Islam vs. Liberalism in Europe

Peter O'Brien

Hate is more important for the hater
than the object of his hate.
          - Vaclav Havel

Introduction

In the West, Muslilms are regarded with anxiety, mistrust, and fear. Many of us choose not to travel to Muslim countries for fear of becoming victims of terrorism. Most westerners worry about the Muslims' firm grip on the spigot of the world's oil reserves. And in 1991 we convinced ourselves that Saddam Hussein represented a threat on par with Hitler.[1]

But Muslims cannot really scare us. After all, it took but a few weeks to vanquish fully the "Butcher of Baghdad," who had up until that time the world's fourth largest army. We united in a stalwart international coalition against the Iraqi menace, while most of Saddam's supposed Arab allies joined our ranks. We need only to remember the Iran-Iraq war to console ourselves with the memory of an internecine inter-Muslim struggle, something not seen in the West since the Second World War. Granted, each of us can probably recall some personal hardship 1973 and 1979 when the Arabs or Iranians withheld "our" oil. Now, however, we all realize, along with such economists as Maddison (1982), that these embargoes merely exacerbated imminent or existing world recessions.

More comfortingly, as Issawi (1982) has shown, the great eastwood flood of petrodollars in the 1970s was eventually channeled back through

---

Peter O'Brien is an assistant professor of Political Science at Trinity University, San Antonio, Texas.

[1]For a discussion of the historical and ideological roots of western views on Muslims, see Rodinson (1987) and Said (1978).

western banks to fuel the economic boom of the following decade. Even that worst of hostage crises, in Tehran in 1980, ended in the release of all captives due to the restraint exhibited by the kidnappers and the Iranian government. Most of our hostages, we must admit, are now back home safe and sound. These unfortunate events seem rather feeble when compared to our proven ability to hold, in effect, all of Iraq hostage, leaving perhaps as many as three hundred thousand dead before the ordeal ended.

More curiously, Europeans show great concern over the ten million Muslim migrants residing in their countries. In 1979 and 1980, for example, German newspapers featured countless exposés and worrisome editorials about the discovery of some one thousand Qur'an schools in the Federal Republic. In 1989, the French entangled themselves in a bitter national debate over the refusal of several Muslim girls to abandon their *ḥijāb* (head scarves) before entering a public school. At roughly the same time, the British government felt it necessary to marshal its security forces to hide and protect a single author—Salman Rushdie—from Muslim assassins.

These misgivings seem exaggerated. The Irish Republican Army daily threatens the lives of numerous British subjects. Muslim-related disturbances (i.e., the Turkish-led wildcat strike in Cologne's Ford factory in 1973 or the Paris riots of 1991) have been sporadic and easily quelled. It would also do well to recall the overwhelming majority of Muslims in Europe cannot vote. Even if they could, their small numbers preclude any electoral impact. Moreover, resident aliens are subject to easy deportation if they act up. And to be sure, those few Muslim girls, just like the pupils attending Qur'an schools, were merely exercising the right of religious freedom celebrated and guaranteed in both the French and German constitutions.

How do we explain our anxiety? Following Havel's insight, I suggest that our fears have much more to do with ourselves than with Muslims. In particular, I argue that the perceived standoff with Muslims makes us doubt the sincerity and supposed superiority of our convictions, which are predominantly liberal in origin and orientation. The Muslim critique and rejection of European liberalism lead us to question our most revered beliefs; we respond by trying to persuade or compel them to embrace our liberal principles. When they resist, we see no recourse but to exercise arbitrary power over them. But our liberal tenets offer no convincing justification for this. In a sense, we are like the insecure neighborhood bully; we do not doubt our capacity to bully our Muslim neighbors, but we have difficulty justifying our behavior to ourselves. We do not distrust and fear Muslims so much as we distrust and fear ourselves.

