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Muslims and Jews in Switzerland

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- The Muslim population in Switzerland has increased rapidly from 16,353 in 1970 to an estimated 400,000 persons today, while the general population grew from around six million to 7.6 million. The Jewish community today is some 18,000 strong, a number that has not changed since the 1950s. Whereas the Jewish community, given its small size and its age profile, is likely to shrink and lose influence, the Muslim community can be expected to become more influential. Already up to eight percent of the population in the large cities is Muslim. Muslims in Switzerland are younger and less well educated than the average, whereas the Jewish community is older than average and the best-educated group in the country.
- The Muslim community in Switzerland is marked by extreme religious and ethnic diversity and hence, also, by a variety of attitudes toward Jews and Israel. There has so far been no openly anti-Jewish mass movement among Muslims with multiple hate crimes committed such as in France. Kurds, Turks, and Bosnians tend to be more secular and friendlier toward Jews than Arabs from North Africa and the Middle East.
- There has been some cooperation between the Jewish and Muslim communities with the former even providing support to the latter. Certain Muslim groups want to learn from the established Jewish community how to gain legal, political, and social acceptance in Switzerland.
- Muslims have not been the driving force behind the Swiss version of the new Europe-wide anti-Semitism. However, there is a growing radicalization of disaffected Muslim youth, with Islamism gaining ground among certain groups.

Understanding the interaction between Jews and Muslims in Switzerland requires, first, a rather detailed description of the Swiss Muslim communities.

It was more than a thousand years ago that the first Muslims came to the territories that later became Switzerland. Moorish raiders from Spain made their way up the Rhone River valley from the Mediterranean and in 936 crossed the mountains to attack the city of Chur in today's Canton of Grisons where bishops have resided since Roman times. Some of the Muslim invaders then established permanent settlements in the lower part of the Rhone Valley in what was to become the Canton of Valais.[1] Those villages exist to this day though the inhabitants were Christianized and assimilated into the region's French-speaking majority many centuries ago.

Later, noblemen, clergy, townspeople, and peasants from the Swiss areas took part in the Crusades from 1096 to 1291. Mainly in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, companies of Swiss mercenaries who were known as fierce warriors were hired by various parties such as the Habsburg Empire or the Republic of Venice to take part in numerous campaigns against the Ottoman Empire mainly in the area of the Balkans and Greece.

Otherwise encounters between Swiss and Muslims were limited, apart from the occasional traveler, merchant, or refugee. Today there are still prominent patrician families in Switzerland, such as the Morins and the Sarasins, who claim descent from Moorish or Saracen ancestors. But when these families entered Switzerland from France as Huguenot refugees after the expulsion of 1685, they had already been Christianized long ago.

Small Beginnings

There was no substantial Muslim presence in Switzerland until quite recently. It is only in the decades since World War II that Muslims began coming to Switzerland in greater numbers for longer or shorter periods, whether as members of international organizations such as the Red Cross and the United Nations or as tourists, students, businessmen, bankers, or political refugees.

One such refugee was Said Ramadan, son-in-law of Hassan al-Banna, one of the founders of the Muslim Brotherhood. Ramadan, a major figure in the Brotherhood, had to flee Nasser's Egypt in 1958 and came to Geneva. There he established one of the first Islamic centers in Switzerland in 1962.[2] In 1963, missionaries of the Ahmadiyya sect who had come to Switzerland in 1946 built the country's first mosque in Zürich.

This initial immigration was, however, limited in size and mainly consisted of upper-middle- and upper-class, predominantly secular Arabs. Its existence was not widely noticed, and meanwhile a bitter controversy surrounded the influx of hundreds of thousands of foreign workers from southern Italy, Spain, and Portugal. This labor migration sustained the massive expansion of the country's economy and infrastructure during the 1950 and 1960s.

Rapid Growth

There were not, however, enough "guest workers" of this kind to meet Switzerland's needs, and in the late 1960s manpower was increasingly recruited in rural areas of Turkey and Yugoslavia. The Yugoslav workers included many Bosnian and Albanian Muslims. Many of the Turkish and Yugoslav workers were brought into Switzerland on a seasonal basis; they received work permits for several months, then had to go back home, only to return the next season.[3] They were not allowed to bring their families and were not granted residence.

