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## **Militant Democracy and the Clash of Ideologies**

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# THE OPEN SOCIETY

## AND ITS CLOSED COMMUNITIES

Afshin Ellian & Paul Cliteur (eds.)

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Ellian & Cliteur (eds.)



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## The Open Society and Its Closed Communities

# THE OPEN SOCIETY AND ITS CLOSED COMMUNITIES

AFSHIN ELLIAN AND PAUL CLITEUR (EDS.)

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>vii</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>xi</b>
<b>Theory</b>	
<b>1      The Open Society and Its Closed Communities</b>	<b>3</b>
<i>Prof. dr. Afshin Ellian</i>	
<b>Challenge 1: Religion</b>	
<b>2      State Complicity and Religious Extremism: Failing the Vulnerable Individual</b>	<b>47</b>
<i>Prof. dr. Amos N. Guiora</i>	
<b>3      The Open Society and Its Closed Communities: The Case of Muslims in Britain</b>	<b>85</b>
<i>Dr. Romy Hasan</i>	
<b>4      Militant Democracy and the Clash of Ideologies</b>	<b>109</b>
<i>Prof. dr. Paul Cliteur</i>	
<b>Challenges II: Education, Online Communities and Identity Politics</b>	
<b>5      Citizenship and Education: Finding Confidence and Light</b>	<b>149</b>
<i>Prof. dr. Jan Willem Sap</i>	
<b>6      Closed Online Communities and Freedom of Speech</b>	<b>173</b>
<i>Michael Klos LLM BSc</i>	
<b>7      Intervention – Academic Freedom and Identity Politics</b>	<b>217</b>
<i>Dr. Joanna Williams</i>	
<b>List of Contributors</b>	<b>231</b>

## 4 MILITANT DEMOCRACY AND THE CLASH OF IDEOLOGIES

*Prof. dr. Paul Cliteur*

*The paramount axis of world politics will be the relations between “the West and the Rest”; the elites in some torn non-Western countries will try to make their countries part of the West, but in most cases face major obstacles to accomplishing this; a central focus of conflict for the immediate future will be between the West and several Islamic-Confucian states.*

*This is not to advocate the desirability of conflicts between civilizations. It is to set forth descriptive hypotheses as to what the future may be like.*

*Samuel Huntington<sup>1</sup>*

### INTRODUCTION

In 1989 the American political scientist Francis Fukuyama (b. 1952) published a much-discussed essay under the title ‘The End of History’.<sup>2</sup> Fukuyama proclaimed that the conflict between ideologies had ended and that one of the ideologies had overcome all others, viz., liberal democracy. The ‘liberal democracy’ model is said to have marginalized the attractiveness of communism, fascism, national-socialism and other ideologies. The Western idea had triumphed. ‘History’ had come to an end.

Fukuyama’s essay was met with fierce criticism, but in my view the largest part of that criticism could not hold up.<sup>3</sup> The reason is that for the largest part the critiques were ‘moralistic’: people did not ask whether what Fukuyama stated was ‘true’, but if it was ‘desirable’.

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1 S. Huntington, “The Clash of Civilizations?”, *Foreign Affairs*, Summer 1993, p. 48.

2 F. Fukuyama, “The End of History?”, *The National Interest*, No. 16, Summer 1989, pp. 3-18, also in: P. Schumaker, D. C. Kiel, and T. W. Heilke, eds., *Ideological Voices. An Anthology in Modern Political Ideas*, The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc., New York etc., 1997, pp. 409-417.

3 See: “Responses to Fukuyama”, *The National Interest*, No. 16, Summer 1989, pp. 19-35; “More Responses to Fukuyama”, *The National Interest*, No. 17, Fall 1989, pp. 93-100; F. Fukuyama, “A Reply to My Critics”, *The National Interest*, No. 18, Winter 1989, pp. 21-28.

The main objection held against Fukuyama was this: what he said is so annoying. The things he said could not be true, because it would be so annoying if it were true. The West had triumphed? Liberal democracy superior to other forms of society? One may think such a thing, but definitely not say it.<sup>4</sup> And in a truly politically correct utopia one may not even think it. Fukuyama was accused of 'triumphalism'. And in a mental climate of cultural relativism where all cultures are thought to be the same, this was a mortal sin.<sup>5</sup>

Nonetheless, his thesis did have a certain power of persuasion, at least at the time it was launched: 1989. The Berlin Wall had yet to fall, but this was to follow shortly after. Was this not convincing evidence of the accuracy of his position that liberal democracy and even capitalism had proven to be superior to totalitarian communism and the planned economy?

#### FUKUYAMA'S MISTAKE

Yet, Fukuyama had missed one thing completely. In 1989 it had been a decade since the Iranian Revolution took place.<sup>6</sup> So in 1989, a regime far from liberal, far from democratic and far from capitalistic had been standing firm for ten years. The regime that was put in charge in Iran in 1979 was a theocracy, exactly like the Islamic fundamentalists had wanted and liberals dreaded.

How could this success of religious fundamentalism (after ten years one can call this a success indeed) be explained in the light of Fukuyama's proclamation of the triumph of the liberal democracy and what has been dubbed 'the Western idea'?

It may be right that the Iranian Revolution had not been imitated elsewhere in the sense that other countries in the region had succumbed to Islamic revolutions,<sup>7</sup> but one could hardly say that Western ideology did not encounter challengers, as Fukuyama claimed.<sup>8</sup>

4 Although some thinkers do, of course. See: I. Warraq, *Why the West is Best: A Muslim's Apostate's Defense of Liberal Democracy*, Encounter Books, New York, London, 2012.

5 This dogma was jibed at in: M. Steyn, *America Alone: The End of the World as We Know It*, Regnery Publishing, Inc., Washington, DC, 2006.

6 See for an overview: C. Djavann, *À mon corps défendant l'occident*, Flammarion, Paris, 2007; C. Djavann, *Comment lutter efficacement contre l'idéologie islamique*, Grasset, Paris, 2016; A. Taheri, *The Persian Night: Iran under the Khomeinist Revolution*, Encounter Books, New York and London, 2009.

7 Something that made an impression on: G. Kepel, *Jihad: Expansion et déclin de l'Islamisme*, Gallimard, Paris, 2000.

8 Also a new type of challenge in the form of identity politics as Fukuyama himself acknowledges in: F. Fukuyama, *Identity: The Demand for Dignity and the Politics of Resentment*, Profile Books, London, 2018; F. Fukuyama, "Against Identity Politics: The New Tribalism and the Crisis of Democracy", *Foreign Affairs*,

And this challenge seemed to be of an unmistakable ideological nature. Islamic fundamentalism seemed to have taken over the role of the formerly competing perspective of communism. Someone who Fukuyama had labelled in a somewhat condescending manner as the ‘crackpot messiah’ had become an important figure in modern history.<sup>9</sup> How important precisely became clear in that same year 1989 when the Iranian leader Ayatollah Khomeini issued a ‘fatwa’ calling for the assassination of British author Salman Rushdie.

Khomeini took offence to the book *The Satanic Verses* (1988)<sup>10</sup> and decreed in 1989 that the author and his publishers should be brought to death. Exactly what the biblical prophet Elia prescribed what should be done in the valley of Kishon to the prophets of Baal,<sup>11</sup> and what the Israelite Phinehas did to his countrymen when they mixed<sup>12</sup> with women of a foreign tribe.<sup>13</sup> The history of religion is replete with examples of gruesome sanctions against unbelievers, heretics, blasphemers and apostates.<sup>14</sup> But Khomeini’s actions took place in 1989. According to Khomeini, it was the duty of each right-minded Muslim to kill the British novelist. Not only in Iran, but in every place of the world where Rushdie could be caught. This was not only a challenge to free speech, as it is often portrayed, it was a challenge to the whole system of world order based on national sovereignty.<sup>15</sup>

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Vol. 97, 2018, pp. 90-114. The way identity politics mixes with Islamism is analysed by French authors like: Y. Mamou, *Le grand abandon: les élites françaises et l’islamisme, comprendre les 30 dernières années*, L’Artilleur, Paris, 2018; A. Del Valle, *La stratégie de l’intimidation: du terrorisme jihadiste à l’islamiquement correct*, édition revue et corrigé, L’Artilleur, Paris, 2018.

- 9 He writes, *ibid*: “Our task is not to answer the challenges to liberalism promoted by every crackpot messiah around the world exhaustively, but only those that are embodied in important social or political forces and movements, and which are therefore part of world history.”
- 10 S. Rushdie, *The Satanic Verses*, Vintage, London, 2006 (1988).
- 11 What happened in the Rushdie Affair was that a cleric called for vigilante justice, like the prophet Elia did when he exclaimed: “Seize the prophets of Baal. Don’t let anyone get away!” (1 Kings 18: 40).
- 12 ‘Mixed’ is an understatement: the men of Israel had probably sexual intercourse with the foreign women, something which was contrary to God’s commands. See: *Numbers* 25.
- 13 Phinehas witnessed one of the men of Israel bringing a Midianite woman to his tent (*Numbers* 25:6) to engage in illicit religious worship. He did not hesitate. He took his spear and “went after the man of Israel into the chamber and pierced both of them, the man of Israel and the woman through her belly” (*Numbers* 25:8). See on this: P. Cliteur, “Religion and Violence or the Reluctance to Study this Relationship”, *Forum Philosophicum*, Vol. 15, 2010, pp. 205-226; P. Cliteur, “Religion and Violence”, in: A. van de Beek, E.A.J.G. van der Borgh, and B.P. Vermeulen, eds., *Freedom of Religion*, Brill, Leiden/Boston, 2010, pp. 235-251.
- 14 F. H. Amphlett Micklewright, “Blasphemy and the Law”, *Law & Justice The Christian Law Review*, Vol. 60/61, 1979, pp. 20-31; P. Marshall and N. Shea, *Silenced: How Apostasy and Blasphemy Codes are Choking Freedom Worldwide*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2011; A. McGrath, *Heresy: A History of Defending the Truth*, HarperOne, HarperCollins Publishers, New York, 2009; G. Stein, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Unbelief*, Prometheus Books, Buffalo, New York, 1985.
- 15 Fortunately, this claim finds due recognition in: H. Kissinger, *World Order: Reflections on the Character of Nations and the Course of History*, Penguin Books, London, 2014, chapter 3: “Islamism and the Middle East: A World in Disorder”, pp. 96-146.

In this contribution to *The Open society and its closed communities* I hope to show that closed communities, where anti-Enlightenment views flourish, are an existential threat to the open societies we know as 'liberal democracies'. The closed communities are vulnerable in the sense that they are 'open' to influences from radical ideologies as those espoused and promulgated by the late Ayatollah Khomeini.<sup>16</sup> One might speak of 'Khomeinism' as the most appropriate label to identify this ideology favouring the closed community. And 'closed' means in this context: separated from the rest of society. Separated from the nation as a whole.

The French government is at this moment involved in a widescale operation to confront this closedness, an attempt to open the communities to society at large. The Macron administration has introduced a new term for the tendencies they aim to eradicate and speaks of "le séparatisme islamiste".<sup>17</sup> In France, Islamist separatism is considered to be more important and dangerous than other possible causes of social disintegration, because of the recent past of the country with jihadist terrorist attacks in 2015 (*Charlie Hebdo* and Bataclan),<sup>18</sup> but also the murder of the French teacher Samuel Paty in 2020. Reflection on the tension between the open society and its closed communities is therefore especially in France nowadays very interesting to analyse.

I will also try to do this by using an conceptual tool that was developed by the Dutch constitutional scholar George van den Bergh (1890-1966), viz. militant democracy.<sup>19</sup> What we see in France at this moment is a reorientation on the concept of democracy. Democracy is not only majority rule and pluralism, but also the individualist, modernist and Enlightened view that democracy cannot condone its own annihilation by radical anti-democratic forces. This is the reason why I have used more French literature in this contribution than is common in articles for an anglophone audience. So this contribution is certainly not focussed on France alone. I will make this clear by starting with a reflection on the American discussion between Francis Fukuyama and Samuel Huntington, and show why the questions they raised are of such eminent relevance for our topic.

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16 In this sense also: R. Porat, "The Political Legacy of the Iranian Revolution: Theocratic Tyranny and Religious Terrorism", *Future Directions International*, 28 March 2019.

17 E. Macron, "La République en actes: discours du Président de la République sur le thème de la lutte contre les séparatismes", 2 octobre 2020; G. Darmanin, *Le séparatisme islamiste: manifeste pour la laïcité*, Éditions de l'observatoire, Paris, 2021.

18 J. Attali, e.a., *Nous sommes Charlie: 60 Écrivains unis pour la liberté d'expression*, Les Livre de Poche, Paris, 2015; Ph. Val, *C'Était Charlie*, Grasset, Paris, 2015; D. Benhabib, *Après Charlie: laïques de tous les pays, mobilisez-vous!*, H&O éditions, Paris, 2016 ; Zineb, 13: *Raconte l'enfer du 13 novembre, avec 13 témoins au cœur des attaques*, Éditions Ring, Paris, 2016.