Liberalism Defined

Liberalism has its roots in the Enlightenment. The core of liberalism is thus epistemological and ontological, although we now associate it with general political, economic, social, and cultural aspects (i.e., civil liberties and representative government, free markets, modern and pluralistic societies, and such values as critical reason and tolerance). Its founding fathers are such great thinkers as Bacon, Newton, Locke, and Descartes, all of whom made pioneering epistemological and ontological break-throughs. They debunked the arguments and authority of Scholasticism and demonstrated the possibility and the superiority of autonomous reason and scientific inquiry. Each in his own way argued that an individual had the capacity to reason and thus could fully comprehend his/her world. Newton's call to understand "Natural Philosophy [and] Mathematical Principles," Bacon's to "go to the facts for everything," Locke's to "consult reason," and Descartes' conclusion that "Cogito, ergo sum" all are rooted in the belief that the world is intelligible to human beings through reason.

These and other individuals argued that we can understand our world as well as know our own best self-interests. It is only our misguided conventions, whether custom, coercion, or superstition, that derail the pursuit of our self-interests. We simply need to have the courage to abandon these comfortable, but enslaving, conventions. Thus Kant declared the purpose and challenge of the Enlightenment in this way: "Enlightenment is man's exodus from his self-incurred tutelage . . . dare to know! Have the courage to use your own understanding; this is the motto of the Enlightenment" (Friedrich 1949).

Such thinkers believed that knowledge of the natural and the human worlds was reducible to simple facts and relationships and, therefore, communicable through unambiguous phrases and principles (expressed mathematically wherever possible). Consequently, all persons could achieve objective knowledge, for it was akin to common sense. Descartes averred that

> Good sense is of all things in the world the most equitably distributed . . . the power of judging well and of distinguishing between the true and the false, which, properly speaking, is what is called good sense, or reason, is by nature equal in all men." (Smith 1958)

We associate these discoveries with liberalism because they depend on freedom. Reason must be autonomous and free of superstition. The in-

stitutions that developed out of the Enlightenment and still characterize our societies also stress freedom. We espouse free and universal education so that everyone can exercise his/her capacity to reason. We promote free markets so that self-knowing human beings can pursue their own interests. We construct free polities with civil liberties and representative institutions so that all citizens can voice and discuss their concerns.

This concept of free agency lies at the heart of liberalism. It represents not only the normative claim that all human beings should be free, but also rests on the empirical assertion that free persons will necessarily discern and assent to the truths perceived by these great thinkers. Even Rousseau's admission that to enlighten human beings would prove to be quite difficult, and would necessitate forcing them to be free, actually celebrates freedom, for Emile, once forced to be free, is absolutely certain of the validity of his learned ways and appreciative of his mentor's compulsory methods.

In addition, thinkers of the Enlightenment promised that freedom would bring progress and power to human beings. Free inquiry and education would allow scientists to discover the laws of nature and therefore to control it. Bacon simply equated knowledge and power. Adam Smith demonstrated that actors in the free market, as if led by an invisible hand, would naturally enhance its efficiency and order. John Stuart Mill believed that the clash of ideas and opinions made possible by free political institutions would inevitably produce the best public policy. And Kant thought that freedom, when coupled with reason, would lead to "the kingdom of ends" and "perpetual peace."

These grand hopes rested on what Spragens (1981) has called "epistemological manicheanism." According to him, the Enlightenment divided the world into two realms: the kingdom of coercion, superstition, ignorance, self-enslavement—in a word, darkness—and the kingdom of truth, reason, progress, self-mastery—in a word, light.[2] Liberty represented a kind of bridge from the former to the latter. As such, liberty became virtually synonymous with prudence, perfection, and power. Nothing could prevent free persons from improving, indeed perfecting, themselves and their world.

Needless to say, countless subsequent thinkers in our own tradition have given us cause to question the Enlightenment's unswerving faith in human sagacity, morality, and progress. Marx exposed the dysfunctions of the free market. Nietzsche chipped away at, indeed tore down, the foundations of western science and morality. Shelley depicted the

---

[2] I have drawn heavily on this work for the inspiration behind this essay.

