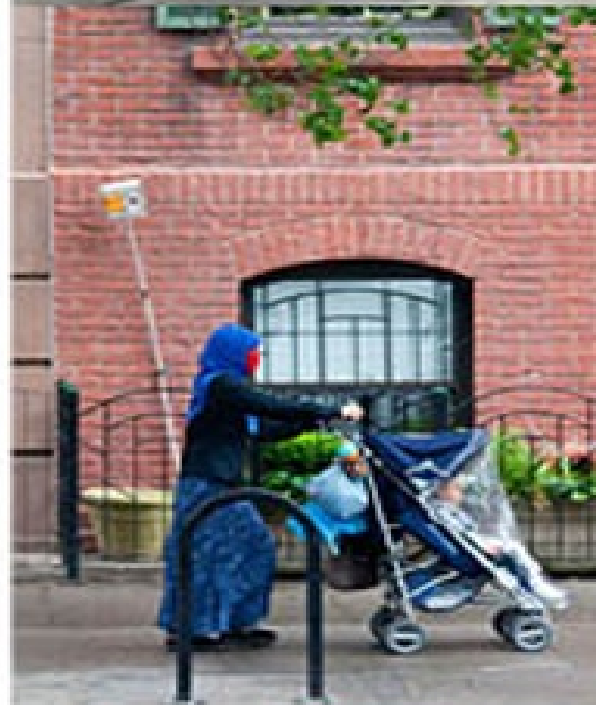

THE
MYTH
OF THE
MUSLIM
TIDE

**DO IMMIGRANTS
THREATEN THE WEST?**

**DOUG
SAUNDERS**

*Author of **Arrival City***



“Serious, mightily researched, lofty and humane, *Arrival City* is packed with salient detail and could hardly be more timely ... [It] feels as important in its way as was Jane Jacobs’s *Death and Life of Great American Cities*.”

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—*Literary Review*

“A broadly researched, passionate and portentous call for a new way to look at the experience of migrants. It is essential reading ... for all who look at the future of cities with a mix of hope and fear.”

—*Winnipeg Free Press*

“[An] incisive study of worldwide rural-to-urban migration, its complex social mechanisms and the consequences of institutional neglect... An essential work for those who pay attention to the effects of globalization—which is, or at least should be, nearly everyone.”

—*Kirkus Review*



DOUG SAUNDERS

THE MYTH OF THE MUSLIM TIDE

Doug Saunders is the European bureau chief of *The Globe and Mail*. He is the author of *Arriv City*, which won or was a finalist for several prizes and was published in eight languages around the world.

www.dougsaunders.net

Arrival City

DOUG SAUNDERS



**THE MYTH OF THE
MUSLIM
TIDE**

DO IMMIGRANTS THREATEN
THE WEST?



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Open your ears; for which of you will stop

The vent of hearing when loud Rumour speaks?

I, from the Orient to the drooping West,

Making the wind my post-horse, still unfold

The acts commenced on this ball of earth:

Upon my tongues continual slanders ride,

The which in every language I pronounce,

Stuffing the ears of men with false reports.

I speak of peace, while covert enmity

Under the smile of safety wounds the world,

... Rumour is a pipe

Blown by surmises, jealousies, conjectures,

And of so easy and so plain a stop

That the blunt monster with uncounted heads,

The still-discordant wavering multitude,

Can play upon it.

King Henry IV, Part II



ONE
POPULAR
FICTION

I THE NEW NEIGHBOURS

ABOUT FIFTEEN YEARS AGO, my London neighbourhood began to change. We noticed first among the crowds on our rough-and-tumble shopping street, Holloway Road, where there were suddenly a lot more women with covered heads: some wore a colourful hijab, others the white veil popular among East Africans, still others the heavy black chador, and occasionally by the bus shelter a pair of eyes would peer from a narrow slit in the all-concealing black sack of a Saudi-style abaya and niqab. Whatever their headdress, the women tended to have a lot of children with them.

Then the street itself changed: its procession of pubs and corner stores was joined by a great many Turkish eateries, some of them excellent, along with several grotty Internet cafes and money-transfer shops with opaque Arabic signs. Within a few years, it felt as if Islam was closing in. Our after-school babysitter, a French girl who grew up in an Alpine village and was partial to all-night raves, abruptly converted to the faith of her new Algerian friends and took to covering her head and praying five times a day. It made her more punctual and orderly and no less attentive to our kids, but also more sombre and less willing to eat out for food.

The new immigrants from East Africa, Turkey, the Middle East and the Indian subcontinent became our friends, shopkeepers, classmates and doctors. But it was hard, in those ten years that began this century, to avoid associating their religion with violence and extremism. Our nearest Muslim house of worship, the Finsbury Park mosque, was often visited by police; in 1997 it had been taken over by an Egyptian-born former Afghan mujahedeen fighter who called himself Abu Hamza. This hook-handed, half-blind cleric, known in tabloid headlines as “hooky mullah,” delivered astringent sermons calling for the murder of non-Muslims in Islamic lands and made headlines by praising the September 11 hijackers; he was arrested and imprisoned in 2004 on terrorism and race-hatred charges. After that, the extremists were banished from the mosque and deported, its new imam was moderate, and fewer intense bearded men hung out on the streets around it. But the sense of insecurity and tension continued, especially after a neighbour lost both her legs in the July 7, 2005, suicide-bombing attacks on the London transit system, which were committed mainly by British-born Muslims from Leeds who didn't seem all that different from some of our neighbours.