19 G. Van den Bergh, "The Democratic State and the Non-Democratic Parties", in: P. Cliteur and A. Guiora, eds., *Populist and Islamist Challenges for International Law*, American Bar Association, Chicago, 2019, pp. 367-391.

In my view this is where a ‘real’ (as opposed to moralistic) critique on Fukuyama’s position should start. Because what did Fukuyama miss? Precisely this point. The meaning of that Iranian Revolution and the meaning of the fatwa on Rushdie were fully ignored by Fukuyama. Not only in his influential essay of 1989, but also in his later work.<sup>20</sup> By using the somewhat funny yet disdainful qualification ‘crackpot messiah’ indicating the new religious leaders that entered the world stage, Fukuyama made clear that he had no clue of the changes that had meanwhile occurred on the international stage. A ‘crackpot messiah’ may be ‘crazy’, but, as we have learned from many examples in world’s history (Hitler could be the most obvious example),<sup>21</sup> a ‘crazy’ person can stir up large masses, not seldom with disastrous consequences.

#### THE FIRST DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FUKUYAMA AND HUNTINGTON: FROM IDEOLOGY TO CIVILIZATION

Merely four years after the publication of Fukuyama’s essay, a competing perspective was presented, which made quite an impression as well.<sup>22</sup> This is the essay written by the political scientist Samuel Huntington (1927-2008) under the title *The Clash of Civilizations* (1993).<sup>23</sup>

Huntington’s approach seems to resemble Fukuyama’s position in many respects. He, too, presented – in a nineteenth-century German tradition – a grand thesis on the course of history. Also, Huntington is, like Fukuyama, a talented writer. And also, Huntington’s work centralizes around the element of struggle between diverging outlooks. But on a number of defining points Huntington’s thesis differs from Fukuyama’s.

First of all, the difference lies in the fact that Huntington focuses on the term ‘civilization’, instead of ideology. In some ways this has made him more vulnerable to the never-ending reproach that one cannot generalize about ‘entire civilizations’. Of course, the argument that one should not generalize about entire civilizations is *prima facie* a rational approach. On the other hand, science cannot refrain from making generalizations. We should never

20 F. Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, The Free Press/Macmillan, New York, 1992; F. Fukuyama, *After the Neocons: America at the Crossroads*, Profile Books, London, 2006.

21 See: S. Haffner, *Defying Hitler: A Memoir*, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London, 2002 (in German: 1939).

22 See: R. Scruton, *The West and the Rest: Globalization and the Terrorist Threat*, Continuum, London/New York, 2002, p. vii: “Samuel Huntington’s celebrated thesis that the Cold War has been succeeded by a ‘clash of civilisations’ has more credibility today than it had in 1993, when it was first put forward.”

23 S. Huntington, “The Clash of Civilizations?”, *Foreign Affairs*, Summer, 1993, pp. 22-49.

forget the wise lesson of Hans Reichenbach (1891-1953) saying: "The essence of knowledge is generalization. And (...) Generalization, therefore, is the origin of science."<sup>24</sup>

Another often heard objection was the 'dynamic' which would be missing if we were to make assumptions about 'entire civilizations'. Civilizations constantly develop, as Huntington's critics held up.

Indeed, civilizations do develop, as do human beings. But why this development in reality should make it impossible for us to pose generalizations is far from clear. Hans Reichenbach again: "The art of discovery is therefore the art of correct generalisation."<sup>25</sup>

#### THE SECOND DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FUKUYAMA AND HUNTINGTON: RECONCILIATION IN SIGHT, YES OR NO?

So far, the difference in terminology. Fukuyama speaks about 'ideologies', Huntington about 'civilizations'. The second difference between Fukuyama and Huntington is more important. While Fukuyama adheres to Hegel (1770-1831) and Karl Marx (1818-1883), Huntington adheres to – without referring to him, though – a nineteenth-century anarchist, J.P. Proudhon (1809-1865). Which means, in this context, that in Huntington's work the conflict, the dialectics, does not end in a higher unity, such as is the case with Hegel, but that this conflict continues to exist, as is the case with Proudhon. Huntington's civilizations clash, and it is not likely that one of them will triumph over the other. They will clash and continue to clash, so to speak. This is not the case for Fukuyama. He was a follower of Marx and Hegel, which means that the ideological antitheses would be solved into a kind of higher synthesis. Fukuyama even made some nostalgic and romantic remarks at the end of his essay, because the world would become a very dull place without the conflict of ideologies. We would all die of boredom.

Nine years after the publication of Huntington's essay 9/11 (2001) took place. Suddenly people were confronted – at least, so it seems – with the stubborn fact that the 'clash-thesis' cannot be written off as an armchair speculation. Contrary to what Fukuyama had claimed at the end of his essay on the end of history, we need not worry about boredom. In fact, it would all become very *exciting*.

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24 H. Reichenbach, *The Rise of Scientific Philosophy*, University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1951, p. 5.

25 *Ibid.*

## CLASH OR END?

One may perhaps call this the ‘Clash or end-discussion’. And the Clash-thesis seems much more convincing than the End-thesis nowadays. Huntington was not the first to use the clash metaphor. The expression ‘Clash of Civilizations’ actually already appeared in the work of American historian Bernard Lewis (b. 1916). In his essay *The Roots of Muslim Rage* (1990), published one year after Fukuyama’s controversial essay, and three years before Huntington’s, Lewis already spoke of a growing frustration which had developed in the Arab world with regard to Western supremacy.<sup>26</sup> Lewis also spoke of a ‘clash’.

Huntington and Lewis’ warnings incurred a lot of dissatisfaction. Without their works being subjected to serious study, they were met with dishonest accusations consisting of distortions of their propositions. In 2001 it was uncomfortable to hear that differences, possibly even unbridgeable differences, were assigned to civilizations. By doing so, it was argued, the thesis of the ‘clash of civilizations’ would become a *self-fulfilling prophecy*. Of course, this is a strange objection against a scientific thesis. A scientist is expected to make tenable and universal (he may generalize, in fact, he must!) assertions on reality. That is his job. If a scientist would allow his statements to be led by political opportunity or moral desirability, then he has committed a serious sin against scientific integrity.

## THE RISE OF ISLAMISM AS A NEW IDEOLOGY

When emotions run high in discussions it might be interesting to find the common denominator which all parties subscribe to and postpone the search for differences. It seems that most authors agree on *one* thing, and that is that in 1989 (and most likely earlier, but at least explicitly since 1989) a new type of ideology manifested itself in the West, when an Islamic leader issued the murder of a British author, thereby completely ignoring prevailing conceptions of national sovereignty.<sup>27</sup> The crucial meaning of that occasion,

26 B. Lewis, “The Roots of Muslim Rage”, *The Atlantic Monthly*, September 1990, also at theatlantic.com and in: B. Lewis, *From Babel to Dragomans: Interpreting the Middle East*, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London, 2004, pp. 319-331. The expression “Clash of Civilizations” is illustrated at p. 327.

27 Though these conceptions also just started to take effect in the West since 1648, with the signing of the peace treaties in Westphalia. That is when the ‘modern state system’ and its national sovereignty developed. Before Westphalia, there was the *Res Publica Christiana*, the Christian community, of which all members were united under the authority of the emperor and the pope. Before 1648, there were also conflicts between the clerical authority of the pope and the worldly authority of the emperor, where for instance the pope urged his subjects to dethrone the monarch. This seems to resemble Ayatollah Khomeini’s intention to become the self-appointed leader of the Muslims, even when those Muslims are living under a jurisdiction other than the Iranian one. See on conflicts between pope and emperor: J. B. Bury, *History of the Papacy in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century*, Edited, with a Memoir, McMillan and Co. Limited, London, 1930. On the Westphalian

and the nature of its underlying ideology is something Fukuyama completely missed in his essay. The nature of that ideology has, according to its acolytes, most certainly something to do with 'Islam', as far as extremists look at Islam as a religion for guidance and giving it a strong political accent. How is religion involved?

Two approaches may be distinguished here. Fukuyama characterizes those as the one connected with the work of the French author Oliver Roy and the other with the work of Gilles Kepel.<sup>28</sup> According to Roy, Jihadism can be interpreted as nihilism.<sup>29</sup> According to Kepel, Jihadism can best be interpreted as a radicalization of a religious position. Roy and Kepel represent opposing positions in the discussion on the role of religion in the contemporary debate on Islamism. So is Jihadism 'radicalization of Islam' (Kepel)? Or is what characterizes the engagement of the youngsters that support ISIS and other jihadist organizations 'the Islamicization of radicalism' (Roy)?<sup>30</sup> Fukuyama tries to take some middle position with: 'today, many Muslims feel identity confusion and have turned to religion as an answer to "Who am I?"'.<sup>31</sup> Fukuyama's answer does not satisfy, I am inclined to think, because even if some people in their identity confusion turn to religion for an answer that presupposes that there is an answer in religion. In other words, the believer must find moorings in the text or in the religious tradition for certain types of behaviour. That implies that Kepel's answer to the matter of radicalization seems to me more convincing than the one presented by Roy and also Fukuyama. What we have to consider are the following three points.

### WHY IS RELIGION INVOLVED?

First of all: religion *motivates* the acts of terrorists. Second: religion is used to *legitimize* the acts of terrorists. Third: (a certain interpretation of) religion is used by terrorists as a *cause that is in need of protection* (if necessary, with violence). This radical interpretation of religion may be characterized with a new name. One may speak of 'radical Islam',

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system see H. Kissinger, *World Order: Reflections on the Character of Nations and the Course of History*, Penguin Books, London, 2014; R. Blackford, "The Rushdie Affair – Lest We Forget", *Free Inquiry*, Vol. 34, No. 4, June/July 2014, pp. 8 and 53.

28 F. Fukuyama, *Identity: The Demand for Dignity and the Politics of Resentment*, Profile Books, London, 2018, pp. 70-71.

29 O. Roy, "Le djihadisme est une révolte nihiliste", in: N. Truong, ed., *Résister à la terreur*, Éditions de l'Aube/Le Monde, Paris, 2016, pp. 65-75.

30 Both authors have written dozens of books. The most appropriate introduction to Kepel's ideas is: G. Kepel, (avec Antoine Jardin), *Terreur dans l'hexagone: Genèse du djihad Français*, Gallimard, Paris, 2015; O. Roy, *L'Islam mondialisé*, Nouvelle édition, Éditions du Seuil, Paris, 2004 (2002).

31 F. Fukuyama, *Identity: The Demand for Dignity and the Politics of Resentment*, Profile Books, London, 2018, p. 72.

‘extremist Islam’, ‘Islamism’, but whatever term one may prefer: the most important thing is the acknowledgement that *there is* such an ideology, a religious ideology, motivating the extremists.<sup>32</sup>

### ISLAMISM, NOT ISLAM

It is essential to emphasize that this contribution is *not* primarily critical of Islam as a religion. What this is all about is about a particular interpretation of Islam as an ideology. This is about Islamism, not about Islam. And the aim of my argument is to make clear that Islamism, unfortunately, is an effective instrument to create closed communities within open societies.

As the French author Robert Redeker (*b.* 1954) pointed out in his notorious<sup>33</sup> contribution to the journal *Le Figaro* in 2006: ‘Comme jadis avec le communisme, l’Occident se retrouve sous surveillance idéologique.’<sup>34</sup>

‘Islamism’ is an ideology which resembles other ‘isms’, such as communism, socialism and liberalism, in the sense that it serves as a political alternative for the dominant Western ideology of ‘liberal democracy’.<sup>35</sup> The meaning of this ideology for the Western world is significant, considering its appeal on young people in Western states which are in a way threatened from the inside by undermining powers.<sup>36</sup> If liberal democracy is to survive, it

32 See on this: B. Collard, “The Origin of the Threat of Islamic Terrorism: An Analysis of Dutch Intelligence Reports from 1991 Until 2018”, in: A. Ellian, G. Molier, and B. Rijpkema, eds., *Terrorism and Counterterrorism after ISIS: Theory, Law and Practice*, Eleven, International Publishing, The Hague, 2020, pp. 193-217. See also T. D. Parker, *Avoiding The Terrorist Trap: Why Respect for Human Rights Is the Key to Defeating Terrorism*, Imperial College Press, London, 2019.

33 After publishing an article on the contemporary problems with Islam in *Le Figaro* on 19 September 2006 Redeker became the target of terrorists’ threats and now, he lives under police protection in Paris. See: R. Redeker, *Il Faut tenter de Vivre*, Seuil, Paris, 2007.

34 R. Redeker, “Face aux intimidations islamistes, que doit faire le monde libre?”, *Le Figaro*, 19 septembre 2006 ; P. Gaubert, *Combattre l’obscurantisme avec Robert Redeker*, Éditions Jacob-Duvernet, Paris, 2007, pp. 210-212, p. 210.