Frankensteinian nightmare of our scientific discoveries. Weber attuned us to the disenchantment and self-entrapment of our rational, efficient bureaucracies. Freud revealed our subliminal irrationalities and discontents. Orwell shocked us with his demonstration of the abuse and distortion of language. Joseph Schumpeter portrayed democracy as a political ideology no different from others used by leaders to sway the masses. And Walter Lippmann uncovered widespread support for pre-Enlightenment values in mass public opinion.

I could extend the list indefinitely, for many thinkers have pursued, broadened, and strengthened the unsettling insights of these modern skeptics and cynics. We live today in what Beck (1992) calls the "risk society." More than at any time in human history, we are sensitive to and frightened by the risks and dangers created by our own fabrications, be they nuclear, environmental, genetic, economic, or political. Furthermore, the ultimate source of our doubts and fears is our own "reflexivity," as both Beck (1992) and Giddens (1991) have pointed out. We have turned the Enlightenment's most powerful weapon—reason—on the Enlightenment itself and used this weapon to doubt and/or discredit our noblest achievements.

Beck and Giddens also note that most of us resist these conclusions. Conceding them amounts to recognizing our most cherished values, institutions, and accomplishments as quixotic delusions. Like the Spanish hero Don Quixote, we find it discomforting and debilitating to gaze into the mirror. We choose, instead, to gallop onwards with our heads held high in the self-righteousness. Accordingly, cynics are not our only esteemed thinkers. Many writers have gained fame and acclaim by protecting the Enlightenment against its assailants. Naqel, Hempel, and Popper have redoubled efforts to demonstrate the possibility of objective knowledge in science. Friedman and Hayek have renewed and reinvigorated faith in the free market. Rawls and Habermas have redefined and reconfirmed basic Kantian ethics and politics. Each of these men and others like them staunchly defended human rationality and freedom. For Nagel, Hempel, and Popper these concepts are vindicated by the exacting methodologist devoted to verification yet open to falsification; for Friedman and Hayek by the rational economic individual capable of knowing his/her own interests if free to do so; for Rawls and Habermas by the thinking ethical self free, behind the "veil of ignorance" or in the "ideal speech situation," from the contingencies, prejudices, and coercions of history and society.

Most westerners cannot find the time to read and consider these thoughtful treatises. We therefore look for more obvious and available confirmations of our beliefs. Perhaps nothing has done more to soothe our insecurities and affirm our confidence than the collapse of communism

in the Soviet empire. We like to think that the people of eastern Europe finally deposed their oppressors because they cherished the same ideals we hold so dear. The vigorous attempts of the successor regimes to seek our aid and emulate our ways further strengthen our belief in the validity and superiority of our principles and practices. The relentless campaign undertaken by our governments to proselytize the "western way of life" throughout eastern Europe and elsewhere has played, I think, a crucial role in buttressing our self-confidence, for, as we gain converts to our faith, we can take solace in the idea that our beliefs represent, at worst, the best option available and, at best, the universally superior option. We liberals feed on converts, because the internal logic of liberalism demands the constant assent of rational free agents.

Muslim Resistance

Muslims attract our attention and antipathy because they refuse to convert. All across the Arabian peninsula, for instance, we see the persistence of monarchies. Moreover, the people living under this vestigial medieval authority seem to tolerate it. In 1979, the Iranians overthrew their westward-looking, modernizing Shah and submitted, in the West's opinion, to a "regressive" state governed by "antiquated" Islamic law.

Examples of resistance to assimilation are far less dramatic in Europe but no less apparent. Muslim migrants tend to congregate in ethnic enclaves or ghettos where they reestablish and perpetuate the old customs of the homeland (Anwar 1979). They form their own exclusive organizations that spurn association with non-Muslim groups (Oezcan 1989). Many Muslims forbid their children to go to public schools or force them to attend Qur'an schools where they unlearn what is taught in public classes (Irskens 1977). The majority of these migrants appear to object to consorting with or marrying westerners, donning western dress, or mastering western languages (Abdullah 1981). Everywhere we turn Muslims are telling us they do not wish to be like us.