Who wouldn't worry? Even as my children befriended the Usamas and Leilas around them, I couldn't avoid glancing distrustfully at some of my new neighbours. I have lived most of my life among immigrants, and of course I am one myself, but in those dark years after the terrorist attacks, it was hard to avoid the sense that Muslims were different: less likely to fit in, more prone to extremism, more likely to follow the teachings of their religion than the laws and social codes of the land around them. They had big families, it seemed, and we had smaller ones. At times I did fear that they would become a majority, and that the illiberal beliefs of the more devout among them would become dominant, turning our taste for tolerance, sexual equality and secularism into a historical footnote. If I was capable of feeling this way, as a writer with years of experience in Muslim cultures, there must be millions of people with similar suspicions.

WE'VE BEEN HERE BEFORE. If I had lived at this same London address a dozen decades earlier, I would have watched with alarm as the pavements of Holloway Road filled with poor, oddly dressed men and with women wearing identity-concealing headscarves. The families segregated themselves from the native-born population, adhered to religious and political beliefs that were at odds with the dominant culture, kept customs and traditions that seemed centuries behind the times, and expanded their numbers at an astonishing rate. At that point they were using the neighbourhood as a base to plot a wave of terrorist attacks that, by the end of the 1880s, had killed more people and caused more political alarm than the jihadist attacks that began the twenty-first century would. Government reports and bestselling books of the time announced that this group was impossible to integrate into the population and would be a growing threat.

Yet in fewer than two generations, these same Irish Catholic immigrants had become fully woven into the cultural life of my neighbourhood, their distinct qualities visible in the churches and pubs but now regarded as an enhancement rather than a threat. We have forgotten how alarming the waves of Roman Catholic and Jewish immigrants from the fringes of Europe appeared to North Americans and Western Europeans only a few decades ago. Their home countries seemed less democratic, less economically free, more prone to religious law and political extremism. Right up through the early 1950s, it was commonplace for thinkers across the political spectrum to argue that Catholic immigrants were driven by the dictates of their faith to promote fascism, violence and religious extremism (for this was the condition of most of their home countries and the apparent fate of many of their diaspora) and therefore could not be assimilated into non-Catholic cultures. Until the Second World War, it had been considered reasonable in many circles to hold similar views, involving communism and crime, about Ashkenazic Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe.

By the end of the twentieth century, though, most people had forgotten about their earlier fears of religious minorities. We lived through a period of comparative tolerance when the religious fears of the mass-immigration era were replaced with the ideological fears of the Cold War. The children of Catholic and Jewish immigrants were no longer associated in the mainstream public imagination with violence and cultural usurpation, and had become our friends, neighbours, colleagues and sometimes political leaders.

And then, in the decade after the September 11 attacks, a seemingly new argument began to appear, first in the far reaches of the Internet and the mutterings of the political right, then in increasingly mainstream and mass-market venues. It began by bolstering our suspicions about those new headscarf-wearing neighbours with a few alarming anecdotes, then fanned them into smouldering distrust with some demographic and statistical claims and a bit of theology, and finally drew them to an explosive conclusion about the fate of Western societies. The argument became the subject of dozens of bestselling books, opinion pieces, blog postings, YouTube videos, political party platforms and campaign speeches, and by now has become an almost common-sense assumption for many people.

It goes like this. These Muslim immigrants, and their children and grandchildren, are not like earlier groups. They are reproducing at an unusually rapid pace, with fertility rates far higher than those of exhausted Western populations, and at some point soon—perhaps by mid-century—Muslims will become a majority in European countries and North American cities. This is a danger because, unlike other immigrants, they are loyal to Islam, not to the

host society. They do not regard their religion as a private source of inspiration, but as a political ideology they intend to act upon. A line of shared belief connects the moderate Muslim believer to the radical Islamist and makes the majority of Muslims impossible to assimilate. They will permanently alter the West and promote a political agenda that will destroy our traditions and freedoms. In short, we are about to be swept away by a “Muslim tide.”

THE PURPOSE OF THIS BOOK is to show that all of those claims are demonstrably untrue and are based on the same mixture of honest misunderstandings and darker fallacies that greeted earlier waves of poor immigrants from different religious cultures. I have drawn on the most comprehensive demographic, statistical, scholarly and survey data available to provide a detailed, honest, point-by-point examination of the facts about Muslim immigrants in the West: their population growth rates; their loyalties; their religious, political and cultural behaviours and beliefs; their propensity to religious fundamentalism, to political extremism and to violence; their successes and, sometimes, their failings in becoming integrated into the economies and cultures of the West.

The stakes here are high. The Muslim-tide beliefs have already become the founding myth behind several alarming political movements and the cause of one notable act of terrorism. Promoting these myths about Muslim immigrants has become a significant mainstream theme in the electoral politics of the United States, Germany, France, the Netherlands and Scandinavia, with scarcely any proper fact checking of the underlying claims. Once again, fever is infecting the minds of many Westerners. We must not allow history to repeat itself.

THIS BOOK IS NOT a defence of Islam, and does not contain a dissection of the teachings of the Koran. I am not an admirer of Islam, or a religious person of any sort. I am deeply alarmed by any prospect of a greater religious role in the public sphere. I am in agreement with secular Muslims such as Ayaan Hirsi Ali, Salman Rushdie, Mona Eltahawy and Fadel Amara when they argue that the instructions of the Koran and the cultural practices of many Muslim countries are enormously harmful to those who are subject to them, especially women. My view, however, is that the solution lies in the economic and political development of immigrant communities, as it has with earlier conservative religious minorities. I do not dismiss the Muslim-tide arguments out of hand. If there were evidence that their larger claims were true, I would be genuinely worried.

