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You are now entering Eurabia

MATT CARR

Abstract: In recent years, an increasingly influential intellectual consensus on both sides of the Atlantic has presented Europe as a doomed and decadent continent that is being transformed into an Islamic colony called 'Eurabia'. The term was originally coined by the British-Swiss historian Bat Ye'or to describe what she identified as a secret project between European politicians and the Arab world for the 'Islamicisation' of Europe. What began as an outlandish conspiracy theory has become a dangerous Islamophobic fantasy that has moved ever closer towards mainstream respectability, as conservative historians and newspaper columnists, right-wing Zionists and European neo-fascists find common cause in the threat to 'Judeo-Christian' civilisation from Muslim immigrants with supposedly incompatible cultural values.

Keywords: Bat Ye'or, Islamophobia, multiculturalism, neoconservative, war on terror

Long before the September 11 attacks, conservative intellectuals on both sides of the Atlantic had begun to present the 'green peril' of Islamic fundamentalism as an existential threat to western civilisation

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comparable to Communism and Nazism. In recent years, however, a new school of conservative opinion has begun to emerge in Europe and the US, which depicts Europe as a doomed continent, on the brink of cultural extinction in the face of a relentless and co-ordinated campaign of Islamicisation. The more pessimistic exponents of this thesis have coined the term 'Eurabia' to describe the emergence of a new 'Islamicised' European civilisation, in thrall to the Arab world. Similar predictions have been made by the European far Right for some years now, but the growing pessimism regarding Europe's imminent cultural and political subjugation by Islam is no longer limited to the marginal fascist fringe. On the contrary, the consensus regarding Eurabia spans a surprisingly wide spectrum of opinion, which includes French *nouveaux philosophes*, 'hard liberals' such as the *Daily Mail* columnist Melanie Phillips, acclaimed historians such as Niall Ferguson and Martin Gilbert and the interlocking network of conservative thinktanks in the US that have helped shape the ideological framework of the 'war on terror'.

One of the most prominent exponents of Eurabia is the veteran Italian journalist and self-proclaimed Cassandra of the Islamic threat, Oriana Fallaci, who told the *Wall Street Journal* in June last year that 'Europe is no longer Europe, it is "Eurabia", a colony of Islam, where the Islamic invasion does not proceed only in a physical sense, but also in a mental and cultural sense'.¹ Since the September 11 attacks, Fallaci has made the struggle against 'Islamofascism' the primary cause of her twilight years and has written two ferociously anti-Islamic diatribes, *The Rage and the Pride* and *The Force of Reason*, both of which have become best-sellers in her native Italy. Fallaci's books have been the subject of various lawsuits in Switzerland, France and Italy, where she was indicted last year for 'defaming Islam'. These various lawsuits have reinforced Fallaci's perception of herself as a courageous iconoclast, bringing the bad news of a sinister alliance between 'Islamic Nazism' and the 'anti-American' Left to a world that has supposedly been blinded to the true nature of the Islamic threat by political correctness and a cowed media. From her adopted home in New York, Fallaci has cast her baleful gaze on a decadent and suicidal Europe, which refuses to face up to the 'reverse Crusade' being perpetrated by the 'sons of Allah'.

The idea that Europe is a collaborator in its own downfall is a key Eurabian concept, though some commentators see Eurabia as an incipient rather than an actual phenomenon. One of its gloomiest exponents is the Canadian columnist Mark Steyn, the former theatre critic of the *Independent*, who has since become a neoconservative stalwart and a writer on foreign policy issues for the British and American right-wing press. Like Fallaci, Steyn predicts a future in which: 'Much of what we loosely call the Western world will not survive this century,

and much of it will effectively disappear in our lifetimes, including many, if not most Western European countries.’ In Steyn’s view, Europe’s coming downfall stems from a fatal confluence of declining fertility rates and a loss of ‘civilizational confidence’ in a European population fatally weakened by ‘affluence, softness, decadence’. The main beneficiaries of Europe’s predicament will be the neighbouring Muslim countries in the Middle East and the Maghreb, with their soaring fertility rates and where ‘the smarter Islamists . . . know they can never win on the battlefield, but . . . they can drag things out until Western civilization collapses in on itself and Islam inherits by default’.²

Other Eurabian commentators have similarly depicted a spiritually exhausted Europe about to fall into the waiting arms of Islam. In an article entitled ‘Is Europe dying?’, published by the neocon bastion, the American Enterprise Institute, the American writer and Catholic theologian George Weigel referred to Europe’s ‘crisis of civilizational morale’ and the ‘disease of the human spirit’ caused by ‘exclusive humanism’ and a ‘failure to acknowledge Christian ideas and values’.³ A long-time conservative activist, Weigel is a senior fellow of the Washington-based Ethics and Public Policy Center, a conservative thinktank established in 1976 whose mission statement is to ‘clarify and reinforce the bond between the Judeo-Christian moral tradition and the public debate over domestic and foreign policy issues’. With the advent of the war on terror, Weigel has become a proponent of an unfettered US foreign policy based on ‘moralism without illusions’ against terrorist ‘evil-doers’. The combination of theology and the ‘moral clarity’ of America’s new war are both evident in Weigel’s depiction of a lost European continent ‘increasingly influenced, and perhaps even dominated, by radicalized Islamic populations, convinced that their long-delayed triumph in the European heartland is at hand’.

The Eurabian notion of cyclical civilisational decline is not new. In 1918, the German writer and philosopher Oswald Spengler captured the mood of an exhausted and war-torn continent in his portentous best-seller *The Decline of the West*, in which he predicted the coming collapse of a decadent European civilisation that had supposedly exhausted its creative capacity. There is more than a touch of Spenglerian pessimism in Eurabian narratives but the contemporary vision of Europe’s downfall is often reinforced by sensationalist science fiction scenarios that meld *El Cid* with *Bladerunner* and G. K. Chesterton’s satirical novel *The Flying Nun*. According to the worst-case Eurabian predictions, by the end of the twenty-first century, most of Europe’s cities will be overrun by Arabic-speaking foreign immigrants, much of the continent will be living under Islamic Sharia law and Christianity will have ceased to exist or be reduced to a state of ‘dhimmitude’, or subject status – in accordance with the ‘dhimmi’ or treaty enforced on the ‘Peoples of the Book’ during the Islamic caliphate.