But why? We often conveniently point to fanaticism, obscurantism, and demagoguery. Doubtless Islam has its fair share of fanatics, like any worldview. Thus some Muslim critics profess apocalyptic visions of imminent western decline and messianic predictions of Muslim ascendancy (Cemile 1985). We focus on these eccentrics, like the self-styled Turkish prophet Cemalettin Kaplan in Cologne (*Stern* 1987), because we wish to ignore more thoughtful and penetrating critics. Given our liberal presumptions, the idea of a reasoned yet resolute rejection of liberalism strikes us as oxymoronic and thus impossible.

Islamic critiques of western liberalism, generally speaking, can be divided into two sorts. The first underscores western hypocrisy; Westerners refuse to extend or guarantee to Muslims the same basic rights and privileges that all human beings deserve. Muslim authors often rail against the erroneous image of Islam promoted by the western media and anchored in popular opinion. They complain that Europeans fail to apply their much touted reason, open-mindedness, and tolerance when evaluating Islam. For example, few Europeans object when nuns choose to wear a habit as an expression of their piety or to live segregated in convents. But when Muslim women cover their heads with scarves or their bodies with nonrevealing garments, or refuse to participate in activities involving men, westerners cry "patriarchy," "domination," and "injustice." In the early 1980s, the government of Northrhine-Westfalen resolved to provide Islamic religious instruction in the public schools, but then went on to establish a commission of Christian theologians to draft the curriculum. Muslim organizations vehemently opposed the plans, arguing that Christians would never tolerate a Christian curriculum written by Muslims. Similarly, whereas Muslims recognize Christianity as a legitimate faith, only the Roman Catholic Church, not the evangelical churches, has reciprocated such a recognition. Furthermore, the Federal Republic of Germany has declared the Roman Catholic and Evangelical churches "recognized religions"—a legal status that entitles them to significant financial assistance from the state. Yet it has not done the same for Islam, despite its roughly two million adherents in Germany. In the words of the Islamische Föderation in Berlin (1986):

> If we in Berlin are to fashion our future together, then it does not suffice to support the justified demands of the black population in South Africa; it is far more necessary to support these freedoms and rights in Berlin itself, and for all of the faithful.[3]

On the other hand, Europeans have exhibited respect and sympathy for such criticisms. In Holland and Sweden, for example, Muslim migrants have been accorded the right to vote in local elections. In Germany, the Green Party has proposed enactment of a "right to settle" that would grant resident aliens all of the rights of citizenship without requiring naturalization. In France, S.O.S. Racisme has doggedly spoken out against various forms of discrimination. In most European polities, Muslims have won important court cases to protect their civil liberties

---

[3]This entire document is a persuasive example of the critique of European hypocrisy.

(Thränhardt 1986). Cries of hypocrisy gain limited sympathy because they, in effect, demand that liberal values be applied to Muslims.

Criticisms of the second sort are far more threatening, for they generally follow the same line of argument proffered by the West's own skeptics and cynics. They contend that the free market has not liberated human beings; it has rather enslaved them to the machine, consumerism, and raw materialism. Moreover, liberal ethics have hardly produced societies characterized by perpetual peace. Violence, aggression, exploitation and alienation run rampant in western societies. "It must be regrettably acknowledged," concluded one critic, "that Western civilisation's shortcomings and weaknesses are no fewer than its advantages . . . despite the new pages of history turned, human happiness has not increased nor have social ills diminished." (Lari 1977)

These problems persist, moreover, not because the liberal project has yet to be completed, but because its underlying assumptions are profoundly flawed. Liberal tenets cannot stand up to "logical scrutiny." As a result,

> modern man, more than any of his predecessors, can construct man, but knows less than any of them what it is he is constructing . . . these new ideologies . . . fall short of answering basic human needs and . : . they either lead people to a sense of futility, or draw them into bondage. (Shari'ati 1980)

Such writers do not always reserve their criticism for the West; indeed, many have led efforts to reveal and reform the shortcomings of Islamic civilization itself.[4] But they aim to disabuse their readers of the urge to romanticize and emulate western liberalism, which, they insist, offers no indisputably superior answers for humanity. Look to your own tradition for answers, they implore.[5]

Liberalizing Muslims

We choose not to see or hear these reasoned critiques of liberalism. We believe that the logic of liberalism teaches that free and rational thinking perforce culminates in the acceptance, not rejection, of

---

[4]For a description of the longstanding internal debates about the strengths and weaknesses of Islamic principles and practices, see Voll (1982).

