

The Islamisation of the West

INTRODUCTION

“Islam entered Europe twice and left it... Perhaps the next conquest, Allah willing, will be by means of preaching and ideology. The conquest need not necessarily be by the sword... Perhaps we will conquer these lands without armies. We want an army of preachers and teachers who will present Islam in all languages and in all dialects.” – Yusuf al-Qaradawi, a popular Sunni Muslim cleric, head of the European Council for Fatwa and Research¹

Since the 1960s large numbers of Muslims have been migrating to the West. Muslim migration is unusual because of radicals within the community who are *deliberately* seeking to create dramatic changes in their host societies; they want Islam to gain social, cultural, economic and political power.

has been dramatic. In Western Europe, there were only about 50,000 Muslims in 1900. By 1970 the number had grown to 3-4 million, and by 2008 it exceeded 25 million. Forty percent of Rotterdam’s population is Muslim. In Brussels the figure is 33 percent and in Marseilles and Malmo 25 percent. Muslims comprise an estimated 20 percent of the population of inner London, 15 percent of the population in Birmingham, and 10 percent in Paris and Copenhagen. Muhammad has become the most common name for newborn boys in Brussels and Amsterdam, and the third most common in England. Muslim populations are growing much faster than non-Muslim ones. This growth is due to continued migration, higher birth rates and conversions. Many Muslim leaders have expressed their vision of an Islamic Europe in the foreseeable future, achieved primarily by demographic changes.

Bernard Lewis predicted in July 2004 that Muslims would form a majority in Europe by the end of the 21st century. He repeated his warning in 2007, arguing that Europe is experiencing a dramatic demographic shift coupled with a process of Islamisation.

“We’re the ones who will change you ... Just look at the development within Europe, where the number of Muslims is expanding like mosquitoes. Every western woman in the EU is producing an average of 1.4 children. Every Muslim woman in the same countries are [sic] producing 3.5 children. By 2050, 30% of the population in Europe will be Muslim... Our way of thinking ... will prove more powerful than yours.” [Mullah Krekar, a Kurdish Islamist radical from Iraq, who has been granted asylum in Norway²]

Secularism has already undermined the Judeo-Christian basis of Western society, and this makes it easier for radical Muslims in the West to progress towards their goal. There are also other factors that seem to make many Westerners ashamed of their Judeo-Christian heritage and values. These factors include guilt and shame about two world wars, colonialism, racism and the Holocaust.

What is happening in the West is linked to worldwide developments in Islam. Muslims around the globe are regaining their confidence and promoting a resurgence of Islam. Their aim is to establish Muslim control in politics, economics and culture in every country. In this process the Islamic world is growing more assertive and intolerant towards the West. This resurgence of Islam and the increasing power of Islamism (political Islam) strongly impact Muslim communities in the West. In response, the West is gradually changing its structures, laws and customs to suit its Muslim communities.

MIGRATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Muslims are still a minority in the West; however, their growth rate

Example: the number of Muslims in Britain

The 2001 UK census found that 1,591,126 people identified themselves as Muslims – this amounted to 2.7% of the total population.⁴ However, other estimates from Muslim bodies, NGOs and academics suggest that the real figure was much higher. In 2002 Professor M. Anwar, head of the Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations at the University of Warwick, calculated that the Muslim population was 1.8 million. In 2001 the Muslim Council of Great Britain estimated that there had been 1.7 million Muslims in the UK in 1999. In 2002 a Government sponsored delegation of British Muslims told senior figures in Egypt that there were about 3 million Muslims in Britain.⁵ British Census records have also been criticised because vast numbers of respondents have refused to answer the question about religious affiliation. This evidence suggests that the government is underplaying the size of the British Muslim population.

So even though recent government estimates have shown dramatic increases in the size of the Muslim population from their earlier estimates, they may still vastly underestimate the true size of the Muslim population and should therefore be treated with caution.