35 See for a description: B. Holden, *Understanding Liberal Democracy*, Second edition, Harvester/Wheatheaf, New York etc., 1993.

36 See for the results of recent British research: M. Mirza, A. Senthilkumaran, and Z. Ja’far, *Living Apart Together: British Muslims and the Paradox of Multiculturalism*, Policy Exchange, London, 2007. For the Netherlands: *The Radical Dawā in Transition: The Rise of Islamic Neoradicalism in the Netherlands*, General Intelligence and Security Service, October 2007, The Hague, 2007. An interesting image is presented by: K. Bessems, *En dat in Nederland! De roerige jaren sinds 11 september (How Could This Happen in the Netherlands! The Turbulent Years After 9/11)*, Uitgeverij L.J. Veen, Amsterdam/Antwerpen, 2006; S. Mekhennet, C. Sautter, and M. Hanfeld, *Die Kinder des Dschihad: Die neue Generation des Islamistischen Terrors in Europa*, Piper, München, Zürich, 2008.

has to become *militant*.<sup>37</sup> And it has to become militant against its main contender: Islamist theocracy.<sup>38</sup>

We may also put it this way. Since 9/11 the democratic world is confronted with 'militant Islam'. This is the term Daniel Pipes uses in his early book *Militant Islam Reaches America* (2002).<sup>39</sup> In 2002 few people were prepared to take the term 'militant Islam' seriously. People liked to think about religions (all religions) in terms of spirituality, peace and love.<sup>40</sup> The general idea was: if we do not polarize,<sup>41</sup> do not insult religious believers in their most sacred beliefs, things will develop automatically for the better. But the past twenty years teaches us another lesson: radical religion, militant religion, does not reform itself *if there is no external pressure, i.e. no external criticism*. A comparison might help: the Catholic Church has not reformed itself automatically, but only under the pressure of criticism, initially by the Reformation, later by Enlightenment philosophers and their nineteenth-century followers.<sup>42</sup> A plea for Enlightenment was in the twentieth century repeated by the New Atheists and authors like Steven Pinker.<sup>43</sup> That those who engage in religious criticism are 'just as fundamentalist' as their religious fundamentalists, as some critics argue, seems not a convincing argument.<sup>44</sup> That 'militant Islam' or 'radical Islam'

37 K. Loewenstein, "Militant Democracy and Fundamental Rights", I, *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 31, No. 3, June 1937, pp. 417-432, also in: S. András, *Militant Democracy*, Eleven, International Publishing, Utrecht, 2004, pp. 231-245; K. Loewenstein, "Militant Democracy and Fundamental Rights", II, *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 31, No. 4, August 1937, pp. 638-658, also in: S. András 2004, pp. 245-265.

38 This is the main theme of Y. Mamou, *Le grand abandon: les élites françaises et l'islamisme, comprendre les 30 dernières années*, L'Artilleur, Paris, 2018; A. Del Valle, *La stratégie de l'intimidation: du terrorisme jihadiste à l'islamiquement correct*, édition revue et corrigé, L'Artilleur, Paris, 2018.

39 D. Pipes, *Militant Islam Reaches America*, W.W. Norton & Company, New York, London, 2002.

40 The way religious traditions are portrayed in e.g.: K. Armstrong, *A History of God: From Abraham to the Present: the 4000-Year Quest for God*, Heinemann, London, 1993.

41 See: *Actieplan polarisatie en radicalisering 2007-2011*, Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties, Augustus 2007.

42 See: A. C. Grayling, *Against All Gods: Six Polemics on Religion and an Essay on Kindness*, Oberon Books, London, 2007; A.C. Grayling, *Towards the Light: The Story of the Struggles for Liberty & Rights that made the Modern West*, Bloomsbury Publishing, London, 2007; R. Blackford, *The Tyranny of Opinion: Conformity and the Future of Liberalism*, Bloomsbury, London, 2018; T. Todorov, *L'Esprit des Lumières*, Robert Laffont, Paris, 2006; E. Badinter, *Les Passions intellectuelles: I. Désirs de gloire (1735-1751)*, Librairie Arthème Fayard, Paris, 1999; E. Badinter, *Les Passions intellectuelles: II. Exigence de dignité (1751-1762)*, Librairie Arthème Fayard, Paris, 2002; E. Badinter, *Les Passions intellectuelles, III. Volonté de pouvoir (1762-1778)*, Librairie Arthème Fayard, Paris, 2007.

43 In particular the 'new atheists'. See: A. Amarasingam, ed., *Religion and the New Atheism: A Critical Appraisal*, Brill, Leiden, 2010; S. Pinker, *Enlightenment Now: The Case for Reason, Science, Humanism and Progress*, Allen Lane, Penguin, London, 2018.

44 This line of argument we find in: J. Gray, "Evangelical Atheism, Secular Christianity", in: J. Gray, ed., *Gray's Anatomy: Selected Writings*, Allan Lane, Penguin Books, London, 2009, pp. 292-307; C. Hedges, *I Don't Believe in Atheists*, The Free Press, New York and Sydney, 2008; C. J. Werleman, *The New Atheist Threat: The Dangerous Rise of Secular Extremists*, Dangerous Little Books, Lexington, 2015.

will transform itself into the spiritual creed liberals like to see in this, *without being criticized and pressured to do so*, is highly unlikely. The Dutch philosopher Sebastien Valkenberg has a point when, referring to *The Sceptic's Annotated Bible* (2013),<sup>45</sup> he asks: "Where is The Sceptic's Annotated Koran?"<sup>46</sup> But in the first 15 years of the twenty-first century the non-confrontational attitude with regard to Islamism was the dominant creed in circles of policy makers and ruling politicians. And so radical Islam could make headway in the world without being questioned. The results were not positive, as we gradually come to realize.<sup>47</sup> Especially France is, since the attack on the editorial office of *Charlie Hebdo* (2015), focussed on getting Islamism under control.<sup>48</sup>

#### 'YOU WILL BE OUR TARGETS'

For the past years, European states have been confronted with citizens who are derailed and alienated from the national state, and who radicalize into Islamist fantasies where liberal democracies should be replaced by theocracies. In order to realize such, all means are allowed, more than that, all means are commanded. Religiously commanded. Just like they were for Phinehas. We find this framework again and again in statements made by Islamist terrorists or in their testaments left for publication after they have died as martyrs. In a video message released by Al-Qaida in September 2005 we can see Mohammed Sidique Khan (1974-2005), one of the four suicide terrorists responsible for the London underground bombings on 7 July 2005. In this message he says:

Your democratically elected governments perpetuate atrocities against my people all over the world. And your support of them makes you directly responsible, just as I am directly responsible for protecting and avenging my Muslim brothers and sisters. Until we feel security you will be our targets and until you stop the bombing, gassing, imprisonment and torture of my people we will not stop this fight. We are at war and I am a soldier. Now you too will taste the reality of this situation.<sup>49</sup>

45 S. Wells, *The Sceptic's Annotated Bible: The King James Version from a Sceptic's Point of View*, SAB Books, Lahore, Punjab, 2013.

46 S. Valkenberg, "Waar blijft The Sceptic's Annotated Koran?", in: F. Bosch, red., *Waarom haten ze ons eigenlijk?*, De blauwe tijger, Groningen, 2016.

47 See on this: D. Murray, *The Strange Death of Europe: Immigration, Identity, Islam*, Bloomsbury, London, 2017; J. Harouel, *Les droits de l'homme contre le peuple*, Desclée de Brouwer, Paris, 2016.

48 G. Darmanin, *Le séparatisme islamiste: manifeste pour la laïcité*, Éditions de l'observatoire, Paris, 2021; F. Fillon, *Vaincre la totalitarisme islamique*, Albin Michel, Paris, 2016. See on the history of the concept of laïcité (secularism): S. David, *Rise of the French Laïcité: French Secularism from the Reformation to the Twenty-First Century*, Pickwick Publications, Eugene, Oregon, 2020.

49 M. Desai, *Rethinking Islamism: The Ideology of the New Terror*, L.B. Taurus, London/New York, 2007, p. 6.

Mohammed constructs an important duality: the one between 'his people' and the rest of the world. The 'Phinehas-moment' is when Mohammed rises up in arms against governments and sets himself up as the true believer who decides what 'his people' and 'his religion' require. Anyone who thinks differently will be met with violent resistance.

The fact is that the religious duty prevails against the moral duty. The ayatollah knows better than the country's prime minister. And in the modern world all believers can become 'ayatollahs' as long as they have the ambition to extract the most extreme consequences from their religion. The holy law of the Sharia is considered superior to national law.

## TWO SORTS OF TERRORISTS: IDEOLOGUES AND OPERATORS

The word 'terrorist' is ambiguous these days. It can refer to two sorts of people. First, to those who *call* for violence. One might call them the 'ideologues'. The biblical prophet Elia is a case in point. In that sense one can call both Khomeini and Bin Laden 'terrorists'. But the word can also be used for those who have proven to be prepared to *use* violence. Phinehas, for instance. In that sense one can call Mohammed Atta a 'terrorist', or the Somali who tried to kill Kurt Westergaard. Just like some of the Israelite people proved willing to kill the prophets of Baal in the valley of Kishon as Elia urged them to, Mohammed Atta is willing to kill and self-sacrifice in that process, urged by Bin Laden. (An interesting question is whether Bin Laden or Zawahiri themselves would actually be prepared to die during one of the actions they are calling for, but this is beside the point).

Phinehas' figure teaches us something more, though, and again this sheds some light on another dimension of the modern use of religious violence. Phinehas is – using the jargon of contemporary terrorism experts – a 'self-igniter'.<sup>50</sup> He is responsible for the 'operational side' of terrorism. In other words: he actually commits the attack. In his case, he does not act on command by an earthly political or religious leader. He calls directly upon the will of the Lord. By doing so, he not only takes up an independent position compared to the established politico-religious powers (Moses), but also compared to spiritual leaders (Elia). Phinehas accepts, in other words, no 'mediators' between him and God.

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50 See: AIVD (Dutch General Information and Security Service), "Jihadistisch terrorisme in Nederland: dreiging en bestrijding" (Jihadist terrorism in the Netherlands: threats and counteracts), in: E. R. Muller, "Trends in terrorisme en terrorismebestrijding" (Trends in Terrorism and Counterterrorism), in: E.R. Muller, U. Rosenthal, and R. de Wijk, eds., *Terrorisme: Studies over terrorismebestrijding* (*Terrorism: Studies on Counterterrorism*), Kluwer, Deventer, 2008, pp. 55-95, p. 88.

The ‘Phinehasses’ not only stopped taking up a dependent position compared to the scribes (“Will I be blessed for my acts?”), but set course for acting on their own authority.<sup>51</sup> During their trials they said to the judge: “Here I stand. I can do no other.”<sup>52</sup>

I have stated earlier: Fukuyama totally underestimated the importance of this movement in 1989. Bernard Lewis, though, did have some insight in 1990, as well as Huntington in 1993. Islamism, the ideology that presented itself in 1989<sup>53</sup> in the form of a universal (in the sense of supra-national) appeal on radicalized spirits, was something Fukuyama could not take seriously. That probably has something to do with Fukuyama himself. Like many other ‘enlightened’ people in the West – not being able to understand the motivational factor of religion. Religion has become, for many Western intellectuals, a sort of poetry (suited for giving ‘meaning’). But the thought that religion can also be used (‘abused’, as the ‘enlightened’ intellectual goes on saying, as if this should solve something) to legitimize behaviour that stands diametrically opposed to the moral and legal order of the country goes beyond his wildest expectations.

Huntington understood better than Fukuyama that religion *had been* and *would be* an enormously important factor in the world, but he made a different mistake, and precisely at that point where Fukuyama had been right. Huntington replaced the notion of ‘ideology’ by the notion of ‘civilization’. That was unfortunate.<sup>54</sup> Huntington would have been better off by holding on to the notion of ‘ideology’, and therefore should have proclaimed that there still was an *ongoing* ‘clash of ideologies’, instead of a ‘clash of civilizations’, and that the ideology that challenges liberal democracies at this moment is ‘Islamism’.

51 After all, as Luther stated, here quoted by R. Friedenthal, *Luther: Sein Leben und seine Zeit*, R. Piper & Co. Verlag, München/Zürich, 1983 (1967), p. 336: “Bringt Zeugnis, überführt mich des Irrtums, aus den Propheten und Evangelien! Wenn man mich daraus besser belehrt, will ich gerne widerrufen und als erster meine Schriften ins Feuer werfen.”

52 Not just Luther’s motto, but the motto for the entire reformation, as has been told. See D. MacCulloch, *Reformation: Europe’s House Divided, 1490-1700*, Penguin Books, London, 2004 (2003), p. 131.