Nevertheless, despite a very thorough system of control, many managed to bring families and stay in the country permanently. By 1970 there were 16,353 Muslims in Switzerland.[4] The number increased steadily, reaching 56,625 by 1980.[5] By 1990 the total had almost trebled to 152,217.[6] Growth further increased when pressure by the European Union during the 1990s led to a liberalization of the Swiss policy toward foreigners. In 1991 the seasonal-workers system was effectively canceled. It ended officially with the bilateral agreement on free movement between the EU and Switzerland, which was signed in 1999 and came into force in 2002.[7]

Already by 1991, however, the seasonal workers from Yugoslavia and Turkey were permitted to bring in their families. It was then that the influx increased. A large proportion of the Turkish citizens coming to Switzerland were Kurds, fleeing violence and unrest in eastern Anatolia and the Iraqi-border area where the Turkish army and the Kurdish PKK had been warring since the 1970s.

Still more Muslim immigrants arrived during the wars in former Yugoslavia in the 1990s. Some 150,000 refugees from Bosnia and Kosovo joined friends and relatives who had come as guest workers. For this reason Switzerland today has the largest community of Kosovar Albanians outside Kosovo.[8] By 2000, when the most recent Swiss census was conducted, the number of Muslims had grown to 310,800.[9] Today the Muslim population is estimated at 400,000 out of a general population of 7.6 million.[10] Although labor migration since 2000 has consisted mainly of highly skilled individuals from the EU with Germany topping the list, several waves of asylum seekers fleeing unrest or economic hardship in North and West Africa have contributed to further expansion of the Muslim population. This trend is continuing, with many asylum seekers from Iraq, Lebanon, Eritrea, and Somalia reaching Switzerland in 2007 and 2008.

Whereas Turks, Kurds, Bosnians, and Albanians have mainly settled in the German-speaking part of Switzerland, Arabic speakers from Algeria and Morocco have settled mainly in the French-speaking part. In the German part only 1.5 percent of Muslims come from the Maghreb; in the French part the number is 10.5 percent. In addition, many of the wealthy in the Arab world, mostly from Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf states, annually exchange the hot Middle Eastern summer for holiday homes around Lake Geneva or have settled in the area, some receiving residence or even citizenship.[11]

In 2000, 4.3 percent of the inhabitants of Switzerland were Muslim, thus making Islam the largest non-Christian religion. In the German part of the country, 4.7 percent of the population was Muslim, compared to 3.6 percent in the French part and 1.8 percent in the Italian part. Only 0.2 percent of the total population was Jewish. Both Jews and Muslim were concentrated in urban areas; 42 percent of the Jews lived in or near Geneva and Zürich, with smaller communities in Lausanne and Basel. In Geneva and Zürich, Jews constituted 1.35-1.46 percent of the population.

As of 2000 the highest percentages of Muslims were in Lausanne (6 percent) and Basel (7.4 percent).[12] The latter city has successfully implemented a strict integration policy under the slogan *Fördern und Fordern*-translatable as "to advance and at the same time to demand"-which teaches language and Swiss civic values to new immigrants.[13] Noncompliance-such as not attending language courses-is penalized by the state, which is actively trying to achieve integration through housing policies and other means. Penalties include the loss of rights and entitlements, up to denial of residence and expulsion from the country.

Although in urban areas Muslims constitute up to eight percent of the general population, with a few exceptions there are no urban ghettos such as in France or Germany. The state is less successful in its education policy, with non-German- or non-French-speaking children outnumbering German-speaking or French-speaking ones in many city schools, which puts successful integration in question. In the Italian part of the country, Italian-speaking children remain the majority.

Age and Education

Although the Muslim community in Switzerland is young and growing, it is generally not well educated. Whereas 19.2 percent of the general population, and 42.7 percent of Jews, are university educated, with considerable numbers obtaining other forms of higher education, 61.4 percent of Muslims do not advance beyond secondary school. Muslims are also the youngest religious community in the country with 39 percent of its members under the age of twenty. Only 23 percent of the general population is younger than twenty, and the Jewish community has the largest percentage of older members.

Muslims also have the highest birthrate at 2.44 children per woman compared to the national average of 1.43. The Jewish rate is slightly higher than the national one. The country's total unemployment rate is now around 2.5 percent, but for Muslims it is 15 percent.[14]

Diversity

Contrary to several Muslim communities in other European countries, Swiss Muslims are ethnically and religiously highly diverse. They originate in more than 105 countries. Nevertheless, in 2000 the majority of Swiss Muslims-some 175,374 persons-were from former Yugoslavia, mainly Bosnia and Kosovo. The second largest group, numbering 65,140, came from Turkey and mainly consisted of Kurds and Turks. Other groups included Moroccans, Algerians, Tunisians, Lebanese, Iraqis, Iranians, Nigerians, Eritreans, and Somalis.