[5]This theme is stressed, for instance, in the second paragraph of the preamble to the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

liberalism. In response, we focus attention on the varied forces that allegedly obstruct the Muslims' way of reasoning. The social scientific analyses of the situation of Muslim communities in Europe has produced a voluminous literature. Since roughly the late 1960s, European governments have commissioned thousands of these studies.[6] Despite the glut of such research, however, most of it contains a common theme—the experience of migrating from traditional (Muslim) to modern (western) societies inevitably causes rapid and disorienting change. In other words, transplanted virtually overnight from village to metropolis, they find adjustment to the pace and demands of modern life difficult and threatening. They cling to their traditions (be they the patriarchal family, outdated religious precepts, or authoritarian political beliefs) in a fruitless attempt to escape or slow change and its corrosive consequences. Stubborn adherence to tradition, in the words of one German analyst,

> should not be understood as a natural continuation of the lifestyle in the homeland, rather as a defense against the changed environment. The confrontation with the divergent ways of the surrounding world creates in every case a sense of uncertainty, a strain on the personality. [This leads] to signs of retreat and compensation, such as exaggeration of traditional norms and values, idealizing the homeland, avoidance of contact with the German environment. (Neumann 1980)

These defensive reactions are not "natural," according to western analysts. Muslims are thus typically diagnosed as suffering from various psychological and social disorders, including "anomie," "anxiety," "culture shock," "identity confusion," "fragmentation of the self-image," "deficient self-confidence," "deficient ego identity," "psychic overload," or "sociocultural stress." Moreover, these symptoms cause such unnatural and deviant behaviors: resignation, escapism, excessive consumption, aggression, crime, and extremism (Ronneberger 1977; Albrecht and Pfeiffer 1979).

Such analyses essentially divide Muslims and Europeans into two distinct classes of actors. Europeans are assumed to be free agents who employ reason to act naturally and normally, while Muslims, by contrast, are depicted as irrational and not (yet) free to think or act reasonably. These studies ignore the political, cultural, and racial distinctions between Muslims and Europeans; rather they concentrate on a more palatable epistemological distinction. In a nutshell, we do not view and treat Muslims

---

[6]See, for instance, the four-hundred-page bibliography in Gliedner-Simon (1986).

differently because they hold foreign passports, believe in a different God, come from non-European stock, or even have darker complexions—they simply have not had the opportunity to reason freely.

Both the liberal diagnosis and distinction determine the solution to the Muslim problem. The West's goal becomes clear: to liberate and enlighten the Muslim population. For sociologists, this usually means reducing or eliminating the social inequalities that keep Muslims living in Europe in a state of marginalization and underpivilege. Such authors prescribe social programs designed to provide Muslims opportunities in housing, education, and employment equal to those enjoyed by Europeans (Hoffman-Nowotny and Hondrich 1982). For psychologists and pedagogues, the cure involves resocializing Muslims (usually the young ones whose minds are still malleable) to the modern liberal values prevalent in the West. Accordingly, they endorse programs that fully absorb and integrate Muslim pupils into the public educational system.

Such prescriptions aim to make Muslims more "like us," either by giving them the same opportunities (or freedoms) we have or by instructing them in our ways. Such proposals view Muslims not as human beings, but as human matter to be molded after our own image; they are grounded in the belief that Muslims will embrace our ways once they are given the opportunities, resources, and assistance to do so. Thus the German sociologist Esser (1980) predicts that integrated foreigners eventually will assimilate the modern norms and values that maintain "system equilibrium" in the Federal Republic. Even proposals for "multicultural education," which integrate Muslim beliefs and experiences into the general curriculum, ultimately seek to inculcate classic Enlightenment values in Muslim and European pupils. Proponents of multicultural education argue that it "dismantles prejudices and nationalisms, facilitates tolerance for the strange and different, and awakens empathy for the situation of 'the other' rather than competitiveness" (Essinger and Hellmich 1981).