In the nightmare world of Eurabia, the future will become the past once again and Christians and Jews will become oppressed minorities in a sea of Islam; churches and cathedrals will be replaced by mosques and minarets, the call to prayer will echo from Paris to Rotterdam and London and the remnants of 'Judeo-Christian' Europe will have been reduced to small enclaves in a world of bearded Arabic-speakers and burka-clad women. This final triumph of Islamic barbarism will lead inexorably to the obliteration of secular society as homosexuals and adulterers are stoned to death in public and writers, liberal humanists and multiculturalists find themselves hoist by their politically correct petards and subjected to harsh repression.

Nor will the impact of Europe's future subjugation be restricted to the continent's unfortunate minorities. According to Tony Blankley of the *Washington Times*, an Islamicised Europe will become a base for 'jihadist operations' against the US and Israel and the continent will be 'pockmarked by little Fallujahs, that effectively will be impenetrable by anything much short of a U.S. Marine division'. Like most proponents of the Eurabian future, Blankley already sees the shape of things to come in the 'Muslim no-go zones' in European cities where the police 'dare not enter'.⁴ Similarly dreadful images can be found in the proliferation of far-right websites, such as Altermedia UK, which in a January 2001 posting entitled 'Eurabia – the nightmare has begun' described the existence of 'Islamic zones' in Sweden, Spain and the UK, where 'the law of the police and the secular State has ended and the authority of the Imam and Mosque is absolute'. All this, according to the authors, was evidence of capitulation to Islamic terrorists by European politicians, who 'In the name of "tolerance" and "multiculturalism" . . . have betrayed the people of Europe and the traditions of freedom, democracy and rationality that hundreds of European people have died fighting for over the centuries'.⁵

These views can be found in dozens of websites, such as the far-right Norwegian website, 'The Fjordman', which described the French riots last year as the 'opening salvoes of the continuation of the Jihad against Christendom, that was brought to a close at Vienna in 1683' and compared the coming downfall of Europe to the 'second fall of Rome'.⁶ Such ideas are not restricted to the outer fringes of the internet. In the *Daily Telegraph* last year, Mark Steyn described the riots as 'an early skirmish in the Eurabian civil war',⁷ while Melanie Phillips, in a weblog piece entitled 'Eurabia on the rampage', similarly attributed the 'Muslim riots' to an alliance between 'Muslims and Western decadents' – a connection which in Phillips' estimation had been mostly ignored by the 'sporadic and downplayed' coverage in the western media, with its insistence on 'deprivation and race' as the principal causes of the disturbances.⁸ A closer examination of the events in

France might have revealed that Pascal Mailhos, the director of the French police intelligence services, the *Renseignements Généraux*, also ‘downplayed’ the role of Islam in the riots. In an interview with *Le Monde* in November 2005, he declared unequivocally that: ‘Radical Islam played no role in the violence.’⁹ But Phillips’ interpretation was shared by the French essayist and philosopher Alain Finkielkraut. In an interview with *Ha’aretz* in November last year, Finkielkraut rejected the idea that what he called the ‘ethno-religious’ riots might have been a response to discrimination and social exclusion, describing them as an ‘anti-Republican pogrom’ motivated by ‘hatred of the West’ rather than racism or discrimination.¹⁰

Catastrophic predictions of violence and civil strife have long been used by the far Right as an argument against immigration by non-white migrants from ‘alien’ cultures but these responses to the events in France from more ‘liberal’ commentators are another indication of the extent to which Eurabian concepts have passed into more mainstream political discourse. The spectre of an Islamic Europe has also been given more highbrow respectability by Bernard Lewis, the White House’s favoured Middle Eastern specialist, who told the German newspaper *Die Welt* in 2004 that ‘Europe will be Islamic by the end of the 21st century’. That same year, the outgoing EU Competitions Commissioner Fritz Bolkestein quoted Lewis in a speech to the University of Leiden in September, in support of his arguments against the rapid enlargement of Europe. Bolkestein warned that the integration of Turkey into the European Union risked transforming the Union into an ‘Austro-Hungarian empire on a grand scale’ in which Europeans would become a minority in an Islamised Europe.¹¹

Niall Ferguson, the conservative English historian and enthusiastic advocate of a new American empire, has also embraced the Eurabian idea in a widely reproduced article entitled ‘Eurabia?’, in which he laments the ‘de-Christianization of Europe’ and its culture of secularism that leaves the continent ‘weak in the face of fanaticism’. Drawing on Gibbon’s *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Ferguson sees the recent establishment of a department of Islamic studies in his Oxford college as another symptom of the ‘the creeping Islamicization of a decadent Christendom’.¹² In a 2004 lecture entitled ‘The end of Europe?’ at the American Enterprise Institute, Ferguson struck a similarly Spenglerian note, conjuring the term ‘impire’ to depict a process in which a ‘political entity, instead of expanding outwards towards its periphery, exporting power, implodes – when the energies come from outside into that entity’.¹³ In Ferguson’s opinion, this process was already under way in a decadent ‘post-Christian’ Europe that was drifting inexorably towards the dark denouement of a vanquished civilisation and the fatal embrace of Islam.

The Eurabian conspiracy

The main inspiration for many of these fantasies is an Egyptian-born British citizen named Giselle Litmann based in Switzerland, who writes under the pseudonym of Bat Ye'or or 'Daughter of the Nile'. The author of a number of revisionist historical works on the Islamic treatment of religious minorities, Ye'or is contemptuous of Islam's celebrated cultural achievements such as the Andalusian 'Ornament of the World' established in Muslim Spain and regards Islam as a perennially barbaric, parasitic and oppressive religion. This vitriolic loathing informs her analysis of contemporary Europe in *Eurabia: the Euro-Arab axis* (2005). Many commentators have used 'Eurabia' as a sarcastic term to describe the Islamicised culture that is supposedly emerging from the ruins of 'post-Christian' Europe. In Ye'or's analysis, however, Eurabia is a consciously designed political project, whose seeds were sown in the European Community's establishment, at the height of the 1973 oil crisis, of the Euro-Arab Dialogue (EAD) – a long-term programme initially conceived by France and intended to forge closer political, cultural and economic links between Europe and the Arab world.