Along with this regional and ethnic heterogeneity, the community is religiously diverse. Seventy-five percent of the Swiss Muslims are Sunni, 10-15 percent are Alevites and the rest belong to the Shia and other groups, such as the Sufis. Most Swiss Muslims, especially those originating in the Balkans, are secular with strong ties to tradition. Over the past decade, however, a religious awakening has occurred among Swiss Muslims, particularly North Africans and Turks but also

among Bosnians and Kosovars. North Africans and Arabs tend to be more religiously observant than those from the Balkans. In any case the majority of Swiss Muslims can still be described as secular and not attracted to Islamism, with the Alevites professing a version of Islam that in many respects-such as the role of women-is more liberal than today's mainstream Sunni or Shiite Islam.

Most Islamic communities are registered associations under Swiss law. There are some 120 to 160 such associations, organized around common religious beliefs or common language and geographic origin. For example, in 1994 Albanian Muslims in Basel formed their own association. Whereas most Islamic associations are funded by membership fees, a few, such as the King Faysal Foundation in Basel and the Fondation Culturelle Islamique in Geneva, are financed by Saudi Arabia.[15]

Some forty imams holding work permits tend to the spiritual needs of the Islamic associations. There are many more imams in the country on tourist visas. To prevent an influx of extremist imams, there have been efforts to educate homegrown Europeanized imams who know Swiss law and custom and use the local language in their Friday sermons, so that the authorities can know what they are saying. This has involved trying to establish schools for imams at the universities of Basel and Geneva, from whose theological faculties in the sixteenth century much of Protestantism sprang.[16] As of 2007 this project had, for the time being, failed.[17] Meanwhile the authorities have stipulated that to obtain residence and work permits, imams who come to Switzerland must know German or French.[18]

The many Islamic associations are subsumed under umbrella organizations. Because of the religious and ethnic diversity there are quite a few of these as well. One such unifying body is the Muslim Commission in Basel.[19] Founded in 1997, it today comprises fifteen Sunni foundations, associations, and mosques. Its members are mostly of Turkish origin. Although the commission is often taken as the main voice of Muslims in Basel and the surrounding area, it by no means speaks for everybody. The six thousand Alevites in Basel, for example, are mostly of Kurdish origin and have their own umbrella organization called the Alevite Commission (Kommission der Alewiten).

Dozens of such umbrella organizations exist in various cities and regions. The Union of Islamic Organizations in Zürich (VIOZ) amalgamates some forty-four associations.[20] There are also nationwide bodies uniting local umbrella organizations such as the Federation of Islamic Voluntary Associations, which was founded back in 1978 and amalgamates Turkish groups;[21] the Coordinated Islamic Organizations of Switzerland (KIOS), reestablished in 2000;[22] or the Federation of Islamic Umbrella Organizations in Switzerland (FIDS), founded in 2006 and uniting ten local umbrella organizations.[23]

The major tasks of all these organizations are to represent their members to the authorities; promote the establishment of prayer rooms and mosques; provide religious instruction for children, either in Sunday schools or in special lessons in regular schools; and to create Islamic cemeteries. The latter issue has been especially contentious. In Switzerland cemeteries are usually provided by the state. Although there are special burial fields for diverse religions, most of these are secular or Christian. Graves are emptied after twenty to twenty-five years and reused. Exempted from that regulation and also private, and hence the only cemeteries that are permanent, are the Jewish ones, which are also among the few in Switzerland that are not Christian or post-Christian in character. In Geneva the canton defines itself as a secular republic and is so emphatic about this that the Jewish cemetery, while accessible from the Swiss side of the border, is actually on French soil.

It is very difficult to establish cemeteries conforming to Islamic law. Although Muslim sections have been created in some cemeteries, still many Muslims have the bodies of their dead transported to their hometown for burial, as was generally the rule for the first generation of migrant workers. This is currently true especially for Muslims from Turkey and the Balkans, possibly because their countries of origin are closer and their links to them better organized.

Extremism

Although the umbrella organizations usually are moderate, Islamism and other forms of extremism are also to be found among Muslims in Switzerland. The small Muslim population of the 1950s and 1960s already included political activists of such groups as the Muslim Brotherhood (Egypt) or the FLN (Algeria). It was, however, the arrival of PKK activists and supporters in the 1970s and 1980s that introduced a political dimension into what had primarily been a labor migration.