Theology is not the issue here, but rather public and political behaviour. The arguments for and against the Muslim-tide hypothesis are too often built on the more alarming scriptural passages of the Koran and its later, severe interpretations, or on the menacing words of certain imams and mullahs. The truth about Muslim communities is found not in scripture but in action. The holy books of every Abrahamic religion contain plenty of fodder for extremist sectarianism and for holy violence; the question is whether these words are being followed by immigrants in the West and their descendants.

We need to put aside the theology and ask a set of concrete questions: To what extent are these immigrants religiously observant or literalist believers? What role do they believe religion should play in politics? To what extent do their children and grandchildren carry the

beliefs, and degrees of observance, of their parents? Where do these communities' loyalties lie? Where are their sources of self-identity?

This book is also not intended to play down the significance of the dangerous political militant and terrorist movements that have exploded within some Muslim communities in recent decades. Rather, I hope to show that these movements are distinct and troubling products of particular political circumstances—not inevitable, organic outgrowths of conventional Islamic culture, any more than terrorist and religious extremist movements in Western cultures have been extensions of everyday thought. My work and my life have brought me too close to this violence to dismiss it. I was living in the United States during the September 11, 2001, attacks and in London during the July 7, 2005, attacks, and I was in southern France during the killing spree committed by Mohamed Merah in Toulouse in March 2012.

I have reported in depth on Islamic extremism—and moderation—from Iran, Turkey, Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Syria, Afghanistan, Bangladesh and India, and from the capitals of Europe and North America, and as a result I do not believe that the war on terror was ill-founded or misconceived. All is not well in Muslim communities. By demonstrating in these pages that recent Muslim immigrants are no more threatening than earlier waves of poor newcomers, I hope to show them as fellow citizens whose children face specific threats that deserve attention and help. It is vitally important to separate the real problems with Muslim immigration from those that are manufactured out of fear and bad information. The idea of a stealth takeover by Islamic believers is a delusion. So is the more moderate idea of a permanently alien and impossible-to-integrate “civilization” in our midst. Real problems, worrying to the majority of Muslims as they are to the rest of us, include the rise of anti-Semitism among the children of immigrants who identify with a mythic and faraway Middle East; a set of backward-looking subcultures that treat women as lesser beings, even their possessions, to be guarded, hidden or abused; and the defensive retreat of the embittered few into all-consuming religious faith in an otherwise fast-secularizing diaspora.

These reactions, along with the remaining instances of violent Islamic extremism, are best understood as intense responses by insecure people to the modernizing trends of individualism and globalization—the very same trends that produced the Muslim-tide theories and political movements in the West. These are clashes *within* civilizations, not between them, and to a large extent they are products of the false belief, held by Muslims and non-Muslims alike, that the world is divided into fixed and irreconcilable civilizations. The largest threat comes not from these immigrants themselves, but from our response to them.

II CRESCENT FEVER

THE BRIEF HISTORY OF AN IDEA

SHORTLY AFTER LUNCHTIME Anders Behring Breivik logged on to his computer, inserted a memory stick, and pulled up the Microsoft Word document he had finished formatting late the previous night. On this warm holiday Friday in 2011, he felt a sense of exalted relief. After he'd spent three years writing, first at his mother's home and then at the farmhouse he'd rented for his project, it ran to 1,518 densely typed pages, with a stark red Templar cross on the cover. He scrolled to page 1472, typed "I believe this will be my last entry. It is now Fri July 22nd, 12:51," signed it, sent it to a mailing list made up mainly of his Facebook friends, and logged off for the last time.

He then changed into the figure-hugging Lycra police uniform he had fabricated with obsessive delight, prepared his weapons, climbed into a Volkswagen van he had rented from Avis, and drove carefully to Oslo's central government building. The security guards, noticing the police uniform, paid little attention to the cube van as it parked in the front courtyard. Breivik took five minutes to walk several blocks away from the vehicle before the fuse ignited the detonator. When the blast wave reached him he did not turn or hesitate, but walked quickly to a Fiat van he had parked downtown the day before and began the drive to the fjord island of Utøya. As he drove westward, scores of emergency and police vehicles raced past him in the opposite direction, scrambling to deal with the deaths, grievous injuries, and collapsing wreckage caused by the bomb. It was the height of the summer holiday during which most Norwegians vacate the city, so Breivik knew the emergency services would be understaffed and unable to deal quickly with any other crises. That was part of the plan.

Aboard the ferry to Utøya an hour later, he flashed a forged police badge and explained that he had been sent to the island to counsel the teens and young adults gathered at the governing Labour Party's summer camp about the tragedy that had just occurred in Oslo. Many of the kids had family and friends employed in the government building, so it seemed a plausible explanation, even if there was something excessively flamboyant about his uniform and overexcited in his demeanour.

