo-Saxon remedies of affirmative action to produce a black and Muslim middle class, and puts black and brown faces onto its television screens as announcers, into the higher ranks of the police and civil service and armed forces, and into the National Assembly and the Senate and the prefectures and the corporate boardrooms, then it risks strengthening the white backlash that has already given the demagogue Le Pen some 18 percent of the presidential vote.

It is, nonetheless, a risk that will have to be taken because no other course is practicable. Modern democracies cannot realistically, or legally, impose ethnic cleansing by mass deportations of Muslim minorities or their permanent subjugation by some odious incarnation of a

discriminatory police state. The policy alternatives therefore are assimilation or apartheid. The former will be difficult, since it will require fundamental economic reform to tackle the problems of unemployment, education (of both Muslims and those poor whites most likely to resort to backlash), reform of immigration rules and border policing to control illegal immigration, and profound religious reform by the Muslims themselves. European societies should not be expected to tolerate subgroups that seek to impose sharia within their communities, nor imams who preach anti-Semitism or demand the death penalty for Muslims who convert to Christianity or for writers such as Salman Rushdie. But equally, European societies will have to accept the political implications of a significant and growing electoral vote that will agitate strongly for respect of Islam as well as jobs, oppor-

tunities, and affirmative action, and that will demand influence over foreign policy.

**T**he challenge is serious but not hopeless. To suggest that European civilization is too feeble and insecure to survive an Islamic population that is currently less than five percent of the total is a counsel of cultural despair. It ignores the example of the United States, which seems to be successfully assimilating its own Muslim minority, just as the vibrant and open American economy assimilated so many previous waves of immigrants. It also ignores the degree to which European Muslims increasingly think and live like the populations they have joined. An opinion poll conducted in Britain for the BBC after the London bombings found that almost nine in 10 of the more than 1,000 Muslims surveyed said they would and should help the police tackle extremists in Britain's Muslim communities. More than half wanted foreign Muslim clerics barred or expelled from

## IS EUROPEAN CIVILIZATION too feeble and insecure to survive an Islamic population that is currently less than five percent of the total?

Britain. Fifty-six percent said they were optimistic about their children's future in Britain. And only one in five said that Muslim communities had already integrated too much with British society, while 40 percent wanted more integration.

Muslims are being changed by Europe just as much as they are changing their adopted countries. The honor killings of young Turkish women in Germany are appalling, but the actions of the women also demonstrate that many Muslim women are no longer content to abide by their parents' wishes. They want the same freedoms and opportunities enjoyed by the German girls with whom they went to school. The French-born children of immigrants who rioted in the Paris suburbs were demanding to be treated as French by the police, potential employers, and society in general. The riots, as French scholar Olivier





**Tariq Ramadan, one of a new generation of European Islamic thinkers who seek to reconcile Islamic ideas with Western values, has the distinction of having been banned from Saudi Arabia and prevented from teaching at an American university by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.**

Roy has noted, were “more about Marx than Muhammad.”

Across Europe, there are significant numbers of potential terrorist cells, radical Islamist activists and organizations, and mosques and imams that cleave to an extreme and puritanical form of Islam. Many of these reject the idea that Muslim immigrants can or should assimilate into their host societies, and also reject Western democracy or any separation of church and state. One such group is the well-organized Hizb-ut-Tahir, which seeks to reestablish the Caliphate as a pan-Islamic system of government based on the Qur'an. Hizb-ut-Tahir is outlawed in Germany, where it has been described as “a conveyor belt for terrorism,” and Blair threatened to ban it in Britain after the London bombings.

But there are other, more promising currents of modern and reformist Islamic thought in Europe that seek assimilation not only with European societies but also with Western values of individual human and political rights. The best known of these currents is associated with Tariq Ramadan, grandson of the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood and author of *To Be a European Muslim* (1999). Ramadan

believes that an independent and liberal Islam is emerging in Europe among young, educated Muslims who have been profoundly and positively influenced by modern liberal democracy with its free press and separation of church and state. He moved from Geneva to Oxford, where he currently teaches, after the U.S. Department of Homeland Security barred him in 2004 from taking a teaching post at Notre Dame University. (He was also banned in Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, and Egypt after calling for a moratorium on sharia's corporal punishment, stoning, and beheading.) Ramadan identifies himself as a European born and bred, with Muslim roots, whose modernized Islamic faith needs to uproot Islamic principles from their cultures of origin and plant them in the cultural soil of Western Europe. “We've got to get away from the idea that scholars in the Islamic world can do our thinking for us. We need to start thinking for ourselves,” Ramadan insists.

Some Muslims see Ramadan as an apostate, while many Christian and Jewish activists regard him as an Islamic Trojan horse. But he seems to represent a significant current in Islam that seeks reform in the Arab world and accommodation with the West. There are traces of this same current in the speeches of Dyab Abou Jahjah, the Belgium-based trade unionist who founded the Arab European League (though he is denounced by the Belgian government). It is also evident in the extraordinary appeal of the Arab world's first Muslim televangelist, Amr Khaled, who was in Britain during the London bombings and repudiated them as un-Islamic.

There is nothing ineluctable about any clash of civilizations between Islam and the West. Current demographic trends are not immutable, and it would be foolish to extrapolate from them a spurious forecast about Muslim majorities in Europe. That the renewed encounter between Europe and its Islamic minorities will result in terrorism or sectarian and ethnic tensions is not foreordained, and a white backlash is by no means inevitable. But the clear prospect that these poisonous predictions could be realized may itself become the antidote. The countries of Europe and their Islamic minorities have had a series of awful warnings, similar to those in the United States in the 1960s. The American response to the civil rights movement is an example to Europe of how open, liberal democracies may address the problems of Islamic immigration and mobilize public opinion and public policy to resolve them. It will not be easy, and the task will endure for generations, at constant risk of being derailed by spasmodic riots and terrorist outrages. But the alternatives are worse. ■