Although most of Europe has banned the PKK as a terrorist organization, it is still legal in Switzerland. The Swiss Federal Police Department has defined it as a violent extremist organization.[24] The PKK maintains a political and logistical infrastructure in the country. The city of Basel even seems to have housed the PKK's European headquarters for a while.

The organization is alleged to be involved in activities such as extortion, the drug trade, and money laundering. The PKK came to the wider public's attention, however, with many loud and often violent demonstrations, usually against Turkish policies, in the 1980s and 1990s. By 2005 the situation had cooled down enough that the Federal Police Department did not characterize the PKK as a clear and present danger to Switzerland. The department's 2007 report, however, mentions several cases of PKK-perpetrated arson.[25]

The 1980s and 1990s also saw the emergence of extreme-nationalist Turkish organizations such as the Grey Wolves. Whereas these movements are largely secular, since the 1990s there has been growing activity by Islamist movements such as Turkish Hezbollah and IBDA-C, also Turkish-based.[26] In the French part of Switzerland and in Zürich and Basel, adherents of Algerian and Moroccan Salafist groups have more or less successfully infiltrated several Islamic centers and mosques.

Several arrests have shed light on how Islamist organizations use Switzerland as a logistical base. In addition, a number of international jihadist organizations are said to collect money among Swiss Muslims. Lately there has also been an influx of organized crime from West Africa and Lebanon, mostly engaged in the drug trade and at least in some cases connected to Islamist and even Islamist terror organizations. All of this has contributed to a certain unease among the general population.

Issues of Integration

Nevertheless, most Muslims in Switzerland are well integrated and many have become citizens. Having recently surpassed Australia, the United States, and Canada as the country with the highest percentage of foreign-born inhabitants, Switzerland seems successful at integration overall.

For communities and locales in Switzerland where integration fails, however, earlier policies of multiculturalism and laissez-faire have largely been abandoned and replaced by rigid state intervention. Contracts between the state and the individual immigrant have been proposed at the nationwide level and are already being implemented in some cantons. In order to remain, the immigrant must fulfill certain conditions such as learning the language and integrating into a secular, Western, democratic culture. Although this seems to imply a give-and-take between society and the individuals concerned, in reality it simply means coercion. People who do not want to learn German or attend courses on Swiss society and history can be denied residence and even deported.[27] Unlike in other European countries, this approach is largely being introduced by the Center-Left parties and supported by the liberal media.

Despite the assertive and overall rather successful integration policies, on which similar policies about to be introduced in Germany and Austria are modeled, there is, as mentioned, an uneasiness among the general population. It focuses on two groups, which sometimes overlap: Islamists and young Muslim men. As in France and Germany, growing numbers have led to growing visibility and the emergence of a parallel society. Because of the heterogeneity and lack of predominantly Muslim quarters in the large cities, this phenomenon is so far not as developed in Switzerland as it is in the Paris suburbs, the borough of Kreuzberg in Berlin, or Birmingham.

As elsewhere in Europe, however, the status of women, honor killings, and especially headscarves have become issues ever since the Supreme Court upheld in 1996 the prohibition on wearing headscarves in the case of a Geneva primary school teacher.[28] In 1999, university hospitals in Geneva prohibited Muslim medical students from wearing headscarves during work. The debate in Switzerland centers on whether the headscarf is a private religious symbol, in which case it should be protected under freedom of religion, or is a political symbol of an extremist ideology.

Minarets

A similar controversy has recently emerged concerning minarets. There are some 160 mosques in Switzerland, mostly not very visible in backyards, former garages, industrial facilities, and the like. Very few mosques have been built as such. Only two-in Geneva and Zürich-have minarets. With growing numbers and self-confidence, however, many Muslims now want to build openly situated mosques with minarets. It was such building projects in the small towns of Langenthal, Wangen bei Olten, and Wil that in 2006 helped kindle the debate on the topic.

Under the principle of religious freedom, minarets should be allowed. However, if they are judged to be symbols of an extremist political ideology that puts itself above the law, that is a different matter. Behind this controversy on the nature of minarets there is a discourse on identity. Most Swiss, even if secular, still see Switzerland as a Christian country. Despite the separation of church and state, and even in cases where schools have a Muslim majority, Christmas is part of the curriculum.

