

POLICY *Review*

AUGUST & SEPTEMBER 2009, No. 156

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CHRISTOPHER CALDWELL.
Reflections on the Revolution in Europe: Immigration, Islam, and the West. DOUBLEDAY. 432 PAGES.
\$30.00.

WE HEAR THAT Europe is about to ram a double-edged dagger into its underbelly: A lack of babies is bleeding the old world of native young people while immigration is pumping in masses of unskilled Muslims. Worse, the aliens don't work hard and they sap the welfare state. Several American authors have spotted what they think is a trend leading to collapse. Pat Buchanan had

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an early start with *The Death of the West*, published in 2002. His prediction of Europe's not-too-distant future was dire: "The cradle of Western civilization will have become its grave." To judge by the recent deluge of books offering similar sentiments — from Tony Blankley, Mark Steyn, Bruce Bawer, Walter Laqueur, etc. — doomsday scenarios are in demand.

Now comes Christopher Caldwell, a columnist for the *Financial Times*, writer for the *New York Times Magazine*, and senior editor at the *Weekly Standard*, who has written a well-researched and provocative book, to be translated into Dutch, Italian, Spanish, and French. It is one of the first in-depth studies of Muslim immigration all over Europe. The book's Burkean title, *Reflections on the Revolution in Europe*, betrays both the author's pessimism and his ambition. After skimming the introduction, most informed readers will be tempted to toss Caldwell's book on the doomsday pile. They would be wrong to do so, especially because a closer reading reveals that his *Reflections* do contain a great deal of uniquely insightful information.

BEFORE CONSIDERING Caldwell's arguments, some numbers have to be made clear. Many EU countries do not have official figures on the faith of their populations. Polling on Muslims in Europe, as a result, is fraught with sampling difficulties. According to the most reliable data, between 14 million and 16 million Muslims live among the 495 million citizens of the European Union's 27 member states — about 3.6 percent of its total population. France probably

has 5 million Muslims, between 3.8 million and 4.3 million Muslims live in Germany (2.4 million of them are of Turkish origin), and approximately 2 million are in Britain.

If the number of Muslims that *presently* reside in the member states of the European Union is hard to determine, the future is even harder to predict. The European Union's statistical agency, which uses national census data, published new forecasts in 2008. The natural change in the population of the Union — that is, its change excluding immigration — would mean a loss of 50 million citizens by 2060. But accumulated net immigration is projected to fill that gap, so that the EU's overall population might even increase to slightly more than half a billion over that 50-year period. To be more precise, the population is predicted to peak at about 520 million in the 2030s, then begin declining. Any such scenario is speculative, but speculation is the coin of realm here. So let's speculate that half of these immigrants over a period of 50 years would come from Muslim countries. That still biases the numbers in favor of the pessimists, as presently only three of the EU's top ten immigration nationalities are Muslim (Moroccan, Albanian, Turkish). The result would be that Europe's Muslim population would swell to approximately 9 percent of the continent's total projected population by 2060, although in some countries it might be significantly higher. These numbers would be roughly equivalent to the percentage of Muslims in France today and the share of Hispanics in the United States today.

And there's an additional problem: Official statistics tend to equate ethnic

origin with faith. This is tricky. In most European countries, it is true, a majority of Muslims consider Islam an important part of their life. But about one-fifth of them do not. Even if these secular "Muslims" are included, the overall numbers might be less extreme than Steyn or Bawer or Caldwell imply. But they are still tough. They represent a serious challenge for Europe, although not a "mortal" one.

TODAY, EUROPEANS are often reluctant to acknowledge that the scale of immigration to their nations in the early 21st century is unprecedented. They are even more reluctant to admit the scale of the challenges mass immigration brings in its wake — and one of the prime challenges is providing work for all the newcomers.

