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ISLAM AND THE MYTH OF CONFRONTATION

Religion and Politics in the Middle East

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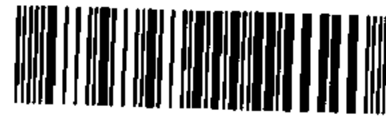

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Anti-Muslimism and Contemporary Politics: One Ideology or Many?

Hostility to 'Islam', and the notion that there exists an 'Islamic threat' external to European society, has in recent years come to acquire an additional, more inward-looking aspect, and to be directed against Muslims living in Western and other non-Muslim societies. Racism in European countries, above all in France, has taken on a more explicitly anti-Muslim character. In the USA, where Muslims are not a noticeable immigrant community, anti-Islamic rhetoric is a significant factor in political discourse; in India it has provided the mainstay of the Hindu chauvinist right.

The tone of this rhetoric is often alarmist, and encompasses racist, xenophobic and stereotyping elements. The term 'anti-Muslimism' is used here to signify such a diffuse ideology, one rarely expressed in purely religious terms, but usually mixed in with other rhetorics and ideologies. In so far as one can term it thus, anti-Muslimism is a semi-ideology, that is, a body of ideas that, like gender and racial prejudice, is often articulated in conjunction with others that have a greater potential to function independently. It involves not so much hostility to Islam as a religion – indeed, few contemporary anti-Muslimists take issue with the claim of Muhammad to be a prophet, or with other theological beliefs – but hostility to *Muslims*, to communities of peoples whose sole or main religion is Islam and whose Islamic character, real or invented, forms one of the objects of prejudice. In this sense anti-Muslimism often overlaps with forms of ethnic prejudice, covering peoples within which there may well be a significant non-Muslim element, such as Albanians, Palestinians or even Caucasians.

At first, it would appear that the prevalence of this rhetoric poses no analytic problems. It is seen by many Muslims purely as a continuation of the enduring hostility of the non-Muslim world to their religion, and is often regarded in the West as a continuation of the rivalry with the Islamic world and the threat of Muslim invasion that goes back to the seventh century. Words such as embedded, engrained, age-old and traditional come into play, along with such speculation as that recently revised by Samuel Huntington, that conflict repeatedly arises along historically established cultural 'fault-lines'.[1] For some, hostility to Muslims requires no justification because it is itself a legitimate response to the threats and the militant rhetoric that emerge from the Muslim world.

But analysis needs to go further than this. In the first place, invoking history can provide little guidance as to why and how such rhetoric is used now. Unless we argue for the existence of transhistorical ideological formations, Jungian archetypes or Blochian *mentalités* which determine our behaviour, the appeal to history is unilluminating. While (for both sides) history certainly provides a reserve of ideological themes upon which to draw, the question of why and how a certain rhetoric emerged when it did still has to be asked. This search for contingent causes also suggests that even in the present historical period there may be no single reason for the re-emergence of anti-Muslimism. The rhetoric of one country may well influence another, – Serbian stress on Muslim 'terrorism' is an obvious case in point – but while there may be elements of common determination, it may also be the case that in each particular instance rhetoric originates from different causes and serves different purposes.

This stress on contingency is directly pertinent to a second explanatory belief, common among many Muslims, that anti-Islamist prejudice is an enduring feature of non-Muslim society. In this perspective the current prevalence of anti-Muslim sentiment requires no particular explanation according to time or place. There is, and has always been, a worldwide anti-Islamic conspiracy, which manifests itself in different forms and is an intrinsic part of the global hostility to Muslims. Thus long-standing issues such as those concerning Palestine, Kashmir and the southern Philippines are all seen as part of some secular hostility going

back to the crusades, and have now been joined by a new set of products of that conspiracy – Bosnia, Salman Rushdie, Nagorno-Karabagh, conflicts over veiling and education in Western Europe. The first thing to say about this approach is that it is itself ahistorical and essentialist, though it is of course only one instance of many such approaches based on transhistorical explanations and is inevitably promoted by those who claim leadership of 'victim' groups. In nationalist contexts, too, the world is full of people claiming that their people are the victims of some timeless and pervasive hostility – the Serbs and the Greeks are among the more prominent recent cases. Equally common in contexts of racial and gender conflict are analyses based on timeless and apparently determinant phenomena (which racism and patriarchy can be represented as). The same applies to the most brutal of all twentieth-century experiences, that of the Jews. The claim that gentile society is in some way intrinsically and pervasively anti-semitic is common to many writers, and the suggestion that it may not be, that it has an element of contingency and indeed variety, is often in itself seen as a concession to the racism identified.

This issue of timeless hostility is reinforced by those who justify hostility to 'Islam' on the grounds that it is indeed the Muslim world that is aggressive, has always been so, and which deserves the opposition which it has produced. The argument that in some way Muslims 'deserve' or 'provoke' the resentment they encounter rests upon two potentially reinforcing arguments. The first is psychological: that the assertion by Muslims of an all-pervasive menacing hostility is an example of projection – that is, of identification with the 'other', the non-Muslim world, of something that is in fact a *product* of the Muslim world. In other words, Islam's recurrent emphasis on *khatar*, corruption and the rest, reflects the aggressiveness of Muslims, not that of their opponents. The second argument is more concrete and contemporary, namely that it does not take one long to find, in the statements of Muslim leaders, claims of precisely the kind of confrontation, rivalry, incompatibility that the anti-Muslimists assert. Such statements have been found throughout Muslim history and are the stock in trade of the Islamists: Sayyid Qutb on the evils of Western *jahiliyya*, or Khomeini on the corruption of the West, are cases in point. More

immediately, as we have seen in chapter 4, many Islamists have responded to the collapse of communism by arguing that they are indeed the successor challenge to the West, and a more long-lasting and effective one at that. Khomeini made precisely this point in his curious letter to Gorbachev in 1989; in Britain, the leader of the 'Muslim Parliament', Kalim Saddiqi, repeatedly states that the next century will be characterized by the Islamic challenge to the West. As noted in chapter 4, we are therefore, in purely ideological terms, faced with a phenomenon that is quite unlike those other stereotypical hostilities, anti-communism and anti-semitism. In the case of anti-semitism, Jews did not subscribe to the myths of the anti-semites; and in the case of anti-communism, there was certainly a communist challenge from 1917 to the mid-1980s but it did not take the form that it was often claimed to take.

Analysis of anti-Muslimism has, therefore, to take account of these complexities: it has to provide an explanation that, while aware of historical continuities, is contingent and specific; it has to show how the very real cases of anti-Muslimism have causes other than that of timeless *kafir* hostility, and it has to provide alternative explanations for cases which Islamists see as proving their point – Bosnia is an obvious example. It has to accept that Islamist propaganda often compounds anti-Muslimism, but to separate out what are legitimate issues of disagreement or rivalry between Muslims and non-Muslims from the projection of anything defined as 'Islamic' as part of some global, and unitary, challenge. In this particular context, analysis of Islamism and Islamist movements that brings out the contingency and variety within them, and the role of contemporary political and social factors, allows for a separation of myth and reality through the establishment of some elementary points, which would include the fact that 'Islam' is not one phenomenon but many, that the Islamic states have not posed a strategic threat to the West since the seventeenth century, and that the issues underlying current unrest are ones of development and political change.

Equally, an analysis of anti-Muslimism provides the context for developing what can be a discussion, or dispute, between Muslims and non-Muslims over issues that are genuinely in dispute and in which morals, traditions and interpretation vary. The worst that

such an analysis could do would be to argue that there were no issues at stake, or that all criticism of the Islamic religion, whether doctrine or practice, is itself based on prejudice.

The following analysis is an attempt to clarify the current origins and character of anti-Muslimism, with the intention of separating out those issues which are legitimately in dispute from those which are not. It addresses, but makes no prior assumptions about, the extent to which history plays a role in determining these and the extent to which there are similarities in the emergence of anti-Muslimism in different countries. This analysis leaves open the question of how far discourses that can be seen as anti-Muslim are, in cause or content, wholly or mainly directed against the Islamic religion, and how far the anti-Muslim theme is in fact deployed in contexts where it is issues of ethnicity and disputes over territory or power that are at stake, and where it may be directed against peoples who are either not Islamist in political character (such as Bosnians) or who are only partly Muslim (Palestinians, Eritreans, Albanians). Rather, the aim here is to begin with some case-studies and to address four broad questions: first, the history of anti-Muslimism in each particular context, the history being seen not principally as being cause or origin, but as thematic reserve; second, the growth of anti-Muslim rhetoric and movements over the past decades; third, the particular themes emphasized in this rhetoric; fourth, the apparent functions of this rhetoric within each country.