Breivik stepped onto the tiny island and marched decisively through the light drizzle toward the clubhouse where two hundred kids were sitting out the rain. From the front lawn he yelled, "Everyone gather around, I have an important message about the bomb attack earlier today." As they stepped onto the lawn to meet him, he opened fire, first shooting the 45-year-old mother of two who had showed him the way from the ferry landing to the clubhouse, then dozens of young campers. As the children fled back into the building, he threw smoke bombs inside to drive them out again, and continued shooting. He then walked around the building into the campsite, methodically unzipping the tents and shooting any youngsters he found cowering inside. He continued to the path that followed the coast on the opposite end of the island, shooting into crowds of fleeing kids. Many threw themselves off the cliffs to escape, some plunging into the icy water and swimming or hiding in caves, others getting crushed on the rocks. He fired an automatic rifle into the water to kill fleeing swimmers, and hunted down teenagers hiding on the shore. At one point, a group of teens ran toward him, thinking a policeman had arrived to rescue them from the shooter. He gunned

them down as their friends watched in horror from hiding places.

Breivik's massacre continued for nearly 90 minutes before he got through by cellphone to the police emergency line and announced his surrender. In the end, 69 people died on the island, some as young as 14. Another 8 were killed by the Oslo bomb. More than 150 were seriously injured.

Hours after the world learned of the attack, people began to circulate copies of Breivik's 1,518-page document. I received mine from a member of his Facebook list as I arrived in Oslo. Like many, I was at first confused by its title, *2083: A European Declaration of Independence*.¹ I had to wade through hundreds of pages to find its significance at last explained in precise detail. Breivik shared the popular misconception that Muslims will become a majority of Europe's population, and claimed that this threshold would be reached around 2080. At that point, he argued, they will naturally want to impose their governing ideals, in harmony with their religious instructions, and subjugate the continent's Christians and Jews. As it happens, 2083 is the four hundredth anniversary of the Battle of Vienna when the advance of the Muslim Ottoman Empire toward the centre of Europe was stopped by the Habsburg armies. Breivik's manifesto argued that Europe is now facing a similar onslaught, and called for a repeat of that battle.

In Breivik's vision, his Oslo attacks were the opening salvo of this larger war, a call to Wagnerian arms for fellow fighters against the enablers of "Eurabia." His targets chosen to have the maximum impact in stopping the Muslim onslaught, were what he called "category A and B traitors": the politicians who were allowing and encouraging Muslim immigration, and the "suicidal humanists" and "capitalist globalists" who were tolerating the presence of Muslims within Europe. By killing the Labour Party youth, he hoped to eliminate a generation of tolerant politicians. (In fact, Norway has one of Europe's tougher immigration policies, and also one of Europe's smallest Muslim communities).

Toward the end of his document, Breivik provided the text of his proposed legal defence: "The individuals I have been accused of illegally executing are all category A and B traitors," he wrote. "They are supporters of the anti-European hate ideology known as multiculturalism, an ideology that facilitates Islamisation and Islamic demographic warfare. The category A and B traitors I executed were killed in self defence through a pre-emptive strike. They have been found guilty of high treason and condemned to death.... I must be allowed to prove that I executed these traitors in order to prevent them from continuing to contribute in the ongoing processes of cultural and demographical genocide and extermination."

That was outlandish stuff. Yet much of the document, once you clawed your way past its lush faux-medieval adornments, seemed strikingly sane and unnervingly familiar. True, the violent language and his invocation of a new Knights Templar army in the concluding sections were hallmarks of deep extremism and possibly insanity. But along the way to that leap of criminal absurdity, he had followed a line of reasoning that, by 2011, had become mainstream—a set of arguments that had been playing out on the bestseller charts, blog sites, opinion pages and 24-hour news networks of Europe and North America for a decade at least. Indeed, the core of his manifesto is a very long pastiche of passages from books, newspaper columns and blog posts by writers who are well-known media figures in Britain, Germany, the Netherlands, Canada and the United States. He did not develop a new argument at all, but

merely cut and pasted theirs, unaltered, and appended his own violent conclusion.

Here, in this manuscript composed by a terrorist, was the history of an idea. In these pages the notion of the Muslim tide could be traced from its emergence in fringe publications in the final decades of the twentieth century, through its rise in increasingly less obscure books and films throughout the opening decade of this one, and then into the central corridors of European and American politics. During that paranoid decade, a set of fringe concepts, built on misreadings and falsehoods, came to be embraced by a large group of writers and political leaders who should have known better.

The Outraged Moderate

Take, for example, the American writer Bruce Bawer, one of the more frequently quoted authors in Breivik's manifesto, his books lauded by the killer as important inspirations. Far from being a career racist or fringe politician, Bawer was known for nearly three decades as a gifted essayist on poetry, fiction and cinema, his subtle works on John Fowles's novels and David Lynch's screenplays published regularly in such mainstream conservative magazines as *The New Criterion* and the *American Spectator*. His first major book, *A Place at the Table: The Gay Individual in American Society*, was a defence of gay rights and same-sex marriage from a politically centrist perspective. His second, *Stealing Jesus: How Fundamentalism Betrays Christianity*, was a moderate, gay Christian's attack on evangelical excesses, in which he argued that his non-fundamentalist middle-of-the-road faith was the "true Christianity," not the angry extremism of US televangelists.²

Bawer had moved to Amsterdam in 1999 (and would be living in Oslo by the time of Breivik's attack). Something happened to him in the wake of 9/11. By Bawer's own account, he was shocked into consciousness living as a gay man in Amsterdam and experiencing the homophobic and antiliberal voices of the more extreme Muslim clerics after the September 11 attacks. In *While Europe Slept: How Radical Islam Is Destroying the West from Within* and other books, he repeatedly and hyperbolically described the extremist fringe of Islam as being its true (and, generally, only) aspect. His books were well received in the United States and were excerpted and praised in such mainstream outlets as the *Wall Street Journal* editorial page and Fox News. In the final chapter of *While Europe Slept*, titled "Europe's Weimar Moment," he likens Europe today to Germany during the ascent of Hitler, with Muslims taking the place of Nazis, arriving at the inevitable conclusion: "It's hard to imagine that Americans could do much to rescue Europe from its present fate, short of launching another D-Day." In a January 2007 blog post, Bawer took this line of reasoning even further, with words that would become his most famous: "European officials have a clear route out of this nightmare" of Muslim hegemony, he wrote. "They have armies. They have police. They have prisons."