Indeed, Muslim expansion has impelled a Christian revival especially in rural areas and suburbs. After decades of declining church attendance, now it is mainly the evangelical churches that are growing and successfully re-Christianizing young people. When, on 28 July 2008, certain politicians from the evangelical Right and the right-wing Swiss People's Party (SVP) launched a referendum against minarets, they had already managed to collect 114,895 signatures in a short time.[29] This initiative aims at a constitutional prohibition on minarets, and the national referendum will probably be held in 2009. The central government opposes the measure on the grounds that it violates religious freedom, could destabilize relations between the country's religious communities,[30] would not help counter the spread of Islamism, and would not be understood abroad.[31]

The Swiss intellectual, industrial, banking, and political establishments mostly share these concerns and oppose the referendum, fearing negative repercussions throughout the Arab and Muslim world. The Federation of Swiss Jewish Communities (SIG), as its president Alfred Donath stated in an interview this year, opposes the measure on the basis of religious freedom.[32] He asked the Muslims for patience, noting that the integration and acceptance of Jews only came after a hundred years of trying. He also asserted, though, that Muslims should learn the relevant language and accept the "law of the land," which is a principle of Halakhah but is problematic in Shari'a. Nevertheless, the prohibition on minarets stands a good chance of passing the referendum.

Youth and Crime

The second group on which popular unease centers is the Swiss-born "*Secondos*." This refers to second-generation foreigners and has become a codeword for young men from Turkey and the Balkans, Muslim and non-Muslim. These young men are seen as clinging to a macho culture, complete with car racing (insurance companies now set higher fees for young drivers from the Balkans), violent and other crime, and even honor killings. Some *Secondos* are highly regarded for enhancing Switzerland's image as athletes, especially in soccer where they have put the Swiss national team on the map.

Nevertheless, popular opinion singles out the *Secondos* as a security risk.[33] Statistics seem to support this perception. Whereas foreigners now constitute 21 percent of the Swiss population, young men of foreign origin now commit more than half of the violent crimes and account for 70 percent of prison inmates.[34] Although a significant number of these young perpetrators are non-Muslims, popular discourse does not differentiate. Xenophobic elements on the Right try to exploit this mood to advance their traditional goal of restricting immigration. The SVP initiated a referendum to make it easier to deport foreign residents, even for minor offenses. Out of concern for Swiss democracy, however, this was clearly rejected at the polls in the summer of 2008.

Nevertheless, in a desperate attempt to regain the popular vote it has lost to the Right over the past few years, the Social Democratic Party (SP) has come up with similar ideas.[35] Abandoning its earlier multicultural stance, it is now talking about an increase in "internal security."[36]

Jews and Muslims

There has not been much friction between Jews and Muslims in Switzerland. Even though much of what is described above resembles what is happening in other European countries, in Switzerland anti-Jewish activities and attacks by Muslims have, so far, been few.

The country has indeed undergone an upsurge of anti-Semitism recently, but largely of the homegrown variety. Covert or overt, generally nonviolent, anti-Semitism has always been present in Switzerland. Occasional anti-Semitic waves have peaked and then seemingly subsided but with some phenomena, such as verbal attacks, continuing and losing their novelty. One such case occurred in the 1990s with the affair of the "dormant Jewish bank accounts" and ensuing debate on Swiss conduct during World War II. Another occurred in 2002 when the government sought to legalize *shechita* (Jewish ritual slaughter),[37] which has been prohibited in Switzerland since 1893.

With the First Lebanon War and the two intifadas, the Swiss Left and Center turned hostile toward Israel. Antagonistic media coverage of Israel has also contributed to the general increase of anti-Semitism both in its more traditional forms and in its newer guise as anti-Israelism or anti-Zionism. Verbal attacks had become quite common by 2002, along with a lesser number of physical attacks, but this was rarely recorded or reported. More recently, efforts have begun to collect reliable data on such incidents.[38]

Anti-Israeli sentiment, often accompanied by anti-American prejudice, has become rampant in all layers of Swiss society, frequently distorting political perceptions. Jews, Israel, and the United States play the role of evil incarnate that traditional anti-Semitism has long assigned to "the Jew." Traditional Swiss neutrality has been replaced by one of "active neutrality" that includes pressuring Israel and talking with Iran, Hamas, and Hizballah. In Switzerland the "new anti-Semitism" is not so new and to a large extent is not connected to the growing Muslim community.

Muslim Anti-Semitism

Nevertheless, there is increasing anti-Semitism among Muslims. A study by the University of Basel showed that a high percentage of youth violence is committed by youngsters of foreign origin, and that a considerable number of these hold anti-Semitic views.[39] In certain mosques fundamentalist imams have been known to preach anti-Jewish sentiment. Compared to countries such as France or the United Kingdom, however, cases of physical aggression are few. This can be attributed to the Swiss Muslim community's diversity and origins. Conflicts between the various groups-North Africans, West Africans, Middle Eastern Arabs, Turks, Kurds, Bosnians, Albanians-run at least as deep as any antagonisms toward other communities.