¹ Yusuf al-Qaradawi on Al-Jazeera Television (Qatar), 24 January 1999, <http://www.aljazeera.net/programs/shareea/articles/2001/7/7-6-2.htm>, quoted in MEMRI Special Dispatch Series, No. 447, 6 December 2002.

² “Krekar claims Islam will win”, *Aftenposten*, 13 March 2006.

³ “Islamic Europe?” *The Weekly Standard*, 4 October 2004; “Europe Will Be Islamic By End Of This Century Says Princeton Prof”, *Free Republic*, 28 July 2008.

⁴ “UK Population”, *British Council*, http://www.britishcouncil.org/diversity/race_population.html, viewed 13 January 2003.

⁵ “British Muslims visit Cairo and Riyadh, Jan 02”, Press Release: www.bashirkhanbhai.co.uk/cl_cairovisitjan02.htm, viewed 14 January 2004.



The Office for National Statistics found that the Muslim population had multiplied ten times faster than the rest of society during the period from 2004 to 2008. In 2008 the government's Labour Force Survey calculated that the British Muslim population in 2008 was 2.4 million.⁶ However, this may well be a considerable underestimate.

Barnabas Fund has undertaken some intensive research into this question. Embassies of Muslim states were approached and asked for their current figures on the number of Muslims in Britain whom they represent, and published material from government agencies (such as the Department of Communities and Local Government) as well as Muslim NGOs dealing with specific Muslim ethnic groups was used. Low and high estimates were recorded, and the results are shown in the following table:

	Low Estimate	High Estimate
Pakistanis (1st generation immigrants only)	900,000	1,200,000
Bangladeshis	353,000	500,000
Indians	160,000	200,000
Afghans	55,000	70,000
Iranians	75,000	85,000
Turks	230,000	500,000
Arabs	250,000	400,000
North Africans	130,000	130,000
Somalis	100,000	150,000
Other Sub-Saharan Africans	70,000	300,000
European Muslims e.g. Albanians, Kosovars	70,000	100,000
Asylum-seekers	?	?
South-East Asians	?	?
Converts to Islam	?	?
Others	?	?
	2,393,000	3,635,000

? indicates that reliable figures are unavailable.

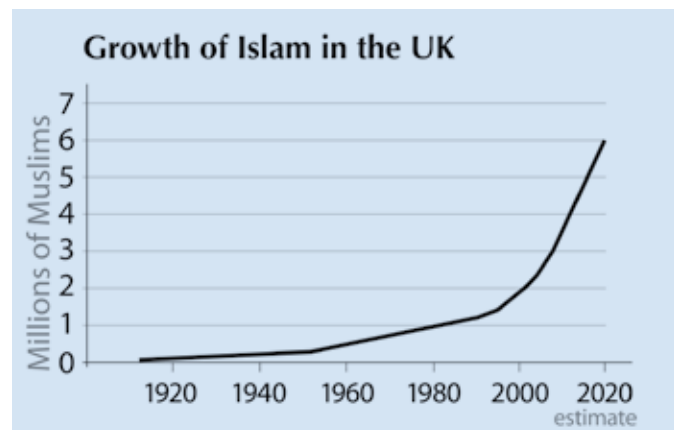
In 2007, there were 28,300 people who applied for asylum in the UK. In 2008 the figure was 30,545. Most asylum-seekers end up staying in the UK, and many of them are Muslims. Making a conservative guess that a third of asylum-seekers are Muslims an extra 10,000 Muslims are added to the British population every year. Because very few asylum applications are accepted, and most applicants who stay do so illegally, the great majority of this 10,000 will not be included in embassy figures. Estimates for the number of asylum seekers currently resident in the UK range from 620,000 to 1.1 million, who could include between 200,000 and 350,000 Muslims. There are no reliable figures for converts to Islam, but estimates range from 10,000 to 60,000.

Pakistani-origin Muslims form by far the largest single group of British Muslims. **It is important to note that the figures from the Pakistani High Commission cover only first-generation Pakistani immigrants.** But many Pakistani-background Britons are now second, third and even fourth generation immigrants; a reasonable estimate would be between 600,000 and 800,000. So the total figure for Pakistani Muslims must be far higher than the table indicates, perhaps between 1.5 and 2 million.

