

## **THE BOOK AND THE SWORD: THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD IN EUROPE**

*Winston Pickett and Mark Gardner*

For much of the twentieth century the constellation of totalitarian ideologies coalesced around the Second World War and the Cold War, a fact that provided historians and analysts with familiar points on the political compass. Broadly speaking, extremism was bounded within the ideologies of fascism on the one hand, and the revolutionary Left on the other. Both reached their zenith, but not their demise, in the twentieth century.

At the start of the twenty-first century – especially since the ‘war on terror’ in the wake of 9/11 – the geopolitical landscape has become infinitely more complex. New religious, political and demographic alignments appear to be emerging from a complex matrix of population movement, instant communications, internationalised conflicts and competing self-identities. One growing ideological movement that has emerged is an instinctively illiberal political Islam, vying to become the template for a nascent European Muslim identity. It is essentially a totalitarian movement, paradoxically seeking a non-assimilationist accommodation for Muslims within a supposedly pluralist Europe. However, the terminology employed by commentators when discussing these trends can obfuscate, even mislead. ‘Terror’ becomes a reified euphemism for militant Islamism, with its origins located in the Middle East and an influence linked to the growing Muslim populations in Europe and the West. Even this juxtaposition lacks precision and arguably opens itself up to charges of Islamophobia, as if demography and ideology were automatically linked or Muslim Europe constituted an undifferentiated mass of inchoate extremism. Rather than viewing Muslims in Europe in the same terms as other population groups – as made up of a range of trajectories including mainstream integrationist, centre left/liberal, economically mobile, democratically and socially invested, and the like – classic xenophobic stereotypes tend to rise to the fore.

The focus of this chapter is not on the threat of an emerging ‘Muslim Europe’ or the growth of a hard-core, jihad-driven and eliminationist brand of militant Islam on the continent. Instead, it seeks to examine the impact of extremist concepts and ideologies – particularly those of the Muslim Brotherhood – on the mobilising *potential* of a totalitarian impulse within a European Muslim framework that is a part of the new Europe, and is positioned to grow in demographic and ideological importance.

### **The contemporary European scene**

Contemporary Europe is frequently seen as characterised by a certain melding of Muslim and Western cultures, caused primarily by a geographic and demographic expansion and by the recent large-scale immigration of Muslims into the continent itself. This has created a new phenomenon: ‘deterritorialisation’, the process by which ‘Islam is less and less ascribed to a specific territory and civilisational area’.<sup>1</sup> Unlike earlier Muslim immigrants, many of whom sought to return to their countries of origin after having reached their economic goals, more recent arrivals from Muslim nations have been deterred by the social and political upheavals in their homelands and chosen to stay put, a process whereby more and more Muslims are living in non-Muslim countries. As a result, for the first time in history, Muslims are building large and growing communities across Western Europe, where their numbers have more than tripled in the past thirty years.<sup>2</sup> From Amsterdam to Paris, and from London to Hamburg and Madrid, Muslims are struggling to stake out their place in their adopted societies. The three largest cities in the Netherlands are soon expected to have a Muslim majority. One-third of all German Muslims are younger than 18 – nearly twice the proportion of the general population. Conservative demographic projections estimate that compared to today’s 5 per cent, Muslims will comprise at least 20 per cent of Europe’s population by 2050.<sup>3</sup>

As a whole, European Muslims constitute a diverse, polyglot population from a variety of national origins. They have been drawn from across the Muslim world, from West Africa to

Indonesia. Since the 1980s, as a result of liberal EU asylum policies, a tolerant political climate and even legalistic protections for terrorists,<sup>4</sup> European elites have facilitated the local and transnational advancement of politically extreme Islamists in their midst – groups that directly challenge commonly accepted understandings of immigration, integration and assimilation. These multinational groupings of political dissidents and radical theocrats are largely composed of men expelled from the Arab states because their opinions were too extreme. Many are wanted for terrorism (indeed, the Muslim Brotherhood has been outlawed in Egypt) or other crimes, but are able to remain in Europe and claim political asylum precisely because they face the death penalty or possible torture in their homelands. These Islamist cadres can thus operate in an environment that embraces freedom, open communication and modernity – attributes they never enjoyed in their countries of origin.

In France, radical Islam is replacing the traditional Left as the voice of the disaffected Muslim underclass. Propelled by frustration over unemployment, uneven distribution of wealth and social disadvantage, some young Arabs and Africans have turned to Islam with the same fervour that the idealistic youth of the 1960s turned towards Marxism. Islam's growth as a vibrant ideology of the downtrodden mirrors the wave of religious fervour that has swept Arab North Africa in the past twenty years. It offers its devotees a transnational ideology and utopian vision. The goal is a vast, if not global, caliphate governed according to *sharia*, the legal code based on the Koran.<sup>5</sup> It constitutes what Olivier Roy refers to as a 'globalised' Islam, distinguished by a decoupling of ideas and ideology from any geographical context. It is this most extremist recension, both as 'part of and heir to the modern Third Worldist anti-US movement' and containing definable elements of Western antisemitism, that inevitably, according to Roy, 'attracts the more radical elements among uprooted Muslims who are in search of an internationalist, anti-imperialist structure but cannot find any leftist radical organisations, or are disappointed by existing ones'.<sup>6</sup>