Although Moroccans, Algerians, Tunisians, and Lebanese tend to be influenced and often radicalized by the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (as is the case in Belgium, the Netherlands, or France), most Swiss Muslims are from communities that were either secular, such as the Bosnians and Albanians from former Yugoslavia, or neutral or even friendly toward Israel and the Jews such as certain Kurdish groups. Many of the Muslims in Basel are Kurdish and Turkish Alevites-as noted earlier, a relatively liberal sect, which has valued good relations with the Jewish community.

Cooperation

Turks and Kurds in particular have time and again turned to the Jewish community for help in dealing with the authorities on questions of legal status, meat supply, establishing cemeteries, and the like. The newly elected president of the abovementioned Muslim Commission in Basel, with its mostly Turkish constituents, stated in a June 2008 newspaper interview that he wants to establish contact with the Jewish Community of Basel (IGB) and learn from the Jewish experience.[40]

Muslim and Jewish interests converge especially on the issue of ritually slaughtered meat. As in the case of shechita, Swiss law prohibits producing *halal* meat. Kosher meat has to be imported and is subject to strict limitations on quantity and special punitive taxes and custom fees. When, in the 1960s and 1970s, the Muslim community was still small, many would buy their meat in Jewish shops because of similarities between kosher and halal meat production.

With growing numbers and demand, however, Muslims opened their own shops and started to compete for the limited import quotas, halal meat being subject to the same regulations as kosher meat. Soon halal started to be slaughtered legally in Switzerland with the animals being anaesthetized, which originally-as in Judaism-was prohibited in Islam. Nevertheless, Islamic authorities allowed the new practice. Because of great demand especially during Muslim holidays, however, there is often a lack of halal meat.

Scandals erupted among the general public when a Muslim leader told the media that some Swiss Muslim communities were illegally slaughtering halal in great quantities on farms in northwestern Switzerland in preparation for the Id al-Adha festival.[41] Increasing import is complicated since the contingents of both the kosher and halal meat have to be auctioned, and at times there is fierce competition for the limited import quantities. Lately there were cases where Muslim importers actually bought the Jewish contingent, outbidding the kosher suppliers at import auctions and thereby effectively limiting the supply of kosher meat. Through political intervention by the SIG with the authorities and negotiations with the Muslim importers, these difficulties seem meanwhile to have been resolved.[42]

Dialogue

Besides these practical issues, Jews and Muslims usually meet on various panels of dialogue organizations. One such organization, financed by a Protestant foundation, is the Lehrhaus in Zürich, which provides courses on Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. In Basel, the Christian-Jewish Projects (CJP) organization has been engaged over the past decade in Christian-Jewish dialogue and understanding. [43] It aims beyond the usual academic circles and wants to engage a wider public. The CJP was privately founded by former minister Nico Rubeli but is supported by all the official churches, the canton governments and private industry of northwestern Switzerland. In recent years it has attempted to build dialogue between Jews, Christians, and Muslims.

A wider umbrella is the Interreligious Cooperation (IRAS), in which some seventy Jewish, Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, and Sikh religious institutions and communities take part. The IRAS provides a framework for meeting and a reference point for authorities. Like other dialogue organizations, it encounters many problems with Muslim participants. For one thing, it is never clear who speaks for whom on the Muslim side given the plentitude and diversity of Muslim organizations. Often the individuals taking part in dialogue only represent themselves or their immediate circle, and commitments they make are hardly binding on the wider community.

The semiofficial Swiss Council of Religions, founded in 2006, has tried to avoid this pitfall. It seeks to bring together the highest representatives of the monotheistic religions, meets about once a month, and also serves as an advisory body to the government. It includes delegates of the official Christian churches and the SIG; yet, again, it is not clear whom the Muslim delegates actually represent. In 2005 the SIG also set up a commission for Jewish-Muslim dialogue specifically. Since then, however, it has not been active.

In these dialogue organizations the Jewish and the Christian sides usually aim high, seeking to promote understanding and coexistence and avoid civilizational conflicts. The Muslim side, however, often has more practical aims such as gaining political recognition, social acceptance, and funding for its communities and institutions and for establishing new mosques and cemeteries.