To Ye'or, the EAD was the *deus ex machina* by means of which European politicians and civil servants willingly prepared for the subjugation of Europe and whose 'occult machinery' has brought about the 'irreversible transformation' of Europe into 'a new geographical entity – Eurabia'. Ye'or's use of the term 'Eurabia' to describe this 'entity' derives from a French cultural journal of the same name that was published in the mid-70s – a name that she randomly applies to the conspiratorial project she describes without offering any evidence that the EAD or any other organisation ever used it, let alone in the terms that she outlines. According to Ye'or, the 'irreversible transformation' of Europe was achieved by the deliberate promotion of Muslim immigration into Europe, a process which then allowed Muslims to establish power bases for 'jihad' in most major cities. At the same time, the EAD imposed 'a preemptive control on minds and thought . . . fusing religion, propaganda, and politics' in order to convert the European media, universities and schools into channels for Arab propaganda and historical disinformation that exalted the Islamic contribution to European civilisation while deliberately negating Europe's 'Judeo-Christian' heritage. As a result of the EAD's efforts: 'Textbooks were rewritten in view of allaying Muslim susceptibilities, and university teachings in Middle East and Islamic history soon conformed to Arab-Muslim norms and their worldview'. The ideological subjugation of Europe to an Arab agenda was reinforced by EU initiatives such as the Euro-Mediterranean Foundation on the Dialogue of Cultures and Civilizations established by the European

Commission in March 2002, whose real objective was ‘to control everything that was said, written and taught on the new continent of Eurabia’.

In Ye’or’s undeclared totalitarian state, this Islamicisation of the education system has been enforced by a combination of political apparatus and an Orwellian apparatus of thought control, which has supposedly purged academe and the media of any dissenting voices and created an intellectual climate in which only pro-Arab views can be heard. The results are evident in Europe’s ‘resurgent anti-Americanism’, ‘Judeophobia’ and, most of all, in the ‘cult’ of ‘Palestinianism’ which ‘poisons Europe’. The EU’s perceived tilt towards the Palestinians is crucial to Ye’or’s indictment of Eurabia, where ‘the conception and practice of Palestinianism as a hate cult against Israel has had a profound impact on European society’ and where anti-Zionism is always synonymous with anti-Semitism. To Ye’or, the notion of a ‘Palestinian people’ is a propaganda fiction and European recognition of the PLO is further confirmation of Europe’s ideological subjugation to the ‘worldwide jihad strategy’ of Islam and the Arabs. All this has created a ‘spirit of dhimmitude that blinds us, that instills in us a hatred for our own values, and the wish to destroy our own origins and our own history’ while simultaneously reducing Europe to ‘a sinking continent, a colossal Titanic wreck, where the passengers run from one desperate situation into another’.¹⁴

Why have Europe’s leaders allowed this catastrophe to unfold? Ye’or cites various factors, from the prospect of lucrative Arab markets, a desire to placate the Muslim outposts in the heart of Europe, to a lily-livered attempt to appease the forces of terrorism and jihad, in contrast to the firm resolution shown by Israel and the US. This combination of greed and opportunism has paved the way for Europe’s cultural demise, however, since:

the EAD trafficked in concepts that were largely foreign to the Arab world. What did freedom of conscience and religion, gender equality, and equality of dignity for all people really mean in societies that practiced segregation of women and infidels, death for apostasy, ‘honor’ killings, female genital mutilation, and even the stoning of women, and which were riddled with the religious fanaticism and hate nurtured by the *jihad shari’a* values that persisted at the core of Arab/Muslim civilization?¹⁵

This essentialist ‘core’ is at the heart of Ye’or’s arguments regarding Europe’s forthcoming demise. For Ye’or, there is only one Islam, a single fanaticism that has remained unchanged since the era of the Prophet, now intent on reducing a cowed Europe to vassal status. As an analysis of contemporary European history, this is flat-out barking gibberish, which falls somewhere between hyper-Zionist propaganda,

crude conspiracy theory and delirious fantasy. In order to accept Ye'or's ridiculous thesis, it is necessary to believe not only in the existence of a concerted Islamic plot to subjugate Europe, involving all Arab governments, whether 'Islamic' or not, but also to credit a secret and unelected parliamentary body with the astounding ability to transform all Europe's major political, economic and cultural institutions into subservient instruments of 'jihad' without any of the continent's press or elected institutions being aware of it. Nowhere in this ideologically driven interpretation of European-Arab relations does Ye'or come close to proving the 'secret history' that she professes to reveal.

At one point, she cites European scientific and economic assistance to Iraq during the 1980s as an example of the corrupt alliance between European greed and Islamic 'jihad'. Ye'or fails to mention that similar assistance was given to Iraq by the US government and US businesses in the same period. Nor does she address the strong links between the US and a number of Arab regimes, including Saudi Arabia and Egypt, or the US sponsorship of the anti-Soviet jihad in Afghanistan. According to Ye'or's spurious reformulation of 'dhimmitude', these alliances might indicate that the US also suffered from the same submissive 'dhimmi' mentality that had brought about Europe's cultural suicide. But such inconvenient facts would interfere with her depiction of Eurabia as a joint European-Arab project which aims to destroy America and Israel, so she ignores them altogether. Nor does Ye'or explain why, if the EU was so in thrall to 'the Arabs' and the Muslim communities in its midst, it singularly failed to come to the aid of Bosnian Muslims during the Balkan wars, at a time when countries across the Islamic world were clamouring for action. On the contrary, throughout much of this period, as the Dutch government report into the Srebrenica massacre later revealed, it was the US rather than the EU that favoured the Bosnian Muslims, however inconsistently, by allowing and in some cases directly facilitating shipments of arms to the Bosnians and Croats in breach of the EU's weapons embargo.