France is not an isolated case. It can be argued that all Europe is increasingly becoming the front line for Islamists who have chosen a more radical political approach – one that can be best exemplified by perhaps the most authoritative Muslim theologian and representative of the Muslim Brotherhood in Europe, Sheikh Yusuf-al Qaradawi. As head of the influential European Fatwa Council, Qaradawi offered the following aspiration:

With Allah's will, Islam shall return to Europe, and Europeans shall convert to Islam. They will then be able to propagate Islam to the world. I affirm that this time, the conquest will not be done by the sword but by proselytism and by ideology.<sup>7</sup>

### **Origins of the Muslim Brotherhood**

Qaradawi stands in a long line of Islamists who were trained or influenced by the Muslim Brotherhood (*al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun*). An expanding and secretive society with followers in more than seventy countries, it is dedicated to creating an Islamic civilisation that harks back to the caliphates (*khilafah*) of the seventh and eighth centuries under the credo that Islam is 'Creed and state, book and sword, and a way of life'.<sup>8</sup> In some Middle Eastern and North African countries such as Egypt, Algeria, Syria and Sudan the Brotherhood has served as a catalyst for violent Islamic revolution. In the Palestinian territories a wing of the International Muslim Brotherhood is known as Hamas, an acronym for 'Islamic Resistance Movement' in Arabic.<sup>9</sup> The Hamas Covenant, which has been described as 'both political and genocidal',<sup>10</sup> subscribes to the antisemitic conspiracy theory of the '*Protocols of the Elders of Zion*',<sup>11</sup> and calls for *jihad* against the Jews under the slogan 'Allah is its target, the Prophet its model, the Koran its constitution: Jihad is its path and death for the sake of Allah is the loftiest of wishes'.<sup>12</sup> Declaring that 'Israel, Judaism and Jews challenge Islam and the Moslem people',<sup>13</sup> Hamas rejects the existence of a Jewish state and carries out suicide bombings against Israeli civilians.

The Muslim Brotherhood was founded in Ismailiyya, Egypt, in 1928 by a 22-year-old schoolteacher, Hassan al-Banna. Al-Banna railed against the British occupation of Egypt and the penetration of secular Western values into Arab society, dynamics that were exacerbated by the collapse of Ottoman Turkey – the last Muslim empire – and the abolition of the caliphate by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in 1924. As an antidote, al-Banna preached a mass return

to early Islam as practised by the Prophet and his disciples, and the full application of *sharia* to replace Western law. In its formative years the tactics of the Brotherhood were evolutionary, seeking change through institutional renewal. During the 1930s, however, the Muslim Brotherhood had developed what Matthias Küntzel calls an ideology of ‘belligerent jihad’ – one that was directed against not only colonialism and ‘cultural modernity’, but particularly against any Jewish presence in Palestine:

[T]he Brotherhood did not conduct its jihad primarily against the British; it did not conduct it against the French or against the Egyptian elite who had collaborated with the British. Instead, the jihad movement of the Brotherhood was focused almost exclusively on Zionism and the Jews. In 1936 they had only eight hundred members but in 1938 they had expanded to an amazing two hundred thousand. Between these years, however, only one big campaign took place in Egypt which targeted Zionism and the Jews exclusively.<sup>14</sup>

As if to add ideological underpinning to the Brotherhood’s more violent trajectory, in 1938 al-Banna publicised his idea of jihad in an article called ‘The Industry of Death’, glorifying the physical act of self-sacrifice: ‘to a nation that perfects the industry of death and which knows how to die nobly, God gives proud life in this world and eternal grace in the life to come’.<sup>15</sup> By the 1940s the Brotherhood had established a special branch, *al Tanzim al Has*, that initiated a campaign of terror against the pro-Western Egyptian government and assassinated a number of political personalities, including two prime ministers. In so doing, it ‘soon became the most powerful extra-political force in Egypt, threatening the regime and wreaking havoc in the country’.<sup>16</sup>

During the same period the Muslim Brotherhood also began to forge both ideological and international alliances, most notably with the German National Socialist government. Foremost among these was the association with Haj Amin el-Husseini, the Mufti of Jerusalem, whose militant campaign against the Jews in Palestine had ‘received substantive support from Nazi Germany in the form of financial assistance and the shipment of weapons’ as early as 1937.<sup>17</sup> This military leadership role was subsequently formalised during the Second World War when Husseini helped recruit the 26,000-strong international SS division called the ‘Hanzar’ Muslim Division in Bosnia and was declared ‘al-Banna’s official representative and personal supervisor of the Brotherhood’s activities in Palestine’.<sup>18</sup> Equally significant is the role that Husseini played as official supervisor of Radio Zeesen, a short-wave Arabic radio service run by the German National Socialist government between 1939 and 1945. Broadcasting from Zeesen (a suburb of Berlin), Athens and Rome, the service’s daily programmes called for *jihad* and ‘skillfully mingled anti-Semitic propaganda with quotations from the Koran and Arabic music’, and thereby served to ‘Islamize anti-Zionism and provide a religious rationale for hatred of Jews’.<sup>19</sup>

In May 1948, Brotherhood members joined the Egyptian armed forces in their failed invasion of the newly established State of Israel under the rallying call to ‘throw the Jews into the sea’. Despite that, however, the Brotherhood opposed both the monarchy and Gamal Abdel Nasser’s regime in Egypt. In October 1954 an assassination attempt on Nasser was attributed to members of the Muslim Brotherhood. As a result, their leaders were hanged and members who were not imprisoned were forced to flee the country. Many found refuge in Saudi Arabia, and some in Kuwait.<sup>20</sup>