So although the minimum figure in the table matches the government estimate of 2.4 million, it is likely to be too low. It would seem fair to estimate the current (2010) number of Muslims in the UK as being certainly 3 million, most likely at least 3.2 million and possibly as many as 4.8 million.

How long has it taken for the British Muslim population to grow to this size? In 1915 there were only 10,000 Muslims in the UK, and the level remained low for the next four decades. The main waves of Muslim immigrants arrived in Britain after the Second World War and as British colonies gained independence. By 1954 there were some 24,000 Muslims. Most of the new arrivals came from the Indian subcontinent (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh) in search of jobs. Later waves of immigrants included Asian Muslims evicted from Uganda by Idi Amin in 1972. Arab Muslims from various countries in the Middle East experiencing economic difficulties, civil war and persecution also found refuge in Britain. Iranians fleeing the Islamic Revolution of 1979, and later Kurds fleeing persecution in Iraq and Turkey, joined the flow. Muslim immigrants and asylum-seekers arrived from the Balkans during the disintegration of Yugoslavia and from Afghanistan during its decades of war and civil strife. Recently there has been an influx from Somalia and sub-Saharan African countries.

The following graph shows how the Muslim community in Britain has grown since 1915, and how the growth has accelerated drastically in the last decade. It also gives an estimate of the number of Muslims in Britain in the year 2020 (6 million).



Impact of Islamism

Many Muslims who settle in the West are traditionalists wanting to recreate in their new country the Islam of their homeland. A few are secularists who migrated in order to escape the growth of radical Islam in their home country. Still others are Islamists who have moved to the West with the definite plan of working for the rule of Islam and sharia throughout the world. It is this last group who are spearheading the process of Islamisation in the West, although many mainstream Muslim organisations are also actively supportive of it.

Islamism is inherently political and considers that the state powers must be controlled by Islam. It is deeply rooted in orthodox Islam and thus appeals greatly to many conservative and traditional Muslim groups. Islamists have developed programmes for

⁶ Richard Kerbaj, "Muslim population rising 10 times faster than rest of society", *The Times*, 30 January 2009.

Islamising the West in stages. These include infiltrating both Western Muslim communities and non-Muslim Western societies, especially their power centres.

The current population explosion in Muslim countries, coupled with the growth in the number of Muslims migrating into Western states, is seen by many Islamists as a sign of God's providence, tilting the global balance in favour of Islam. They believe that Muslims in the West must seize this unique opportunity to expand Islam's sphere of influence, changing Western Christian and secular culture in favour of Islam.

Islamists want Islam to be not just an equal alongside the many other faith communities, but to be privileged and protected, the dominant player. Islamic norms and practices are promoted as Muslims make their presence felt in politics, economics, law, education and the media.

Islamists are never satisfied with what they have achieved, but use every opportunity to ask for more. The then Bishop of Rochester, Michael Nazir-Ali, complained that in dealing with some Muslims "there can never be sufficient appeasement and new demands will continue to be made".⁷

Islamists have created a vast network of interlocking organisations committed to spreading Islam in the West. These institutions are used to lobby for Muslim causes. They are often led by well-educated Muslims born in the West, who are able to engage effectively with wider society.

THE ALLIANCE BETWEEN ISLAMISTS AND THE EXTREME LEFT

The fall of Soviet communism weakened the Western hard left and forced it to look for other allies in its struggle against capitalism and Christianity. It has developed links to radical Islamists, many of whom take part in demonstrations against Western governments and their policies and stir up resentment among many Muslims. Although Islamism and the extreme left have very different ideas and goals, they are united in their hatred for America.

Left-wing intellectuals present a sanitised view of Islam, ignoring its terrorist forms, playing down the place of Islamism and emphasising the guilt of the West. They offer Islamists a privileged platform in the media channels and academic centres that they control, calling any criticism of Islam "Islamophobic" and thus silencing all dissent.