An insight into Ye'or's own sentiments regarding these events was contained in a 1994 interview, in which she compared the Balkan wars to the 'wars of liberation of the Christian dhimmis' and explicitly described the Serbs as 'the continuation of the many rebellions over the centuries by Serbian resistance-movements'.¹⁶ At a time when Bosnian Muslims were being killed, raped and deported in their tens of thousands, Ye'or's major anxiety was that any future Muslim states in the Balkans might become 'points of attraction for immigrants, who by obtaining a European nationality, will then be able to circulate freely in Europe'.

Eurabia and the war on terror

Stripped of its Islamic content, the broad contours of Ye'or's preposterous thesis recall the anti-Semitic conspiracy theories of the first half of the twentieth century and contemporary notions of the 'Zionist Occupation Government' prevalent in far-right circles in the US. Yet her book has been well received, not only by established heralds of the Islamic threat, such as Melanie Phillips, Daniel Pipes and Oriana Fallaci, but by respected historians such as Niall Ferguson and Churchill's biographer Martin Gilbert, who, whatever their political views, might at least be expected to recognise the absence of historical discipline or methodology when they see it. Nevertheless, Ferguson has called Ye'or 'prophetic' while Gilbert hailed *Eurabia: the Euro-Arab axis* as further evidence that 'the European idea is being subverted by Islamic hostility to the very ethics and values of Europe itself'.

Such plaudits suggest a visceral appeal to the idea of an Islamicised Europe that transcends objective assessment. What does the popularity of Eurabia in this circle reveal and what ideological function does it serve? On the one hand, Eurabia is a paranoid fantasy, which recalls the way that 'international communism' was perceived during the cold war. But, like the communist threat, it is also a politically convenient fantasy, particularly in the US, where Bat Ye'or's theses have been well-received by the advocates of 'permanent war' against 'militant Islam'. One of Ye'or's most fervent admirers is Robert Spencer, the author of a number of hostile books on Islam, jihad and terrorism, which purport to reveal the 'disturbing questions' and hidden 'truth' about a religion that he clearly detests. Spencer is one of a number of dubious 'experts' on Islam who have emerged in the US in recent years or found influential spaces in conservative US institutions and thinktanks. For example, Bat Ye'or's protégé Andrew Bostom, a doctor of epidemiology, is the author of *The Legacy of Jihad* and Serge Trifkovic, the author of *Sword of the Prophet: the politically incorrect guide to Islam* and a former supporter of the Bosnian Serbs, has claimed, among other things, that the figure of 250,000 Muslims killed in the Balkan wars should be lowered to 2,500 and that the Srebrenica massacre was 'self-inflicted'. As the titles of their books suggest, these writers share a similar perspective on Islam, the essential characteristics of which were summed up by Bostom under the acronym 'MPED' – massacre, pillage, enslavement and deportation.

Spencer belongs to the same school of Islamic studies. In addition to his books, television appearances and frequent articles for David Horowitz's rabidly conservative *Frontpage* magazine, he is the editor of two websites, 'DhimmiWatch' and 'Jihadwatch', which claim to reveal 'the concerted effort by Islamic jihadists, the motives and goals of whom are largely ignored by the Western media, to destroy the West

and bring it forcibly into the Islamic world'. Spencer is also an adjunct fellow of the Free Congress Foundation (FCF), another of the conservative US thinktanks, such as George Weigel's Puebla Institute, which helped shape US foreign policy in the Reagan years and have since found a new niche in the war on terror. A sister organisation to the more well-known thinktank the Heritage Institute, the FCF has maintained long-term links with Laszlo Pasztor, a former Hungarian collaborator with the Nazis and a close associate of Paul Weyrich, the FCF's chairman and one of the most influential activists on the Christian Right. During the cold war, the FCF was linked to the Pinochet regime in Chile, the Contras and the murderous Renamo organisation in Mozambique. Today, the FCF describes itself as a protagonist in the 'culture war' which aims at preserving America's 'Judeo-Christian heritage' from the 'long slide into the cultural and moral decay of political correctness'.

These ideological underpinnings are evident in Spencer's depiction of the global 'war' against the 'warriors of jihad' and his endorsement of Ye'or's Eurabia fantasy. In a 2004 article for *Frontpage* magazine on the Madrid bombings, entitled 'The rise of Eurabia', Spencer saw the atrocities and their aftermath as further proof that Europe had 'turned its back on its Judeo-Christian heritage and set the stage for its own Islamization'.¹⁷ In Spencer's estimation, the Spanish electorate's rejection of the pro-US Aznar government was not a punishment for its political dishonesty in attributing the attacks to Basque separatists but a 'spectacular act of appeasement' that had paved the way for the future reconstitution of Muslim Spain. Such lily-livered and ultimately suicidal behaviour was only to be expected from a continent that had been 'selling its soul for decades' in exchange for Arab oil, while colluding with 'the blood of countless Iraqis and others who had to suffer under the heel of tyrants with whom Europe happily did business'.

Spencer might have mentioned that the US had also done business with Iraq and other Middle Eastern 'tyrants' but, like Ye'or, he is not a writer to allow inconvenient facts to interfere with his depiction of a doomed and pusillanimous Europe drifting into the arms of Islam. It is not difficult to see why this presentation of Europe might appeal to American proponents of the 'fourth world war', which many of them regard as inevitable – a war which always carries broader implications of civilisational confrontation. On the one hand, the notion of an Islamic plot to subjugate Europe is part of the creation of the 'Muslim enemy' without which the state of permanent war advocated by foreign policy hawks would have no justification. At the same time, the depiction of a corrupt European political class secretly colluding with Islam is a variant on the neocon notion of 'Old Europe', whose supposed appeasement of terrorism contrasts with the 'moral clarity'

emanating from the US. Last but not least, Eurabia also serves to legitimise the broader neocon social and economic agenda, since Europe's coming demise is partly perceived to be the result of an ageing European population's fatal addiction to an 'unsustainable' social model based on high pensions, early retirement and social security benefits. According to the arguments put forward by Steyn, Ferguson and others, these doddering Europeans need to sustain high levels of immigration in order to continue living in this economic fool's paradise, which only brings the era of barbarism closer, since the majority of immigrants come from neighbouring Muslim countries.