Among the Muslim Brotherhood members whom Nasser imprisoned in 1954 was the prominent thinker and ideologue Sayyid Qutb. While in prison, Qutb wrote his famous commentary *In the Shadow of the Koran*, which, together with his seminal *Milestones*, elucidated his vision of turning Islam into a political movement in order to create a new society to be based on ancient Koranic principles – one that pictured a resurrected caliphate as a theocracy with *sharia* as the law of the land. In time, his works would become core texts for the Islamist movement. In them, Qutb introduced the concept that modern society existed in a state of *jahiliyya*, or pre-Islamic paganism, impurity and moral ignorance. Muslims and their leaders who did not uphold the tenets of Islam were *kafir*, or unbelievers, a crime that was punishable by *takfir* (excommunication) and death. He argued that bringing society out of *jahiliyya* and into a state consonant with Islamic practice and law required revolution – *jihad* through armed struggle.

What distinguished Qutb's vision is the purported holiness of its source, described as being the perfect and complete authority in all places, at all times, for all peoples. For Qutb, Islam is not just a religion or a religious narrative like Judaism or Christianity. It is a 'divine program conceived to be implemented on earth'.<sup>21</sup> Qutb's philosophy is also confrontational, demonising all challenges to Islam including Christianity, Judaism, the Jews, and the United States in a framework that has become a sacred source and an operational template for Islamist anti-Americanism up to the present. One analyst has referred to Qutb as 'the first Islamist to declare a cultural war against the United States and Western civilization'.<sup>22</sup>

[H]is writings about American society and culture became a kind of sacred source to refer to in developing the blunt anti-Americanism of the 1990s. Sayyid Qutb introduced anti-Americanism to the Islamic world. His followers developed and merged this element into their interpretation of Islam, and made it a part of the religion and one's religious duties.<sup>23</sup>

Over the longer term the mainstream Muslim Brotherhood rejected the core militant doctrine that Qutb, who was hanged by Nasser's government in 1966, espoused. As the most seminal thinker of that movement, however, Qutb, whom John Esposito calls 'godfather to Muslim extremist movements around the globe', nevertheless provided the critical link between the Muslim Brotherhood and the most radical, violent Islamic movements that were to prosper in the decades ahead.<sup>24</sup>

By the time a second wave of Muslim Brothers was exiled from Egypt in 1966, members had already become activists on the international stage. They were joined by others who were likewise banned from Iraq and Syria, swelling the ranks of thousands of Brotherhood activists who had found work in their new oil-rich countries by becoming teachers, lawyers and engineers, staffing banks and government agencies and establishing Saudi universities and rewriting curricula.<sup>25</sup>

One of the most influential intellectual thinkers during this period was Sayyid Qutb's brother Muhammad, who settled in Saudi Arabia after he was released from an Egyptian jail in 1972. Muhammad became the chief editor and promulgator of Sayyid Qutb's writings, which attracted young readers who sought a confrontation between Islam and *jahiliyya* and yearned for invigorating, modern ideas for their battle against secularism, socialism and the West. Having secured a global niche in the Arabic-reading world, Qutb's writings effectively became, in the words of Gilles Kepel, 'a manifesto for radical Islamism in the last quarter of the twentieth century'.<sup>26</sup> Significantly, Muhammad Qutb also became a distinguished Saudi professor of Islamic studies; many years later, Osama bin Laden would be one of his students. During the 1970s, Muslim Brotherhood members and sympathisers began moving to Europe where they replicated their success in Saudi Arabia by establishing a wide and well-organised network of mosques, charities and Islamic organisations. For Brotherhood members, having failed in attempts to seize power in Egypt and having lost the civil war in Algeria, Europe, became a top priority. As a result, with funding from the oil-rich Persian Gulf, Brotherhood members currently preside over a centralised network that spans nearly every European country. This network is characterised by a dual track approach:

These organizations represent themselves as mainstream, even as they continue to embrace the Brotherhood's radical views and maintain links to terrorists. With moderate rhetoric and well-spoken German, Dutch, and French, they have gained acceptance among European governments and media alike. . . .But, speaking Arabic or Turkish before their fellow Muslims, they drop their facade and embrace radicalism. While their representatives speak about interfaith dialogue and integration on television, their mosques preach hate and warn worshippers about the evils of Western society. While they publicly condemn the murder of commuters in Madrid and school children in Russia, they continue to raise money for Hamas and other terrorist organisations. Europeans, eager to create a dialogue with their increasingly disaffected Muslim minority, overlook this duplicity.<sup>27</sup>

The ability to 'speak moderately' functions as an essential component of the Muslim Brotherhood's practical philosophy. In seeking to implement their strategic goals, they employ the tradition of *taqiyya*, whereby hostile local circumstances may dictate that Islam is

better served by diluting its ideological statements for consumption by non-Muslim audiences.<sup>28</sup>

### **The lure and utility of the Muslim Brotherhood**

For European Muslims who have fully integrated and adapted to Western mores, the Muslim Brotherhood is undoubtedly not their ideology of choice. It is also not an option for the strictly pious group of Muslims known as *salafists*<sup>29</sup> – either those who advocate violent *jihād* or those who subscribe to a non-violent cultural separation from the West. For both these groups, members of the Muslim Brotherhood are considered ‘deviant’ according to the strict salafist code:

Unlike the salafists, who preach self-imposed apartheid or advise believers to isolate themselves in a mental ghetto to avoid contamination by European infidels, the associations emerging from the Muslim Brothers have chosen since 1989 to root themselves in civil society.<sup>30</sup>

In the history of the Muslim Brotherhood the year 1989 was a watershed. Muslim Brothers sought to fill an ideological gap created by the collapse of communism. Furthermore, the movement’s proponents stopped considering Europe a *Dar al-Kufr* (literally, ‘Domain of Unbelief’). Instead, in reaching out to the generations of economically disadvantaged Muslims who were born during the 1970s and had become European citizens, Europe became *Dar al-Islam* – in other words, ‘sharia [should] be applied to Muslims settled on European soil, since Europe was part of the land of Islam’.<sup>31</sup>

This theological framework is critical to understanding where the Muslim Brotherhood fits within the Islamist spectrum today. In traditional Islamic political theory the world is separated into two realms: *Dar al-Islam*, the Land/Domain of Islam—lands currently administered by Muslim governments – and *Dar al-Kufr* – lands administered by non-Muslim governments. For the strictest adherents of salafist Islam, Europe belongs to the latter: potentially contaminating and off-limits in terms of social/political engagement. Yet for some groups, *Dar al-Kufr* does allow for some degree of engagement. For those whom Kepel calls the ‘pietists’ – advocates of a peaceful version of Islam – Europe is regarded as *Dar al-Sul*, the Land of Truce: a domain where young Muslims should reject violent *jihād*, while simultaneously advocating a strict religious apartness. Indeed, members of this group regularly ridicule the Muslim Brotherhood as ‘deviant’ for engaging with Western society. But another dimension of *Dar al-Kufr* is known as *Dar al-Harb*, or the Land/Domain of War. This framework is used by those who advocate violent *jihād*. The goal of these aggressive Islamist organisations, such as the pro-Al Qaeda network, is to expand the borders of *Dar al-Islam* and to create a universal Islamic *umma*, or community.<sup>32</sup>

By contrast, the Muslim Brotherhood occupies a significantly different place, attracting mainstream conservative Muslims by advocating what Olivier Roy calls ‘integration without assimilation’. This principle is key to understanding the Muslim Brotherhood’s appeal – and its reach. For in practical terms Brotherhood members strive to organise Muslims into visible and active communities, with institutions and establishment figures, while promoting publicly visible education and social services, including such programmes as after-school lessons for children with learning difficulties, and literacy courses.<sup>33</sup> Muslim Brothers routinely seek recognition by host country authorities and consequently promote debate and negotiation, advocating communal organisation and mobilisation as well as exhibiting a legal-minded ability to advocate such communal issues as the *hijab*, *halal*, or holding consultations on ethical issues. In the short, and even medium, term, advocates of the Muslim Brotherhood worldview take a gradualist approach, preferring to advance their seemingly moderate objectives under the multicultural umbrella and via institutions and leaders who are recognised in the European public space. It is this same public space, however, that provides a receptive environment for promoting their distinct strand of extremism on the geopolitical and domestic front.

### **Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi**

An important key to the Muslim Brotherhood's overall strategy is expressed by the movement's senior theologian, Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi. An Egyptian-born cleric based in Doha, Qatar, Qaradawi has a weekly religious affairs show on Aljazeera television, where he is hailed as a 'moderate' and as a modern voice of Islamist thinking. Wanted on charges of terrorism in his native Egypt,<sup>34</sup> Qaradawi is described by Aljazeera as 'revered in much of the Muslim world for his intellectual rigour and ability to adapt the fundamental tenets of Islam to the modern world'.<sup>35</sup>

Within Europe, Qaradawi stands at the head of an umbrella organisation, the European Council for Fatwa and Research (ECFR), making him effectively a leading Islamic authority for all Muslim Brotherhood groups, since the ECFR is globally accessible via its associated website, [www.islamonline.net](http://www.islamonline.net). In 2003, Qaradawi founded the World Council of Muslim Clerics, with its headquarters in Dublin. It meets annually throughout Europe to debate and publicise rulings on Islam (*fatwas*), especially those pertaining to Muslim life in the West.

As the spiritual leader of these organisations, he advocates the core Muslim Brotherhood tenet that Muslims must keep their distance from liberal democracy as it is practised in the West, while at the same time availing themselves of its benefits and advantages.<sup>36</sup> He also appears to be a practitioner of *taqiyya*: while portraying himself as an accommodationist to non-Muslims, when he is facing Arabic-speaking audiences, a more extremist side emerges. In one 2002 broadcast the imam told his Aljazeera chat-show viewers about the joint destiny of Europe and Muslims:

We conquered Constantinople and the second part of the [Koranic] prophecy remains – the conquest of *Romiyya* [Rome]. The conquest of *Romiyya* means that Islam will return to Europe. In one of my previous programs, I said that I think this conquest would not be by the sword or armies, but by preaching and ideology. Europe will see that it suffers from materialistic culture, and will seek an alternative . . . Islam will return to Europe and the Europeans will convert to Islam. Then they themselves will be the ones to disseminate Islam in the world, more than we ancient Muslims. This is within Allah's capabilities.<sup>37</sup>