53 Of course, the history of Islamism stems from an earlier date than 1989. Perhaps we should say that at that moment it revealed itself to the world. Experts actually assume that Islamism developed into an independent politico-religious ideology already during the 1970s and 1980s. See: B. Tibi, *Political Islam, World Politics and Europe: Democratic Peace and Euro-Islam versus Global Jihad*, Routledge, London and New York, 2008; W. Phares, *The War of Ideas: Jihadism against Democracy*, Palgrave, Macmillan, 2007; G. Kepel, *The War for Muslim Minds: Islam and the West*, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge (Mass.), London, 2004; O. Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam*, translated by Carel Volk, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1996.

54 See for a forceful criticism along these lines: H. Pena-Ruiz, “Clash des civilisations”, in: H. Pena-Ruiz, ed., *Dictionnaire amoureux de la laïcité*, Plon, Paris, 2014, pp. 202-209.

## THE CHALLENGE OF ISLAMISM

Let me elaborate a bit on the notion of Islamism. An important book on this topic is: *Rethinking Islamism: The Ideology of the New Terror* (2007). It is written by the British Labour politician and economist Meghnad Jagdishchandra Desai (b. 1940). Desai is a representative of the movement that points at Islamism (not Islam), as an ideology, as the cause for terrorist violence. The cause of terrorism should not be sought in 'Islam as religion', not in the 'lifestyle or culture of British Muslims', but in the 'ideology of global Islamism'.<sup>55</sup>

Islamism differs from communism, because it is theocratic and religiously fundamentalist. Islamism provides a full political interpretation of monotheism, all of its problems included. Islamism does not approach religious belief as something that could be 'inspirational' for private relations (and should be limited to that). Belief, as the Islamists teach, is a perspective which should permeate all aspects of life. This makes it in fact 'totalitarian'.<sup>56</sup> This last feature Islamism has in common with communism, but communism has an anti-monotheistic orientation. Apart from that, Islamism and communism certainly do find each other again by both being strongly opposed to the liberal and capitalist society.<sup>57</sup> That is exactly why – like in the 1960s and 1970s, many Western intellectuals supported communism<sup>58</sup> – we are able to discern Islamic 'fellow travellers' nowadays<sup>59</sup> or 'useful

55 M. Desai, *Rethinking Islamism: The Ideology of the New Terror*, L.B. Taurus, London/New York, 2007, p. vii. For other authors on Islamism, see: T. Osman, *Islamism: What It Means for the Middle East and the World*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2016; S. Admiraal, "Gedachten over islamitisch terrorisme, Islam en islamisme", in: F. Bosch, red., *Waarom haten ze ons eigenlijk?*, De blauwe tijger, Groningen, 2016; C. Cox and J. Marks, *The West, Islam and Islamism: Is Ideological Islam Compatible with Liberal Democracy?*, Civitas, Institute for the Study of Civil Society, London, 2003; B. Tibi, *Islamism and Islam*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2012.

56 See: D. Suurland, "Totalitarianism and Radical Islamic Ideologies", in: B. C. Labuschagne and R.W. Sonnenschmidt, eds., *Religion, Politics and Law: Philosophical Reflections on the Sources of Normative Order in Society*, Brill, Leiden, Boston, 2009, pp. 257-311.

57 This argument is also made by: D. D'Souza, *The Enemy at Home: The Cultural Left and Its Responsibility for 9/11*, Doubleday, New York, Auckland, 2007 and D. Horowitz, *Unholy Alliance: Radical Islam and the American Left*, Regnery Publishing, Inc., Washington, 2004.

58 D. Caute, *The Fellow Travellers: Intellectual Friends of Communism*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1988 (1973) and J. Sévilla, *Le terrorisme intellectuel de 1945 à nos jours*, Perrin, Paris, 2004 (2000) and J. Sévilla, *Historiquement Correct: Pour en finir avec le passé unique*, Perrin, Paris, 2003.

59 The 'holy text' for the Islamic fellow travellers is: E. W. Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*, With a New Afterword, Penguin Books, London, 1995 (1978). See on that: A. L. Macfie, *Orientalism*, Pearson Education, London etc., 2002 and for orientalism as science: R. Irwin, *Dangerous Knowledge: Orientalism and Its Discontents*, The Overlook Press, Woodstock & New York, 2006 and I. Warraq, *Defending the West: A Critique of Edward Said's Orientalism*, Prometheus Books, Amherst, New York, 2007. In his history of orientalism, Irwin considers Said's work to be of a 'malignant charlatany' (Ibid., p. 4). Until today Said's legacy is heavily contested. In response to criticism on Said's views by Hafid Bouazza and Afshin Ellian in *NRC Handelsblad* of respectively 29 May 2010 and 19 July 2010, many readers wrote

idiots'. One can certainly discern a 'failure of the nerve' of the European intellectuals,<sup>60</sup> a "soumission plus ou moins consciente"<sup>61</sup> to the dictates of what might be called the Islamist theocrats. Within the faculties of Arabic and Middle-Eastern studies we see the recurrence of the same process of intellectual struggle of the sociology faculties in the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>62</sup> People like Edward Said (1935-2003) have the same amount of difficulty pointing out the problematic sides of Islamism as Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980) had with communism. When Sartre heard of the concentration camps in the Soviet Union, he ignored that.<sup>63</sup>

One can point at several manifestations of Islamism, yet one of the most striking is, as we have seen, the one in 1989: the spiritual leader who issued the murder of a novelist. Actually, why a novelist? Why not the mayor of a big city or a member of the Royal Family? The history of religious terrorism teaches us that also random citizens and politicians can be subjected to acts of terrorism, such as 7/7 (2005) and 9/11 (2001) point out, but the special interest in writers is quite manifest. While the violence in the United States, Great Britain and Madrid was aimed at symbols of capitalism (Twin Towers) and the transport system (London and Madrid), in the Netherlands and France (*Charlie Hebdo*) the attack was aimed at the spiritual foundation of a free society: free debate.

#### SECULAR ISLAM IN ST. PETERSBURG (FLORIDA)

How can liberal democracy defend itself against the assault of Islamist theoterrorism? As Bassam Tibi argues in one of his insightful essays on the need to confront the Islamist challenge, we have to distinguish between 'violent Islamists/Jihadists', on the one hand,

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resentful letters to the editor, which reached its peak when 15 professors collectively sent in a letter under the title 'Edward Said also had merits', which was published on 24 July 2010. I can hardly imagine professors to write a letter collectively in defence of the honour of Immanuel Kant or Spinoza. However, Said apparently is still seen as some kind of cult figure in certain circles.

60 B. Bawer, *Surrender: Appeasing Islam, Sacrificing Freedom*, Doubleday, New York, 2009.

61 R. Redeker, "Face aux intimidations islamistes, que doit faire le monde libre?", *Le Figaro*, 19 septembre 2006, also in: P. Gaubert, *Combattre l'obscurantisme avec Robert Redeker*, Éditions Jacob-Duvernet, Paris, 2007, pp. 210-212.

62 See for an excellent analysis: C. Delacampagne, "Une réflexion amputée. Le biais de la pensée française", P. Gaubert, *Combattre l'obscurantisme avec Robert Redeker*, Éditions Jacob-Duvernet, Paris, 2007, pp. 106-118.

63 See for Said's viewpoint: E. W. Said, *Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World*, Vintage, London, 1997. See for criticism: H. Jansen, "Edward Said. De luchtftietser van het Midden-Oosten" (Edward Said. The Dreamer of the Middle East), *Trouw*, 11 October 2003. See also: T. Chervel, "Vorausselende Unterwerfung", *Der Tagespiegel*, 7 February 2009. The most extensive commentary on his work is: I. Warraq, *Defending the West: A Critique of Edward Said's Orientalism*, Prometheus Books, Amherst, New York, 2007.

and 'peaceful institutional Islamists', on the other.<sup>64</sup> The focus is usually on the violent Islamists, but that would be neglecting the peaceful kind. The peaceful institutional Islamists distribute the ideology that sooner or later will result in violent attacks. Therefore, Tibi tells us: "In order to effectively counter terrorism, there is need to subdue and control the institutional Islamists, while simultaneously engaging in military action against the Jihadists." And institutional Islamism starts in the closed communities. Therefore no open society can afford to turn a blind eye to these communities.

One of the most important preconditions for the reinforcement of democracy is the *acknowledgement* that it is under attack. As long as we do not see this, all attempts to overcome this challenge are doomed to be futile. We are in the middle of a new 'clash of ideologies'. Not a clash of *civilizations*, but a clash between competing *ideologies*. Here Fukuyama was right. He was wrong though (and here Huntington came much closer to the truth) that the new ideology of Islamism is a serious contender.

Islamism has to be vanquished which means that Islam, as a religion, must take the course Christianity and Judaism have taken in the past. What is that course? What makes Christianity and Judaism special in their *contemporary manifestations*? This is that they have adapted themselves to modernity, to the secular legal order. So, we do not need 'moderate religion', but 'secular religion'. We need religion that accepts that there are non-negotiable limitations to its ambit.

In March 2007, in St. Petersburg, Florida, a 'Secular Islam Summit' was held, where the so-called St. Petersburg Declaration is adopted. This statement could be regarded as an important manifest of 'secular Islam'.<sup>65</sup> In that statement the Shari'ah and fatwa courts are rejected, and is called for the realization of freedom of religion, including the possibility of belief change. The text of the statement reads as follows:

We are secular Muslims, and secular persons of Muslim societies. We are believers, doubters, and unbelievers, brought together by a great struggle, not between the West and Islam, but between the free and the unfree.  
We affirm the inviolable freedom of the individual conscience. We believe in the equality of all human persons.

64 B. Tibi, "The Non-state Actors of Neo-Jihad and Security in a War of Ideas over a New Order for the World", in: A. Ellian, B. Rijpkema, and G. Molier, eds., *Terrorism and Counterterrorism after the Caliphate*, International Publishing Eleven, The Hague, 2020, pp. 25-37, p. 34.

65 "Verklaring van afgevaardigden op de seculiere Islam-top", ('Declaration of Representatives at the Secular Islam-Summit') *De Volkskrant*, 13 March 2007.

We insist upon the separation of religion from state and the observance of universal human rights.

We find traditions of liberty, rationality, and tolerance in the rich histories of pre-Islamic and Islamic societies. These values do not belong to the West or the East; they are the common moral heritage of humankind.

We see no colonialism, racism, or so-called “Islamophobia” in submitting Islamic practices to criticism or condemnation when they violate human reason or rights.

We call on the governments of the world to reject Sharia law, fatwa courts, clerical rule, and state-sanctioned religion in all their forms; oppose all penalties for blasphemy and apostasy, in accordance with Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human rights; eliminate practices, such as female circumcision, honor killing, forced veiling, and forced marriage, that further the oppression of women; protect sexual and gender minorities from persecution and violence; reform sectarian education that teaches intolerance and bigotry towards non-Muslims; and foster an open public sphere in which all matters may be discussed without coercion or intimidation.

We demand the release of Islam from its captivity to the totalitarian ambitions of power-hungry men and the rigid strictures of orthodoxy.

We enjoin academics and thinkers everywhere to embark on a fearless examination of the origins and sources of Islam, and to promulgate the ideals of free scientific and spiritual inquiry through cross-cultural translation, publishing, and the mass media.

We say to Muslim believers: there is a noble future for Islam as a personal faith, not a political doctrine; to Christians, Jews, Buddhists, Hindus, Baha’is, and all members of non-Muslim faith communities: we stand with you as free and equal citizens; and to nonbelievers: we defend your unqualified liberty to question and dissent.

Before any of us is a member of the Umma, the Body of Christ, or the Chosen People, we are all members of the community of conscience, the people who must choose for themselves.<sup>66</sup>

66 “The St. Petersburg Declaration”, *The Center for Inquiry*, 5 April 2007, available at: [centerforinquiry.net/secularislam/](http://centerforinquiry.net/secularislam/).

## WHAT DOES THIS HAVE TO DO WITH MILITANT DEMOCRACY?

In this contribution I identify radical Islam, or Islamism, as the contemporary threat for democracy. I also suggest there is a solution to our problems: militant democracy is the answer to militant Islam (to quote Daniel Pipes's book referred to before). *Prima facie*, the application of the concept of militant democracy in the context of radical Islam might raise eyebrows. Why? Because we are not used to it. The context in which the concept of militant democracy was developed was Nazism or fascism, not Islamism. Joseph Goebbels (1897-1945), writing in 1928, was surprised that democracy gave him and his Nazis, who had entered the Reichstag to abolish democracy, the same rights as committed democrats.

We enter the Reichstag to arm ourselves with democracy's weapons. If democracy is foolish enough to give us free railway passes and salaries, that is its problem. It does not concern us. Any way of bringing about the revolution is fine by us. (...) We are coming neither as friends nor neutrals. We come as enemies! As the wolf attacks the sheep, so come we.<sup>67</sup>

Committed democrats as the Dutch professor George van den Bergh (1890-1960)<sup>68</sup> and the German émigré Karl Loewenstein (1891-1973)<sup>69</sup> began to wonder: if this is the consequence of democracy, *i.e.* that democracy can be abolished by a parliamentary majority, is democracy a good system then? Should we not exclude one particular decision from democratic respect, *viz.* the decision to abolish the democratic system itself?