Bawer was outraged by Breivik's attack, but not simply because it was a grotesque atrocity. In his view, the killings had also brought dishonour on an important movement. "When it emerged that these acts of terror were the work of a native Norwegian who thought he was striking a blow against jihadism and its enablers," Bawer wrote in the *Wall Street Journal* two days after the killings, "it was immediately clear to me that his violence will deal a heavy blow to an urgent cause." Even as bodies were still being pulled from the Norwegian lake, he

used the occasion to endorse the arguments in the 2083 manifesto. “The first half, in which [Breivik] indicts the European cultural elite for permitting Islam to take root in Europe, makes it clear that he is both highly intelligent and very well read in European history and the history of modern ideas,” Bawer wrote. “There is reason to be deeply concerned about all these things, and to want to see them addressed forcefully by government leaders.” Breivik had “a legitimate concern about genuine problems,” Bawer continued, even if his solution was “unspeakably evil.”

In the months after the attacks, Bawer hardened his position further. In 2012, he published a short e-book that sharply denounced the response to the attacks from the “left-wing cultural elite” and the international media, whom he described as “apologists for radical Islam.” The book, tellingly, is titled *The New Quislings*, after the Norwegian Nazi collaborationist leader Vidkun Quisling. In it, Bawer suggests explicitly that people who tolerate immigration from Muslim-majority regions are analogous to those who allowed Hitler to take over the European countries. The government and the media are, in Bawer’s argument, class A and class B traitors.

The Mother of Eurabia

When you try to find out what might have caused otherwise reasonable people such as Bawer to become foaming Muslim-tide extremists, you keep running into the same little old woman. She is the grandmotherly inspiration of authors and activists, the inventor of the word “Eurabia,” the coiner of the popular angry bloggers’ insult “dhimmitude,” and the widely acknowledged matriarch of the movement. Almost every Muslim-tide book written since September 11 has drawn on the writings of Gisèle Littman, a self-educated, Egyptian-born Swiss-English writer who publishes under the pen name Bat Ye’or (Hebrew for “daughter of the Nile”).

The most famous Bat Ye’or book—the one whose title put a new portmanteau word into the language and effectively catalyzed an entire movement—is *Eurabia: The Euro-Arab Axis*, published in 2005, and a surprise hit in the years after the September 11 attacks. It has been lauded by conservative popular historians such as Niall Ferguson (who called it “prophetic”) and Sir Martin Gilbert (who said it helped prove that “the European idea is being subverted by Islamic hostility to the very ethics and values of Europe itself”).³ As a result, you might assume that this book makes a credible case for Islamic ambitions in Europe. Instead, however, the book’s purported dark heart is not anything Islamic or Arabic but rather an obscure Brussels committee called the Euro-Arab Dialogue.

In the real world, the Euro-Arab Dialogue was a diplomatic talking shop created in 1973 by the European Economic Community, the precursor to the European Union, to improve diplomatic relations with the Arab states in the wake of the OPEC oil crisis and the Yom Kippur War. Its original goals of helping the cause of Middle East peace and improving trade relations across the Mediterranean went nowhere, in large part because the Europeans wanted it to be an economic forum and the Arabs wanted it to be political.⁴ In 1979, after only four meetings, the Dialogue was suspended. Attempts to relaunch it in 1990 and 2000 were widely regarded as failures. It has never had any policy power and wields no political influence. In fact, it is so universally regarded as an irrelevance that it was overshadowed by

two later efforts to improve relations between Europe and its Middle Eastern and North African neighbours, the EU's 1995 Barcelona Process and French president Nicolas Sarkozy's 2008 Union for the Mediterranean.*

In the mind of Gisèle Littman, though, this sleepy committee and its successors are orchestrating a continent-wide Islamic takeover. The Euro-Arab Dialogue, she writes in *Eurabia*, “has been in the vanguard of engineering a convergence between Europe and the Islamic states of North Africa and the Middle East ... a new entity—with political, economic, religious, cultural and media components—superimposed on Europe by powerful governmental lobbies.... What is emerging is a new Eurabian culture with its own dogma, preachers, axioms and rules.” This political dialogue, she argues, is one of “the main steps of a transformation that has already begun in Europe, the birth of a new *dhimmi* civilization, Eurabia.” To support this claim, she offers only a thin soup of assertions that bracket passages from anodyne committee reports. That was all it took to earn her great credibility among a generation of writers, activists and politicians.