With regard to terrorism, Qaradawi holds distinct and mutually contradictory views. He was widely quoted as condemning the destruction of the twin towers and the Pentagon as well as the Madrid and London<sup>38</sup> train bombings as acts of terror that had brought opprobrium on all Islam. And yet towards Israel and its Jewish citizens, Qaradawi clearly sees terrorism as a legitimate weapon. Theologically, both comprise an infidel entity on Muslim territory under the rubric of *Dar al-Harb*, thereby justifying ultimate removal. Both are religiously sanctioned targets, because the 'entire Israeli society (with its citizen army) is made up of combatants, where all Israelis, both men and women, are trained to kill the Palestinians and therefore the rules on non-combatant civilians in other countries do not apply to them'.<sup>39</sup>

On the one hand, Qaradawi, like many Brotherhood leaders, appears sincere when condemning jihadist, al-Qaeda-style terrorism. However, any consistency in his position is shredded by remembering that Hamas is the Muslim Brotherhood's operational arm in the Palestinian territories. Its actions are legitimised by the religious authority of Qaradawi's *fatwas* (religious rulings) that justify the use of suicide bombings against civilians in the first place. This glaring contradiction is reminiscent of Orwell's doublespeak. Such thinking permeates Qaradawi's approach to other Western concepts such as democracy, freedom of speech and religion, women's rights, gay rights and even antisemitism: they can only be understood if the terms of reference are first seen through the prism of the Brotherhood's particular version of Islam.

When he is speaking to the European media these inconsistencies and contradictions are obscured by the use of vocabulary and terminology that mask a gradualist, 'Eurabia' approach:

As a Muslim society we should adopt [democracy] in an Islamic context . . . a society driven by laws of *shari'ah* [Islamic law] that is compatible with values of freedom, human rights, justice, and equity. . . . We should take the good and abandon the bad. For instance, many democratic countries have allowed types of sexual deviance to spread. . . . Islam is not anti-democracy. What we want is a free society that lives with the rules and

laws of *shari'ah* which is very compatible with the values of democracy, human rights, justice, development, and prosperity.<sup>40</sup>

Equally revealing of Qaradawi's worldview are his connections to organisations with a record of financing terrorist networks. For example, Qaradawi sits on the Sharia Board of al-Taqwa Bank and is one of the bank's largest shareholders.<sup>41</sup> This bank was designated by the US State Department a 'specially designated global terrorist organization'. Its assets were frozen by the US government on 7 November 2001 owing to its alleged involvement in al-Qaeda fund-raising.<sup>42</sup> Qaradawi is also the chairman of the 101 Days Charity Coalition,<sup>43</sup> a Palestinian fund-raising venture that the Palestinian Authority has named as 'one of the supporters – in terms of money and provisions – of the Hamas movement.'<sup>44</sup> As a consequence of what US law enforcement authorities regard as his support for terrorism, Qaradawi has been banned from entering the United States since November 1999.<sup>45</sup>

In July 2004, London's mayor, Ken Livingstone warmly welcomed Sheikh Qaradawi to the Greater London Authority's building when it hosted the annual session of the European Council for Fatwa and Research. There the Fatwa Council was successful in giving the appearance that it was speaking for all British Muslims, even while creating ideological convergences with more extremist groups. The campaign to bring Qaradawi and the Council to London was headed by Britain's leading pro-Muslim Brotherhood group, the Muslim Association of Britain (MAB). In 2003 the MAB rose to national prominence with its alliance with the far Left-led Stop The War coalition, which featured George Galloway as keynote speaker. Galloway went on to establish the Respect party and to win a parliamentary seat in the United Kingdom's 2005 national elections. MAB's unprecedented and highly successful role saw its credit rise appreciably throughout the Muslim community as well as large sections of the liberal left and the Greater London Authority. Tens of thousands of people heard its oratory in Trafalgar Square, and its slogan 'Don't Attack Iraq / Free Palestine' featured in their mass demonstrations. MAB is now a powerful player in the Muslim Council of Britain, an umbrella body that is the most public face of Britain's 1.6 million Muslims.<sup>46</sup>

Running in tandem with such political alliances are key British statistics reflecting attitudes that are part of the ideological framework of the Muslim Brotherhood. In this context it is noteworthy that the British Home and Foreign Offices in mid-2004 issued a confidential report following the terrorist attacks on Madrid train commuters on 21 March of that year, *Young Muslims and Extremism*. The report defines extremism to include 'arguing that it is not possible to be Muslim and British, calling on Muslims to reject engagement with British society and politics, and advocating the creation of an Islamic state in Britain'.<sup>47</sup> Just over a year later, in the wake of the London terrorist bombings on 7 July 2005, a London-based poll showed that no fewer than one in four of an estimated 1.6 million British Muslims 'feel no loyalty to Britain', while one in a hundred consider British society to be 'decadent and immoral' and 'declare themselves willing, possibly even eager, to embrace violence' in order to bring Western society to an end.<sup>48</sup>

### **Muslim Brotherhood Institutions in Europe**

Since the early 1960s, Muslim Brotherhood members have progressively established a wide and well-organised network of mosques, charities and Islamic organisations with the ultimate goal of 'extending Islamic law throughout Europe and the United States'.<sup>49</sup>