The term 'anti-Muslimism' is, therefore, used to cover not only hostility to the Islamic religion itself, but also to peoples who are, in whole or significant part, Muslim and who are conventionally categorized as being part of the Muslim world. Criticisms that are, on the basis of available evidence, legitimate are not covered by this term: thus critical discussions of Sudan's and Iran's human rights record, or of Quranic verses sanctioning rape in marriage or patriarchal authority over women, or of the practice of clitero-dectomy or the terrorist acts of Islamist organizations, are not subjects of anti-Muslimism, although Islamists will be quick to say they are.[2] It is never easy to identify what is, and is not, the product of prejudice, but we all need such distinctions and must try ourselves to make them. To say that one Bahai, or Jewish or Armenian banker is corrupt and exploitative may, if the evidence

is there, be valid; to say he is corrupt *because* he is Bahai, or Jewish, or Armenian, or to say that because one is, all are, is prejudice, as is the attempt to deny that peoples other than these are not similarly capable of corruption. Similar distinctions can, and should, be made with regard to issues raised in the context of Islam.

Orthodox Christianity: Serbia and Greece

After the rise of Islam in the seventh century, Orthodox Christianity had a moving, often hostile frontier with the Islamic world to which it progressively lost territory, leading to the fall of Constantinople in 1453 and the Ottoman conquest of the Balkans in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. As historians have pointed out, the challenge of Islam had important consequences within the Orthodox world. The rise of iconoclasm in the eighth and ninth centuries was, for example, a response to Islamic hostility to images of living beings.[3] But the elements of history that are most pertinent to contemporary anti-Muslimism date from the conquest of the Balkans. From this period certain central themes emerged. These included the image of the Orthodox Christian lands as the barrier or rampart between the Muslim world and Europe; the notion of the Muslims as demographically superior and as able to expand rapidly through high birth-rates and settlement; the memory of the destruction of Christian holy places by Muslims; and the sense of the trauma and pathos of conquest despite heroic opposition. In the Serbian case, much mythology and sentiment surrounds the battle of Kosovo in 1389, when the Serbian Tsar was defeated by the Ottoman armies. The River Drina which traverses Serbia was also invested with special significance because of the battles of that time. In the Greek case, the loss of Constantinople, the preferred capital of Hellenism, plays a similar role.[4] To these themes the Ottoman period added a number of others. The Muslim or Turkish rulers (the two terms used interchangeably) were caricatured as cruel and corrupt; the Turks were said to favour particular forms of brutality, including homosexual rape, against Christians;[5] and the image arose of the Muslim populations moving into previously Christian lands. A culture of

resentment, paranoia and self-pity was thus generated and codified with the rise of the nationalist movements in the nineteenth century which led to the independence of Greece in 1830 and of Serbia in 1878. This culture was perhaps all the more bombastic because Ottoman rule had in fact been rather benign: Christian communities had collaborated with the Turkish regime, and relations between the three religious communities of the Balkans – Catholic, Orthodox, Muslim – were relatively harmonious. To the shame of defeat at Kosovo was added that of centuries of collusion.[6]

The rise of a new anti-Muslimism in Serbia draws, in the first instance, on the experience of World War Two, when significant Muslim support from Bosnia and elsewhere was provided to the Croatian ustasha state, with the backing of, among others, Hajj Amin al-Husseini. In postwar Yugoslavia such ideas were suppressed in the name of a new pluralism of nationalities, and in 1974 the Muslims of Yugoslavia, of whom there were around 2 million, were declared to be a third major nationality of the country, along with Serbs and Croats. Propaganda against Islam and Muslims began to emerge later, and in relation to two issues in particular. The first was the migration of large numbers of Albanians into Kosovo, especially in the post-World War Two period, and the subsequent Serbian charge that this was another case of demographic invasion which would mean the weakening of Serbian identity. The second issue centred on the trials of groups of Bosnian Muslims accused of being pan-Islamists, of receiving support from Turkey and/or Iran, and of simultaneously being in league with an anti-Yugoslav (in other words anti-Serb) exile network based in Vienna. In the 1980s, when Iranian press reports began criticizing Yugoslavia for its treatment of Muslims, and for problems relating to the building of mosques, the Yugoslav communist press increased its level of anti-Islamist propaganda.

With the disintegration of the communist regime after the death of Tito, Serbian nationalism became a more explicit part of government policy.[7] Serbian academics, mobilized by the regime, produced a history that denied the legitimacy of the Muslim communities in the Balkans – whether Bosnian, Albanian or Bulgarian – and which sought to portray Muslims as playing a central part in some perennial anti-Serb and anti-European

conspiracy. One recurrent theme was the claim that the Bosnian Muslims were really Serbs who had converted to Islam for financial reasons and hence were traitors to the Serbian nation.[8] The function of this writing, directed both at Serbs and at a hopefully broader anti-Muslim European public, was to degrade and demonize the Bosnian and other Muslims, and thus to legitimize and reinforce the persecution of these peoples.[9] Above all, it served to deny the right of the Bosnians to self-determination, to their own state. Bosnia, it was claimed, was an invention of the communists in 1945. The issue of Kosovo became central to the tone of Serbian nationalism, with the press replete with articles on the threat posed by the Albanians. This was linked to the crescendo of nationalist sentiment that accompanied celebrations of the six hundredth anniversary of the battle in 1989. Serbian propaganda also began to report on the takeover and/or destruction of Christian holy places by Albanians. The issue of homosexual rape was given special prominence in two particular cases. In one instance a Serb named Martinovic was allegedly attacked by a group of Muslims on 1 May 1985 and had a bottle shoved up his rectum.[10] Martinovic became a national symbol, with poems lamenting his fate and pictures of him on the cross. The second case was that of the leader of the nationalist Serbs, the politician Vojislav Seselj, who claimed to have been raped seventeen times by Muslim policemen while under arrest in Bosnia. Both cases were embellished with propaganda about Turkey's expansionist aim to reconquer the Balkans, with Serbia now portrayed as the bulwark against the new Islamic threat, both Serbia and Greece facing encirclement.

The outbreak of fighting in Yugoslavia from 1991 saw the further development of these themes. Here it is important to note that it is not only the Serb leadership of Slobodan Milosevic and his Serbian Socialist Party (the former League of Communists of Serbia) which is responsible. While Milosevic does routinely attack the Albanian presence in Kosovo, and denounces forces which he claims are trying to fragment Yugoslavia/Serbia, his two main opponents, Seselj of the Serbian far-right Radical Party and the otherwise more centrist Vuk Draskovic of the SNO (Srpski Narodna Obnova), have gone much further than Milosevic in anti-Muslimism. Thus Draskovic made a particular point of spreading alarm about the

Islamic threat in his 1990 election campaign, and spoke of the rise of what he termed 'the ustasha janissary state'. He said he would 'cut off the hand' of anyone raising a Muslim flag. In Croatia, a Catholic country ruled not by the Ottomans but by the Austro-Hungarian empire, Franjo Tudjman has been equally vociferous in his anti-Muslimism, in addition to his well-known anti-semitism (in private, he regularly refers to Bosnian president Izetbegovic as 'the Algerian'). Of course, one of the things Croatian nationalists denounce the Turks for is settling *Serbs* in the Krajina area, four or five centuries ago. What all this would suggest is that the prevalence of anti-Muslimism in this context has at least as much to do with contemporary needs and calculations as with any historical determination.

In Serbo-Croat there is a range of words used to vilify Muslims: the most common are *turkcin*, 'Turk', and *balija*, usually meaning a violent, lazy and stubborn person.[11] A casual reading of Serbian press materials since the start of the war in Bosnia reveals a plethora of anti-Muslimist themes, some drawing on the Serbian past, others obviously drawn from available international themes: Muslims using chemical weapons, Islamist terrorists and fundamentalists pouring into Bosnia, the destruction of Orthodox churches and monasteries, drug-running from Muslim areas, the faking of human rights abuses and of starvation by Muslims, Turkish and Iranian strategic plans, German collusion with Muslims in anti-Serb policy, fundamentalist laws being applied to women in areas under the control of the Sarajevo government.[12] A graphic illustration of this sentiment was given in an interview with the Serbian Bosnian military commander General Ratko Mladic in August 1993.[13] Mladic evoked the importance of the Drina: 'This river, the Drina, is the spine of the Serb state and it will be the mother of Serbia in the future. Some forces in the West did not want the Berlin Wall, but they wanted a border along the Drina. It will never be a borderline again.' Rejecting accusations about his ethnic cleansing, he claimed that the Serbs were the victims: 'Serb mothers watched their children taken away by the *Musulmani* to become sultan's kids to be sold as slaves ... The Islamic world does not have the atomic bomb, but it does have a demographic bomb. Atomic bombs are under some kind of control. Their enormous reproduction is not under any kind of control.' Wherever Muslims go, Mladic stated, 'very swiftly one man with five or six wives creates a village. Then they build a mosque and there you have it! Gorazde is not Istanbul, not Izmir, not Ankara. The Muslims who live there are not of that soil. They were not raised there.' Mladic talked confidently about how he would blockade UN soldiers and Muslims into Bosnian towns: 'When the snow is 3 metres thick, the UN will beg us to bring them food.' By mid-1994 Mladic's forces had destroyed upwards of 800 of the 2,000 Muslim places of worship in Bosnia.