In the decades after World War II, reconstruction and an impressive economic boom created a hunger in Europe for unskilled and cheap labor to fill factories and man construction sites. For the continent's fledgling colonial powers, the easiest sources of immigrant laborers were their former possessions. By the late 1950s, for instance, about 55,000 Indians and Pakistanis and 125,000 West Indians called Britain their home. Today, Britain is home to more than 2 million people of South Asian descent and more than 1.1 million people that official UK statistics call "Black British," many of them from former Caribbean colonies. France received many immigrants from East Asia and from North Africa, about 2 million from Algeria alone, more than 770,000 of whom are still registered to vote in Algeria. In Germany, the postwar boom is known

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as the *Wirtschaftswunder*, the economic miracle. To keep it going, Germany, with no noteworthy former colonies, attracted guest workers, *Gastarbeiter*, from Southern Europe and Turkey. Many guests stayed and today Germany is home to 2.4 million Turks. This scale of immigration, Caldwell makes clear, has no historical precedent.

Immigrants still flock to Europe, of course. Two economic reasons, one capitalist and one socialist, are generally used to justify keeping the EU borders relatively open. Caldwell convincingly argues that, today, both are wrong. The “socialist” argument is that the welfare state needs to be rescued. Most of Europe’s pension schemes are designed as pay-as-you-go systems. The working-age population pays for the retirees. When such systems come under demographic pressure, they tend to “degenerate into Ponzi schemes.” Politicians, in other words, overpromise and borrow today’s investments against future welfare recipients. As long as the size of populations is growing, no problem arises: The so-called support ratio — the working age population divided by their dependents — will grow with the population or at least remain stable. But when the population pyramid first mutates to a bottle, and ultimately to a pear, the demographic dividend turns into a liability.

The conclusion of many Europeans seems obvious: Immigrants will maintain sliding support ratios. Caldwell shows that this theory is naive. The saviors, he lampoons, “would emerge from the desiccated and starving hamlets of the Third World and ride to the rescue of the retirement checks and second homes, the wine tastings and snorkeling vacations, of the most pampered

workforce in the history of the planet.” Unfortunately for the wine tasters, immigrant labor participation in the EU has been falling sharply. Take the example of Germany. In 1970, 82 percent of its immigrants were in the workforce, but by 1980 only 58 percent had jobs. The decline continued: By 1990, just 41 percent were in the workforce, and by 2000 only 33 percent were. Over these five decades the number of foreign residents in Germany rose from 2.7 million to 7.3 million.

The capitalist argument is that free movement of labor allocates resources more efficiently, raises the supply of labor, increases demand, boosts output, keeps wages lower, and decreases inflation. But such a view ignores several obstacles: The overall number of immigrants is not that large; their participation rate is low; they may not have immigrated for economic reasons; and Europe has trouble attracting highly skilled immigrants. Caldwell argues, in short, that the benefits of immigration are overrated. Newcomers don’t boost the economy and they don’t bolster the welfare state.

CHRISTIANITY HAS 2 billion adherents worldwide; Islam claims 1.3 billion believers. And Christianity is also growing faster than Islam, particularly in Africa. Yet “bizarrely,” Islam seems to be gaining strength in Europe.

According to Caldwell, the spiritual and moral fabric of Europe was softened and ripped apart after the 1760s and again after the 1960s. Worse, non-immigrant Europeans see their distance from religion not as a cultural loss but as a cultural attainment. In their “post-

modern chatter” they boast of post-religious universalism, “loudly, haughtily, snobbishly.” As result, as Caldwell sees it, the spiritual foundation of old communities, nationalism and patriotism, has corroded. In Europe’s “new, guilt-based moral order,” the singing of national anthems or the waving of the flag became the province only of skin-heads and soccer hooligans, Caldwell charges. How can such communities integrate newcomers?

In September 2006, Pope Benedict XVI gave a speech in Regensburg, Germany, in which he quoted an unfavorable remark about Islam by a 14th-century Byzantine emperor. The incident sparked a vicious debate about Christian-Muslim relations. The secretary of the Islamic League in Spain, Audalla Conget, a former Cistercian monk in Saragossa, published an open letter to the Pope. Conget, himself a convert, saw in the Pope’s fascination with Islam a “deep admiration” for “our intense and persevering worship” and “unshakable faith.” The former monk pointed out that there are few Muslims who convert to Christianity, while many Christians convert to Islam. He added:

If one is Christian, it is painful to look, every Friday, upon the mosques packed with men and women of all ages, with their foreheads pressed to the ground in the sincerest gesture of acceptance of the will of God.