In France the extremist *Union des Organisations Islamiques de France* has become the predominant organisation in the government's Islamic Council, while in Italy the extremist *Unione delle Comunità ed Organizzazioni Islamiche in Italia* is the government's prime partner in dialogue regarding Italian Islamic issues. Of all the countries in Europe, Germany is unparalleled as a model of Muslim Brotherhood power and acceptance. Following the Egyptian authorities' clampdown, Muslim Brotherhood intellectuals found a hospitable environment in the former West Germany. No less a person than Hassan al-Banna's personal secretary and son-in-law, Sa'id Ramadan, moved there from Saudi Arabia and founded the *Islamische Gemeinschaft Deutschland* (Islamic Society of Germany, IGD), which he ran from 1958 to 1968. Ramadan also co-founded the Saudi-funded Muslim World League, which was investigated in 2004 by the US Senate Finance Committee for links with terrorist financing

networks.<sup>50</sup> In a parallel move, Ramadan, with the help of Saudi petrodollars, also established the Islamic Centre of Geneva, where Sa'id's son Hani Ramadan currently serves as its head. Also on the Geneva Center's board is Sa'id's other son, Tariq Ramadan, who in August 2004 had his visa to teach at Notre Dame University revoked by the US Department of Homeland Security.<sup>51</sup> In Germany, meanwhile, Sa'id Ramadan's successor at the IGD was Ghaleb Himmat, who, together with Egyptian-born banker and Brotherhood leader Youssef Nada, helped found the Bank al-Taqwa. In 2001 the US Treasury Department designated both Himmat and Nada as terrorism financiers.<sup>52</sup>

The IGD boasts of a vast network of Islamic organisations in more than thirty German cities under its umbrella. It also has an association with officials of Milli Görüş (National Vision, in Turkish). Milli Görüş, which has 30,000 members and an estimated another 100,000 sympathisers, officially seeks to defend the rights of Germany's immigrant Turkish population, giving them a voice in the democratic political arena while 'preserving their Islamic identity'.<sup>53</sup> But Milli Görüş also has a more extremist agenda. According to German security officials, 'although Milli Görüş, in public statements, pretends to adhere to the basic principles of Western democracies, abolition of the laicist government system in Turkey and the establishment of an Islamic state and social system are . . . among its goals'.<sup>54</sup> Moreover, both the IGD and Milli Görüş actively seek to become the official representatives of the entire German Muslim community in a way that mirrors Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated MAB's efforts in the United Kingdom.

### **The Muslim Brotherhood: Islamism's elitist edge**

Without a doubt, the success of the Muslim Brotherhood in Europe can be attributed to both their ample funds and their superior organisational skills relative to any competing localised Muslim bodies. However, their success also has relied on the reluctance of European leaders to investigate properly their motivations and ideas, and to recognise the fact that many self-described representatives of European Muslim communities have considerably more radical long-term goals than the populations they represent. And yet, because of the growth of Muslim communities throughout the continent, together with their potential political clout, the European elites take them seriously. Small wonder. As we have seen, articulate Islamist thinkers like Yusuf al-Qaradawi command attention precisely because they are regarded as an intelligentsia at the top of a population pyramid of undifferentiated Muslim 'masses' and regarded by non-Muslims as a legitimising force. As a result, while some European politicians realize that Muslim Brotherhood-associated organisations may not be the ideal counterparts for constructive dialogue, they fail to expend any effort to seek out more moderate but less visible organisations that may exist on a grassroots level but are hampered by financial constraints. Indeed, as Vidino cogently warns,

What most European politicians fail to understand is that by meeting with radical organizations, they empower them and grant the Muslim Brotherhood legitimacy. There is an implied endorsement to any meeting, especially when the same politicians ignore moderate voices that do not have access to generous Saudi funding. This creates a self-perpetuating cycle of radicalization because the greater the political legitimacy of the Muslim Brotherhood, the more opportunity it and its proxy groups will have to influence and radicalize various European Muslim communities.<sup>55</sup>

Moreover, because of the malleable and at times unstructured nature of the Muslim Brotherhood, Europe's power elites fail to recognise the above dynamic at work. It is a dynamic whereby under the general rubric of the politics of grievance and direct action there resides a Manichean, quasi-apocalyptic worldview that sees America, Zionism/Israel and the Jews as the source of the world's ills. As a result, elements of Muslim Brotherhood rhetoric not only appeal to more radical, jihadist strands of Islamism, but also serve to reinforce the worldviews of both Europe's indigenous fascists and its revolutionary Left. It helps to provide both 'strange bedfellows' at opposite ends of the extremist spectrum with a sense of shared vision and élan.

In Britain, London's mayor, Ken Livingstone, is an example of this new fashion by leftist politicians of supporting Islamists in the apparent belief that one can mobilise a new Muslim

constituency for electoral support. While Livingstone agrees with and accepts as axiomatic the Muslim Brotherhood's accusations against the evils of US imperialism and Israel's 'criminality', he manages to overlook some of the Islamists' less 'progressive' beliefs such as a theologically based, violent antisemitism, homophobia and anti-feminism and communalist polarisation – precisely those stances that resonate with the far Right fascists because they happen to share some of the same views. Muslim Brotherhood-style Islamists thus have the potential to curry favour with European extremists on both political wings, because their ideas echo similar sentiments and thereby bolster these groups' morale and sense of efficacy. Europe's new Islamists are the inadvertent connectors between traditional European fascism and the revolutionary Marxist Left for whom America, Israel and the Jews are the chosen enemy and the focus of their joint animus.