ISLAMIC MISSION (DA'WA)

Islam is a missionary faith that makes *da'wa* (mission) a duty for individual Muslims and also for Muslim communities and states. *Da'wa* has two dimensions: first, internal *da'wa* aims to revive the faith and commitment of Muslims; then external *da'wa* calls on non-Muslims to accept Islam. It is not limited to converting individuals, but includes converting whole societies and establishing states or enclaves ruled by Islam.

Islamist movements are dedicated to *da'wa* as part of their attempt to make Islam the dominant religion in the non-Muslim

world.. They expect Muslims in the West to witness to Islam and persuade or force their adopted states to accept sharia law. Islamists' efforts in such fields as law, economics and culture are not just small steps to meet the needs of Muslim individuals and the local Muslim community, but are part of an overall plan to change the character of host states until they become part of the global Islamic *umma* (nation).

Islamists now encourage Muslims to make their mission more suitable for the West. Terms and concepts that might offend Western people are avoided. Islam is presented not as an alien religion to be imposed on Western society by force, but as a peaceful and tolerant religion, closely related to Christianity and dedicated to social justice and equality. Islamists also often engage in interfaith dialogue with Christians with the aim of promoting Islam.

Oil-rich Muslim states such as Saudi Arabia, Libya and Iran are using their considerable resources and influence to fund and promote a large network of Islamic mission organisations. Non-Muslim societies and states are pressured to meet their demands.

At the same time, the threat of violence, whether terrorism or rioting, is part of *da'wa*. Western governments have to allocate vast resources to fighting Islamist terrorism. Terrorist threats also make governments more eager to respond positively to the requests of their Muslim communities, hoping that this will prevent them from becoming radicalised.

MOSQUE-BUILDING

Some observers estimate that by 2007 there were over 1,700 mosques in the UK, over 1,600 in France, over 1,200 in the US and over 1,000 in Germany. The largest and most ornate mosques are often funded and supported by Islamic states. The increasing numbers of mosques, and their magnificence, speak of the presence and permanence of Islam in the West and reflect the growing confidence of Muslim communities.

Recently plans to build several "mega-mosques" in the UK have caused much controversy and raised inter-communal tensions. Muslims claim that these structures will be needed to accommodate their growing numbers in the West. However, the need for Muslim places of worship could be met by smaller, less eye-catching buildings. The ambitious designs of many mosques suggest a desire to have a very visible presence, claim superiority for Islam, and dwarf Christian cathedrals and churches.

ISLAMIC SHARIA

Sharia law defines the faith and identity of most Muslims, who submit to it as God's will. Traditionalists, Islamists and modernists all take this view, while differing on how sharia should be understood and put into practice. In the West there is pressure to have parts of sharia added to the secular legal system and applied in the public sphere.

As a result of Muslim demands, various public bodies, including the police, hospitals and the prison system, allow Muslims to follow certain sharia regulations. Informal, voluntary sharia courts are operating in many Muslim communities. These put Muslim women

⁷ "Bishop attacks 'Muslim hypocrisy'", *BBC NEWS*, 5 November 2006.



in real danger of severe discrimination in matters of marriage, divorce, custody of children and inheritance.

Important non-Muslim public figures have joined in the demand for an increased public role for sharia. In Britain the Archbishop of Canterbury has argued that some role for Islamic law is unavoidable and that in order to hold society together the country should permit Muslims to follow some parts of it. He was followed by the Lord Chief Justice, Lord Phillips, who argued that sharia could operate in Britain in the field of marriage, family disputes, and finance as long as it did not contradict the laws of the land. He also said that sharia should be one (voluntary) basis of arbitration and mediation, which could then be enforced by English law. Similar voices are heard in other Western states.