Littman had built her reputation on her earlier Bat Ye'or books, a series of amateur histories of the Middle East that offered harsh portraits of the repressions and humiliations suffered by Christians and Jews under Islamic regimes, from the seventh through the late twentieth century. Littman's family were Egyptian Jews who fled to Europe in the 1950s, an experience that must have inspired her to adapt *dhimmi*, a neutral Arabic term for religious minorities whose presence was tolerated (sometimes roughly) in Islamic states, into *dhimmitude*, her darkly menacing word for “subjected, non-Muslim individuals or people [who] accept the restrictive and humiliating subordination to an ascendant Islamic power to avoid enslavement or death”—or, in practice, anyone who tolerates Muslim immigrants or recognizes their religion. It has become a word used endlessly by anti-Muslim bloggers and their fans to dismiss critics or liberals as Eurabian sellouts. However popular it is online, the concept has no credibility. Even the Middle East historian Bernard Lewis, who has been strongly critical of contemporary Islam, dismissed *dhimmitude* as a historical myth comparable to the mirror-image Islamic myth of a “golden age” of multifaith harmony. “Like many myths,” he wrote, “both contain significant elements of truth, and the historic truth lies in its usual place, somewhere in the middle between the extremes.”⁵

Littman, however, is not a historian but a radical activist. This was starkly apparent from the mid-1990s, when she gained her first taste of public renown by employing her *dhimmitude* arguments to bolster the Serbian cause in Bosnia. In a series of interviews and speeches, she popularized the idea that Bosnia's Muslim-plurality population, at that point being attacked by Serb militias, were the war's real threat, and their attackers were actual “Serbian resistance movements” against “the gradual Muslim penetration of Europe.”⁶ In 1995, she delivered a speech at the Lord Byron Foundation for Balkan Studies, a group dominated by Srdja Trifkovic, the adviser to and spokesman for Radovan Karadzic, the Bosnian Serb warlord who, only months before the talk, had organized the Srebrenica massacre. Littman's speech championed the arguments made by the Serbian radicals: that the Muslims of Bosnia and Kosovo have a centuries-old plot to take over Europe, and that, as she said, “suddenly the recent crisis in Yugoslavia offered a new chance for [the plot's] reincarnation in a multi-religious Muslim Bosnian state. What a chance! A Muslim state again in the heartland of Europe. And we know the rest, the sufferings, the miseries, the trials of

the war.”

This unsavoury background has not prevented scores of writers and journalists from believing in Littman’s shadowy plot. Shortly after the publication of *Eurabia*, Oriana Fallaci, in the final episode of her journalistic career, eagerly adopted and amplified the Bat Ye’or argument. “Europe is no longer Europe, it is ‘Eurabia,’ a colony of Islam, where the Islamic invasion does not proceed only in a physical sense, but also in a mental and cultural sense,” Fallaci told the *Wall Street Journal* in 2005. Mind you, she had already embraced the demographic claims behind the Muslim-tide argument in the least subtle fashion, writing, in her 2002 Italian bestseller *The Rage and the Pride* that the “sons of Allah ... they multiply like rats.”

Language like this seemed to find a new licence after the September 11 attacks. Amid the public anxiety and distrust of those years, it was hard for many people to make the distinction between Islamic terrorism and ordinary Muslims. And here, fully prepared for such an event, was a voice declaring loudly that such a distinction had never existed. The most immediate effect of Littman’s oeuvre was to inspire a set of extremist blogs dotted with her neologisms: Gates of Vienna, founded by the American activist Ned May, which warns of a “worldwide jihad,” calls for the expulsion of all Muslims from Europe and had a close relationship with Breivik’s friends and enablers; Atlas Shrugs, run by the American anti-Muslim firebrand Pamela Gellar (author of books such as *Stop the Islamization of America: Practical Guide to the Resistance*); and Jihad Watch, run by the provocateur Robert Spencer, author of such memorable titles as *The Truth about Muhammad: Founder of the World’s Most Intolerant Religion*.

Such shrill messages, joined in the angry years of the Iraq War by established American anti-immigration and anti-Muslim voices such as Daniel Pipes and Patrick Buchanan, slowly rose from the extremist fringe of the Internet into more respectable circles, and eventually came to play a powerful role in the post-Bush Tea Party branch of the Republican Party. Along the way, they linked up with an older, more potent set of fears.

The Self-Hating Westerners

“Can you have the same Europe with different people?”

Those nine words, penned by the *Financial Times* columnist Christopher Caldwell and printed across the cover of many editions of his 2009 book, *Reflections on the Revolution and Europe: Immigration, Islam, and the West*, are a succinct summary of the anxiety driving the Muslim-tide movement, as well as a key demonstration of the essential illogic of its arguments. After all, as we shall see in the next chapter, recent Muslim immigrants are no more “different” than the earlier, larger waves of religious minorities who contribute to the current populations of most Western countries. Still, this has become a widely held public opinion about Muslim immigrants: they are different, and they will force *us* to be different.

His argument is novel in that it does not simply claim that Muslims are plotting to take over the West. Instead, he blames the victim: the West, he says, has morally and spiritually collapsed into wide-open vulnerability. “The spiritual tawdriness Islamic immigrants perceive in the modern West is not imaginary,” Caldwell begins. “It may be Europe’s biggest liability in preserving its culture.” Like those earlier Muslim-tide authors, he also sees Muslims a

disloyal arrivals whose birth rates will swamp the West and whose faith is better described as an ideology. “Imagine that the West, at the height of the Cold War, had received a massive inflow of immigrants from Communist countries who were ambivalent about which side they supported.... Something similar is taking place now.” But to this he adds something new: admiration, even envy, for the spiritual strength and organizational coherence of Muslims and a corresponding horror at the disappearance of such qualities in the West. His book, like many others of recent years, gains its potency by resurrecting two powerful, long-dormant concepts.