## Notes

- 1 Olivier Roy, *Globalised Islam: The Search for a New Ummah*, Christopher Hurst, London, 2004, p. 18. There are few precise figures for the number of Muslims living in Europe, for two reasons: first, the difficulty of defining who should be considered a Muslim; and second, the reluctance of most European legal systems to register religion in census and identity papers (see Roy, op. cit., p. 101). Only the United Kingdom has recent and reliable official census data, and then only for a voluntary question (the 2001 Census reported 1,591,000 Muslims, or 2.7 per cent of the total UK population; UK Office for National Statistics, <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001/profiles/uk.asp>). The statistics usually quoted for the European Union put the Muslim population at around 5 per cent of the Union's more than 425 million people (see 'Annual Report on Religious Freedom', September 2004, U.S. State Department, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/irf/>). The comparative result on the religious profile of the region is amplified by an asymmetrical decline in European Christianity; the continent's largest denomination, Catholicism, for example, has declined by more than a third in the past twenty-five years (see Evan Osnos, *Chicago Tribune*, 'Islam shaping a new Europe', 19 December 2004).
- 2 David Masci, 'An Uncertain Road: Muslims and the Future of Europe', The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, December 2004, <http://pewforum.org/docs/index.php?DocID=60>, pp. 2-3.
- 3 Timothy Savage, 'Europe and Islam: Crescent Waxing, Cultures Clashing', *The Washington Quarterly*, vol. 27, no. 3, Summer 2004, pp. 2-5 ([http://www.twq.com/04summer/docs/04summer\\_savage.pdf](http://www.twq.com/04summer/docs/04summer_savage.pdf)).
- 4 See 'London 7/7 and Its Impact', Michael Radu, Foreign Policy Research Institute, July 2005, <http://www.fpri.org/wr/0605.200507.radu.londonbombings.html>.
- 5 Craig S. Smith, 'In Europe, Islam Fills Marxism's Old Shoes', *International Herald Tribune*, 30 December 2004.
- 6 Roy, *Globalised Islam*, p. 101.
- 7 'Leading Sunni Sheikh Yusef Al-Qaradhawi and Other Sheikhs Herald the Coming Conquest of Rome', MEMRI Special Dispatch Series No. 447, <http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=subjects&Area=jihad&ID=SP44702>.
- 8 Muslim Brotherhood web page, <http://www.ummah.org.uk/ikhwan/> (accessed August 2005).
- 9 *Hamas Covenant*, <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/mideast/hamas.html>, Article 2: 'The Islamic Resistance Movement is one of the wings of Moslem Brotherhood in Palestine. The Moslem Brotherhood Movement is a universal organization, which constitutes the largest Islamic movement in modern times.'
- 10 David G. Littman, 'The Genocidal Hamas Charter', *National Review*, 26 September 2002.
- 11 *Hamas Covenant*, Articles 22 and 32 ('Their plan is embodied in the "Protocols of the Elders of Zion", and their present conduct is the best proof of what we are saying').
- 12 Ibid., Article 8.
- 13 Ibid., Article 28.
- 14 Matthias Küntzel, 'Jihadism and Anti-Semitism' *Jüdische Allgemeine*, Berlin, no. 1/03, 2 January 2003, (<http://www.matthiaskuentzel.de/artikel.php?artikelID=29>).
- 15 Ibid.
- 16 Zvi Mazel, 'How Egypt Molded Modern Radical Islam', Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, 16 February 2005, <http://www.jcpa.org/brief/brief004-18.htm>.
- 17 Klaus Gensicke, *Der Mufti von Jerusalem: Amin el-Husseini und die Nationalsozialisten*, Verlag Peter Lang, Frankfurt am Main, 1988, p. 251 (German), quoted in Matthias Küntzel, 'Islamic Antisemitism and Its Nazi Roots', Spring 2003, <http://www.matthiaskuentzel.de/artikel.php?artikelID=30>.
- 18 Küntzel, 'Islamic Anti-Semitism', p. 10. Equally noteworthy is the role that Husseini played as official supervisor of Radio Zeesen, a short-wave Arabic radio service run by the German National Socialist