Opinions differ on the matter. Some committed democrats thought the abolishment of democracy itself should be accepted as the ultimate consequence of democracy. A most prominent thinker supporting this view was Hans Kelsen (1881-1973).<sup>70</sup> Others, like Karl

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67 J. Goebbels, "Why Do We Want to Join the Reichstag?", translated by Randall Bytwerk, *Der Angriff*, 30 April 1928. Available at: [research.calvin.edu/german-propaganda-archive/angrif06.htm](http://research.calvin.edu/german-propaganda-archive/angrif06.htm).

68 G. Van den Bergh, *De democratische Staat en de niet-democratische partijen* (in English: *The Democratic State and the Non-democratic Parties*), De Arbeiderspers, Amsterdam, 1936.

69 K. Loewenstein, "Militant Democracy and Fundamental Rights", I, *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 31, No. 3, June 1937, pp. 417-432, also in: A. Sajó, *Militant Democracy*, Eleven, International Publishing, Utrecht, 2004, pp. 231-245; K. Loewenstein, "Militant Democracy and Fundamental Rights", II, *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 31, No. 4, August 1937, pp. 638-658, also in: A. Sajó, *Militant Democracy*, Eleven, International Publishing, Utrecht, 2004, pp. 245-265.

70 H. Kelsen, "On the Essence and Value of Democracy", in: A. J. Jacobson and B. Schlink, eds., *Weimar: A Jurisprudence of Crisis*, translated by Belinda Cooper, University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 2000 (1929), pp. 84-110.

Popper (1902-1994),<sup>71</sup> followed the line of Van den Bergh and Loewenstein and argued that democracy cannot demand respect for one specific decision, not even when this decision was reached by majoritarian vote: the decision to destroy democracy. ‘One man, one vote, once’, does not have to be accepted as the ultimate consequence of democratic theory. And following the line of argument of Van den Bergh and Loewenstein, one could argue that political parties advocating the abolishment of democracy do not have to be condoned within the democratic system. That means that Goebbels and its ilk could have been refused entry into the Reichstag.

The next step in this argument is raising the question: what to do with those people who advocate the annihilation of democracy as a manifestation of their right to free speech? Free speech is an important principle in democratic society. Formulating limits to free speech always feels uncomfortable. On the other hand: should we not curtail free speech for those people who vow to use it to argue for the annihilation of free speech?

If we answer the last question affirmatively, we now have two characteristics of militant democracy: (i) it provides the justification to absolve parties that vow to abolish democracy and (ii) it provides a criterion to limit free speech.<sup>72</sup>

#### WHY ISLAMISM IS THE CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGE TO DEMOCRACY

As has been said, historically it were the Nazis, people like Goebbels, who used democratic principles like respect for majoritarian decisions and freedom of speech to liquidate democracy, but are the Nazis nowadays the most important threat democracies have to fear? Or are there other guys on the block?

It has been the contention of this contribution to *The Open Society and Its Closed Communities* that Nazism is not the greatest contemporary challenge for democracies. This challenge comes from a different ideology, *i.e.* Islamism.

71 Popper did not address the topic of militant democracy as a systematic matter but his remarks on the subject are dispersed throughout his work. See: B. Rijpkema, “Popper’s Paradox of Democracy”, *Think*, Vol. 11, No. 32, September 2012, pp. 93-96.

72 Next to the already existing criteria such as that *not* protected by freedom of speech is: the incitation to hatred, incitation to physical violence, libel, etc. See on this: T. Bruce, *The New Thought Police: Inside the Left’s Assault on Free Speech and Free Minds*, Three Rivers Press, New York, 2001; P. Cliteur, T. Herenberg, and B. Rijpkema, “The New Censorship: A Case Study of Extrajudicial Restraints on Free Speech”, in: A. Ellian and B. Rijpkema, eds., *Freedom of Speech under Attack*, Eleven, International Publishing, The Hague, 2015, pp. 291-318; M. Hume, *Trigger Warning: Is the Fear of Being Offensive killing Free Speech?*, William Collins, London, 2015.

There are many authors who have analysed the similarities between Nazism and Islamism.<sup>73</sup> I cannot delve into this matter too deeply within the confines of this contribution, but it does not require much imagination to understand that Islamism is the diametrically opposite position compared to democracy. Islamism is based on the absolute validity of the divine. It is not mankind, not the citizens, who make law, God does it. Real law, higher law (what in the Western tradition was called 'natural law') is higher than human law. This divine law has to be identified and interpreted, and for this, there is a special class of mortals who, despite their human status, can get a glimpse of the divine. These people are the religious scholars, people with knowledge of the Koran, the hadiths, in short people who can have some intermediary position between ordinary mortals and God.<sup>74</sup>

'Law' in the democratic tradition, as it has been developed in the West, and law as it is seen through the eyes of an Islamist, is something completely different. This difference has great consequences, because an Islamist simply cannot see law as made by humans as legitimate. The so-called democratic legal order is something that has to be overthrown. And this is what happened in some countries, e.g. in Iran in 1979.<sup>75</sup> The Iranian Revolution toppled the regime of the Shah in 1979 to inaugurate an Islamist theocracy.

But this revolutionary or radical change is not the focus of militant democracy. Neither is militant democracy concerned with the military or aggressive assault on democracy. What militant democracy is concerned with is the gradual, piecemeal undermining of democracy. The undermining takes place when the souls are made ready for a takeover of a democratic system by peaceful means, by the 'enemy from within'. As Bastiaan Rijpkema emphasizes: "militant democracy is understood as a defense against 'non-violent anti-democratic parties'."<sup>76</sup> The Institutional Islamists Bassam Tibi referred to use non-violent means to change the democratic order into a religious dictatorship. Just as the Nazis did when entering the Reichstag. If you want to call it 'revolution', it is revolution through the ballot. In Egypt the Muslim Brotherhood was a good example of a movement that tried to

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73 See for instance: P. Berman, *The Flight of the Intellectuals*, Melville House, Brooklyn, New York, 2010; J. Herf, *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 2010; H. Abdel-Samad, *Der Islamische Fascismus: Eine Analyse*, Droemer Verlag, München, 2014; E. Vermaat, *Nazi's, communisten en islamisten: opmerkelijke allianties tussen extremisten*, Uitgeverij Aspekt, Soesterberg, 2008; J. Glazov, *United in Hate: The Left's Romance with Tyranny and Terror*, WND Books, Los Angeles, 2009.

74 The classic formulation of this doctrine is: Khomeini, "Islamic Government", in: *Islam and Revolution, Writings and Declarations of Imam Khomeini*, translated and annotated by Hamid Algar, Mizan Press, Contemporary Islamic Thought, Persian Series, 1981, pp. 27-150.

75 See on this: A. Taheri, *The Persian Night: Iran under the Khomeinist Revolution*, Encounter Books, New York and London, 2009.

76 B. Rijpkema, "Local Militant Democracy: Exploring the Relevance of Subnational Democracy for Normative Militant Democracy Theory", in: A. Ellian, B. Rijpkema, and G. Molier, eds., *Terrorism and Counterterrorism after the Caliphate*, International Publishing Eleven, The Hague, 2020, pp. 71-90, p. 72.

undermine democracy by democratic means.<sup>77</sup> In Turkey we see a leader who has come to power by democratic means and now slowly, but nonetheless clearly, develops into a religiously mandated dictator.<sup>78</sup>

There is a long discussion about the matter whether power-hungry people simply ‘use’ religion to come to power, or whether religion really makes a substantial contribution to change the hearts of people. What is primary: the lust for power or religious inspiration? We cannot go into this matter deeply, but let it suffice to say: the importance of this matter is overstated. What counts is that Islamism advocates demolishing democracy in favour of theocracy and Islamism can be invoked as legitimating political decisions.

In *Refah Partisi (The Welfare Party) v. Turkey* (2003), a landmark decision of the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg, it was acknowledged that the threat of creeping Islamization justifies legislative measures to counter this. The Court supported a ban on the Refah Party because of its inherent danger to the functioning of a democratic state. So the Court supported the Turkish state in its attempts to save democracy from looming theocracy in 2003.<sup>79</sup> In hindsight we can say this was a laudable attempt of the Court to support the democratic forces in Turkey, even if, in the long run, this attempt proved abortive. The Court realized that the Refah Party in 2003 was the analogue of Goebbels’s Nazi party in 1928: the Islamists tried to use the democratic system to annihilate democracy from within. In Egypt similar concerns were raised with regard to the Muslim Brotherhood.<sup>80</sup>

#### IS THE THREAT OF ISLAMISM EXAGGERATED?

Now that I have expounded the reasons why I think that Islamism poses a challenge for contemporary democracies, analogous to the challenge of Nazism in the 1930s, it seems fair to say that this line of argument is heavily contested. Many authors feel extremely uncomfortable with identifying Islamism as a threat. In what follows, I will attempt to understand this reluctance. And I will try to formulate an answer to such criticism. The

77 M. Louizi, *Pourquoi j’ai quitté les frères musulmans: retour éclairé vers un islam apolitique*, Michalon Éditeur, Paris, 2016.

78 A. Kruft and P. Pierik, red., *Erdogan: perception, reflectie, analyse*, Aspekt, Soesterberg, 2017.

79 ECHR, *Refah Partisi (The Welfare Party) v. Turkey*, 13 February 2003.

80 See on this: M. Louizi, *Pourquoi j’ai quitté les frères musulmans: retour éclairé vers un islam apolitique*, Michalon Éditeur, Paris, 2016; X. Ternisien, *Les Frères musulmans*, Nouvelle Édition, Arthème Fayard, Paris, 2011 (2005); P. Landau, *Le Sabre et le Coran: Tariq Ramadan et les frères musulmans à la conquête de l’Europe*, Éditions du Rocher, Paris, 2005; M. Prazan, *Frères musulmans: enquête sur la derrière idéologie totalitaire*, Bernard Grasset, Paris, 2014.

most obvious reason for this reluctance is that in Europe and the United States Islamism has not manifested itself in a mass movement with political parties in parliament that pose a clear and present danger that democracy can be overthrown. So, in Egypt, with political parties like the Muslim Brotherhood, Islamism may be a problem, but not in Europe or in the United States, many authors say.<sup>81</sup>

This narrow focus on political parties as the central preoccupation of militant democracy may be challenged. There are many other ways political movements can undermine the democratic process than by means of political parties. One may even argue that at the moment you have a political party you are already too late.<sup>82</sup> In 1928, when Goebbels wrote the lines I have already quoted, it was too late. The Nazis had undermined Weimar democracy in countless ways. Karl Loewenstein gives a good description of all the techniques the Nazis used to undermine the democratic order in Weimar.<sup>83</sup>

Another reason for challenging a focus on Islamism as an important threat to open societies is that Islamists, both jihadists and institutional Islamists, are an insignificant small number of people. What harm is to be expected from such a small minority? There are the “theoterrorists” that tried to kill Rushdie.<sup>84</sup> There were attempts to kill Danish cartoonist Kurt Westergaard.<sup>85</sup> There was one man, Mohammed B., who killed Theo van Gogh in Amsterdam in 2004.<sup>86</sup> And there were two men, Said and Chérif Kouachi, who killed the cartoonists of *Charlie Hebdo* in 2015.<sup>87</sup> These are tragic events, but they do not say anything about broad trends in British, Danish, Dutch or French society, the critics of Islamism as a concept say. Those who invoke militant democracy against a supposed threat of Islamism are simply scaremongers, “Panikmacher”, as the Germans say.<sup>88</sup> Not even the murder of

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81 This was also remarked by an anonymous author doing a peer review for this book. I am greatly indebted to his or her comments, not only with regard to this point but also with regard to other questions raised.

82 See: A. Jacobson and B. Schlink, eds., *Weimar: A Jurisprudence of Crisis*, translated by Belinda Cooper, University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 2000; C. Müller and I. Staff, *Staatslehre in der Weimarer Republik: Herman Heller zu ehren*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main, 1985.

83 Or see: S. Haffner, *Defying Hitler: A Memoir*, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London, 2002.

84 Rushdie is alive, though his Japanese translator has been killed. See: P. Cliteur and T. Herrenberg, “Rushdie’s Critics”, in: P. Cliteur and T. Herrenberg, eds., *The Fall and Rise of Blasphemy Law*, Leiden University Press, Leiden, 2016, pp. 137-157.

85 See his autobiographical work: K. Westergaard and J. Lykkegaard, *Kurt Westergaard: The Man Behind the Mohammed Cartoon*, Mine Erindringer, Tilst, Denmark, 2012.