These analyses and proposals have not gone unheeded. The governments of European countries with large migrant populations launched and sustained extensive campaigns to integrate migrants into the mainstream of society throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Comprehensive social welfare programs were expanded to include resident aliens as well as citizens. Special housing, language, and vocational and cultural programs were devised to assist foreigners in their adjustment to western life. Educational programs were aimed at making second-generation migrants into equal citizens by the time they reach maturity (Thränhardt 1986). One study likened these efforts to the development of an entirely new "industry" replete with products and specialists, research and degrees, institutes and agencies, marketers and salespersons (Griese 1984).

In my opinion, such initiatives tend to *depoliticize* relations between Muslims and Europeans. Generally speaking, they assist but do not empower their subjects. Muslim migrants enjoy the right to vote or run for public office in only a few European lands. Consequently, they are excluded from participating in the design of programs and policies aimed at them. More importantly, this critical division of labor and power rests on epistemological, rather than political, assumptions and justifications. Europeans vest themselves with the authority to act on and for Muslims on the basis of their liberal understanding that they *know*, better than the Muslims themselves, what is best for the newcomers. European policymakers act as the self-appointed doctors and therapists of Muslims rather than their politically chosen representatives. When it comes to Muslims, therefore, Europeans excuse themselves from the political accountability they demand in their own relations.

Muslims find themselves entrapped in an apolitical Catch-22 common to all technocratic projects. If they accept the European assistance, they in effect assent to the image of themselves as nonreasoning nonliberals in need of European aid and instruction. If they resist or insist that they are being coerced into integrative programs, such recalcitrance is taken as yet another symptom of their ailment and, therefore, grounds for further treatment. To be sure, the logic of liberalism does not allow for a free and reasoned critique or rejection of the liberal order and its underlying axioms. Only free and rational agents deserve the political rights associated with liberalism; irrational actors require liberation from their irrational tutelage. And as self-styled western liberals we see it as our right and duty to be the Muslims' liberators.

Arbitrary and Nonliberal Recourses

The problem with Muslims residing in Europe is that they refuse to be liberated. First and foremost, they demand political rights so that they themselves can determine what is best for them. When the Muslim girls showed up at school wearing the *ḥijāb*, they were insisting on their right to free worship as well as the right to resist or reject the teachings of French public schools. Turkish parents make a similar political statement when they whisk their children off to Qur'an schools immediately following German classes. Countless Islamic organizations in Europe refuse to participate in official programs of integration, even if it means forfeiting much-needed public assistance. For instance, mosques in Europe typically offer their visitors much more than a place of worship; they also provide an array of social services parallel to but independent of those offered by European governments (Vöcking 1984).

Such acts of resistance trouble and alarm us, for they seem to snub our generous attempts to offer the fruits of liberalism. Unlike their brothers and sisters in faraway places who might not yet be sufficiently exposed to liberal values or assistance, Muslims in Europe eschew liberalism despite its ready availability. Nothing perturbs and perplexes Europeans as much as the documented tendency among Muslim migrants to resist naturalization. Schemes have been devised to offer migrants the chance to become citizens of their host societies. Most involve liberalizing the requirements for naturalization for second-generation aliens, who are perceived as the most willing and able to assimilate western norms and values. They also entail swearing an oath of allegiance to the liberal principles enunciated in European constitutions once young migrants reach adulthood. The policies assume that after living in the West from an early age and being socialized in public schools, western-educated Muslims will seek citizenship and embrace the values it embodies.