THREATS TO FREE SPEECH

Islam does not separate religion from the state, and many Muslims believe that the state should protect Islam. Muslim institutions in the West frequently complain about Islamophobia and demand laws to ban hate speech and insulting religion. They are supported by Muslim states and Muslim international organisations such as the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC), who seek to give Islam a special place in all societies. They claim that Islam, the Qur'an, sharia and Muhammad must all be protected from criticism, however factual the criticism might be. In 2007 an act was passed in the UK outlawing the use of threatening words or behaviour meant to incite hatred against groups of people because of their faith.

Islamist organisations in the West also use the laws on libel, human rights and equality to silence any criticism of Islam. Large funds are set aside for hiring skilful lawyers. This

approach puts off many people who might otherwise criticise Islam and so limits their free speech. This situation is beginning to limit public discussion of Islam and even of the threat posed by Islamist terrorism. It presents a real challenge to both civil rights and national security in Western states.

The OIC and its member states are also pressuring other countries at the UN. Since 1999 the UN Commission on Human Rights, and its successor the UN Human Rights Council, have passed annual resolutions criticising and opposing the defamation of religions; one was even passed in the General Assembly in 2007. These resolutions are non-binding, but the UN has also established a committee to work on a binding treaty against defamation of religions.

Legal protection of this kind for *individuals*, including Muslims, is acceptable to most people, but the OIC's aim is rather to protect a set of *ideas*, namely the religion of Islam, from any kind of criticism. Moreover, although these resolutions supposedly apply to all religions, the most recent ones have particularly singled out Islam as needing protection.

This campaign is a first step towards changes in the law of Western and other non-Muslim states to favour Islam. As a result the UN is increasingly censoring its own language and inserting terms such as "blasphemy" and "defamation of Islam" into its documents. Non-Muslim states seem to have decided to keep quiet about Islam. Thus freedom of speech and expression is being limited in many international organisations and conferences.

VIOLENCE AND THE THREAT OF VIOLENCE

Some Muslims have resorted to violence and the threat of violence to frighten governments into meeting their demands. Examples include the riots in Oldham, UK in 2001 and in Paris in 2005. This approach seems to be effective in the West, where governments want to avoid riots in the streets of their cities. The Danish cartoons of Muhammad and the riots and violence that followed prompted many Western politicians to express sympathy with Muslim anger.

In addition, leading Western personalities, both non-Muslim and Muslim, have been threatened, attacked or even murdered. Examples are the fatwa against Salman Rushdie in Britain (1989); the assassination of Theo Van Gogh (2004) in the Netherlands; death threats against the politicians Ayaan Hirsi Ali and Geert Wilders in the Netherlands; death threats to the *Jyllands-Posten* editor Flemming Rose and cartoonist Kurt Westergaard in Denmark; and a plot to kill cartoonist Lars Vilks in Sweden. As a result the media, academics and publishers have also begun to censor their own work.

PRESENTATION OF ISLAM

Islamists present Islam to the non-Muslim West as tolerant and peaceable. They have a project to rewrite texts about Islam for Western audiences. They present Islam and Islamic history in the best possible light, stressing only its peaceful and pleasant features while denying the intolerant and violent ones, not least its many wars of expansion. They have created an atmosphere in which it is becoming difficult for public figures to criticise Islam or talk openly about the challenges posed by Islamism.

Islamists are also seeking to change the way that Western people see the world (the Islamisation of knowledge). Islamic bodies have been founded in the West to promote an Islamic way of thinking, based on the principles of the Qur'an, the words and deeds of Muhammad, and the ideas of Islamic civilisation. Some of these bodies are linked to Islamist movements, while presenting a moderate face to their Western audiences. Their academic standing encourages some Western academics to co-operate with them.

Some Western governments are changing the language they use to describe the Islamist terrorist threat. Terms such as "War against terror", "Islamic terrorism" and "Islamist terrorism" are being abandoned, because they anger Muslims and increase tensions with the wider Muslim world. No link may be openly made between Islam and terrorism or radicalism. For example, in April 2010 the US government decided to ban all mention of Islam in important national security documents.

ISLAMIC FINANCE

Islamist movements deny that Western financial products are consistent with sharia. So they have invented a range of alternatives and are trying to convince other Muslims to use them. The Western media has supported the founding of Islamic banks and financial institutions in the West. Western governments increasingly support the introduction of this "Islamic finance", hoping to attract investment from the oil-rich Middle East.