If Eurabia has become the front line in the unfolding 'clash of civilisations', the prospect of Europe's cultural disintegration also serves as a warning to the US. The Harvard political scientist Samuel Huntington has warned, in *Who Are We? The challenges to America's national identity*, of the potential threat to America's 'Christian, Anglo-centric' identity posed by the 'Mexicanization' of the population. Another strong critic of multiculturalism, Huntington sees 'the mixing of races and hence culture' as 'the road to national degeneration'. Proponents of Eurabia have similarly cited the Islamic 'threat' to Europe as evidence that multiculturalism has not only failed but that it has paved the way for Europe's cultural suicide, since Muslims are temperamentally and theologically incapable of coexistence with a 'secular' European society based on tolerance and respect for cultural diversity. In a speech in New York in November 2005, Oriana Fallaci described European civilisation as a 'spent force – the end of a cigarette' and explained how: 'Today's Islamic expansionism . . . does not need the armies and fleets with which the Ottoman Empire once terrorized Europe. It only needs the immigrants, whom short-sighted politicians and befuddled multiculturalists continue to welcome.'¹⁸ If such trends continued, Fallaci claimed, Europeans would ultimately become minorities on their own continent, confined to the 'reservations' allotted to them by their Muslim overlords.

The fear of cultural and racial extinction has a long pedigree in European history, which can be traced back to the racial Darwinism of the nineteenth century, articulated by writers such as Count Joseph-Arthur de Gobineau, who argued that only races that maintained their racial purity would survive. Then, as now, racial and cultural integrity were often perceived to be threatened on both sides of the Atlantic by mass immigration, particularly immigration by Jews. As Abdal Hakim Murad has observed of Victorian Britain, Jews were often regarded as 'an alien, Oriental intrusion into white, Christian lands, a Semitic people whose loyalty to its own law would always render its loyalty to King and Country dubious' and whose ultimate aim was always 'to subvert, dominate and possess'.¹⁹

The new culture wars

Eurabia is a variant on the same tradition. At the same time, the spectre of a new Islamic invasion echoes an older confrontation with the 'Moor' and the 'dreadful Turk' that has haunted the European imagination ever since the Muslim conquests of the seventh century. Like Ye'or, proponents of the Eurabian nightmare tend to marginalise or discount completely the Islamic contribution to 'European' civilisation, presenting Islam as an alien and hostile presence, eternally committed to expanding the 'Dar al Islam', the zone of Islam, at the expense of the 'Dar al Harb', the zone of hostility, through force of arms. Thus Anthony Browne explains in an article in the *Spectator*, entitled 'The triumph of the East', that: 'Islam really does want to conquer the world. That's because Muslims, unlike many Christians, actually believe they are right, and that their religion is the path to salvation for all.'²⁰ In another doomsday article in the *Spectator* on 'The collapse of the West', Melanie Phillips defines the same unbridgeable gulf between the West and the Islamic barbarians:

Muslims not only despise western secular values as decadent, materialistic, corrupt and immoral. They do not accept the distinction between the spiritual and the temporal, the division which in Christian societies confines religion to the margins of everyday life. Instead, for Muslims the whole of human life must represent a submission to God. This means that they feel a duty to Islamicise the values of the surrounding culture.²¹

Such reductionist stereotypes are crucial to the Eurabian imagination. These assumptions tend to evoke a generalised image of an 'Islam' as a hermetically sealed monolithic cultural bloc, whose adherents are theologically incapable of coexistence with other cultures or religions, either as minorities or majorities. In France, Muslim residents come from more than fifty-three countries and speak some twenty-one languages. According to various surveys, between 12 and 30 per cent of French Muslims do not even go to a mosque, while a 2004 poll found that 68 per cent regarded the separation of religion and state as 'important' and 93 per cent felt the same about republican values.²² Other surveys reveal a similarly variegated picture of Muslim communities in other European countries. In the Netherlands, which is often cited by Eurabian exponents as the front line in the European 'clash of civilisations', a 2005 study carried out on behalf of the Hague parliament found that only 1 per cent of Dutch residents of Moroccan background and 7 per cent of Turkish immigrants were even registered at the Netherlands' more than three hundred mosques.²³ The same study found that a majority of Dutch Muslims favoured a clear distinction

between religion and politics and predicted a growing tendency towards secularisation and individualisation of religious belief.

All this suggests a more complex picture than the Eurabian image of a homogenous Muslim bloc obliged by scripture to expand the Dar al-Islam. This is not to deny that there are extremist Muslim groups that do have this aspiration, such as the British group Al-Muhajiroun, which announced at a London press conference in January 2004 that: 'Jihad is spreading like wildfire. Constantinople has fallen, Rome is still to come.'²⁴ But there is no convincing evidence that such groups enjoy a wide constituency. In France, for example, the director-general of the intelligence services Pascal Mailhos claimed that, out of 200,000 practising Muslims in France, only 5,000 belonged to fundamentalist Salafist groups, of whom only one in four had any involvement with 'radical Islam'.²⁵ The reformist Islamic scholar Tariq Ramadan has similarly claimed that such 'political and literalist' Salafist groups represent less than 0.5 per cent of European Muslims.²⁶

In recent years, Ramadan has become one of the most prominent and articulate proponents of a new identity for European Muslims, based on the recognition that Muslims have become a permanent presence in Europe. Among other things, Ramadan has called for a reformulation of the whole concept of the Dar al-Harb, claiming that such an anachronistic 'binary' framework is inadequate to explain the situation of contemporary Muslims living in a non-Islamic Europe. The grand mufti of Marseilles, Soheib Bensheikh, has similarly criticised the 'flagrant anachronism separating religious thought and Muslims' real life experience', claiming that 'reform of Islam has to begin with an urgent desacralization of the whole of Islam's texts, commentaries, and the theological work around the texts'.²⁷

There are also militant 'Arab pride' organisations such as the Belgium-based Arab European League (AEL), modelled on the American civil rights movement and the Black Panthers, whose leader Dyab Abou Jahjah has condemned advocates of Muslim integration as 'Uncle Toms' while nevertheless maintaining: 'We're a civil rights movement, not a club of fundamentalist fanatics who want to blow things up'.²⁸ In France, there were Muslims who supported the French government's ban on headscarves and those who opposed it. There are feminist organisations such as Ni Putes Ni Soumises (Neither Whore Nor Submissive), formed in the French *banlieues* to protest the practice of gang rapes known as *tournantes*. There are French rap groups influenced by African-American ghetto culture, such as Ideal J, a French-Haitian Muslim convert who accused the September 11 attackers of 'dishonouring the faith'.