86 R. Eyerman, *The Assassination of Theo van Gogh: from Social Drama to Cultural Trauma*, Duke University Press, Durham and London, 2008.

87 The best books on the *Charlie Hebdo* killings are: C. Fourest, *Éloge du blasphème*, Bernard Grasset, Paris, 2015 and W. Laes, *Een jaar na Charlie Hebdo: een pamflet*, met een voorwoord van Paul Cliteur, Houtekiet, Antwerpen en Utrecht, 2016 (2015).

88 P. Bahners, *Die Panikmacher: Die deutsche Angst vor dem Islam*, C.H. Beck, München, 2011.

Samuel Paty in 2020, the French teacher in Paris who showed cartoons of the prophet Mohammed to make a point during history lessons, has been able to change this.

#### WILFRED

Let us give a name to this reaction to militant democracy as applied to Islamism. It has many names, of course. A considerable number of authors, both journalists and politicians, reason the way indicated.<sup>89</sup> But instead of naming all of them individually, I will choose one collective name for the sceptical reaction against those who point to Islamism as the serious danger I want to analyse here. Let us call its mouthpiece ‘Wilfred’. Wilfred is my model for the usually liberal, broad-minded, politically correct figure who thinks Nazism and fascism are great problems of our time, while Islamism is not.

Wilfred will say that there may be some support for these murders and murder attempts among estranged youngsters coming from French banlieue’s, but even then: this is because those people live under dire circumstances. They have no work. They are discriminated against. They have identity problems as second- or third-generation immigrants and, let us be honest, they have some reason to complain.<sup>90</sup> Western states, ignited by populist leaders, have invaded Muslim lands and wrought havoc in those countries. Is it strange that those people feel estranged? We have a problem with populism, fascism and neo-Nazism, not with Islamism. According to Wilfred, Islamism (if one wants to use the term at all) is not so much caused by Islamist hate preachers, by Islamist ideologues, but by us, by Western interventionist powers with their hypocrisy. We have created our own monsters.

#### FELLOW TRAVELLING WITH ISLAMISM

The line of argument developed in the previous sections makes a deep impression on many people. Wilfreds are everywhere. This has even led to a whole new group of ‘fellow travellers’ or ‘useful idiots’. The term “fellow traveller” is well-known in relation to communism. French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980) and his companion Simone de Beauvoir (1908-1986) could not see any fault in the Soviet Union, or in any case they were reluctant

<sup>89</sup> To name only one example: T. Snyder, *On Tyranny: Twenty Lessons from the Twentieth Century*, Tim Duggan Books, New York, 2017. See my reaction in: P. Cliteur, “Misconstruing Tyranny”, *The New English Review*, September 2017.

<sup>90</sup> In this sense: A. Gresh, *L'Islam, la République et le Monde*, Fayard, Paris, 2006 and E. Todd, *Qui est Charlie? Sociologie d'une crise religieuse*, Seuil, Paris, 2015.

to talk about this openly, because they were preoccupied with the shortcomings of their own society, France. To highlight the failings of their own society, France, they lauded all other societies that were France's enemies, so also the Soviet Union. When Sartre and De Beauvoir were invited into the Soviet Union, on their 'conducted tours', they were led along all the great achievements of communism, and Sartre praised these.<sup>91</sup>

Was Sartre a communist? He was not. He was a 'fellow traveller' of communism in the sense that he was reluctant to criticize communism. Legend has it that Lenin already praised these Western intellectuals. They were not communist, and therefore 'fools', but they were 'useful', so 'useful idiots'.<sup>92</sup>

An illustrative book on this history of fellow travelling is written by Jamie Glazov: *United in Hate* (2009).<sup>93</sup> Glazov's book is in the tradition of David Caute's *Fellow Travellers* (1973)<sup>94</sup> and Paul Hollander's *Political Pilgrims* (1981).<sup>95</sup> What *United in Hate* distinguishes from its predecessors, though, is highly relevant for our subject. Glazov also treats the fellow travellers with Islamism.

The type of objections I paraphrased in the previous section is cultivated to a true cult by contemporary authors who derive inspiration from the literary critic Edward Said (1935-2003), author of *Orientalism* (1978),<sup>96</sup> a book that indicts all criticism of Islam, Islamic culture or Islamism as motivated by the desire of scapegoating and unduly eulogizing Western society to the detriment of Arabic culture. Said's work was hugely influential.<sup>97</sup> People under the spell of Said's influential treatise will say: Islamism is not a problem. And if it would exist, it is our own fault. The default position of Said is to see

91 See on this: B. Lévy, *Le siècle de Sartre: Enquête philosophique*, Grasset, Paris, 2000, p. 485 ff.

92 The most recent history of fellow travelling is to be found in: P. Hollander, *From Benito Mussolini to Hugo Chavez: Intellectuals and a Century of Political Hero Worship*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2017. See also: R. Wolin, *Heidegger's Children: Hannah Arendt, Karl Löwith, Hans Jonas, and Herbert Marcuse*, Princeton University Press, Princeton and Oxford, 2001; R. Wolin, *The Seduction of Unreason: The Intellectual Romance with Fascism: From Nietzsche to Postmodernism*, Princeton University Press, Princeton and Oxford, 2004; R. Wolin, *The Wind from the East: French Intellectuals, the Cultural Revolution, and the Legacy of the 1960's*, Princeton University Press, Princeton & Oxford, 2010.

93 J. Glazov, *United in Hate: the Left's Romance with Tyranny and Terror*, WND Books, Los Angeles, 2009.

94 D. Caute, *The Fellow Travellers: Intellectual Friends of Communism*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1988 (1973).

95 P. Hollander, *Political Pilgrims: Travels of Western Intellectuals to the Soviet Union, China and Cuba*, Oxford University Press, New York/Oxford, 1981.

96 E. W. Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*, With a New Afterword, Penguin Books, London, 1995 (1978).

97 Although also heavily criticized. See: I. Warraq, *Defending the West: A Critique of Edward Said's Orientalism*, Prometheus Books, Amherst, New York, 2007; R. Irwin, *Dangerous Knowledge: Orientalism and Its Discontents*, The Overlook Press, Woodstock & New York, 2006.

discrimination and stereotyping everywhere, or rather: everywhere in Western societies. In *Covering Islam* (1981), published three years after *Orientalism*, he indicts the Western media to give an unduly negative image of Arabic culture.<sup>98</sup>

One year after the publication of *Orientalism* the Iranian Revolution brought the Khomeini regime to power. Khomeini inaugurated a real Shiite theocracy like the Saudi's had realized in Saudi Arabia but then based on the Sunni brand of Islam. Khomeini's regime annihilated all the progress which had been booked under the Shah in the field of feminism. But the interesting thing is that Western intellectuals did not protest. Khomeini got the benefit of doubt from Western intellectuals. As Sartre had lauded the Soviet Union, the new French star philosopher, Michel Foucault (1926-1984), went to Iran and gave a very nuanced description of what he found there.<sup>99</sup> Foucault, a homosexual himself, and therefore someone who would not have survived the Iranian regime, did not find any fault with Khomeini.<sup>100</sup>

Jamie Glazov is very pessimistic about the ability of intellectuals to give a realistic account of the world they live in. G.B. Shaw (1856-1950) glorifies Stalinism, Susan Sontag (1933-2004) and Mary McCarthy (1912-1989) are blind to the dictatorial aspects of North Vietnam, and Foucault welcomes the Iranian Revolution. Intellectuals do not have the capacity to learn, so it seems. Intellectuals, especially left-wing intellectuals, seem enamoured with violence, tyranny, suppression and they will always find excuses to defend those, at least when it contributes to the annihilation of the societies in which they live: liberal democracies. Glazov says:

Throughout the twentieth century, the Western Left supported one totalitarian killing machine after another. Prominent intellectuals from George Bernard Shaw to Bertolt Brecht to Susan Sontag venerated mass murderers such as Lenin, Stalin, Mao, Castro, and Ho Chi Minh, habitually excusing their atrocities while blaming America, and even the victims, for their crimes (preface).

98 E. W. Said, *Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World*, Vintage, London, 1997 (1981).

99 See Foucault's writings in English assembled in: J. Afary and K.B. Anderson, *Foucault and the Iranian Revolution: Gender and the Seductions of Islamism*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 2005.

100 See on this: J. Birnbaum, *Un silence religieux: la gauche face au djihadisme*, Éditions du Seuil, Paris, 2016.

9/11

In a certain sense Foucault was an early bird. When, in 1979, he started fellow travelling with Islamist regimes, he was one of the first. The high tide of Islamist fellow travelling occurred after the deadly attacks of theoterrorists on the Twin Towers. 9/11 was for the general public perhaps the moment that they realized they have a problem with radical Islam, for intellectuals it was the moment to take sides with those who target decadent, neocolonial and discriminatory democracies. As Glazov writes:

leftists were beating their breasts with repentance for their own government's supposed crimes and characterizing the tragedy that their nation has just suffered as the form of karmic justice.

Noam Chomsky, Norman Mailer, Eric Foner, Susan Sontag – they all see 9/11 as a rightful revenge for the misdeeds their own countries perpetrated in other countries, in particular former colonies. 9/11 is 'chickens coming home to roost'.

Perhaps fellow travelling with Islamism can best be compared with fellow travelling with communism and not with fascism. The reason is this: Nazism and fascism had a relatively short lifecycle. Although prepared in nineteenth-century racial thinking, with racist thinkers as Houston Stewart Chamberlain (1855-1927),<sup>101</sup> Arthur de Gobineau (1816-1882)<sup>102</sup> and Richard Wagner (1813-1883),<sup>103</sup> it came to power in the 1930s.<sup>104</sup> The Second World War soon made clear how aggressive and totally nihilistic this ideology was. After the Second World War fascist thinking was totally discredited and those who had been under the spell of this ideology (for instance G.B. Shaw or H.G. Wells) could only apologize for their temporary blindness.

Communism was different. In contrast to Nazism, communism came out of the Second World War as victorious and still as a moral model to emulate. There were Churchill's misgivings with the ideology of communism. There was Churchill's notorious speech

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101 P. J. Verstraete, *Houston Stewart Chamberlain: rassenideoloog en wegbereider van het nationaalsocialisme*, Uitgeverij Aspekt, Soesterberg, 2016.

102 A. de Tocqueville and A. de Gobineau, *Correspondence entre Alexis de Tocqueville et Arthur de Gobineau*, 1843-1859, publiée par L. Schemann, Librairie Plon, Paris, 1909.

103 J. Barzun, *Darwin, Marx, Wagner: Critique of a Heritage*, Second Edition, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1981 (1941).

104 See: P. Viereck, *Meta-politics: The Roots of Nazi Mind*, Capricorn Books, New York, 1961 (1941) on the nineteenth-century roots of Nazism. On the more recent history: Y. Sherratt, *Hitler's Philosophers*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2014; A. Hamilton, *The Appeal of Fascism: A Study of Intellectuals and Fascism, 1919-1945*, A. Blond, London, 1971.

about the iron curtain (1946).<sup>105</sup> There was Khrushchev's speech on the mistakes of his predecessor Stalin in 1956,<sup>106</sup> but many European intellectuals could continue to think that this had nothing to do with 'real' communism. Communism had been hijacked by people with the wrong intentions, but in essence the creed was fine. This lasted till the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, and from the end of the Second World War till 1989 there was the culture wars between intellectuals who fought communism (Popper,<sup>107</sup> Arendt,<sup>108</sup> Kolakowski)<sup>109</sup> and those who kept faith in the system (Lukacs,<sup>110</sup> Bloch).<sup>111</sup>

### DEEPLY MISTAKEN

As one might expect, my view on the critics of Islamism as a concept, the ideas of whom I have summarized in an imaginary 'Wilfred', is that they make serious mistakes in their analysis of reality. The first mistake they make is with their attitude towards numbers. They belittle the number of Islamists and think that this is good news. But the problem is: small numbers can accomplish great results. This is especially the case if they are dedicated to their cause.<sup>112</sup> The Nazis started with small numbers. But if a small and very dedicated minority operates in a world with many confused people who have no idea of the issues at stake, they can accomplish great results. In *The Crisis of Islam: Holy War and Unholy Terror* (2003) the great scholar of Islam, Bernard Lewis, said "terrorism requires only a few". The meaning is clear. You need only a few people to impose great terror on society. Open societies are especially vulnerable. What happened in France during the last decade should give us food for thought. What president Macron calls 'Islamist separatism' is a real danger.<sup>113</sup> The separation of the people with an Islamist mindset in closed communities

105 W. Churchill, "An Iron Curtain has Descended Across the Continent", Speech in Fulton, Missouri, 5 March 1946, in: W. Hywell, ed., *Great Speeches of Our Time*, Quercus, London, 2013 (2009), pp. 12-19.

106 N. Sergeyevich Khrushchev, "The Personality Cult and Its Consequences", 24-25 February 1956, in: H. Williams, *Great Speeches of Our Time*, Quercus, London, 2013 (2009), pp. 102-108.