Caldwell feels that pain. And perhaps this pain leads his argument to veer off course. Europe’s most recent encounter with Islam, he writes, “however painful and violent,” has been “an infusion of oxygen into the drab, nitpicking, mate-

rialistic intellectual life of the West.” He finds it liberating to be able to talk about God once more.

Less liberating, though, is the remarkable uniformity of conservatism embraced by Europe’s new religious — the immigrant Muslims. Take homosexuality, for instance. Asked in a recent Gallup poll if homosexual acts are morally acceptable or morally wrong, a majority of Europeans think gay sex is acceptable: 78 percent in France, 68 percent in Germany, and 58 percent in Britain. The Muslim population in these countries holds a much different view: A mere 35 percent of Muslims in France are tolerant of gays, 19 percent in Germany, and, according to Gallup’s Coexist Index 2009, a remarkable *zero percent* in the United Kingdom. The ideological gaps between natives and immigrants are roughly comparable whether the topic is homosexuality, abortion, sex outside wedlock, or pornography.

Caldwell, perhaps because he focuses so much on religious strength, does not pay enough attention to political strength — yet power is at the core of his argument. In many EU countries, the “fundamental difference between colonization and labor migration ceases to be obvious,” he writes. Muslim immigrants, in other words, are no longer migrant laborers — they are getting ready to overrun and colonize Europe. Theirs is a project to “seize territory.” If that is so, if Europe’s Muslims are seen as the new colonizers, then an obvious and important question arises: Are Europe’s Muslims politically organized? Is there any prospect that Europe’s 14 million Muslims will be able to find and articulate a unified political voice? Caldwell ignores this

question, perhaps because he understands that it undermines his argument. The prospects for the EU's Muslims being able to organize, mobilize, and dominate European public opinion and culture are dim. Spiritual strength should not be confused with political strength.

FRANCE'S 577-MEMBER Assemblée nationale contains not a single Muslim. Britain has four Muslim members in the House of Commons — out of 646 members. The German Bundestag includes five Muslims, or rather five members of Turkish origin, out of 612. Furthermore, if these Muslim politicians do come from the same party at all they tend to come from left-leaning parties, for which religion and conservative values are less important than labor policies. Of the five Muslims in the Bundestag, four represent the post-communist Die Linke (Lale Akgün, the fifth, is a center-left Social Democrat).

It is remarkable that in Europe hardly any Muslim parliamentary politicians represent conservative parties — parties that should be their natural home given the conservative values of most European Muslims. Among the exceptions are Souad Sbai, an MP for Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi's party, Il Popolo della Libertà, and Naser Khader, a member of the Danish parliament and cofounder of the centrist Liberal Alliance. On a local level, there are a few politicians in center-right parties, for instance Adly Abu Hajal, an imam and local politician for Sweden's center-right Moderata samlingspartiet. But even they represent first and foremost their districts, not a specific immigrant

group or even their *country's* Muslims, let alone *Europe's* Muslims.

While Islam will not in the foreseeable future assume political power in Europe, political influence can take more subtle forms. The Hispanic population in the United States will surpass 15 percent of the country's total population in 2010, and in some western states in the U.S., Hispanics are a constituency that Democrats as well as Republicans have to court if they want to win. Ultimately attitudes held by minorities, if not the minorities themselves, will find their way into the political process — but they will not dominate it.

THE MAJORITY OF Europe's Muslims are conservative, religious, and largely isolated from other European communities (the EU's Muslims do not frequently intermarry with non-Muslims, for instance). Unfortunately, they are also relatively poor; have high unemployment rates, particularly the women (even the unemployment rate of university-educated immigrants is about three times higher than that of university-educated Europeans); have high school-dropout rates; rarely attend university; are not among the ranks of business leaders and entrepreneurs; are underrepresented in public service; rarely work in so-called "trust professions" like medicine and law; and are not politically organized.