Such voices reflect a wider ongoing debate within different European Muslim communities regarding a range of questions, from the relationship between Islam and the state, to attitudes towards terrorism,

culture and the role of women. All these nuances tend to be ignored in the Eurabian presentation of an alien and hostile Islamic culture at the heart of the metropolis, secretly conspiring to subjugate the continent. The spectre of Eurabia draws its force by presenting marginal figures such as Mohammed Bouyeri, the killer of Theo van Gogh, or Britain's al-Muhajiroun as 'representative' of an entire set of cultural or religious values. In this way, Eurabians shape a particular version of 'Islam', which blurs or ignores the distinctions between Islam and Islamism, between violent and non-violent forms of Islamism, between Muslim as an ethnic category and Muslim as a statement of faith, between immigrant, terrorist and refugee.

In all these depictions, 'Islam' is invariably presented as the negative antithesis of quintessentially 'European' values such as tolerance, secularism and gender equality. By presenting such values as immutable and essential qualities belonging to one culture or the other, cultural difference becomes a mark of superiority or inferiority, modernity or backwardness. As one Dutch politician asked after the murder of Pim Fortuyn by a Dutch animal rights activist: 'Why are we afraid to tell Muslims to adapt to us, simply because our values and norms represent a higher level of civilization?' This notion of an irreconcilable conflict between superior and inferior cultures is intrinsic to the Eurabian critique of multiculturalism, with its argument that political correctness and excessive liberal tolerance of reactionary 'Islamic' cultural practices have paved the way for Europe's cultural disintegration. One of the most prominent advocates of this thesis is the gay Christian writer Bruce Bawer, a literary critic based in Norway, who has accused Europe of 'tolerating intolerance' by supposedly pandering to the cultural 'separatism' of men like Khalil al-Moumni, the imam of the al-Nasr Mosque in Rotterdam, who described homosexuality as a 'contagious disease which threatens humanity with extinction' and described Europeans as 'lower than pigs and dogs for tolerating this disease'.

It is one thing to recognise that such reactionary tendencies exist within some Islamic communities in Europe. It is another to assume, as Bawer does, that such figures represent a broader threat to European civilisation and the possible loss of 'the freedom, tolerance, and respect for individual mind and conscience on which Western civilization is founded'.²⁹ Such beliefs have generated an intellectual consensus that might once have seemed outlandish before the emergence of the 'Islamic threat'. In Britain, the British National Party (BNP) leader Nick Griffin has similarly warned of the challenge posed by Islam to Europe's 'fundamental values' at his recent trial for inciting racial hatred. Griffin's defence was steeped in Eurabian concepts, from his evocation of Britain's 'post-Christian society' to his insistence on the Qur'an's 'incompatibility with British democracy' and his prediction that Britain would be forced 'within decades' to chose between whether

it wanted to remain a democratic secular society or become an Islamic republic. In Antwerp, according to the *New York Times*, 5 per cent of the Jewish population voted in municipal elections in 2005 for the Vlaams Belang party, which was formed by ex-members of the neo-fascist Vlaams Blok after its banning by the Belgian High Court in 2004 for promoting racism.³⁰ The Vlaams Blok had originally been formed by Belgian Nazi collaborators. Yet the Vlaams Belang leader Filip Dewinter has actively courted Jewish and Israeli support, telling the liberal Israeli newspaper *Ha'aretz* that: 'After communism, the greatest threat to the West is radical fundamentalist Islam. There are already 25–30 million Muslims on Europe's soil and this becomes a threat. It's a real Trojan horse.'³¹

There is some irony in the ideological heir of Nazi collaborators celebrating Europe's common 'Judeo-Christian' heritage to a liberal Israeli newspaper in his evocation of the Islamic menace to civilisation but such ironies are increasingly commonplace in the Eurabian consensus. In many parts of Europe, Muslim communities live precarious, besieged existences but the Eurabian nightmare reverses these dynamics, in order to present the dominant 'Christian' or 'secular' culture as under siege, not just by the Muslim minorities that actually exist but by the hypothetical majorities of the future that will subject the rest of Europe to servile dhimmitude. Once this perspective is accepted, it becomes possible to view the French housing projects and the 'mill and mosque' northern English towns not as zones of social deprivation and exclusion, but as outposts of barbarism and potential launching pads for jihadist 'fifth columns' that will sooner or later engulf the countries in which they have become 'implanted'.

The demographic 'time bomb'

One of the key components of the Eurabian fantasy is the notion that Europe is caught in an inexorable process of demographic decline, from which the Muslim world is poised to benefit. In the *Daily Telegraph* in January 2006, Niall Ferguson returned to the demographic theme in an article in which he imagined how the historians of the future would view a 'devastating nuclear exchange' between unnamed countries and Iran in August 2007. In Ferguson's 'what if?' scenario, the historians of the future would find one of the main causes of this catastrophe in a demographic imbalance between the 'slothful senescence of Europe' and the 'youthful energy' of Islamic societies, particularly Iran, where various factors had combined to produce 'a quite extraordinary surplus of young men' following the Iran-Iraq war. These soaring fertility rates in the Muslim world were matched by 'a wave of religious fervour, the very opposite of the process of secularisation that was emptying Europe's churches'.³²