The first is the clash of civilizations. When Samuel Huntington gave that old phrase a new lease on life shortly after the end of the Cold War with his book *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, his argument sounded, to more reasonable ears, like a moderate resurrection of the medieval vision of competing religious empires—a scenario that had been eclipsed by centuries of cultural convergence and economic interconnection. But after September 11, the notion of monolithic, incompatible “civilizations” suddenly appealed to Islamic extremists in the East as much as to the Muslim-tide authors and politicians in the West. Among both Islamic radicals and anti-Islamic radicals, it became popular once again to speak of a spiritual no man’s land between two distinct blocs of humanity.

The second seductive concept is the decline of the West. Even before Oswald Spengler’s 1918 bestseller of that title, it had been popular, during moments of economic or military difficulty, for some conservatives to claim that the societies of the West had brought it upon themselves with their “moral decline”—usually a reference to the diminished power of the Church after the Enlightenment.

This combination of ideas—*civilizations* and *decline*—gave the Muslim-tide argument a powerful new kick of self-blame for Europeans (and, for some Americans, a potent sense of being threatened not just by Islamic beliefs but also by weak-kneed European secularism). “It is certain that Europe will emerge changed from its confrontation with Islam,” concludes Caldwell, who sees both the Enlightenment and the liberation movements of the 1960s as terrible mistakes that caused a collapse of European Christianity into postmodern decadence. “When an insecure, malleable, relativistic culture meets a culture that is anchored, confident, and strengthened by common doctrines, it is generally the former that changes to suit the latter.”

Caldwell offered the polite version of this argument. But there were writers willing to express it more bluntly. One of the most successful British books of this century’s first decade was *Londonistan*, by the *Daily Mail* columnist Melanie Phillips, which began with the quite plausible argument that London had become a hotbed of Islamic-terrorist organizing (certainly true at the decade’s outset), and then went on to claim that the majority of British Muslims are believers in jihad and sharia. Britain has become “hollowed out,” she wrote, by “the onslaught mounted by secular nihilists against the country’s Judeo-Christian values ... [and] a debauched and disorderly culture of instant gratification, with disintegrating families, ferocious children and violence, squalor and vulgarity on the streets.” To Phillips’s mind, it was only secular amorality that had brought about Islamic radicalism.

If Caldwell is the cool-headed preacher of original sin and pending end times, his comic opera choirmaster is the Canadian Mark Steyn. After spending decades as a well-regarded writer on musical theatre, publishing such books as *Broadway Babies Say Goodnight*, Steyn

like Bruce Bawer, took a sharp turn after September 11 into the more corrosive (and lucrative) territory of sarcasm-laced political commentary. In the *Wall Street Journal*, Canada's *Maclean's*, and in his blog and breezy books, he won headlines by popularizing the claims of the Bat Ye'or books ("Islam itself is a political project") and adding a supercharge to the demographic claim. "By some projections, the EU's population will be 40 per cent Muslim by 2025," he argued in one article; in several others, that the continent would be Muslim-majority by century's end; and in another, that "Europe will be semi-Islamic in its politico-cultural character within a generation" or that every European "under the age of 40—make that 60, if not 75—is all but guaranteed to end his days living in an Islamified Europe."

Modernity has feminized the West and rendered it meek, Steyn argues repeatedly, and this feminization has led it to abort itself into nonexistence. Muslims, he writes, are destined to take over the Western world because "they've calculated that our entire civilization lacks the will to see them off." Steyn's works appealed to Anders Breivik, whose manifesto quoted them several times. And indeed, while Steyn is far from being a violent or militaristic figure, he ends his bestseller *America Alone: The End of the World as We Know It* with a passage that seems to have prefigured the Norwegian's apocalyptic rhetoric: "We have been shirking too long, and that's unworthy of a great civilization. To see off the new Dark Ages will be tough and demanding. The alternative will be worse."

Millions of otherwise moderate and reasonable people have bought these books, enjoyed them, and sometimes praised and repeated their arguments. Most readers, I suspect, are not subscribing to these authors' more ornate conspiracies or darker claims of pending catastrophe. Rather, they are seeking a narrative that might help explain the bewildering appearance of visibly different Muslim communities in their cities, and the near-simultaneous eruptions of Islamist violence that marked the first years of this century. Much as a rumbling distrust of Catholics and Jews among earlier generations was supported by a string of hyperbolic books making similar claims, these Muslim-tide works provide most readers with more of a reassurance than a call to arms. A small minority of readers, however, have been inspired to support a new type of politics.

* Far from being the vanguard of an anti-Western takeover, these initiatives were lauded by Israel, denounced by Colonel Muammar Gaddafi as a foil for European imperialism, and rejected by the Turks as a ploy to keep them out of EU membership.

