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## **The Non-Territorial Islamic States in Europe** **By Reuven Paz**

In an interesting article published recently by Bruce Bawer, a New-Yorker living in Oslo, in the *Christian Science Monitor*, he defined the recent riots of Muslims in France and other parts of Europe, as a rejection of the process of integration.<sup>1</sup> This tendency, he explains, is a combination of the rejection of many Muslim emigrants by their surrounding societies, and their own wish to preserve their old values, culture, and the ties with their homelands. "There are more flights from Oslo to Pakistan than to the United States," he wrote. Furthermore, "Millions of "French Muslims" don't consider themselves French. A government report leaked last March depicted an increasingly two-track educational system: More and more Muslim students refuse to sing, dance, participate in sports, sketch a face, or play an instrument. They won't draw a right angle (it looks like part of the Christian cross). They won't read Voltaire and Rousseau (too anti-religion), *Cyrano de Bergerac* (too racy), *Madame Bovary* (too pro-women), or *Chrétien de Troyes* (too chrétien). One school has separate toilets for "Muslims" and "Frenchmen"; another obeyed a Muslim leader's call for separate locker rooms because "the circumcised should not have to undress alongside the impure."

Abd al-Rahman al-Rashed, a well-known Arab columnist and now director general of Al-`Arabiyyah TV satellite channel, took this stand to further conclusion in his commentary on Bawer's article. In an op-ed in the Saudi owned London-based *Al-Sharq al-Awsat* he threw the lion share of the blame on European governments and societies, but also recognized "the existence of the new antagonistic Islamic culture that has infiltrated into Pakistani, Bengali and African Muslim communities, and hence, we must distinguish isolation as violent."<sup>2</sup> Al-Rashed only forgot that the same "antagonistic Islamic culture" is exclusively imported from the Arab world, in most cases financed by Saudi Arabia, and is spread among European Arabs the same as among non-Arab Muslims.

What Bawer points at, and Al-Rashed indirectly admits, is the failure of Muslim integration in Europe, and in some parts of the United States and other Western societies, as a result of their own choice, motivated in recent decades by growing Islamic sentiments.

The sense of kind of autonomy in Muslim ghettos in Europe, described by Bawer, is encouraged not only by the behavior of European governments and societies but also by self-motivated behavior of Muslims. In the 1980s it started to get a doctrinal cover, and later on an organizational aspect in the form of charity associations that supported

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<sup>1</sup> Bruce Bawer, "Not All Muslims Want to Integrate," *Christian Science Monitor*, 17 November 2005. See on-line in -- <http://www.csmonitor.com/2005/1117/p09s02-coop.html>

<sup>2</sup> Abd al-Rahman al-Rashed, "The Crises of Social Integration: the state or the immigrant's responsibility?" *Al-Sharq al-Awsat* (English edition), 27 November 2005. See on-line in -- <http://www.asharqalawsat.com/english/news.asp?section=2&id=2845>



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independent school systems, welfare system, medical care, or building of numerous mosques, thus creating a growing Islamic atmosphere. The doctrine behind these developments fell under the title of creating “the Non-Territorial Islamic State.”

This doctrine views Muslim communities as a kind of loose-knit Islamic state, though without the territorial and religious mission of reestablishing a Khilafah. Islamic scholars in the United Kingdom have long provided the impetus for this view by emphasizing the cultural, economic, and political consolidation of these Muslim communities. Furthermore, the democratic and liberal environment of Western countries fostered Islamic pluralism, giving free rein to the activities of many different groups reflecting many different trends of Islamic thought, unlike the reality in their homelands. Despite this pluralism, however, many of these groups went on carrying the fundamentalist banner of many of the Islamic movements in their Arab and Muslim homelands.

At the same time we have been witnessing the development of what we might call “Social Terrorism” – terrorism that is primarily motivated by social elements, such as: hatred of foreigners, growing unemployment, economic circumstances, difficulties in coping with Western modernization, changing and dismantling of traditional values and of family ties, etc. Such elements might have affected other kind of groups of immigrants as well. But, the Islamic and Islamist growing activity among Muslim communities of emigrants in addition to Islamist doctrines of conspiracies and global struggle with the West, encourage the growing potential of spreading radical doctrines among younger Muslim generations. In a way, participating in criminal activity of “gangs of emigrants” is also part of this “social terrorism,” as part of the element of alienation from the surrounding societies.

Most of the Islamic movements and groups, primarily those that emerged from the 1960s and after, present the Arab and Muslim regimes—and in some cases rightfully—as symbols of arbitrary oppression and the distortion of the social justice that is rooted in orthodox Islam. Thus, they instill bring their followers to sympathize with and support those who present themselves as the protectors of the weaker elements of society. Thus, in many cases they manage to recruit to their side elements of social, political, cultural and economic protest against various Arab and Muslim regimes, and in Europe against European governments, which are also perceived as neglecting the anticipated social justice. These elements also see themselves as standing against the alleged global enemies and conspirators: The United States, Israel, the Jews, Western “Crusader” heretic culture, etc.

In the past two decades there has been also a shift in the Islamic attitude towards immigration to the non-Muslim world, primarily the “Christian” one, from total denial by Salafi clerics to a growing approval. The most radical Jihadi-Salafists still object and prohibit it. But, the moderate Salafis, not to mention the school of the Muslim Brotherhood, are now compromising with the process and even started developing a special Islamic law for Muslim minorities—*Fiqh al-Aqalliyyat*—in the West, encouraged by leading clerics in the Arab world.



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The emergence of the “Non-Territorial Islamic State,” whether motivated by clear ideology and doctrines of certain clerics, or as a product of problematic reality in the form of ghettos, looks like a growing phenomenon in Europe. So far it is more “Muslim” than “Islamic” or “Islamist” phenomenon. Yet, we should bear in mind that these ghettos have already produced a linkage of poverty-alienation-criminal activity-Islamist violent preaching-support for global Jihad-recruitment to terrorist activity outside of Western Europe—and in the past year—terrorism on European soil.

As long as radical ideology is a growing cover to justify isolation, especially out of own will, the riots in Europe might become an on-and-off phenomenon, leading to more radical acts, such as terrorism. European governments should look first how to prevent the creation of such ghettos or “pockets of isolation,” which might seek autonomy in the seen future.

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