Though Ferguson's piece was intended to bolster support for strong action against Iran, it was steeped in Eurabian concepts, with its fearful insistence that rampant breeding amongst the Islamic barbarians leads automatically to 'religious fervour' then nuclear war, thanks to the indolence of a senile post-Christian Europe. Demographics is a notoriously inexact science, whose fluctuations are often dependent on a variety of unpredictable variables, such as lifestyle, economic growth, cultural changes, education on family planning and so on. In 2000, for example, the United Nations revised its population forecasts for the Middle East and the Maghreb in 2025, downwards from a previous estimate of 679 million to 640 million.³³ Eurabian prophets of doom not only tend to present their population estimates as more inevitable than they actually are but their demographic prognoses sometimes border on the hallucinatory. The worst-case Eurabian scenarios predict that the Muslim population of Europe will have reached 40 per cent by 2025. Given that the current European population is approximately 450 million, with a total Muslim population of approximately 15 million, such expansion from 3 per cent to 40 per cent within twenty years would be nothing short of miraculous. Even if Turkey was integrated into the EU, the proportional impact of 68 million Muslims would be reduced by the forthcoming inclusion of 'Christian' nations such as Romania and Bulgaria. In Italy, there are approximately 1 million Muslims in a population of 57 million. In France, which has the largest Muslim population in Europe, there are between 5 and 7 million Muslims in a population of 60 million.

Barring an unexpected natural catastrophe, such as a bird flu pandemic, which would presumably kill Muslims, Christians and post-Christians alike, it is difficult to see how the Eurabian demographic nightmare can occur even by the end of the century. Nor is the difference in fertility rates between Europe and the Middle East or the Maghreb as wide as it appears. According to the *CIA World Fact Book* in 2005, the fertility rate in Algeria was 1.92, compared with 1.85 in France. In Turkey, Lebanon, Tunisia and Iran, figures were barely above replacement rates.

All these demographic scenarios take it for granted that the fertility 'imbalance' they predict will translate directly into cultural and political advantage for the Islamic hordes in the Middle East and the Maghreb, where fecundity is supposedly matched by religious fervour that will sweep away the last vestiges of 'post-Christian Europe'. Once again, such fears are not entirely new. In 1923 Lothrop Stoddard, the president of the American Birth Control League, described in *The New World of Islam* the 'mighty forces' represented by 'the 250,000,000 followers of the Prophet from Morocco to China and from Turkestan to the Congo'. Stoddard attributed 'the quick breeding tendencies of Oriental peoples . . . not merely to strong sexual appetites

but . . . perhaps even more to religious doctrines enjoining early marriage and the begetting of numerous sons'. The most likely consequence of this 'ethnic fusion' between East and West, in Stoddard's opinion, would be 'a dreary mongrelization from which would issue nothing but degeneration and decay'.³⁴ In 1949, the British Royal Commission on Population similarly worried that the rate of fertility increase among 'the peoples of Western civilization' had 'markedly declined while that of Oriental peoples has markedly accelerated'.³⁵

The 'demographic time bomb' at the heart of the Eurabian nightmare is fuelled by similar anxieties, even if its exponents tend to explain the looming threat in terms of an inevitable clash of incompatible cultural or religious values, rather than ethnic or racial 'mongrelization'. The prophets of Europe's coming downfall tend to deny any racial implications to their Islamic threat narratives, preferring to present the looming confrontation in cultural terms, but the endless references to the 'East' and Europe's Muslim 'neighbours' reveal a different sub-text. Nick Griffin similarly rejected accusations of racism, claiming at his trial that he condemned the 'vicious, wicked faith' of Islam itself and the 'religion and the culture it sets up' rather than Muslims or Asians. Other proponents of the Eurabian nightmare have made similar claims, albeit with more intellectual sophistication, restricting their critique to 'militant Islam' rather than Islam itself.

Griffin's idea that it is possible to despise a set of religious and cultural beliefs in their entirety without despising the people who uphold them need not detain us long. What is striking about the BNP leader's arguments is the way that they draw on concepts and assumptions held by so many proponents of the Eurabian nightmare, even those who would disclaim any ideological connection to the BNP. There is, in fact, very little of Griffin's critique of Islam that would be out of place in the writings of Bat Ye'or, Spencer et al, let alone Oriana Fallaci's depictions of Europe with its 'leftist-controlled municipalities where police stand idly by while Muslim hooligans demonstrate their contempt for European society and culture by urinating and otherwise desecrating churches'.³⁶

In case there were any doubt about what Fallaci means by 'Muslims', her depiction of Florence overrun by 'the Albanians, the Sudanese, the Bengalese, the Tunisians, the Egyptians, the Algerians, the Pakistanis, the Nigerians who fervidly contribute to the commerce of drugs' leaves little room for ambiguity.³⁷ For Fallaci, the former anti-fascist resistance fighter and the grand dame of Eurabian discourse, the presence of such people in Europe is not only a threat to European civilisation but a defilement that has paved the way for an invasion of: 'Terrorists, thieves, rapists. Ex-convicts, prostitutes, beggars. Drug-dealers, contagiously ill.'³⁸

There is no doubt that the attacks in New York, Madrid, London and elsewhere have helped to foster a climate in which Eurabian fantasies can flourish but these interwoven narratives of cultural, racial and theological pollution have antecedents in western discourse that existed long before al-Qaida and the war on terror. Already the advocates of permanent war in the United States are beginning to identify new barbarians on the European horizon. Thus Tony Corn, a political analyst at the US Foreign Service Institute, in an article for the prestigious conservative thinktank the Hoover Institution, warned of a dangerous ‘congruence’ between China and the Islamic groups engaging in ‘fourth generation warfare’. Corn praised Ye’or’s *Eurabia* for ‘shedding light on this little-known aspect of the EU’s Common Foreign and Security Policy’, claiming that ‘what began as an intercivilizational “Dialogue” has resulted not so much in the Europeanization of the Arab Mind as in the creeping Islamization of the European Mind’.