107 K. Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, Volume 1, *The Spell of Plato*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London and Henley, 1977 (1945); K. Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, Volume 2, *The High Tide of Prophecy*, Hegel, Marx, and the Aftermath, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London and Henley, 1977 (1945).

108 H. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Schocken Books, New York, 1951.

109 L. Kolakowski, "Marxism and Human Rights", *Daedalus*, Vol. 112, No. 4, Human Rights (Fall, 1983), pp. 81-92.

110 G. Lukács, *Gelebtes Denken: Eine Autobiographie im Dialog*, red. István Eörsi, Aus dem Ungarischen von Hans-Henning Paetzke, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main, 1981.

111 H. Schelsky, *Die Hoffnung Blochs: Kritik der marxistischen Existenzphilosophie eines Jugendbewegten*, Klett-Cotta, Stuttgart, 1979.

112 See on this: R. Pantucci, "We Love Death as You Love Life": *Britain's Suburban Terrorists*, Hurst & Company, London, 2015.

113 E. Macron, "La République en actes: discours du Président de la République sur le thème de la lutte contre les séparatismes", 2 octobre 2020.

(the French speak of “communautarisme”)<sup>114</sup> from mainstream society is a problem that ultimately can lead to polarization and radicalization.

A second problem with the optimistic view of Wilfred that Islamism does not place democratic societies for great challenges is that the critics of Islamism do not realize that, in order to be effective, the Islamists have to operate (and do operate) in a context where there is considerable support for their actions. The effectiveness of a terrorist movement is dependent on three factors: (i) a group of dedicated combatants who want to die for the good cause, (ii) support within society at large that sees the terrorists as freedom fighters or at least people with some legitimacy, (iii) confusion and division in the group which is the target of the attacks. All conditions are fulfilled with Islamist theoterrorism.

Let me elaborate a bit on the third element: confusion. Wilfred stresses that people are unjustifiably ‘afraid’ in Western societies. This fear borders on ‘phobia’. But the problem is that people are not so much afraid as confused. They are confused about the causes of theoterrorism and their will to withstand this challenge is undermined by postmodernism, cultural relativism, cultural Marxism and multiculturalism. These are the ideologies prevalent in Western societies, especially among its cultural elites, and they are an important factor weakening the vitality of the West.<sup>115</sup> According to pessimistic voices the West is doomed.<sup>116</sup> The West has outrun its lifecycle.

I do not want to go as far as that. But it would be foolish to deny that postmodernism has undermined Western self-assurance and the willingness of its elite to defend the universal values of democracy, human rights and the rule of law.<sup>117</sup> They are considered ‘merely our choices’ without any deeper foundation that we happen to like them. They are to be exchanged and negotiated with anyone who comes with a better offer.

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114 A. Sfeir and R. Andrau, *Liberté, égalité, islam: La République face au communautarisme*, Tallandier, Paris, 2005.

115 See on this: I. Warraq, *Why the West is Best: A Muslim’s Apostate’s Defense of Liberal Democracy*, Encounter Books, New York, London, 2012; P. Cliteur, “Do Postmodernism, Cultural Relativism and Multiculturalism Make Us Defenseless Against Jihad?”, in: A. Ellian and B. Rijpkema, eds., *Terrorism and Counterterrorism After ISIS: Theory, Law and Practice*, Eleven Publishing, The Hague, 2020, pp. 37-70.

116 See the, according to my opinion, too pessimistic diagnosis of: Bat Ye’or, *Eurabia: The Euro-Arab Axis*, Farleigh Dickinson University Press, Madison, Teaneck, 2005.

117 See on this: J. R. Searle, “Rationality and Realism, What is at Stake?”, *Daedalus, Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences*, Vol. 122, nr. 4, Fall 1993, pp. 55-83.

Contrary to all expectations in the 1970s, secularization has not set through and some think that the fastest growing religion of our time,<sup>118</sup> Islam, is secularization-resistant.<sup>119</sup> The terrorist attacks on free speech as they manifest themselves in the murder of Theo van Gogh, the murder attempts on Kurt Westergaard and Salman Rushdie and the accomplished liquidation of cartoonists of *Charlie Hebdo* testify to the fact that it is possible to intimidate Western societies to such an extent that satirical criticism of Islamic icons is basically eliminated.<sup>120</sup> All religions can be criticized in Europe, except one. And this religious criticism is eliminated by force. Just like the Nazis did in the 1930s. As Alan Dershowitz writes: terrorism works.<sup>121</sup>

Making this observation is not scaremongering. It has nothing to do with fear. It is simply facing up to reality, something our intellectual elites find so terribly difficult to do.

#### THIS APPLICATION OF MILITANT DEMOCRACY IMPAIRS THE RIGHTS OF MINORITIES

But I do not want to sound overly pessimistic. I do not believe in a deterministic conception of history. We make history and we make it now. We cannot predict the future, because what the future will look like depends on the actions we perform now. And the most appropriate reaction to the assault on freedom of expression as a principle is to defend the principle by using it.<sup>122</sup>

There is another important aspect to the defence of democracy, and this is what militant democracy refers to. It is possible to dissolve political parties which vow to destroy the democratic order. Critics of the concept of militant democracy as applied to Islamism point out that as long as there are no political parties committed to the implementation of Islamism as a political doctrine, the concept is useless. I beg to disagree. As I made clear in my distinction between the two dimensions of militant democracy, the second dimension means a limitation of free speech. It seems reasonable to argue that so-called Islamist hate preachers can be curtailed in their freedom of speech, their freedom of religion, their

118 See: S. Prothero, *God Is Not One: The Eight Rival Religions That Run the World*, HarperOne, New York, 2010, p. 31 ff.

119 This is the thesis defended by the cultural anthropologist Ernest Gellner: E. Gellner, "Islam and Marxism: Some Comparisons", *International Affairs*, Vol. 67, No. 1, January 1991, pp. 1-6.

120 See: B. Bawer, *Surrender: Appeasing Islam, Sacrificing Freedom*, Doubleday, New York, 2009.

121 A. Dershowitz, *Why Terrorism Works: Understanding the Threat, Responding to the Challenge*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2002.

122 See on this: R. Hasan, "We Need a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Voltaire to Fight the Growing Power of Censorship Around the World", *The Independent*, 23 October 2012.

freedom of assembly and association, and their freedom of movement. And not only that. One may refuse them entry into the country, evict them if their anti-democratic activities come to the fore; in short, Islamists may be curtailed in their civil rights.

Those who are opposed to militant democracy as applied to Islamists find this hard to accept. They have an absolutist, not to say fundamentalist, conception of civil rights, meaning that even your worst enemies ‘cannot be deprived of their rights’. This sounds fine and the critics of militant democracy usually do no more than expressing these nice sounding moral principles. This is called “virtue signaling”.<sup>123</sup> You make clear to your audience that you are a good person. But if one really realizes what those persons are saying, it becomes clear that the consequences would be disastrous if taken seriously. It means that those people are prepared to let the democratic order destroyed, as long as they can continue cultivating their progressive self-image. Their views are suicidal. *Fiat Justitia pereat mundus*.<sup>124</sup> They are supporters of defenceless democracy and this means that ultimately democracy will vanish, viz. as soon as the theoterrorists decide the time has come.

#### WHAT REALLY WORRIES THE CRITICS OF MILITANT DEMOCRACY

But so far, we have not dealt with the deepest fear of the critics of militant democracy. They are concerned about the civil rights for the Islamists. But they are also concerned about the rights of ordinary non-Islamist Muslims.

They think militant democracy applied to Islamists can lead to discriminatory measures towards Muslims. Wilfred again:

If one were to concede that Islamism represented a new global ideological war akin to those with fascism and communism, the fact that the previous two ideological wars were marked by such humanitarian embarrassments as Congressional witch-hunts, blacklists, internment camps, and government registries should be enough to give us more than a little pause.

Pause, yes. Total rejection to look the tiger in the eye, no. How to answer Wilfred? Is there an answer?

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<sup>123</sup> P. Nielsen, *How to Debate the Left on Islam*, Second Edition, Lexington, 2017, p. 22.

<sup>124</sup> “Let justice be done, though the world perish.”

I think there is. But before formulating this answer, I first want to concede this criticism addresses a valid point. We have to confess to Wilfred that, indeed, militant democracy is a dangerous concept. It is dangerous, because it can be misused. The examples are legion. In the times of McCarthyism we saw the excesses of anti-communism.

### MCCARTHYISM

Joseph McCarthy (1908-1957) was a senator from Wisconsin who made history with a series of investigations and hearings during the 1950s.<sup>125</sup> His aim was to expose communist infiltration in the US government. His initial claim was that 205 communists had infiltrated the State Department.

McCarthy's action did not come out of nothing. President Harry S. Truman (1884-1972) had tried to demonstrate his own concern about communism. He did this with a loyalty programme for federal employees. Pivotal for the struggle against communism was McCarthy's speech in West Virginia on 9 February 1950, when he referred to Abraham Lincoln who brought peace to America. His own time, McCarthy claimed, was not a time of peace. It was the time of the 'cold war', a time when the world was split into two vast, increasingly hostile armed camps. The dividing lines McCarthy sees between 'our Western Christian world' on the one hand and the 'atheistic Communist world' on the other. The atheist world McCarthy sees as committed to 'the religion of immorality'.

Karl Marx dismissed God as a hoax, and Lenin and Stalin have added in clear-cut, unmistakable language their resolve that no nation, no people who believe in a god, can exist side by side with their communistic state.

The danger of Stalin and communism in general, McCarthy stated, was proved by what the Russian dictator had said two years after the end of the Second World War. Stalin had said:

To think that the Communist revolution can be carried out peacefully, within the framework of a Christian democracy, means one has either gone out of one's mind and lost all normal understanding, or has grossly and openly repudiated the Communist revolution.

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<sup>125</sup> See for some background information: P. J. Achter, "McCarthyism", *Encyclopedia Britannica*; "Enemies from Within: Senator Joseph R. McCarthy's Accusations of Disloyalty", *History Matters, the U.S. Survey Course on the Web*.

Anyone who reads this carefully, and ponders over the meaning, must acknowledge that communism is a threat. But the most important point for the concept of militant democracy is what is followed by this. McCarthy quotes an outstanding historical figure with: “When a great democracy is destroyed, it will not be from enemies from without, but rather because of enemies from within.” So, he went on the search for the enemies from within and claimed to have a list of 205 names working within the State Department.

This number of 205 was soon decreased to only 57, when, in a letter to president Harry Truman of 11 February 1950 – so only three days after the West Virginia speech – he spoke of “57 Communists who are in the State Department”. He prodded Truman to a more active stance in the search for communists to avoid the Democratic Party that could be accused of being the ‘bedfellow of international communism’. McCarthy’s credibility was successfully undermined by incisive criticism of the journalist Edward R. Murrow during his television show.

What McCarthyism can teach us is that militant democracy is a dangerous concept. It can lead to disproportionate and unjust measures to supposed ‘enemies from within’. In that sense militant democracy is like war. War can be terribly unjust. But the question is, of course, does it mean *that war is always unjust*?<sup>126</sup> Is pacifism the answer? That is exactly the problem with Wilfred. His answer will be yes. And with Wilfreds at the helm of the state, countries will always be overrun by the villains of this world, a world in which Hitler has the last word.

#### McCARTHYISM AND ANTI-COMMUNISM

From the fact that unjust wars are being conducted, Wilfred will conclude that there cannot be a just war. And from the fact that McCarthyist anti-communism exists, Wilfred concludes that every form of anti-communism is tainted or at least suspicious. The term ‘cold warrior’ is used as a term of abuse or has at least a deprecatory undertone. Again, this is false. In 1949 Louis Fischer, André Gide, Arthur Koestler, Ignazio Silone, Stephen Spender and Richard Wright published *The God That Failed*.<sup>127</sup> They were famous ex-communists who

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126 See on this: A. C. Grayling, *War: An Inquiry*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2017; M. Byers, *War Law: International Law and Armed Conflict*, Atlantic Books, London, 2005; C. Catherwood, *Making War in the Name of God*, Citadel Press, Kensington Publishing Corp., New York, 2007; J. R. Hoffmann, ed., *The Just War and Jihad: Violence in Judaism, Christianity, & Islam*, Prometheus Books, Amherst, New York, 2006.

127 R. Crossman, ed., *The God that Failed*, Ayer Company, Publishers, Inc., Salem, New Hampshire, 1984 (1949).

broke with their past convictions. The book is testimony of their disillusionment with communism. The book was edited by Richard Crossman, a British Member of Parliament, and had a profound influence on the post-war discussion on communism.