In the case of Greece, a somewhat different configuration has operated. Since 1821 and in the recurrent crises of World War One and more recent clashes over Cyprus, Greek animosity has, in particular, been directed against Turkey and, to a lesser extent, Albania, where a Greek Orthodox minority was persecuted under Hoxha's regime. Thus in Greek nationalist rhetoric the threat of Turkey is recurrent – in Cyprus, in the Aegean and, perhaps most dangerously, in the Greek-held area of western Thrace where a Turkish-speaking minority still exists. In the novels of Nicos Kazantzakis, for example, Turks are referred to as 'dogs'. More recently, Turkish influence in post-Soviet states, and the war in Yugoslavia, has aroused anti-Turkish and more generally anti-Muslim sentiment in Greece. As Radovan Karadzic, the Bosnian Serb leader, stated when visiting Athens in May 1993: 'Only God and the Greeks are with us.'

Beyond a recurrent nationalist Turcophobia, certain particular themes have contributed to this.'[14] First, the issue of western Thrace is very sensitive in Greek politics, and there is a widespread belief that the Turks, through the local minority, will try to get it back. In 1990 anxiety about this reached fever pitch when two Turkish-speaking deputies were elected to the Athens parliament: they have been the subject of nationalist vilification in the press ever since. Second, the end of communism in Albania has created friction with the new government in Tirana and unleashed chauvinism against the estimated 300,000 Albanians who have come to work in Greece, mainly as illegal immigrants. Third, the Greek Orthodox Church has become more alarmed and concerned about its position, in Greece and in other Orthodox countries, not so much as a result of Islam, but as a result of the resurgence of the Catholic and Uniate churches who claim not only souls but also property

and status. As a consequence the Greek Orthodox Church has become more assertive of its religious and social position and thus, indirectly, more hostile to the Islamic world.

These themes are all reflected in the Greek press with varying degrees of intensity. Thus the right-wing nationalist press regularly carries articles on Albanian and other Muslims as illegal immigrants (*lathrometanastis*), drug-smugglers, agents of a long-standing Turkish conspiracy, and so forth. Articles argue that the region of Epirus is under 'Albanian occupation'; headlines read 'Every day three hundred new illegal immigrants arrive',[15] 'Invasion of murderers', 'Illegal immigrants, the scourge', 'Threat to our society'. Many other articles stress the Turkish encirclement, the arc that threatens Greece. Interestingly, increased Turkish influence in Central Asia is often presented not as a welcome diversion from the Balkans, but as a sign of Ankara's expansionism, a token of what is to come in Greece.

However, the extent of this anti-Muslimism should not be overstated. In Greek national mythology the (Orthodox) Bulgarians have often ranked second only to the Turks as enemies: one of the main heroes of Greek national history is *vulgarochthonos*, the killer of Bulgarians. Greece has, traditionally, had good relations with many countries of the Middle East and has projected itself as the *yefira*, the bridge, between Europe and the Arab world. In some Greek nationalist propaganda the Jews are the main enemy, and the Arabs/Muslims even pitied as victims of the Jews. While the Greek political scene is rife with anti-Turkish and now anti-Macedonian propaganda, its coverage of issues around Islamic religion and of immigration varies from the grotesque to the objective. In all of this, hostility to Islam as a religion, derived from Greek Orthodox concerns, is insignificant: indeed it is the Catholic and Uniate threats that are seen as the greatest religious problem, not the Islamic.[16] Once again, it would appear to be secular, contemporary, political concerns such as strategic influence and immigration that provide the real occasion for anti-Muslimist ideology, rather than an animosity that is timeless and religiously based.

A third country, of historically Orthodox culture, which saw the mobilization of such sentiments was Bulgaria. Here, in the dying years of the communist regime, and to bolster its falling

fortunes from 1985 to 1989, the ruling party fell back on anti-Turkish and anti-Muslim racism, directed at the roughly 10 per cent of the population of Turkish origin who spoke Turkish, and at the Pomaks, a group of around 50,000 Bulgarian-speakers in the south-east of the country who had converted to Islam under the Ottomans. The basis for anti-Turkish and anti-Muslim racism already existed in Bulgaria, a legacy of centuries of Ottoman occupation and conflict with Turkey. Indeed, a study of words referring to Turks in Bulgarian found that around 90 per cent of them had negative connotations, and the Ottoman *robistvo* (enserfment) was the target of much nationalist denunciation. In general, relations between Bulgarians and Turks within Bulgaria had been reasonably good. The Turks had been allowed to use their language, to wear their *shalvar* or 'baggy' trousers, and to celebrate *bairam* along with Bulgarian national day. However, in the 1970s and 1980s the cultural and religious rights of Muslims had been curtailed, with closures of mosques and restrictions on education. Then in 1984 the Bulgarian Communist Party went a stage further and initiated a campaign to force Turks to acquire 'Bulgarian' names, arguing that all genuine Turks had left the country in 1945 and that all those who remained were in fact Bulgarians, that is, Christians who had been forcibly converted to Islam under the Ottomans.[17] This campaign was accompanied by propaganda about the Turkish threat, about those 'who dance to Ankara's tune', about the linking of Turkish ambitions to NATO encroachment on Bulgaria's sovereignty, about a possible replay of the Turkish invasion and annexation of part of Cyprus in 1974, and about the high birth-rate among Turks.[18] In 1989, when political controls were relaxed, the regime allowed, and in many ways instigated, the mass exodus of Turks from Bulgaria to Turkey. In the space of a few months, 350,000 Bulgarian Turks fled the country. If a year later about half of those who had fled returned, the human cost and long-term poisoning of Bulgarian life remained.[19] As in Serbia, the rise of hostility to Muslims, combining religious with nationalist hostility, reflected political instrumentality in a context of decomposition and crisis. The difference was that in Bulgaria, unlike Serbia, the collapse of communism led to a reversal of this policy and to a degree of progress, within the context of political pluralism.

India

The country in the world where anti-Muslimism has made perhaps the greatest impact in recent years, and where it is most central to a political and ideological mobilization, is India. Here the right-wing Hindu movement, represented by a cluster of overlapping groups, has made the campaign for a reassertion of the Hindu character of the country, against Muslim influence, its central programme. This has led to rising communal violence and to an increasingly hostile attitude to Muslims.[20] One slogan commonly heard in recent riots runs: '*Mussulmanonke do his sthan, Pakistan aur kabristan*' ('There are only two places for Muslims, Pakistan or the graveyard'). This is a cry that sits with chilling disingenuousness next to the claim that Pakistan has no right to exist anyway. Muslims are abused as *ganda* (low status, also low caste) and as *katwa* (literally, 'half-penis'). Often the Sanskrit word *mleccha*, meaning both outsider and impurity, is used. A literature of justification and abuse has been produced by the parties involved in this campaign. The pages of *The Organiser*, the weekly paper of the *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh* (RSS), are full of predictable themes: Muslim infiltration of Hindu regions, the fate of women in Muslim society, Pakistani support for terror in India, the destruction of Hindu holy places by Muslims.[21]

In one sense, this is not uniquely directed against Muslims: it is in part a campaign to turn India from a secular into a religion-based state. Indeed many of the anti-secular themes sound similar to those heard in Islamist countries, and all non-Hindus – Christians, Jews, as well as Muslims – are regarded as the potential foe, as well as secular-oriented Hindus such as those in the other political parties. It has also been argued, with some justice, that the main line of conflict is not between Hindus and Muslims but between communal and secular Hindus, and that the major cause of the rise of the BJP (*Bharatiya Janata Party*) and its allies is not the Muslim presence but the failure and corruption of the Congress Party.[22] In many ways the history of the Congress Party is parallel to that of other post-independence secular modernizing regimes, most notably the FLN in Algeria. Like the FLN, the Congress Party can be said in part to have encouraged the rise of religious parties, in this case Hindu communalism, by adopting some of its slogans itself. But the Muslims are certainly the major target of this attack: they are by far the largest non-Hindu minority in India (110–120 out of 950 millions, or 12–13 per cent of the total). It is the centuries of Muslim conquest that the Hindus want to avenge and reverse, and the Muslim threat 'within' is linked to the threat from 'without' in the form of Pakistan. Some of the themes found in the Indian case mirror those in the Balkans: resentment at the Muslim conquests of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, alarm at Muslim demographic and immigration trends, denunciation of the Islamic threat to the unity of the country, reciprocal policies of ethnic cleansing and, of course, the contest for the control of holy places. On the latter issue, for example, supporters of the destruction of the Ayodhya mosque justified the action by arguing that the Muslim conquerors destroyed all the Hindu temples in northern India. In the words of one Hindu nationalist: 'Not one temple was left standing all over northern India. It was a conscious spell of vandalism. No nation with any self-respect will forgive this. They took over our women. And they imposed the Jazia, the tax. Why should we forget and forgive all that?'[23]

There are, however, important differences between the Indian and the Balkan cases. The particular history of the rise of Hindu chauvinism is linked with that of the emergence of the Muslim League from the 1920s and the creation of Pakistan in 1948. The BJP and RSS explicitly reject secularism, whereas the Serbian nationalists do not. In the long run, the potential for explosion and loss of human life are even greater in the sub-continent than in the Balkans.