This seems to reinforce the cliché that while the United States can properly integrate its immigrants, Europe cannot: The old continent has no "American dream." The truth is more complex. Why are Europe's Muslims not integrated? To put it bluntly it is

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they, and not European governments or societies, who are most responsible. It is they who, in many cases, *choose* to remain unintegrated. The first large wave of Iranian immigrants to Germany helps prove the point. Europe's largest Persian community, numbering up to 120,000, is in Germany, a country that is not always particularly easy on immigrants. The first wave of Iranian immigrants came in the wake of the Iranian revolution; its members were generally well-educated and often part of Iran's cultural and political elite. Many of them are still in Germany and today are remarkably successful. Which is to say that assimilation and success is not impossible if immigrants are educated (or willing to educate themselves) and embrace European values. The situation with Vietnamese and Laotian immigrants to France is comparable.

Of course, Europe is no monolithic entity — some countries and regions more successfully integrate their immigrants than do others. The Berlin-Institut für Bevölkerung und Entwicklung, a think tank, has evaluated the ways in which various European countries and regions tackle this problem. One of the institute's studies was designed to find out which German states (*Länder*) and which German cities best integrate their minorities. It found significant differences in Germany across regions and across immigrant communities. Because of its diversity, the institute pointed out, Europe is a vibrant marketplace of "successful and unsuccessful policies."

THE PESSIMISTIC books on Muslims in Europe cannot be understood without taking

one more step back, beyond Caldwell's book. A significant number of American conservatives, authors as well as readers, seem to be driven by two fears: fear of Islam and fear of Europe. The second fear perhaps cuts deeper. It would be naïve to think that the wellspring of the ire dripping from many pages of the books quoted above could be found in the Islamic world or even in Europe. No, the source might as well be in America.

Hardly anybody seriously considers the possibility that the United States could become Islamic. But America — horror of horrors — might turn more European. Mark Steyn deadpanned quite revealingly that "Self-loathing Americans are in danger of sounding like self-loathing squares if they pin their hopes on a decayed Eutopia a quarter century past its sell-by date." Exaggerated into a caricature, the unease starts with the observation that decrepit Europe seems to have the civilizational benchmarks: the English language, German industry, French haute cuisine, Italian haute couture, Spanish virility, Austrian composers, Danish design, Dutch architecture, Swiss engineering, Swedish administration, even Greek philosophy and Russian literature.

And what America does better — capitalism, warfighting, and religion — is sneered at by arrogant Europeans. And recent developments seem to vindicate them: the financial and economic crisis, the fit of the U.S. automakers, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, global warming, health care, even Obama's victory. All that appeared to highlight the frailty of America's model and the strength of Europe's. More and more Americans fear that European

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may become more and more synonymous with advanced, sophisticated, urban, green, and cultured. The horror seems to be that the new appeal of all things European could drive back American values. Rush Limbaugh, commenting on Obama's first visit to Europe in early April, spelled out the angst:

The world hated Bush; the world loves Obama; now the world loves the United States. If the world loves the United States ... it's 'cause the United States has decided to stop being who we have always been. Barack Obama wants to turn the United States into something similar to a Western European socialist democracy.

Enter Muslim immigration. The subject seems to personify and expose all of Europe's faults while highlighting America's strengths. Immigration, Caldwell writes, strengthens strong cultures but it weakens weak cultures. The temptation to thrash at that, shall we say, God-given piñata is understandable: "Along the road to European modernization lie the shopping mall, the pierced navel, online gambling, a 50 percent divorce rate, and a high rate of anomie and self-loathing. What makes us so certain that Europeanization is a road that immigrants will want to take?" No matter that many European conservatives would see the mall, pierced navels, online gambling, and divorces as dreaded American imports.

This caricature is nothing but the mirror image of the European left's knee-jerk, feel-good anti-Americanism. Reflections are in order, but there is no budding "revolution," and there is not

one Europe. For some public intellectuals on the opposite sides of the political spectrum and the Atlantic, on the American right and on the European left, there is a desire to distort Muslim immigration, on the one side by downplaying its challenges and risks, on the other side by exaggerating them. Both are counterproductive.