One of the most prominent participants to this project was Arthur Koestler (1905-1983), a Hungarian-British author and journalist, who joined the Communist Party of Germany in 1931 until his resignation in 1938, being disillusioned by the horrors of Stalinism. His novel *Darkness at Noon* (1940)<sup>128</sup> had gained him international fame. He was one of the precursors of the anti-totalitarian critique of both communism and fascism.<sup>129</sup>

A second wave of anti-communist writing is connected to the American neo-conservatives who came to the fore during the Reagan administration.<sup>130</sup> Neo-conservatives advocate the promotion of democracy and American national interest in international affairs. They warn against communism and other types of political radicalism and they favour interventionism as an important element of international policy.<sup>131</sup> The movement is connected to the Jewish monthly *Commentary*, published by the American Jewish Committee. An important philosophical source of inspiration is to be found in the work of the political philosopher Leo Strauss (1899-1973).<sup>132</sup>

#### STALIN AND THE ENEMY FROM WITHIN

The problem of the 'enemy from within' is not only a problem for democracies, of course. We also have it with nondemocratic forms of government. Truman and his wayward disciple McCarthy wanted to combat communism. And in its attempt to get rid of the communists McCarthy sought refuge to techniques that resembled those of Stalin himself. After Stalin (1878-1953), the great communist leader was Nikita Khrushchev (1894-1971). Khrushchev criticized the personality cult of Stalin in 1956, giving vent to the atrocities of Stalin during the purges in the 1930s. Khrushchev referred to a letter from Lenin of December 1922, saying:

128 A. Koestler, *Darkness at Noon*, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1982 (1940).

129 See: A. Koestler, *The Yogi and the Commissar and Other Essays*, with a preface by the author, Hutchinson, London Melbourne, 1965 (1945) and I. Hamilton, *Koestler: A Biography*, Secker & Warburg, London, 1982.

130 I. Kristol, *Neoconservatism: The Autobiography of an Idea*, Selected Essays 1949-1995, The Free Press, New York, 1995; D. Murray, *Neoconservatism: Why We Need It?*, The Social Affairs Unit, London, 2005.

131 D. Frum and R. Perle, *An End to Evil: How to Win the War on Terror*, Ballantine Books, New York, 2003. See for a critical approach: J. Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans: The History of Bush's War Cabinet*, Penguin Books, London, 2004.

132 S.-B. Drury, *The Political Ideas of Leo Strauss*, Updated Edition, with a new introduction by the author, Palgrave, Macmillan, 2005 (1998).

After taking over the position of Secretary General, Comrade Stalin accumulated in his hands immeasurable power and I am not certain whether he will be always able to use this power with the required care.<sup>133</sup>

In the 1930s the “practice of mass repression through the Government apparatus was born”, Khrushchev says.<sup>134</sup> First against Trotskyites, Zinovievites, Bukharinites, but later also against many ‘honest Communists’. Under Stalin originated the concept of “enemy of the people”, Khrushchev reveals.

This term automatically rendered it unnecessary that the ideological errors of a man or men engaged in a controversy be proven; this term made possible the use of the cruelest repression, violating all norms of revolutionary legality, against anyone who in any way disagreed with Stalin (...).<sup>135</sup>

During many of the fabricated court cases the accused were charged with the preparation of terrorist acts, Khrushchev tells us, and this deprived them of any possibility that their cases might be re-examined.<sup>136</sup> Khrushchev does not make that comparison, of course, but the similarities between Stalin’s actions and McCarthyism are striking. The consequences for the targets of McCarthy’s criticism were less severe than for Stalin’s victims, but the techniques of what we call nowadays ‘demonization’ are clear.

The lessons Khrushchev draws from all this are only partially convincing. His conclusion is: we have to avoid the personality cult that had grown around Stalin. We can acknowledge that, but at the same time realize that Khrushchev’s solution is not enough. We also have to be on our guard against unfounded suspicions. We have to stick to the principles of fair trial. But, and now I repeat what I also said about McCarthyism, we cannot conclude from this that the whole notion of ‘enemies from within’ is spurious, because the world is not only filled with friends. There are real enemies in this world and some of those use the strategy of undermining a state, an organization, society, from within. Not with overt violence, but with spreading lies, causing havoc, organizing revolt, supporting violent action. What Tibi called ‘institutional Islamism’ is such an undermining factor. And one of the strategies of institutional Islamists is what president Macron calls ‘separatism’: the separation of small communities, closed communities, with antinational ideologies undermining the open society.

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133 See: N. Sergeyevich Khrushchev, “The Personality Cult and Its Consequences”, 24-25 February 1956, in: H. Williams, *Great Speeches of Our Time*, Quercus, London, 2013 (2009), pp. 102-108, 103.

134 *Ibid.*, p. 103.

135 *Ibid.*

136 *Ibid.*

GERMANY'S *BERUFSVERBOTE*

Germany had its own experience with the enemies from within. Here was a country that had the most devastating experience with being too naïve about those who had vowed to destroy democracy as soon as they came to power. So, the political system was characterized by Germany's Supreme Court (*Bundesverfassungsgericht*) as a "militant" ("streitbare, wehrhafte") democracy. The German freedom loving democratic basic order ("freiheitliche demokratische Grundordnung") is protected, even though the Germans realize that this will limit the exercise of certain fundamental rights in some situations. The Germans decided to be more tough on the communists who promised the same as the Nazis, *i.e.* to finish with parliamentary democracy. In post-war Germany there were "Berufsverbote" for communists, because communists were a danger for the post-war democratic order as Nazis were a threat for the democratic order of Weimar. It would be silly to suppose that the use of militant democracy in the struggle against Islamism was not susceptible for such excesses. But can we say that because of the dangers of McCarthyism communism should be considered an innocuous and democratic creed? Or should we say that because of the dangers of McCarthyism Popper's criticism of Marxism in *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (1945)<sup>137</sup> or Hannah Arendt's criticism of totalitarianism in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951)<sup>138</sup> should be shunned?

Let me summarize. The problem with Wilfred is that he does not realize that he is living in a world that has been created for him by previous generations which were seriously prepared to make dirty hands to save the greater good. Wilfred does not want to do this. He thinks that he can engage in virtue signalling and presenting 'dangers' to our defence of democracy without even considering the dangers of doing nothing. And as we know (or ought to know): "All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing."

I repeat, it is undeniable that militant democracy can lead to all the witch-hunts and blacklists Wilfred is referring to, but we have to work for the right application of militant democracy. We simply cannot afford 'to do nothing' when the fundamental democratic order is destroyed by the enemies of the open society. And here Nazism, communism and Islamism work together to the same end.<sup>139</sup>

137 K. Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, Volume 1, The Spell of Plato, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London and Henley, 1977 (1945); K. Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, Volume 2, The High Tide of Prophecy Hegel, Marx, and the Aftermath, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London and Henley, 1977 (1945).

138 H. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Schocken Books, New York, 1951.

139 See on the similarities between Islamism and communism: A. Del Valle, *La stratégie de l'intimidation: du terrorisme jihadiste à l'islamiquement correct*, édition revue et corrigé, L'Artilleur, Paris, 2018, pp. 300-306.

## OUR PRESENT POLITICIANS

Let me make some final remarks to conclude this contribution on militant democracy, the necessity to apply this concept to our contemporary ideological challenge (Islamism) and the dangers inherent in doing this. Whoever has studied our present political scene will have noticed that there are many Wilfreds among our politicians. After every new terrorist attack, we can hear them pontificating on great principles, promising to bring the culprits to justice, but they are extremely reluctant to give a diagnosis of contemporary theoterrorism. In fact, they profess to combat a monster they have no idea what it looks like. The central question is how long will it take for our politicians to understand, and acknowledge, that their efforts in curbing militant Islam have failed. The terrorist attacks and the manifestations of radicalization are all around us. But prominent politicians like Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton and David Cameron cultivated a so-called non-confrontational language. They are reluctant to speak of 'Islamism', 'radical Islam', 'political Islam' or 'militant Islam'. Some of them only wanted to speak of 'violent extremism'.<sup>140</sup> But the problem is: as long as you refuse to name and study the ideology that motives the terrorists, all efforts to combat that ideology are doomed to failure. The previous generation of ruling politicians emphatically believed that as long as you do not provoke the terrorists, they would in all likelihood change their world view and help to develop it into something more tolerant and peace loving. This turned out to be a strategic mistake.

A second conclusion we can draw upon the material presented in this essay is that the struggle against 'Islamism' and the protection of liberal democracy has an important cultural dimension. What we need is *cultural* counterterrorism. Because the previous generation of politicians could not bring itself to the acknowledgement that contemporary terrorism is based on an ideology ('Islamism') the struggle against terrorism was restricted to military and judicial measures. In short: when a terrorist attack had taken place, and the judicial authorities were successful in finding the culprits and bringing them to justice, the terrorists were punished and that was the end of it. But once we define the struggle against terrorism as rooted in cultural and ideological differences the need for prevention comes to the fore. How to avoid "breeding Bin Ladens"?<sup>141</sup> The struggle against Islamism cannot be fought with only military means. It is also a cultural confrontation.<sup>142</sup> The struggle between the closed communities and the open society is also a struggle for the hearts and

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140 See e.g. B. Obama, "Speech in Cairo", *The New York Times*, 4 June 2009.

141 Z. Shore, *Breeding Bin Ladens: America, Islam, and the Future of Europe*, The John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 2006.

142 P. Cliteur, "Cultural Counter-Terrorism", in: G. Molier, A. Ellian, and D. Suurland, eds., *Terrorism, Ideology, Law, and Policy*, Republic of Letters Publishing, Dordrecht, 2011, pp. 457-490.

minds. Like Fukuyama, our politicians seem to have difficulties in seeing that there was a new ideology in the making which has won the struggle for the hearts and minds of vulnerable youngsters in their neighbourhoods,<sup>143</sup> and now they (and we) see the manifestations of their blindness all around us in the form of terrorist attacks. But although late, it may be not too late for a change of policy. What we need is a paradigm change. To underline the necessity of this, let us conclude with another part of Goebbels's satirical rejection of democracy:

We are an anti-parliamentarian party that for good reasons rejects the Weimar constitution and its republican institutions. We oppose a fake democracy that treats the intelligent and the foolish, the industrious and the lazy, in the same way. We see in the present system of majorities and organized irresponsibility the main cause of our steadily increasing miseries. So why do we want to be in the Reichstag? We enter the Reichstag to arm ourselves with democracy's weapons. If democracy is foolish enough to give us free railway passes and salaries, that is its problem. It does not concern us. Any way of bringing about the revolution is fine by us.<sup>144</sup>

The Islamist ideologues also see the present parliamentary democracies of Europe as 'fake democracies', political systems that have to give way to the reign of God. By taking the measures that were sorely lacking in the Weimar Republic, *i.e.* in the time the Nazis came to power, European democracies can protect themselves to this new test. But before this is about to happen, the first step is to recognize that there is a challenge at all.

If the open society wants to survive, it has to take the danger of closed communities seriously. I want to close with some formulations by the French philosopher Régis Debray, quoted in Gérard Darmanin's essay on the *laïcité*. Debray presents the French Republic as "démocratie plus". Debray continues with "the Republic is freedom, plus reason." One can also say that the Republic is a more ambitious democracy. It is democracy where the principles of the Enlightenment are taken seriously. The Enlightenment incarnated a

143 See: G. Kepel (avec Antoine Jardin), *Terreur dans l'hexagone: Genèse du djihad Français*, Gallimard, Paris, 2015.

144 See on the Nazi's and Weimar: R. Blommestijn, "Defending the Free Democratic Basic Order – Four Stages of Combatting Enemies of the State in Germany", in: A. Ellian, B. Rijpkema, and G. Molier, eds., *Terrorism and Counterterrorism after the Caliphate*, International Publishing Eleven, The Hague, 2020, pp. 151-173; A. Ellian and R. Blommestijn, "100 jaar Weimar", *Nederlands Juristenblad*, 22 November 2019, afl. 40, 2019, pp. 3018-3024.

notion of citizenship that made it possible for everyone to integrate into the national community, without distinction, ‘even’ for people with a religion.<sup>145</sup>

Not to the same extent as France, but the Netherlands has been hit hard by contemporary Islamist terrorism. And it can play a role in raising consciousness about the ideological nature of contemporary terrorism. The most recent debate in the Second Chamber of Parliament on 14 January 2021 about the dangers of financial support from ‘unfree countries’ makes clear that most of the fractions in parliament are aware that there are challenges to face.<sup>146</sup> There is, however, still little recognition of the fact that we are confronted with an ideological challenge that requires, first, an extensive study of the nature of Islamism as an ideology and, second, a strategy to counter this.

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145 G. Darmanin, *Le séparatisme islamiste: manifeste pour la laïcité*, Éditions de l’observatoire, Paris, 2021, p. 32.

146 “Debat over het verslag van de Parlementaire ondervragingscommissie ongewenste beïnvloeding uit onvrije landen (POCOB) ‘(On)zichtbare invloed (35228)”, 35 228, 14 januari 2021.