The history of the rise of Hindu anti-Muslimism is linked to the development of Indian politics since World War One. This is not the place to explore the reciprocal process by which an increasingly explicit Hindu Indian nationalism interacted with an increasingly separatist Muslim faction to produce the partition of 1948. Suffice it to say that each fed on the other, but that in the event the main poles of division were between a predominantly secular Indian state and a predominantly Muslim Pakistan. However, there was from the beginning a third force, that of Hindu communalism and chauvinism, which, in its self-justifying history and ideology, mirrored the language and terms of the Muslim

League. This was, in particular, expressed in the policies and ideas of the RSS, founded in 1923. Its ideology can be gauged from the writings of M. S. Golwalkar, its intellectual inspiration and one of its main organizers until his death in 1964.[24]

Golwalkar begins from the evocation of an ideal Hindu polity, the Hindu *Rashtra*, which his party is committed to restoring. This ideal is influenced by conventional German romantic ideas of the nation, including the reverence for the original language, Sanskrit, and involves the denial of other non-Hindu peoples. When Golwalkar began writing in the 1930s this category denoted Jews, Christians and Muslims, and the Sikhs were excluded as in effect a sub-branch of Hinduism. This Hindu communalist reassertion also involves a gradual reshaping of the Hindu faith, what has been termed the 'semitization' of Hinduism. Thus what had hitherto been rather androgynous gods are turned into male warriors and one god, Ram, is given precedence over others; congregational worship is introduced; and what had previously been rather diffuse holy texts and stories are given the status of sacred books.[25]

This project of *Hindutva*, Hindu revival or, more accurately, assertion of Hinduness, is tied to a justificatory historiography.[26] India is referred to by its Hindu name, Bharat, this being the name of one of the younger brothers of Ram. The fate of Bharat is seen as having been doomed by the Muslim conquests of the fifteenth century, a process that pursued its anti-Hindu dynamic through the period of British rule and up to the creation of Pakistan. Partition, sometimes referred to as 'the vivisection of the motherland', is unacceptable: 'Our Motherland has been partitioned. Some people ask me to forget this fact. But I, for one, can never persuade myself to forget it. I would appeal to you also not to forget this tragic episode. It is an abiding humiliation for us. We have to pledge ourselves resolutely not to rest content until we have wiped out this blot.'[27] Indeed, it is striking, in reading the writings of Golwalkar, how little the British figure as an enemy at all. Muslims have continued, even after dividing Bharat, to conspire against it, flooding the country with immigrants, planning to extend Pakistan's rule, challenging Hindu domination in Kashmir and so forth. Thus Golwalkar writes: 'Alien traits found today in the life of Muslims and Christians of Bharat may be traced to

history. Both these sects were imported into Bharat by foreign rulers, and throve under their patronage, as their instruments. These foreign rulers did not nationally establish the superiority of their faith before propagating it. Instead, they used terror to alienate our nationals from our ancient traditions, and used the converts to prop up their rule. A large number of people embraced these faiths out of fear or greed, and simultaneously they adopted foreign ways of life too. These faiths, therefore, symbolize our slavery.'[28] Golwalkar argues that the Muslims of the twentieth century are planning not to defend their Pakistani state, but to restore the Mughal Empire, ruling over all India. Despite his hostility to Christians, Golkwalkar has no problem in identifying with Christian resistance to Islamic forces: 'If Charles Martel had not stopped the Muslims at Tours in 732, today the entire Europe would have been under the banner of the Star and the Crescent.'[29]

The RSS remained on the relative margins of Indian politics for the first three decades after independence: it was banned in 1948 after the Congress Party alleged that one of its members had assassinated Gandhi. But in 1969 an associated cultural front, the VHP (*Vishwa Hindu Parashad*), was founded and in 1980 another party, the BJP, became a militant and increasingly successful advocate of Hindutva politics. Tied to the RSS, with its mass of disciplined and lightly armed members, or to the Shiv Sena, or army of Shiva, an even more militant group founded in 1966 on a programme of Maharashtra chauvinism, these forces acquired a major influence in Indian politics both at the electoral level and in mass actions, culminating in the seizure and rededication of the Babri Masjid, the mosque in Ayodhya where it was claimed Ram was born, in December 1992. This event was preceded and followed by clashes with Muslims in a number of Indian cities.[30]

Three themes in particular are central to this current wave of fundamentalism. The first is the call for the reconstitution of a Hindu nation. This nation is to be established on a version of Hindu values: while it is not argued that the non-Hindus should reconvert to Hinduism, it is implied that many of them were converted by force and would therefore revert to Hinduism if they could, and that in some (undefined) way they should accept Hindu cultural values. 'Let Muslims look on Ram as their hero, and the communal problems will be all over,' proclaimed *The Organiser* in

1971. Hence the rejection of secularism, similar to the claim of Islamists and distinct from that of, say, Balkan anti-Muslimists. Secondly, the national territory of the state should be reunited, with the reincorporation of Pakistan. Here there is an evident contradiction between the policy of reunification and the slogan of expulsion of Muslims. It goes without saying that all other attempts to break away, such as that of the Sikhs in the Punjab fighting for 'Khalistan', or of the Mizos and Nagas in Tripura, should also be opposed. Thirdly, there is a great emphasis on the dangers of mass Muslim immigration. In his time, Golwalkar in discussing 'Internal Threats' to Bharat, began with the Muslims who, he said, had become an even greater menace with the creation of Pakistan. Golwalkar wrote that the Muslims pursued two strategies – external aggression, from Pakistan, and internal weakening, through migration, so that he saw the settlement of Muslims in areas of Bharat as part of a planned conspiratorial process.[31] A book on West Bengal promoted by the RSS, *Paradise for Infiltrators*, evokes themes familiar in other contexts: 'West Bengal may be part of India but in reality it is like a disposable concubine of Bangladesh.' The ruling Communist Party and the Congress Party are attacked for patronizing this 'infiltration'. For the Muslims, 'everything that man needs for a civilized living is available to them at no extra cost. There are no bars against him. He can purchase land for residential and agricultural purposes, get his children admitted in schools, have ration cards issued to him, have his name entered in the voters' list and yet follow his Islamic way of life. Such are the bounties of Indian secularism.'[32]

This anti-immigrant theme was especially evident in the communal clashes in Bombay in 1992–3 and in the discourse of the Hindu leader Bal Thackeray, head of the local branch of *Shiv Sena*. Agitating in a city where 15–20 per cent of the population are Muslims, Thackeray has denounced Muslims as 'anti-nationals' and 'traitors', and referred to their districts of the city as 'mini-Pakistans'. 'My fight is against pro-Pakistan Muslims. The Pakistani extremists, the Bangladeshi Muslims and the Muslims staying in this country for years together, giving shelter to them – all these people must be kicked out. Even if he is a Hindu giving shelter to these kinds of Muslims, he also must be shot dead.' Thackeray also advocated the use of violence against Muslims, in contrast to the less aggressive construction of Hinduism: 'You have to react, you have to retaliate. I believe in constructive violence. I am not Mahatma Gandhi. If Muslims do this mischief again with Hindus, come what may, by whatever means we have, we will spare our lives.'[33] Asked what he would do with illegal immigrants from Pakistan or Bangladesh he was happy to reply: 'We will compel them to leave. After all, I am not a member of Amnesty International.'[34] When Thackeray and his *Shiv Sena* associates came to power in the province of Maharashtra in early 1995, one of their first acts was to change the name of the capital from Bombay (derived from the Portuguese for a 'Good Bay') to Devi Mumbhai, after a Hindu goddess.