It is therefore on the political level of wheeling and dealing that cooperation seems to work best. Nevertheless, considering the rapid growth and the youth of the 400,000-strong Muslim community and the shrinking number and age of the 18,000-strong Jewish community, it seems clear which of the two will hold economic and political leverage in Switzerland in the not so distant future. In this Switzerland is not different from the rest of Western Europe.

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Notes

[1] *Historisches Lexikon der Schweiz* (*HLS*), Internet Edition, http://hls-dhs-dss.ch/textes/d/D11392.php (viewed on 28 January 2008). [German]

[2] The Geneva Islamic Center is now headed by his son Hani Ramadan who is, together with his brother Tarik Ramadan, among the leading figures of European Islamism.

[3] This regulation was introduced in 1934, complementing the 1931-1933 Law on Foreigners (ANAG), which provided the legal basis both for the restriction of Jewish immigration before World War II and the anti-Jewish immigration policy during the war. See www.socialinfo.ch/cgi-bin/dicopossode/show.cfm?id=377 (viewed on 28 August 2008). [German]

[4] *Historisches Lexikon der Schweiz* (*HLS*), Internet Edition, http://hls-dhs-dss.ch/textes/d/D11392.php (viewed on 28 August 2008). [German]

[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid. After the Swiss authorities had by 1953 forced most of the 22,500 Jewish refugees received during the war to leave the country, the number of Jews was never higher than 20,000.

[7] Press Communiqué, Bundesamt für Migration, http://www.bfm.admin.ch/bfm/de/home/dokumentation/medienmitteilungen/2002/2002-04-19.html%20(vi2(viewed on 2 September 2008). [German]

[8] It is estimated that 10 percent of all Kosovar Albanians presently reside in Switzerland. Many leading members of the Kosovar liberation movement UCK, and of the first government of newly independent Kosovo, have a Swiss connection. President Hashim Thaçi was in 1995 a political refugee in Switzerland, from where he organized the fight against the Serbs before returning to Kosovo. Switzerland was one of the first countries to recognize independent Kosovo in the spring of 2008.

[9] www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/portal/de/index/themen/01/05/blank/key/religionen.html (viewed on 28 August 2008) [German]. The next population census is due in 2010.

[10] Press Communiqué, Bundesamt für Statistic, www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/portal/de/index/news/medienmitteilungen.Document.111774.pdf (viewed on 28 August 2008). [German]

[11] Since in Switzerland it is not the central state but the community and the canton that grant citizenship, people can actually buy themselves in. That is, when someone comes to a community and undertakes to pay a certain amount of communal tax, he is voted in by a committee or general assembly and automatically receives Swiss citizenship. It is therefore easier for the wealthy to become Swiss than for the poor, who might be considered a burden for the communal budget.

[12] Numbers are from the 2000 population census.

[13] See the official website, http://www.welcome-to-basel.bs.ch/ [German], and the new Law of Integration at www.welcome-to-basel.bs.ch/integrationsgesetz_april07.pdf (viewed on 7 September 2008). [German]

[14] The data is from Claude Bovary and Raphaël Broquet, *Eidgenössische Volkszählung 2000. Religionslandschaft in der Schweiz* (Neuchâtel: Bundesamt für Statistik, 2004), 48ff. [German]

[15] When, because of some problem, funds for the King Faysal Foundation did not arrive and it almost had to close its center and mosque, the Jewish Community of Basel (IGB) and the official Christian churches supported the foundation financially out of interreligious concern.

[16] *Historisches Lexikon der Schweiz* (*HLS*), Internet Edition; http://hls-dhs-dss.ch/textes/d/D11392.php (viewed on 28 August 2008) [German]; Kirchen wollen Ausbildung für Imame in der Schweiz, NZZ, 21 November 2004,

www.nzz.ch/2004/11/21/fr/article9ZWYV.html (viewed on 28 August 2008). [German]

[17] See www.kath.ch/pdf/kipa_20070624205929.pdf (viewed on 5 September 2008). [German]

[18] Simon Erlanger and Philipp Loser, "Deutschpflicht für Imame. Mit Integrationsvereinbarungen soll Zuzug von Predigern kontrolliert werden," *Basler Zeitung*, 1 April 2008. [German]

[19] See http://www.baselmuslim.org/. [German]

[20] See www.vioz.ch/89828/index.html. [German]

[21] See www.inforel.ch/i21103 (viewed on 7 September 2008). [German]

[22] See www.inforel.ch/i21200 (viewed on 7 September 2008). [German]

[23] See www.inforel.ch/i21300 (viewed on 7 September 2008). [German]

[24] Bundesamt für Polizei, *Bericht für Innere Sicherheit 2005* (Bern: EJPD, 2006), 37. [German]

[25] Bundesamt für Polizei, *Bericht für Innere Sicherheit 2007* (Bern: EJPD, 2008), 43. [German]

[26] Bundesamt für Polizei, *Bericht für Innere Sicherheit 2005* (Bern: EJPD, 2006), 38.