Our liberal logic has not prepared us for the fact that Muslims will not take the oath. We believe that free, rational adults will by nature assent to liberalism, and that because liberal societies are justly constructed and organized, they are worthy of the approval of free and rational persons. If we take Muslims seriously, we must face the prospect that liberal principles and practices engender discontent and disapproval. Moreover, if we admit that Muslims are free and rational agents, we must conclude, from their rejection, that they perhaps know something about liberalism that has escaped our scrutiny. And this, in turn, would suggest that our own acceptance of liberalism has not been as free or rational as we think.

Rather than recognize these unsettling possibilities, we choose to persist in the belief that Muslims' troubles lie with themselves rather than with us. We conclude that the antiquated customs and mores they bring with them from their homelands are more firmly rooted than originally conceived. As a result, their misfortune is greater than expected. We see no option but to judge the differences between us and them as entrenched, perhaps immutable. In this way, Muslims come to be viewed as external agitators—foreign threats in our midst whose alien nature runs far deeper than the possession of a different passport. As many poststructuralists note, the sense of difference and "otherness" we feel towards Muslims stems more from the subjective image we wish to have of ourselves than from objective attributes common to Muslims (Said 1978).

But we resolve, then, that their misfortune should not become our misfortune.[7] We can and must endeavor to reform them. If they resist re-

---

[7] I have borrowed this idea from Honig (1991).

form, we must limit or eliminate their undesirable influences on our societies. Accordingly, after roughly two decades of progressive and integrative legislation, we see throughout Europe in the late 1980s and early 1990s mounting calls and sympathies for tougher, more restrictive policies towards Muslim and other non-European migrants and refugees. The European Community, for instance, has initiated steps to "harmonize" the laws governing political asylum in member states in the hope of preventing refugees from trying their luck from one country to the next. Proposals have been submitted to institute "immigration quotas" that would place a ceiling on the number of immigrants and, in some cases, designate the countries from which immigrants would be accepted. The fact that xenophobic parties, like the National Front in France, or the Republicans in Germany, have made significant gains throughout Europe in recent elections reinforces such trends.

Such restrictive proposals and policies all blame migrants and absolve Europeans of responsibility for the problems associated with large-scale migration. Calls to limit immigration have typically been justified on the grounds that Europeans cannot possibly absorb all of the world's poor and persecuted. In other words, the problems of the Third World are simply too complex and intractable to be solved by an open-door policy for refugees. Moreover, Europe has its own problems, particularly now as western Europeans have taken on the responsibility aiding their eastern European neighbors in the transition from dictatorship to democracy. For example, in response to neo-Nazi disturbances in such cities as Rostock, Christian Democrats reconfirmed and Social Democrats conceded to the German government's plan to stem the tide of immigration into the newly united country. In so doing, the parties effectively claimed that both the cause of and the responsibility for the disturbances lie not with the neo-Nazis but with the foreigners, whose numbers have grown beyond acceptability. Perhaps this also explains the limited, and at times reluctant, police protection given to the victims of neo-Nazi terror—as well as the lenient sentences handed out to the convicted perpetrators.

Such acts trouble our conscience and offend our sensibilities because we see no viable alternative yet cannot justify them with our liberal convictions. We have been taught that the only effective and ethical way to deal with nonliberals is to liberalize them. Moreover, the liberal paradigm has assured us that all human beings by nature possess the capacity and desire to become liberals when free to do so. Coercion should play no role. Our societies are self-governing and self-legitimating.

When the liberal cure fails to heal our social wounds, however, we find no choice but to accept the older idea that Muslims and Europeans have immutable and insurmountable differences. Yet it is precisely these

kinds of irrational and arbitrary distinctions, whether religious, racial, nationalist, or ethnic, that liberalism was supposed to overcome and transcend. When we cannot convince Muslims of the universality of our liberal views of human nature and morality, we see no recourse but to discipline and coerce them. Such tactics and rationales, which belong to a preliberal era, force us to acknowledge, uncomfortably, that we are less liberal than we believe. After all, is there a genuine philosophical or ethical difference between the policies of liberal governments that discourage the entrance and encourage the exit of Muslims, and the slogans of the National Front or Republican Party that France exists for the French and that Germany exists for the Germans? The only difference lies in the fact that the xenophobes feel perfectly justified in bullying Muslims, whereas we do not. This, more than anything else, explains why the Muslim presence in Europe causes us so much anxiety.