- government between 1939 and 1945. Broadcasting from Zeesen (a suburb of Berlin), Athens and Rome, the service's daily programmes called for *jihad* and 'skilfully mingled anti-semitic propaganda with quotations from the Koran and Arabic music', and thereby served to 'Islamize anti-Zionism and provide a religious rationale for hatred of Jews'.
- 19 Matthias Kuntzel, 'National Socialism and Anti-Semitism in the Arab World', *Jewish Political Studies Review*, vol. 17, no. 1 – 2, Spring 2005 (<http://www.jcpa.org/phas/phas-kuntzel-s05.htm>).
  - 20 Gilles Kepel, *The War for Muslim Minds*, Harvard University Press, London, 2004, p. 171.
  - 21 Masel, 'How Egypt Molded Modern Radical Islam'.
  - 22 Reuven Paz, 'Islamists and Anti-Americanism', *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, vol. 7, no. 4, pp. 53 – 61 See also: Paul Berman, 'The Philosopher of Islamic Terror', *New York Times Magazine*, 23 March 2003.
  - 23 Paz, 'Islamists and Anti-Americanism', p. 56.
  - 24 John L. Esposito, *Unholy War: Terror in the Name of Islam*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2002, p. 56: '[I]n many ways [Qutb's] journey from educated intellectual, to government official, and admirer of the West to militant activist who condemned both the Egyptian and American governments and defended the legitimacy of militant jihad has influenced and inspired many militants, from the assassins of Anwar Sadat to the followers of Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda.' Significantly, Qutb's trajectory was mirrored by the 'mastermind' of al-Qaeda, Ayman al-Zawahiri, who joined the Muslim Brotherhood at 15, was arrested during Nasser's crackdown on the group during the 1960s, and formally joined forces with bin Laden in 1998 when his Egyptian Islamic Jihad merged with al-Qaeda. At that time the two issued a fatwa that said, 'The judgement to kill and fight Americans and their allies, whether civilians or military, is an obligation for every Muslim' (see 'Ayman Muhammad Rabi' Al-Zawahiri: The Making of an Arch Terrorist', in the winter 2002 edition of the journal *Terrorism and Political Violence*, [www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/biography/Zawahiri.html](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/biography/Zawahiri.html)).
  - 25 John Mintz and Douglas Farah, 'In Search of Friends among the Foes', *Washington Post*, 11 September 2004. See also Kepel, *The War for Muslim Minds*, p. 172, and Roy, *Globalised Islam*, pp. 67 and 173.
  - 26 Kepel, *The War for Muslim Minds*, p. 175.
  - 27 Lorenzo Vidino, 'The Muslim Brotherhood's Conquest of Europe', *Middle East Quarterly*, Winter 2005, <http://www.meforum.org/article/687>.
  - 28 An emblematic case of *taqiyyah* can be seen in the language employed by Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi in a recent sermon at the mosque in Doha, as juxtaposed with the terminology he used during his press conference at the Greater London Authority in 2004: see 'Qaradawi: Moderate and Extremist', Abdul Rahman Al-Rashid, <http://www.arabnews.com>.
  - 29 Tariq Ramadan, *Western Muslims and the Future of Islam*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2004, p. 26.
  - 30 Kepel, *The War for Muslim Minds*, pp. 252 – 53.
  - 31 *Ibid.*, p. 254.
  - 32 Dan Pipes, 'What Is Jihad?', *New York Post*, 31 December 2002 (<http://www.danielpipes.org/article/990>); cf. Kepel, *The War for Muslim Minds*, p. 255.
  - 33 Roy, *Globalised Islam*, p. 276.
  - 34 David Pryce-Jones, 'The Islamization of Europe?' *Commentary*, December 2004, pp. 29 – 33.
  - 35 'Cleric: Muslims Should Fight US in Iraq', <http://www.Aljazeera.net>.
  - 36 Pryce-Jones, 'The Islamization of Europe', p. 33. 'Leading Sunni Sheikh Yousef Al-Qaradawi and Other Sheikhs Herald the Coming Conquest of Rome', MEMRI Special Dispatch Series No. 447, <http://memri.org/bin/opener.cgi?Page=archives&ID=SP44702>.
  - 38 'IAMS Condemns Sharm El-Sheikh, London Attacks', *Islamonline.net*, 24 July 2005, <http://www.islamonline.org/English/News/2005-07/24/article07.shtml>.
  - 39 'Disagreements between Al-Azhar Sheikh and Al-Qaradawi over "Martyrdom or Suicidal" Operations and the Boycott of US Goods', *Al Sharq al-Awsat*, 12 December 2001.
  - 40 'Shura and Democracy', 2 February 2002, <http://www.islamonline.net>.
  - 41 Bank Al-Taqwa, list of Ordinary Shareholders and list of Preference Shareholders, both at 31 December 1999.
  - 42 'Supplemental Declaration in Support of Pre-Trial Detention', affidavit issued on 11 September 2003 in the US district Court of the Eastern District of Virginia, in the case of *USA v. Soliman S. Biheiri*; see also 'US Details an Alleged Terror-Financing Web', *Wall Street Journal*, 15 September 2003.
  - 43 'Helping Palestinians Help Themselves', Union for Good UK leaflet (quoted in [www.londoncommunitycoalition.org](http://www.londoncommunitycoalition.org)).
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  - 45 'Supplemental Declaration in Support of Pre-Trial Detention'.

- 46 U.K. Office for National Statistics, <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001/profiles/uk.asp>.
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- 48 'One in four Muslims Sympathises with Terrorists', *Daily Telegraph* (London), Anthony King, 23 July 2005 (<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2005/07/23/npoll23.xml&sSheet=/news/2005/07/23/ixnewstop.html>).
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- 51 Geneive Abdo, 'Muslim Scholar Has Visa Revoked', *Chicago Tribune*, 24 August 2004.
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- 54 Vidino, 'The Muslim Brotherhood's Conquest of Europe'.
- 55 Ibid.

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

**Winston Pickett** PhD is director of media and external relations for JPR/Institute for Jewish Policy Research, London, and a former US bureau chief for the *Jerusalem Report*.

**Mark Gardner** is Director of Communications of the Community Security Trust (CST), which advises and represents Britain's Jewish community on matters of antisemitism, terrorism and security.