One of the consequences of this process, according to Corn, was that the ‘Sino-Islamic connection has been largely ignored by European elites too busy indulging in anti-American posturing’.³⁹ Corn offered no evidence to prove any of these assertions but, in the parallel intellectual universe of Eurabia, the suspension of disbelief makes anything possible and this ‘Sino-Islamic connection’ may well herald a new chapter in Eurabian discourse with overtones of the nineteenth century ‘Yellow Peril’. According to the Office for National Statistics, the non-white population in Britain declined by 0.1 per cent in 2005, while the Chinese population grew by 11 per cent as a result of immigration. Such figures suggest that it may not be long before US foreign policy hawks announce a new threat to European ‘values’ posed by the alien representatives of a hermetically sealed Confucian culture, incapable of integration or assimilation and intent on absorbing the remnants of Eurabia into another empire from the East.

What solutions do the Eurabians propose for the nightmare they have described? Most Eurabian prognoses tend towards pessimism and resignation regarding Europe’s fate. For Niall Ferguson, Europe is engaged in a terminal ‘dance of death’ which cannot be stopped. The academic and counter-terrorist guardian of the American campus, Daniel Pipes, is similarly downbeat about the ability of ‘a diminishing European population’ to retain its ‘historic culture’ and withstand the ‘giant smuggling rings and human waves cascading over fortified positions’ such as the Spanish border outposts of Ceuta and Melilla. Commenting on the Moroccan government’s forcible removal of hundreds of African migrants to the Sahara desert in October 2005, Pipes notes that ‘the removal was done with some brutality’. Nevertheless this ‘signal was received’ since some of the migrants reportedly announced that they would not try to enter Europe again. Such incidents

lead Pipes to conclude that it is only a 'matter of time' before other European countries similarly 'resort to military force' – a prospect that he appears to regard with equanimity.⁴⁰

Other Eurabian proponents have called for the spiritual revitalisation of Europe. Michael Germano, writing in the Christian journal *Perspectives*, has prevailed on the papacy to save 'what is left of Christian Europe from an undeclared war they call Jihad'.⁴¹ A November 2004 *Newsweek* article entitled 'The new crusade' similarly depicted a secularised Europe where 'the religious vigor of many of Europe's 30 million-odd Muslims stands in marked contrast to the apathy of the Christian flock'. *Newsweek* saw hopeful signs of renewed Christian vigour in the revival of conservative Catholicism in the European parliament and the inclusion of Article 51 in the EU constitution, which allows churches to maintain 'open, transparent and regular dialogue' with the European Union. These developments, according to Jean-Paul Willaume, a Sorbonne-based author, were due to Islam, which had 'reactivated the public presence of the Christian churches' and brought about 'a new religious configuration' in Europe.⁴²

Even the self-professed atheist Fallaci called upon the incoming Pope last year to ensure that the Church did not miss its 'appointment with history' in the face of the Islamic threat. More 'secular' proponents of Eurabia, such as Melanie Phillips, have called for an aggressive reassertion of 'core liberal values', a process which, in Phillips' view, requires that society 'must end the ruinous doctrine of multiculturalism and reassert British identity and British values – and insist that although Muslims are a valued minority, they must abide by majority rules'.⁴³ Bruce Bawer has similarly declared that Muslim immigrants 'should be comprehensively educated in the ways of democracy, they must learn – no small order – to think for themselves, to read critically, to question'.⁴⁴

Like Bawer, proponents of this policy of aggressive assimilation are generally in agreement that Muslims who fail to conform to the standards expected of them should be deported from Europe or refused entry in the first place. To some extent, these policies are already being pursued in various European countries. In the climate of the war on terror, the notion of 'alien' cultural allegiances overlaps with notions of loyalty and national security, so that the cultural and religious values of Muslim immigrants are deemed to indicate not just their willingness to integrate but their loyalty to the state. Both the Italian and the French governments have declared themselves in favour of a domesticated Islam, purged of 'foreign influences'.⁴⁵ In the German state of Baden-Württemberg, suspect Muslim immigrants are now obliged to answer an official questionnaire to determine their 'internal attitude to the constitution' in order to qualify for a passport. This 'internal attitude' is determined by a range of questions covering

issues such as the interviewee's attitude to homosexuality and the 'free democratic basic order' in Germany.

To the hardcore proponents of Eurabia, any attempts at integration, assimilation and liberal 'reassertion' are as doomed to failure as the multiculturalist policies that preceded them. According to Hugh Fitzgerald, the deputy director of Spencer's Dhimmiwatch website:

Europeans are now coming out of a deep dream of peace. There is no peace. They have done something tremendously stupid, and more than stupid, by allowing in people who bear in their mental luggage something inimical to Western ways, who are hostile to Western political and social understandings, and who – save for a few who will leave Islam altogether – cannot be integrated.⁴⁶

In other words, the only way that Muslims can cease to be a threat is to cease to be Muslims at all.

The potential consequences of this confrontation are disastrous. In the sixteenth century, less than a century after the conquest of Granada and the fall of Muslim Spain, the Spanish crown took the decision to expel the remaining Muslims from Christian territory. The mass expulsion of the 'moriscos' or 'little Moors' followed the deportation of the Jews more than a century before and was seen as a resolution to the Islamic 'fifth column' in the heart of Christian Spain. Such episodes are rarely mentioned in the selective evocation of the past that is so integral to Eurabian discourse. That is one possible future. Another possibility is the notion of *convivencia* (coexistence) that characterised the golden age of Muslim rule in Spain, whose essence was depicted by Ibn Arabi (1165–1240), the great Sufi poet of al-Andalus, who wrote:

My heart has adopted every shape; it has become a pasture for gazelles
And a convent for Christian monks,
A temple for idols and a pilgrim's Kabah, the tables of a Torah and
the pages of a Qur'an.

There are many obstacles to the creation of such a European space, not the least of which is the relentless depiction of European Muslims as representatives of a terminally backward and retrograde culture that can only be cured through aggressive Europeanisation. Tariq Ramadan has called for a European future based on 'mutual respect' and the recognition that the Muslim presence in Europe is a 'source of enrichment' which can make a 'positive contribution in building a new Europe'.⁴⁷ Such a project may seem utopian in the present polarised climate but it remains an infinitely preferable alternative to the dark fantasy world of Eurabia, with its self-fulfilling prophecy of the 'clash of civilisations'.

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