If, in India, this anti-Muslim discourse is perhaps more developed than anywhere else in the world, its incidence is one that bears some relation to other movements. Hinduism gave European fascism one potent symbol, the swastika, the symbol of good fortune (*su-asti* in Sanskrit). The very ideology of *rashtra* that is promoted by the RSS is based on the application of European conceptions of nation and religion to India. It is a modern ideology, with the added element of the supposed common stress on the Aryan ethnic and linguistic heritage of those opposed to Muslim expansion. This original RSS ideology, derived from European racism of the interwar period, has now adopted some of the elements of contemporary anti-Islamism, notably the stress on Islam as the source of terrorism and the pseudo-strategic concept of a Muslim 'arc', in this case stretching from Turkey to Indonesia, within which India is located. The social and political factors that have led to the rise of the RSS, the BJP and others are also familiar from other contexts: the collapse of the power and legitimacy of the secular nationalist regime, growing social tensions in the cities, to which is added the intervention of a determined and well organized ideological force, with the support of at least some in the state apparatus and among the middle classes.[35]

The West: Europe and the USA

If the visibility of mass anti-Muslim sentiment in the Balkans and in the Indian sub-continent appeared as a relatively recent phenomenon, a feature of the latter half of the 1980s, the same

could hardly be said of the developed Western world, both European and American. Here a range of anti-Muslim sentiments had prevailed for far longer, so much so that it was easy for commentators to write in terms of some underlying but enduring religious and cultural antipathy in Western Christianity, going back not just to the imperial period ('orientalism') but to the earlier confrontations of the Ottoman assault of the seventeenth century, the crusades, and the initial repulsion of the Arab invasions in the eighth century.[36] In one of the most famous polemics against Islam, the French linguist and 'orientalist' Ernest Renan declared in 1883 that it was essential for the rational, scientific, 'Aryan' spirit to conquer the irrational 'Semitic' mind of Islam.[37] For Muslims and non-Muslims alike it seemed that this confrontation was 'engrained' in the Western world, its most recent manifestations but the latest chapters in a long-running and apparently continuous story.

The elements of this continuity are not hard to find. The wars with the Islamic world, from the eighth to the seventeenth centuries, were a major preoccupation of Christian Europe. The crusades, launched in the late eleventh century by Pope Urban II, were a major defining point in medieval Europe. In the Iberian Peninsula, the very state and its identity were forged in the battle to expel the Muslims, and once this was completed in 1492 the ideology of militarized and religious offensive was transferred to the conquest of the Americas. The conquistadores saw themselves as crusaders, as did those who brought Christianity to the Baltic states in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Later, with the Ottoman advances of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, a further chapter of anti-Muslimism was written: one can, indeed, suggest that it was this experience above all which shaped European attitudes, just as it was the rise of the Mughal empire that formed Hindu sensibilities. As Norman Daniel has pointed out, this period saw the earlier image of the Muslim as 'Saracen'[38] replaced by its new all-purpose variant, 'Turk'. One famous example of this was to be found in the 'War Sermon' of Martin Luther, who in 1529 saw the Turks as realizing Biblical warnings of divine punishment, such as those relating to the Flood and to Sodom and Gomorrah.[39] One of the best-selling works of the period was that of Bartholomew Georgevich of Croatia, *Tribulations of the Christians held in Tribute and Slavery by the Turks* (1544).[40] In Austria, the racist right has used as its hero Count Ernst Rüdiger von Starhemberg, commander of Vienna during the 1683 siege.[41]

The relics of these campaigns are not hard to find in modern European culture – in the abusive uses of the term 'turk' (meaning stupid) in Dutch, in the Italian warning to children who do not behave 'Mama, i turchi!' and in the abusive term *marroquino*, in the celebration of the defeat of the Muslims in the French *croissant*, or the Viennese *kipferl*,[42] in the names of English pubs ('The Turk's Head'), and, indeed, in the national symbol of one of the emergent European regions, Corsica, which has taken the eighteenth-century flag of the Moor's head, itself borrowed from the crusades, as its symbol.[43] Certainly these themes are available for current usage, as are those, of equal historical importance, that express Muslim concern about Christian hostility. But to identify these relics and revivals is not to prove a continuity of culture or politics, let alone to prove that contemporary anti-Muslimism can be explained in terms of this past. Several considerations, beyond a general scepticism about the automatic transmission of culture and the effectivity of an archetypal substratum, would suggest otherwise.

In the first place, if we survey stereotypes of Muslims and Arabs we find that they are, like many such stereotypes, contradictory. Thus Islam, today associated with austerity and the denial of the material, was long seen as a religion of hedonism, sensuality and male pleasure – as expressed in images of the *harem* and the *seraglio*. Equally, the concept of the Arab or Muslim as militant, aggressive and active goes together with that of the Muslim as quintessentially passive, accepting and submissive before God. Strikingly, Primo Levi records that in the concentration camps the inmates whose spirit was broken were known as the 'Muslims'.[44] Secondly, it is not possible to generalize about the experience of Western states, particularly if this involves the USA. For reasons above all of geographical location, but also of differential imperial experience, the role of anti-Muslim sentiment varies from country to country. The states of the northern Mediterranean were, for centuries, far more exposed to Muslim attack than those of northern Europe. Thus not only the initial Arab attacks and occupation, but the later experience of Italy with Arab naval attacks (condensed in the term 'Saracen'), were not replicated in the north. (The one other

place where this image of Arabs and Muslims as pirates was found was, surprisingly, in North America: the clash between US ships and 'Barbary', i.e. North African, ships in the early nineteenth century was to form the basis for much later imagery, not least with regard to Qaddafi). That these threats and the identities of those so threatening were confused is evident from the widespread use of the term 'Moor', a pre-Islamic, Roman term that also gives us 'Morocco' but came to combine, as in the case of Othello, Muslim identity with African origin. To these earlier differences must be added those of colonial experience. For France the encounter with Arab and Muslim North Africa was a formative experience, culminating in the traumatic Algerian war of 1954–62. Italy had a less violent but nonetheless important experience in Libya. Spain too had a major confrontation with the Arab world, in the conflicts over Ifni, the Western Sahara and, to this day, Ceuta and Melilla. These were, however, but one aspect of several colonial confrontations – notably with Vietnam, (Christian) Ethiopia and Latin America respectively.

In the British case, the confrontation with the Islamic world was far less important: true there was the occupation of Egypt and the death of Lord Gordon at the hands of the 'fanatical' Mahdists in the Sudan in 1885. Probably the most influential British encounter with Muslim society was that brought about by the presence of hundreds of thousands of British soldiers in Egypt during World War Two, out of which much contemporary anti-Arab racism emerges. But the Muslim encounter was far less important for Britain than for France. French has many Arabic words derived from the North African experience, while nearly all 'Muslim' words in English come from the Anglo-Indian vocabulary derived from a predominantly Hindu experience within which the Persian vocabulary of Hindustani played an important part. For much of the British imperial period other foes were more prominent: Irish Catholic nationalists, Hindu mutineers in India, Zionists in Palestine, Greek Orthodox guerrillas in Cyprus, Christian and pagan Mau-Mau opponents in Kenya, Chinese communists in Malaya. In several of these contexts – India in the 1850s, Palestine in the 1940s, Malaya and Cyprus in the 1950s – the Muslims were not only not the main enemy but were to a greater or lesser extent allies of, or at least partial collaborators

with, the British. The result is that both in popular stereotype, and in more recent racist manifestations, hostility to Muslims as such plays a relatively smaller role. It is true that one of the main terms of abuse of South Asians is that of 'Paki', or Pakistani (it being lost on those who use the term that in Urdu, the language of many Pakistanis, *paki* means 'pure'), but this is almost wholly a racial epithet, referring to skin colour and clothing, and is applied indiscriminately to South Asians of any religion, be they Muslim, Hindu, Christian, Buddhist, Sikh or Jain. In the American case almost the only images of Muslims available until the 1960s were in films – Valentino as the Sheikh of Araby, Palestinian terrorists in *Exodus*.[45] Once a set of conflicts began, however, a new abusive vocabulary developed: 'rag-' or 'towel-heads', 'camel-jockeys' (a euphemism for people who have sexual relations with camels) and so on.[46]

To this must be added, as a partial corrective, the actual history of Western–Muslim relations over the past century. This is not one of concerted or unremitting hostility. The Dutch, for example, had a long history of alliance with the Moroccans against their common foe, Catholic Spain. In Poland, too, there was, prior to the disappearance of the state in the 1790s, a tradition of alliance with the Ottomans against the common enemy, the Habsburg empire. Christian hostility to Muslims is usually proved by reference to the Spanish *reconquista*, which culminated in the fall of Granada in 1492. But this degree of hostility was particular to the imperial regime of that period, and contrasted with an earlier period of greater tolerance within Christian Spain. The history of European relations with the Ottoman empire in the nineteenth century was one of both conflict and accommodation, the latter often involving alliances between various European powers and Istanbul against other 'Christian' powers – Napoleonic France in the 1800s, Britain in the 1830s and 1850s, and later Germany. In both world wars the Western antagonists devoted considerable energy to winning over Islamic sentiment, not least because in three cases – Britain, France, Holland – Muslims comprised a considerable proportion of their subject peoples. In World War One, for example, Kaiser Wilhelm presented himself as the champion of the Muslim world. The British, ensconced in Egypt and the Arabian Peninsula, made much of their being 'friends of

the Arabs', be it in the World War One alliance against the Turks, or in the arms sales deals of the 1960s and later. In the whole period since 1945 the record has been mixed: in the 1950s and 1960s, the West supported monarchical 'Islamic' polities such as Saudi Arabia against the much greater threat of socialist, nationalist and communist movements in the Third World, a policy that was to reach its culmination in the substantial CIA backing for the Afghan *mujahidin* in the 1980s. Indeed the whole picture of a 'West' unremittingly hostile to the Islamic world is rather contradicted by what occurred in Afghanistan after 1979.