References

Abdullah, Muhammad. "Als Türke in Deutschland." *Aktuelle Fragen* 5 (1981).

Albrecht, Peter-Alexis and Christian Pfeiffer. *Die Kriminalisierung junger Auslaender*. Munich: Juventa Verlag 1979.

Anwar, Muhammad. *The Myth of Return: Pakistanis in Britain*. London: Heinemann, 1979.

Aspekte der Wanderungssoziologie: Assimilation und Integration von Wanderern, ethnischen Gruppen und Minderheiten. Darmstadt: Luchterhand, 1980.

Beck, Ulrich. *Risk Society*. London: Sage, 1992.

Cemile, Meryem. *Bati Uygarligi ve Insan*. Istanbul: Kultur Basim Yayin Birligi, 1985.

Essinger, Helmut and Achim Hellmich, "Unterrichtsmaterialen und -median für Interkulturelle Erziehung." In *Ausländerkinder im Konflikt*, edited by H. Essinger and G. Hoff. Koenigstein: Athenaeum, 1981.

Friedrich, Carl J. "What Is Enlightenment?" In *The Philosophy of Kant*, edited and translated by Carl J. Friedrich. New York: Random House, 1949.

Giddens, Anthony. *Modernity and Self-Identity*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991.

Gliedner-Simon, Adelheid. *Ausländer—zwischen Integration und Remigration*. Bonn: Informationszentrum Sozialwissenschaften, 1986.

Griese, Hartmut. "Kritisch-exemplarische Überlegungen zur Situation und Funktion der Ausländerforschung und einer verstehenden Ausländerpädagogik." In *Der glaeserne Fremde*, edited by H. Griese. Leverkusen: Leske & Budrich, 1984.

Hoffmann-Nowotny, Hans-Joachim and Karl O. Hondrich, eds. *Ausländer in der Bundesrepublik und in der Schweiz.* Frankfurt: Campus, 1982.

Honig, Bonnie. "The Return of the Repressed in John Rawl's *A Theory of Justice*." Paper presented at the Anuual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Washington, DC, 30 August 1991.

Irskens, Renate. "Koranschulen." *epd-Dokumentation*, no. 35 (1977).

Issawi, Charles. *An Economic History of the Middle East and North Africa*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1982.

Islamische Föderation in Berlin. *Leben wir miteinander*. Berlin: Islamische Föderation in Berlin, 1986.

Lari, Sayid Mujtaba Rukni Musawi. *Western Civilisation through Muslim Eyes*. Teheran: Sadr Publishing House, 1977.

Maddison, Angus. *Phases of Capitalist Development*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982.

Neumann, Ursual. *Erziehung ausländischer Kinder*. Dusseldorf: Pädagogischer Verlag Schwann, 1980.

Özcan, Ertekin. *Türkische Immigrantenorganisationen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*. Berlin: Hitit Verlag, 1989.

Rodinson, Maxime. *Europe and the Mystique of Islam*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1987.

Ronneberger, Franz, ed. *Türkische Kinder in Deutschland*. Nuremberg: Nuernberger Forschungsvereinigung, 1977.

Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage, 1978.

Smith, Normam K., ed. and trans. "Discourse on Method." In *Philosophical Writings*. New York: Modern Library, 1958.

Shari'ati, Ali. *Marxism and Other Western Fallacies*. Berkeley: Mizan Press, 1980.

Spragens, Thomas. *The Irony of Liberal Reason*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981.

Stern (21 May 1987).

Thränhardt, Dieter, ed. *Ausländerpolitik und Ausländerintegration in Belgien, den Niederlanden und der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*. Dusseldorf: Landeszentrale für politische Bildung, 1986.

Vöcking, Hans. "Die Moschee," *CIBEDO—TEXTE*, no. 30 (15 November 1984).

Voll, John O. *Islam: Continuity and Change in the Modern World*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1982.