[27] "'Der Druck des Amtes ist entscheidend': Andreas Ross vom Migrationsamt will Ausländer in die Pflicht nehmen," *Basler Zeitung*, 1 April 2008. [German]

[28] In 2001 the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg took the Swiss Supreme Court's position and upheld the prohibition.

[29] See http://www.minarette.ch/ (viewed on 3 September 2008). [German]

[30] "Botschaft zur Volksinitiative 'Gegen den Bau von Minaretten,'" www.ejpd.admin.ch/etc/medialib/data/gesellschaft/gesetzgebung/minarettverbot.Par.0001.File.tmp/bot-d.pdf (viewed on 7 September 2008). [German]

[31] "Botschaft zur Volksinitiative 'Gegen den Bau von Minaretten,'" www.ejpd.admin.ch/etc/medialib/data/gesellschaft/gesetzgebung/minarettverbot.Par.0001.File.tmp/bot-d.pdf (viewed on 7 September 2008). [German]

[32] Alfred Donath, "Die Integration der Juden hat über hundert Jahre in Anspruch genommen," *NZZ am Sonntag*, 30 March 2008. [German]

[33] As one of many examples, see "Sechs von zehn Schweizern finden jetzt reichts!" *Blick*, 29 September 2006, www.blick.ch/news/schweiz/auslaenderreport/artikel45856 (viewed on 3 September 2008). [German]

[34] See the official statistics at www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/portal/de/index/themen/19/03/05/key/ueberblick/wichtigsten_zahlen.html (viewed on 7 September 2008). [German]

[35] In this the young Jewish law professor Daniel Jositsch played an important role. See Daniel Binswanger, "Ein Mann der Offensive," *Das Magazin,* 36, 6 September 2008, http://dasmagazin.ch/index.php/ein-mann-in-der-offensive/. [German]

[36] Giery Cavelty, "SP streitet um Sicherheitspapier, " *Tagesanzeiger*, 8 September 2008, www.tagesanzeiger.ch/schweiz/SP-streitet-um-Sicherheitspapier/story/26149155 (viewed on 8 September 2008). [German]

[37] In 1893 the first referendum in Swiss history was held on the issue of prohibiting shechita. Counter to the position of the government and most of the political parties, 60 percent voted in favor of banning it, and this was added to the constitution. Only in 1978 was the ban removed from the constitution and made part of a new Law for the Protection of Animals. Despite several revisions, the prohibition is still part of that law today. It was to combat the ban that the Federation of Swiss Jewish Communities was founded in 1904. It managed to secure the import of kosher meat in strictly limited quantities.

[38] See http://newsletter.swissjews.org/archiv/2005/5_05.html (viewed on 7 September 2008). [German]

[39] See http://pages.unibas.ch/violence/ (viewed on 7 September 2008) [German]; Philipp Loser and Michael Rockenbach, "Schweizer Jugendliche klauen, Ausländer schlagen öfter zu. Studie der Uni Basel zeigt, aus welchen Quartieren die Straftäter stamen," *Basler Zeitung*, 10 March 2005. [German]

[40] Claudia Kenan (interview), "'Wir haben einen Generationenwechsel vollzogen': Der 18-jährige Ykup Gürgün ist neuer Präsident der Basler Muslimkommission," *Basler Zeitung*, 6 June 2008. [German]

[41] Martina Rutschmann, "Koran erlaubt Schächten unter Betäubung. Die Basler Muslim Kommission und der Tierschutz rufen zur Einhaltung des Gesetzes auf," *Basler Zeitung*, 1 January 2008. [German]

[42] Information provided to the author in 2007 by officials involved.

[43] See http://www.cjp.ch/. [German]

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Dr. Simon Erlanger is a journalist and historian. He was born in Switzerland in 1965 and educated in Basel and Jerusalem. A former employee of the Yad Vashem Archives in Jerusalem, he presently teaches Jewish history at the University of Lucerne. He also works as an editor for Telebasel, a television station for northwestern Switzerland.

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