These correctives may support an analysis of the growth of contemporary anti-Muslim sentiment that is rather more contingent, in terms of country and time. In terms of the past one or two decades, one may indeed distinguish between two strands of anti-Muslimism which may be termed 'strategic' and 'populist'. One is related to issues of security – nuclear weapons, oil supplies, terrorism – while the other is concerned with the presence of Muslims within Western society – immigration, assimilation, race, veiling and so forth. The two may be linked, in one generic and timeless 'threat', but the elements are rather different. Strategic anti-Muslimism dates from the early 1970s, and is above all a result of the 1973 OPEC price rises: even though these were not the result of a uniquely Muslim coalition (OPEC includes Venezuela), the 1973 rises provoked a reaction that included anti-Muslim and associated racist hostility to Arabs and Iranians. This was particularly so in the USA where, for the first time, what had hitherto been experienced as an independent economic system was exposed to a form of foreign pressure, conceived of as blackmail or threat. Then came the Iranian revolution and, for the USA in particular, the hostages crisis, which confirmed the image of the Islamic fanatic and terrorist: this rhetoric did not distinguish Persians from Arabs. Side by side with this alarm, related to oil and the hostages, was the diffusion of a set of anti-Arab prejudices emanating from the Arab–Israeli dispute. These had been identifiable since the 1940s, but became more evident from the 1960s onwards, partly as a result of the 1967 war, and then as a result of the rise of a terrorist faction within the Palestinian movement. These stereotypes were played up in the press, but were reinforced by novels such as Leon Uris's *Exodus* and *The Hajj*, and

by films. In the USA in particular the composite Arab-Persian-Muslim-terrorist was established through the intersection of these influences. With the end of the Cold War another chapter was written: numerous politicians were heard to proclaim that the USA was now facing the threat of Islamic militancy, and this received partial confirmation from the Gulf conflict of 1990–91. In 1990 Vice-President Dan Quayle, in an address to cadets at the Annapolis naval academy, linked Islamic fundamentalism to Nazism and communism. The right-wing Republican candidate in the 1992 presidential campaign, Pat Buchanan, declared: 'For a millennium, the struggle for mankind's destiny was between Christianity and Islam; in the twenty-first century it may be so again. For, as the Shi'ites humiliate us, their co-religionists are filling up the countries of the West.'[47]

Press analysis played up the sense both of a transhistorical force, and of a concerted worldwide campaign: from the 1979 Iranian seizure of US diplomatic personnel, through the holding of Americans as hostages in Lebanon, to the bombing of the World Trade Centre in New York in 1993, the threat seemed to be getting closer. A television documentary, aired in December 1994 and titled *Jihad in America*, presented a dramatic picture of Islamism hitting directly at the USA.[48] Such was the strength of this anxiety that when, on 19 April 1995, a bomb exploded outside a government building in Oklahoma City, killing hundreds, the immediate response of many media commentators and of the police was that it was the work of Middle Eastern terrorists. Men of Middle Eastern complexion were sought; terrorism 'experts' pontificated on television; there were calls for pre-emptive strikes on Middle Eastern states; a wave of public attacks on Arabs and Muslims occurred.[49] The culprits were home-grown American crazies.

The culture of anti-Muslimism in the USA was distinguished in several respects from that of Europe. On the one hand, it was not to any significant extent concerned with the issue of immigration or with an internal or demographic threat to US society. This was partly because of the more variant and multicultural character of the USA, and partly because while in Europe the 'immigrant threat' was represented by Muslims (among others), in the USA (Catholic) Hispanic migrants took that role. In the USA the focus fell on what was seen as the set of security threats –

restrictions to the supply of oil, hostage-taking, terrorism – that had emerged from Middle Eastern society in the 1970s and 1980s. In Europe these issues, although present, were a less prominent focus of concern. For Europe, 1973 marked a shock, but not the one it represented in the USA, since Europe had always been dependent upon foreign imports. The hostage crisis had, for obvious national reasons, less impact in Europe. Terrorism did arouse concern, but the relatively less dominant position of pro-Israeli sentiment meant that there was not the obsession with terrorism that prevailed in the USA. Moreover, European countries had themselves had recent experiences of terrorism that had nothing to do with any Muslim force: the British with the IRA, the Spanish with ETA, the Germans with the Baader–Meinhof group, the Italians with the Brigate Rosse and the fascist counterparts, the French with the OAS.

Strategic anti-Muslimism was certainly present in Europe, both because of the proximity of European countries to the Muslim world, and because, as in so many strategic fashions, Europe copied the USA. Thus in an article published in 1993 under the title 'Islam's New Drive into Europe', Sir Alfred Sherman, a former personal adviser to Margaret Thatcher, wrote:

> There is a Moslem threat to Christian Europe. It is developing slowly and could still be checked. But the policies of the western powers have done almost everything possible to help it grow. The factors that created the threat were: 1. totally irresponsible immigration policies in western and central Europe, which have rapidly created an increasingly militant minority of 15 million Moslems there. 2. the alienation of Turkey by the European community, which rejected Turkey's sincere efforts to join the EEC, virtually compelling it to seek identification with a Moslem world it was trying to escape from. 3. Germany's aggressive policy in the Balkans, calculated to break up Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia, suppress Serbia and achieve hegemony in the region with Hungarian help. 4. Vatican support for this policy and the Pope's persistent court of Arab states regardless of the interests of their Christian minorities ... The gradual Moslem colonization of western and central Europe owes much to social and spiritual disorientation there ... Another factor was the decline of Christian and western values caused by the unlearning of western history, including the threat from Islam. In essence pro-Islamism – like pro-third worldism and (until recently) pro-Sovietism – are symptoms of the collapse of belief in their own values among the west's intellectuals and politicians.[50]

In similar vein Clare Hollingworth, a veteran British defence correspondent, under the title 'Another Despotic Creed Seeks to Infiltrate the West' wrote: 'Muslim fundamentalism is fast becoming the chief threat to global peace and security as well as a cause of national and local disturbance through terrorism. It is akin to the menace posed by Nazism and fascism in the 1930s and then by communism in the '50s.'[51]

A quite different element was introduced from the mid-1980s onwards with the rise of anti-Muslim sentiment as part of the anti-migrant and more generally racist sentiments in many Western European countries, tied to alarmist speculation at the end of the Cold War about the new 'Islamic' threat.[52] Thus in Europe strategic anti-Muslimism combined with popular anti-Muslimism from the mid-1980s onwards. A number of particular issues involving Muslim immigrants fuelled this: these included the dispute that broke out in France in 1989, and which was repeated again in 1994, over the veiling of Muslim girls going to school, ('*l'affaire foulard*'),[53] the campaigns by Muslim organizations in Britain in protest at Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*, and the prominence of Turks as targets of racism in Germany. The most extreme case of hostility to Muslims was undoubtedly that of France, where the right-wing *Front National* headed by Jean-Marie Le Pen openly called for the repatriation of up to 3 million North African immigrants, and stimulated a general climate of permitted anti-Arab racism.[54] During the French presidential elections of 1995, for example, in which Le Pen won 15 per cent of the vote, Le Pen sympathizers openly voiced anti-Arab views: 'My father told me: Arabs are worse than mice,' one thirty-one-year-old woman told a reporter. Another attacked the way in which those of North African origin claimed social security: 'They are French when they get their unemployment benefit, Arab when they misbehave.'[55] During one of Le Pen's election rallies in Paris a twenty-nine-year-old Moroccan, Brahim Bouarram, was thrown into the river by skinheads, and drowned: Le Pen refused to apologize, saying it was the kind of 'incident' that happened in any big city and, indeed that it might have been triggered by a provocation against the *Front National*.[56] Such was the hostility to Arabs that right-wing demonstrators denounced the main conservative candidate, Jacques Chirac, with the slogan '*Chirac à la Mecque*' – 'Chirac to Mecca'.[57]

It was striking too that in other European countries the racist right made anti-Muslimism particularly central. In Belgium the Flemish right-wing *Vlaamse Vront* blamed the country's budget deficit on Walloons and on the welfare costs of supporting Moroccans with large numbers of children. In Sweden the leader of the New Democratic Party, Ian Wachtmeister, declared in 1993: 'I must confess that in my Sweden there will not be many mosques', a statement that was followed within two days by an arson attack on a mosque. Another right-wing politician, Viviane Franzen, asked at the same time: 'How long will it take until Swedish children will be bowing to Mecca?' In Austria, the recently founded Freedom Party (FPO), and in particular its leader Jochen Haider, highlighted the dangers of mass immigration and the loss of Austrian identity: in his new year's message for 1993 he warned that Austrian schoolchildren were losing their culture, since in some classes in Vienna where there was an above-average percentage of Muslim children, crucifixes were being removed.