London has become the main Western centre for Islamic finance and investment outside the Middle East. In a 2005 survey several Islamic companies indicated that the UK was the most sharia-friendly of all the Western countries.

By accepting these Islamist interpretations of sharia as representative of all Islam, Western governments have strengthened Islamists, while weakening Muslim moderates and progressives. Individual Muslims are now under increasing pressure to use so-called "sharia-compliant" financial products.

EDUCATION

Islamists would like to control the whole of Western education. Although the number of Muslim schools is growing, most Muslim children attend state schools. Wherever possible, Muslims demand that Muslim girls be allowed to wear Islamic clothing. They also call for special prayer rooms to be set aside in schools for Muslim prayers, for halal food to be provided, and for permission for Muslim pupils to leave school premises for Friday prayers.

Other requests include the provision of alternatives to mixed-gender sports activities, and the exemption of Muslim pupils from dance and drama. Where Islam is not already part of the curriculum, there are calls to include it, preferably taught by Muslim teachers from outside the schools. Further, some Muslims check school textbooks and ask for any supposedly anti-Islamic material to be removed, even if it is true. They try to vet all books about Islam in schools, colleges, universities and public libraries, and to influence publishers to provide textbooks that present a positive view of Islam. Governments, educators and publishers wanting to avoid being accused of prejudice, racism and Islamophobia often yield to such requests.

ACADEMIC CENTRES OF ISLAMIC AND MIDDLE EASTERN STUDIES

Islamists also fund academic chairs and support Muslim academics taking up lecturing posts in Western universities. A growing proportion of senior staff positions in Western departments of Islamic and Middle Eastern studies, and much of their funding, now come from Muslim countries. But funding from Muslim sources often has strings attached, and there is clear evidence that at some universities the choice of teaching materials, the subject areas and degrees offered, the recruitment of staff and advisory boards and even the selection of students are now influenced by donors. University staff may censor their own work so as not to offend the donors.

RADICAL MUSLIMS AT WESTERN UNIVERSITIES

In recent decades Islamist activists have gained a larger place in many Islamic student societies in colleges and universities. They radicalise Muslim students, encourage separation and isolation from the staff and non-Muslim students, and encourage female Muslim students to wear Islamic dress. A number of Islamist terrorists studied at Western colleges and universities.

NO-GO ZONES FOR NON-MUSLIMS?

Poverty, racism and the need for mutual support made the first generations of Muslims in the West live close together. But more recently this process has been encouraged by Islamists and even by governments. It creates a growing sense of separation from wider society and encourages young Muslims to seek their identity in radical Islam. Extremist literature is being widely distributed in some mosques and Islamic centres, further encouraging this process.

An Islamic character is being imposed on many inner-city areas where Muslim social networks are very powerful. In such areas non-Muslims feel outnumbered and threatened by the Islamic community. Some commentators suggest that they have become "no-go" areas that it is dangerous for non-Muslims to enter.

CONCLUSION

Governments and the public must be made aware of the danger of allowing Islamist activists to take over Muslim organisations and claim to represent all Muslims. The excessive demands of Islamists must be rejected, along with their blaming of host societies for all the difficulties faced by Muslims. It is important that democratic Western societies do not give up their hard-won heritage of equality before the law, freedom of expression and freedom of religion. It must also be made clear that tolerance must work both ways and that threats of violence are unacceptable. Muslim communities must try much harder to isolate and expose Islamists who reject integration and the violent radicals among them.

For Christians the growing Islamisation of the West can be seen as both a challenge and an opportunity to sharpen our thinking and renew our evangelism. As we Christians see Muslim zeal, commitment, and willingness to sacrifice, we should be driven to repent, to pray for revival and act boldly for God in this generation. We need to stand firm on our Biblical foundations, beware of compromises and reach out in love to Muslims, offering them the Gospel of salvation in Christ.