III THE PARTIES OF EURABIA

WHEN I VISITED Geert Wilders in The Hague two years before the Norwegian murder, what surprised me was not his louche English or his famous bottle-blond coif, but his taste in art. The paintings he chose to adorn his parliamentary office suite were not what you would expect from the leader of the radically anti-Muslim Party For Freedom (PVV): not the heroic horsebound realism of an archconservative revanchist, nor the stark abstractions of a freemarket libertarian. No, this was hippie art, the sort of rock-poster phantasmagoria popular among velvet revolutionaries, with pert-breasted naked girls transmogrifying into pianos and rainbow-hued evocations of cosmic love. And in these psychedelic artifacts you could spot the secret to his success: Wilders did not become the third most powerful politician in the Netherlands on a platform of intolerance, but rather on a platform of claiming not to tolerate those who are intolerant of the Dutch lifestyle. All of whom just happen to be Muslim.

“Whatever colour or sexual preference, whatever people have, it doesn’t matter as they’re all welcome in our party and we don’t discriminate in any way,” he told me. His party won 15% of the votes in the 2010 national election with a message that included the deportation of Muslims and the outlawing of the Koran. It was the first of several anti-Muslim parties swept into substantial election victories across northern and western Europe at the height of the economic crisis.

A party opposed to religious extremism sounds, frankly, like a perfectly reasonable idea, I told him. Would he expand his message to include problems of Christian zealotry? Wilders bristled at this suggestion and told me there could be no comparison. “I see many differences between Islam and other religions,” he said. “In fact, I see Islam not so much as a religion as much as an ideology. As I see it, the aim of the Islamic ideology is to dominate and to submit the Western societies to their belief, and this is unlike the other religions. I say that Islam is not another branch on the tree of religions—it has to be put in the corner of totalitarian ideologies. That’s why I compare it with communism and fascism—I see the comparison between the Koran and *Mein Kampf*.”⁷

Wilders then gave me a lecture about what he calls “al-Hijra, the Islamic doctrine of migration,” in which Muslim believers follow Koranic commands ordering them to migrate to foreign lands and have great numbers of children, acting as Trojan Horses bent on civilizational domination. This is a popular concept on the fringes of the Eurabia movement. It has escaped wider notice in large part because it has not a word of support in the text of the Koran and has never been advocated, in speech or in print, by any Muslim leader, however radical—with the sole exception of the late Libyan dictator Muammar Gaddafi, who once gave a speech calling on Muslims to take over Europe through migration. (Gaddafi, far from being an Islamic figurehead, was mainly known for his imprisonment and mass murder of Islamists, and also for forbidding his people’s migration.)

Such gaps in logic had not stopped Wilders from becoming a very successful politician. I believe that we will be able to redefine the meaning of what is mainstream in this country, he told me. And to a certain extent he has already succeeded—not just in his own country.

The first decade of this century saw an explosion of Eurabia parties. In neighbouring

Denmark, the Danish People's Party—whose platform often sounds like parts of Breivik's manifesto—became the third-largest force in parliament, with 14% of the vote. In Finland, the even more harshly xenophobic True Finns won a fifth of the vote. The Swedish Democrats, whose platform is almost entirely anti-Muslim, won their first parliamentary seats, 20 out of 349, in the 2010 election. And in Norway, despite the outpouring of national outrage following Breivik's attack, views similar to his had already entered mainstream politics. In 2010, Christian Tybring-Gjedde, the finance critic for the opposition Progress Party and head of its Oslo branch, wrote a furious attack on immigration in which he described Muslim immigrants as having "the goal of stabbing our culture in the back" and warned that their presence "will tear our country apart." And this was *after* the party had purged its radical anti-immigrant faction.

The Norwegian massacre did nothing to dim the popularity of these views. A week after Breivik's slayings, I dropped in on Arne Tumor, an Oslo right-wing activist and former newspaper editor whose group SIAN (Stop Islamization of Norway) included Breivik among its supporters. He told me he welcomed the attention the attacks brought to his cause. "Of course we have nothing to do with his violence—we have sent him into the dark," he quickly added. "But this new debate is a great opportunity for us to educate Norwegians about the truth, which is that Muslims are not a religion, they are a political fifth column out to take over our part of the world."

The Angry Banker

None of these political precedents prepared anyone for the strange and outsized phenomenon of Thilo Sarrazin. A most unlikely figure, this German central banker was a senior figure in the centre-left Social Democratic Party, and a man who seemed almost a caricature of straitlaced Berlin moderation. This contrast, rather than the book's arguments, may have been why his *Germany Abolishes Itself: How We Are Putting Our Country at Risk* became the most popular political book of postreunification Germany, selling 1.2 million copies in little more than three months in 2010. But the upshot was that a man of the respectable left had effectively resurrected a set of ideas about religious minorities that had been banished from German thought for six decades.

His bestseller began with the tropes of the Eurabia literature, complete with its decline-of-the-West anomie. "Demographically, the enormous fertility of Muslim migrants is a threat to the cultural and civilizational equilibrium of an ageing Europe," Sarrazin wrote. "I don't want the country of my grandchildren and great-grandchildren to become largely Muslim, to have Turkish and Arabic spoken over wide areas, to have women wearing headscarves and the daily rhythm of life dictated by the call of the muezzin." In interviews, he expanded on this idea, indicting four million Turko-Germans in a conspiracy: "The Turks are conquering Germany as the Kosovars have conquered Kosovo: by a higher birth rate." Germany's Turks, of course, did not invade the country but were invited to come, beginning in the late 1950s in order to fill huge labour shortages in low-skilled fields. And then, after being asked to stay and settle, they were denied citizenship for the better part of forty years, until citizenship laws were reformed in 1999. For this reason, Turks, who in other countries have integrated well into the economy and the educational system and slipped easily into citizenship, have

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