Anti-Muslimist sentiments of this kind can be quoted from several European countries, where they express the new racist and anti-immigrant politics that has emerged. The causes of this lie in the first place in two issues separate from Islam or Muslims – the pervasive social unease arising from the economic recession, and the rise of an anti-foreign and anti-'coloured' resentment that focuses, in many cases, on Muslims. But even here it is hard to disentangle the different elements in the prejudice. In Britain Muslim immigrants have encountered hostility ever since the first Muslims, Yemenis and Somalis, began arriving around the time of World War One. In 1919 there were widespread anti-Arab riots in several British ports: but the terms used to describe these Arab sailors – Bolsheviks, Fenians, negroes – had no special religious character, and the most specific term used of them, *lascar*, was a generic Anglo-Indian word for an Asian sailor.[58] With the large-scale migration of Muslims from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, the term 'Paki' acquired widespread usage in Britain, but it was again not necessarily religious in connotation. It was indeed only in the late 1980s, and more particularly with the *Satanic Verses* affair and the Gulf war, that an identifiable anti-Muslimist trend emerged at the mass level in Britain. In sum, anti-Muslimism emerged throughout Western Europe in a context of broader

xenophobia and economic recession: it was linked to the particular contexts of political competition in each country, yet it also had certain limits. In some cases this was due to the fact that for European far-right groups the main object of hostility remained the Jews, and in this context Muslims were, if anything, regarded as victims of a supervening Zionist conspiracy.

Israel

No relationship is more controversial or complex than that between the Islamic and the Jewish worlds, above all because of what has occurred since the mass migration of Jews to Israel in the late nineteenth century and the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948. The massacre of twenty-nine Muslims at prayer in the mosque at Hebron by the Israeli terrorist settler Baruch Goldstein in February 1994 appeared to be but the culmination of this antagonism. Here, above all, images of an eternal, transhistorical hostility prevail on both sides. For Muslims, the story seems clear enough: the Quran itself states that the Jews are the enemies of Islam,[59] and this has been vindicated by the establishment of the state of Israel and the occupation not only of Muslim lands in general but of cities and places of worship central to the Muslim faith. No wonder, it might appear, that Islamists and indeed Muslims have for the several decades past seen 'Zionism' as a central element of the anti-Islamic conspiracy and Israel as an entity created for the purpose of dispossessing and oppressing Muslims. For their part, Israeli politicians, particularly but not exclusively those of the nationalist right (*Gush Emunim*), stress the danger posed to Israel and to Jews in general by Islam, and recast the Arabs as the ancient foes of Israel, the Gentiles and, more specifically, the Amalekites of the Bible. The Bible[60] commands that these Amalekites be exterminated, just as, in a verse frequently used by nationalist settlers on the West Bank, the Gentiles should be struck down.

The relationship of Jews and Judaism to Islam has, however, been more complex than this would suggest, and remains so. First, while arguments about complete tolerance by Muslim states of Jews are exaggerated, the history of relations between Jews and

Muslims prior to the 1890s was not all antagonistic. The record of Islamic states towards Jews was, on the whole, much better than that of Christian states, and this was most evident in the acceptance of large numbers of Sephardic Jews who were expelled from Spain. On their side, Jewish writers tended not to express great hostility to Islam. With the emergence of Jewish mysticism or *kabbalism*, a strain of hostility to the Islamic religion did emerge,[61] as is evident in the writings of the thirteenth-century writer Nachmonides. The Andalucian writer Maimonides wrote critically of Jews who studied Islam, but he distinguished between Christianity, which was a form of idolatry, and Islam, which was not. He himself quotes from Muslim texts with respect, and served as personal physician to Saladin, the Islamic Kurdish leader who drove the Crusaders out of Jerusalem.[62] It can, however, be argued that until the emergence of Zionism, Jewish writers were far more concerned with Christianity than with Islam.[63] Even after the Zionist movement began, the main preoccupation of Zionists was not with the Muslim world but, given the rise of fascism, with the European states. It was only after 1948 that the Arab world became the object of clear confrontation in Jewish eyes, and then it was seen as hostile not so much because it was Muslim as because it was Gentile. Arab states such as Nasser's Egypt were, in Israeli rhetoric, compared with Hitler's Germany and regarded as another political force bent on destroying the Jews.

There were certainly elements of anti-Arab and, by implication, anti-Muslim racism and prejudice in Israel prior to 1948. From the 1890s people referred to the local population in disparaging terms, as 'donkeys' and so forth.[64] The very project of the Zionist movement explicitly involved the displacement of the local Arab (and partly Christian) population from their lands and thus contained, at least implicitly, a racist denial of their rights and common humanity. The goal of a 'land without people, for a people without land' was, therefore, anti-Palestinian. The early Zionist poet, Ben Yahuda, wrote 'How beautiful is Israel without Arabs.' But Zionist ideology was not as yet specifically or mainly anti-*Muslim*: the main ideological orientation of the European settlers who came to Israel was that they were, in addition to being representatives of the Jewish people, also in the vanguard of European civilization, against the barbarians and natives whom

they found in Palestine. In this their attitude was not markedly different from that of other white European settlers in the Third World. And this 'civilizational' arrogance also meant considerable prejudice not just against Arabs but also against Oriental Jews, who were considered as uncivilized and little better than the Arabs. One account of Ashkenazi hostility to Oriental Jews illustrates this graphically: 'A whole vocabulary of racial slurs referring to the Oriental Jews became commonplace: "Khomeinists", rabble (*asafsuf*), hooligans (*biryonim*), masses (*amkha*), Moroccan cutthroats (*Morocco sakin*), cave dwellers (*shluhim*), pagans (*ovdai elilim*), fanatics (*Babe Salee*). Mordechai Gur, a Labor candidate and former Chief of Staff, warned a heckling group of Oriental Jews, *Likud* supporters, in a development town: "We'll screw you like we screwed the Arabs in the Six Day War".'[65] The term *avoda aravit*, literally 'Arab work', was used to refer to sloppy or substandard work. Nothing could be more indicative of this than the use of the term *aravit* (Arab) to refer to Oriental Jews. The term *shluhim*, 'cave dwellers', came into common usage in the 1950s as an Ashkenazi term of abuse for Moroccan Jewish immigrants who had, allegedly, been cave dwellers in their land of origin. Conversely, the early Zionists used to refer to Arabs by the most common term of abuse of all in Hebrew: *frenk*, the Yiddish word for anyone in European dress. Since the Jews wore their black dress, *kapota*, and the Arab educated classes wore Western European clothing of the period, the Arabs were assimilated to Christian gentile society.[66]

Hostility to Arabs and Muslims was therefore mixed up with a wider rhetoric of racism and hostility to Gentiles in general and to people who had originated in Arab society, be they Muslims, Christians, or Jews. The more specific anti-Arab/Muslim hostility was to develop only later, in the aftermath of the 1967 war and, even more so, in the aftermath of the Iranian revolution. After 1967, with the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, there emerged a much stronger current of militant and nationalistic irredentism, epitomized in the settlers and the newly influential *Gush Emunim*. It was in this context that orthodox rabbis began providing a religious justification – deploying elements available in the Judaic tradition – for occupation of the West Bank and the violent displacement of Arabs. In 1968 Samuel Derlich, head chaplain for the Israeli army, wrote to soldiers that it was a *mitzvah*

(religious duty), recorded in the Bible, 'to destroy Amalek'. When some army officers protested, forty other rabbis wrote to defend Derlich and to certify that his statement was consistent with *halakhah*, Jewish legal tradition.[67] At the same time, particularly from the mid-1970s onwards, the parties of the religious right, the *haredim*, were to play an important role in Israeli politics, and to propagate a more assertive and prejudicial attitude towards non-Jews as a whole, including Muslims.[68] This internal shift in Israeli politics was compounded by external events – the triumph of the Iranian revolution in 1979, with its clear hostility to the very existence of Israel, the emergence of a pro-Iranian Shi'ite movement in Lebanon from 1982 onwards, and the rise amongst Palestinians of the Islamic Resistance Movement (*Harakat al-Moqawama al-Islamiyya*, or Hamas) among the Palestinians. By the late 1980s and early 1990s it did, therefore, appear as if Israel was locked into an overarching battle with the Islamic world, a view that many Islamists, intoxicated with their visions of a worldwide Zionist and Jewish hostility to Islam, were quick to confirm.

The most extreme anti-Arab trend was, however, represented by the movement of Rabbi Meir Kahane and his *Kach* movement, which occupied a militant, violent place in Israeli politics from the early 1970s until Kahane's assassination in 1990. Kahane proffered a militant reading of the Talmud and the *halakhah*, according to which Jews were enjoined to fight non-Jews, and indeed those corrupted, 'gentilized' and 'Hellenized', Jews who did not agree with him.[69] Central to his message was the call for all Arabs to be forcibly deported from Israel.[70] Kahane wanted a law to be introduced making it illegal for any Jew to have sexual relations with a non-Jew, and for all non-Jews to be denied citizenship in Israel. 'Give me the power to take care of them [the Arabs] once and for all' he declared to a rally of supporters in Jerusalem in 1989, after a Palestinian attack on a bus in which sixteen people died. His supporters were reported as replying: 'Death to the Arabs and their [Jewish] leftist friends.'[71] Kahane's rhetoric was clear, hateful and threatening:

> The Arabs are cancer, cancer, cancer in the midst of us. But there is not a single man who is willing to stand up and say it ... I am telling you what each of you thinks deep in his heart: there is only one solution, no other, no partial solution: the Arabs out! out! ... Do not ask me how ... Let me become defence minister for two months and you will not have a single cockroach around here! I Promise you a *clean* Eretz Israel! Give me the power to take care of them![72]

In this context, the incidence of overtly anti-Arab and anti-Muslim rhetoric has become much greater in Israel, and especially amongst West Bank settlers and the parties of the nationalist and religious right. One of the texts most frequently cited by settlers is verses 5–9 of Psalm 149, which form part of the Jewish morning prayer. This includes the lines: 'Let the praises of the Lord be in their mouth and a two-edged sword in their hand. To execute vengeance upon the Gentiles and punishments upon the nations. To bind their kings with chains and their nobles with fetters of iron.' These words are widely interpreted as legitimating attacks by settlers upon local Arabs, and find their more vernacular expression in slogans scrawled on walls: 'Only a sucker doesn't kill an Arab', 'Death to the Arabs', 'To make mincemeat of the Arabs', etc.[73] At the funeral of Baruch Goldstein, one rabbi declared: 'One million Arabs are not worth a Jewish fingernail.'[74] Such attitudes among militant settlers find their parallels in the religious establishment, and especially so among the sections of the rabbinate involved as chaplains to the army and in association with settler organizations and parties. Thus in July 1993 the head of the Public Committee for the Defence of Human Dignity, Rabbi Mordechai Yedidya Weiner, called on the government to allow the organs of Arabs killed during the intifada to be used for organ transplants, in order to dispense with the need to extract such organs from the bodies of Jews, since such extractions are deemed to be forbidden under orthodox Jewish law.[75] Earlier in the year Ovadia Yoseph, a rabbi who heads the religious party Shas, had expressed his view clearly in a sermon when he said that 'Arabs are worse than the wildest animals.' Such attitudes, while not characteristic of the statements of most Israeli politicians, are, however, those of an important minority within Israel who evidently feel that they can utter and disseminate such views without fear of contradiction, legal or political.

Those who propound anti-Muslimism within contemporary Israel, and in related sections of the diaspora, are themselves quick

to resort to arguments about some enduring, eternal conflict between the Muslim and Jewish worlds. In doing this, they can easily find themes and symbols from the biblical past, and from subsequent history, to bolster their argument. From their perspective, as we have seen, Palestinians, Arabs as a whole, and indeed many in the whole Muslim world, consider Jews to be the enemies of Islam. Yet this obscures the manner in which the current usage of anti-Muslim rhetoric has developed, and distorts the longer and more varied history of Jewish–Muslim relations. The contemporary form of Jewish hostility to the Arab and Islamic worlds, and the reciprocal anti-Jewish and in many cases anti-semitic rhetorics of the Arab and Muslim worlds, reflect above all a recent and contemporary history, not the resurgence of some archaeological conflict. Thus in the rhetoric of right-wing Israelis Palestinians are attacked as 'Hitlerites' or as modern versions of the Ukrainian peasants led by Chmielnicki who killed Jews in the seventeenth century, more than as part of some eternal Muslim threat.[76] The origins of the most extreme anti-Arab racism, that of Kahane, lie more in the polarized racial politics of New York, in a fusion of anti-Nazi and anti-black confrontational themes, than in any specific engagement with the Arab or Muslim world. In Kahane's rhetoric the Arabs are but the latest bearers of the title, 'enemy of Jews'. The Middle Eastern sources of this confrontation lie in modern history, in the actions of Weizmann and Ben Gurion, Balfour and Peel, Nasser and Khomeini, rather than in the resurgence of the Amalekites or of some Talmudic ideological essence. As elsewhere, anti-Muslimism in Israel is a modern, contingent and instrumental ideology.

Conclusion

This introductory survey, necessarily schematic and incomplete, allows of no easy analysis of the genesis, content or impact of anti-Muslimism, any more than it permits of complacency about the pervasiveness and manifold uses of this contemporary ideology. In one sense the debate over ideological genesis and form is irrelevant to the most pressing political and human issue, namely the incidence of this prejudice, linked to others of race, faction and party, in so many countries. No one surveying this phenomenon, and the ease with which it is reproduced and embroidered throughout the press in political discourse ranging from the most vulgar to the most 'serious', can fail to feel concern and shame.

Yet as part of any response to it, and analysis of its relation to other forms of racism, it may be pertinent to suggest some analytic conclusions. First, while historical legacies certainly play a role – in the Balkans, in India, in Western society and in Israel – these cannot explain the incidence of anti-Muslimism today. Like all cultural residues and themes, it is their revival, reformulation and redeployment in contemporary contexts that has to be explained.

Second, it is certainly possible to identify a set of core anti-Muslim themes which are found in different contexts. Terrorism, demographic expansion, strategic encirclement, the oppression of women and dirtiness are the common preoccupations. But this does not prove the existence of a single anti-Muslimism, but rather suggests how, in addition to themes generated within a specific context, others available from the international media are deployed.

Third, without conceding to the claim that hostility to Muslims is justified by what some/all Muslims have done, it is pertinent to identify the ways in which some in the Muslim world have contributed to this phenomenon. Islamists have made claims about the homogeneity of Islam and the challenge that it represents. Such claims can seem to accord with the charges made by opponents of Islam. Equally, those opposed to Islamist movements of the present, or Islamic imperial forces of the past, have tended to reproduce and internalize the rhetoric of their foes. To reformulate a phrase of Régis Debray's, *Islam has Islamicized anti-Islam.* Both the iconoclasm of the Byzantine empire and the evolution of a Christian doctrine of Holy War were instances of this mechanism, which is working today in the transformation of Hinduism, the myth of Islam as a replacement for communism in threatening the West, and the hypostatization of 'Islam' in Western discourses.

Fourth, in none of these cases is anti-Muslimism the defining feature of the ideology or conflict in which it is deployed. It is linked to other issues – of ethnicity, colour, intra-communal conflict, administrative corruption and inter-state conflict – and depends to a considerable degree on the progression of these other

processes and disputes. Such an analysis of anti-Muslimism as a 'semi-ideology' may provide little comfort to those who are the objects of such prejudice. It may, however, contribute to the formulation of a response to it, as well as to an understanding of the broader issues of prejudice, racism and ethnicity in the contemporary world. In a reformulation of the infamous question of Mao Tse-tung, 'Where do correct ideas come from?', one may ask: 'Where do incorrect ideas come from?' In this case the answer would seem to be that they do not come from an immutable, recurrent, historical archetype, nor from any essence of Western or Christian or non-Muslim society, but from a set of contemporaneous national conjunctures, in which politicians and their associate ideologues draw on themes present in history, or in the discourses of other states, for their own, current and specific, purposes. It is those purposes, not the prevalence of a world anti-Muslim conspiracy, that need addressing.

7

Conclusion: 'Orientalism' and its Critics

One of the most debated issues in the analysis of the contemporary Middle East has been that of 'orientalism', the question of whether Western writing on the region over the past century or two has been, and continues to be, distorted by a set of prejudices born of European and imperial preconceptions. This is not an issue that was first raised by Islamists, but it is one that they have readily adopted in their use of terms derived from the debate – 'eurocentric', 'ethnocentric' and 'orientalist' itself – to criticize ideas or analyses with which they disagree. The debate on orientalism also goes to the heart of the debate on Islam, because behind it lies the much broader question of what set of terms, general theories and values we should adopt in approaching Middle Eastern societies. A disentangling of the arguments around orientalism may therefore serve not only to clarify some issues of method, of *how* to analyse, but also to illuminate the question that has been most central to this book as a whole, namely the explanation of the contemporary Middle East, and not least of the Islamist movements it has generated.

The subject of orientalism therefore raises a broad and continuing debate to which many writers have contributed.[1] By way of introduction I should like to clarify how I myself have approached the study of the Middle East, not so much in order to enjoin it on others as to make explicit my position.

My point of departure is a belief, cautious but firm, in the validity of social science in general, and of the branches thereof – history, sociology, politics, economics, international relations, law, and so on – constituted by general analytic and theoretical