

## Zachary Shore, author of "Breeding bin Ladens," on assimilation, language and inclusion

**Z**achary Shore spends the first half of each week as a professor at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, and the second half at UC Berkeley where he is a research scholar. Shore, 38, is in demand as the author of "Breeding bin Ladens: America, Islam, and the Future of Europe."

### On developing an interest in world affairs

When I was growing up my father had an incredibly old shortwave radio. It was the size of four bread boxes put together. I would listen to it in our basement at night. If you turned the dial just so, you could get foreign language broadcasts. Even though I didn't know what they were saying, I was fascinated by it.

### On his students at the Naval Postgraduate School

They're all military officers, mostly majors, from all of the services. These are people who had undergraduate degrees, went on to serve for about 10 years and showed an aptitude for graduate study. They stay 12 or 18 months. Many are coming from Iraq.

### On his curriculum

I teach two courses. One is "War in the Modern Era." The other course is on Islam in Europe. I want them to understand what is happening with the majority and not be focused entirely on extremists.

### On background

I was working on the State Department's policy planning staff, under Colin Powell. I was focused on European affairs, since my doctorate is in modern European history from

Oxford. We had top security clearance, top secret/secure compartmented information. After I left the State Department I received a grant to research Europe's Muslims more intensely.

### On his book

It's not about Iraq. It's about Muslims in Europe. It tries to answer the question "Why is it that some young European Muslim want to strap bombs on and blow themselves up?" What are the roots of this?

### On the time frame

I started working on this in early 2002, before the invasion of Iraq. It's based on interviews with younger Muslims from Britain, Germany, France, Denmark, Holland, Turkey. Sometimes I went back to the same people over a period of years.

### On finding his subjects

Sometimes I met people through connections. Sometimes just by going into mosques, sitting down and talking with people. It takes time, of course, to build up trust. I met people who were under surveillance as suspected terrorists.

### On failed integration

The Europeans expected those from Muslim countries — Turkey, Morocco, Algeria — to come and work for a time and then go back home. But they stayed and brought families. Several million are not citizens and do not have equal rights.

### On the "Clash of the Barbies"

Noor Saadeh, one of the people in interviewed in the book, was born and raised in Appleton, Wis. She converted to Islam, changed her name and created a Muslim Barbie

called Razanne. She's more modestly figured and dressed than the standard Barbie. Razanne, Quibla Cola, Mecca Cola and many other products I describe, are designed to challenge Western consumerism and stress Islamic values.

### On the most destabilized countries

France, Britain and the Scandinavian countries have been facing serious problems. In Holland last November, a reactionary politician named Geert Wilders, who ran on an anti-Muslim platform, now controls nine seats in the Dutch Parliament.

### On bin Ladens being bred

Absolutely. Without question. But the important thing to remember is that they are still a fringe minority. The more important problem is to focus on that majority of Muslims in the middle who don't feel included.

### On inclusion in America

The first thing I talk about is changing our language. Dropping the war metaphor when it comes to winning the "battle for hearts and minds" and the "battle of ideas." I'd drop all that war language because it immediately frames Muslims as the enemy to be conquered, like territory. ♦

E-mail Sam Whiting at [swhiting@ Chronicle.com](mailto:swhiting@s Chronicle.com).



January / February 2007

# WESTERN EUROPE

Book Review by Stanley Hoffman

Zachary Shore  
*Breeding Bin Ladens:  
America, Islam and the future  
of Europe*

Johns Hopkins University Press  
www.press.jhu.edu  
2006 223 pp. \$25.00

*This eminently readable  
volume deserves to be  
widely known and seriously  
pondered*

Having previously written the very interesting *What Hitler Knew*, Shore, who teaches at the Naval Postgraduate School and is a research scholar at Berkeley, has now published a thoughtful and wise book about Europe's "Muslim problems"—both the problems faced by the fifteen million Muslims of the European Union, and the problems the Europeans encounter in trying to cope with them. He points out that these issues go way beyond that of terrorism, and may get worse as Europe, with an aging population and a low birth rate, will need more immigrants, but the cultural problems of integrating Muslims, many of whom are, or see themselves as, fundamentalists promise continuing conflicts in societies where secular values and customs prevail.

Shore, who has interviewed many Muslims in many of Europe's countries, has found a deep "ambi-Americanism" and "ambi-Europeanism" among them. There are, of course, profound political causes for their hostility to the United States; there is also "among younger European Muslims a growing sense that Europe and America are spiritually empty." The conflicts over Danish cartoons or the headscarves are aspects of a clash of values that is particularly strong in countries whose traditional homogeneity is being challenged: Holland, Denmark, Slovenia. Many young Muslims feel rejected by the Europeans among whom they live, as well as detached from their parents' countries. Fundamentalism (which "simply means returning to the fundamentals of a religious doctrine") does not mean terrorism, but is often perceived as a first step toward violence—especially as "Muslims on the whole still represent part of the underclass, overrepresented in unemployment, low wage earnings, and political disenfranchisement." Shore's chapter on the "clash of the Barbies" documents the rise in Europe of Islamic goods and services, whose challenge to the profits made by European stores and services "is marginal" but whose "challenge to mainstream cultural values is real."

He worries about the European welfare state beginning "to fracture under the stress of cultural heterogeneity—in order for wealth redistribution to take root within a society, its citizens must possess a strong sense of shared identity." He is, however, confident that solutions can be found, just as in the case of the "searing anti-Catholicism" provoked by the rise of Ultramontanism in nineteenth-century Europe, and he makes a series of "modest proposals," such as retiring the vocabulary of "war" from the current language, creating a "Head Start" program for low-income Muslims in Europe, getting the EU to invest directly in Europe's Muslims, etc . . . This eminently readable volume deserves to be widely known and seriously pondered.

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December 12, 2006  
Web Exclusive

## CONTINENTAL DIVIDE

By Aziz Huq

*Two new books explore  
fraught questions  
concerning the  
Muslim minority  
in Europe.*

In the run-up to last month's Dutch election, Immigration Minister Rita Verdonk, known locally as "Iron Rita," declared her intention to pass a ban on religious garments that cover all of a woman's face. According to one Dutch parliamentarian, full face covering is so rare that the ban would apply to less than one hundred of the Netherlands' one million Muslims. Verdonk nevertheless insisted the ban was needed from a "security standpoint." Picking up on recent comments by British parliamentarian Jack Straw, Verdonk elaborated that "people should be able to communicate with one another." Apparently, communication is impossible with a veiled woman.

Not for the first time in European history, the question of national security today is entangled with matters of minority assimilation. The argument now goes like this: Europe has developed Muslim minorities in the past few decades that have failed to assimilate into the mainstream of European society. Unable to assimilate, they have latched onto a newly available global Islamic identity soaked in violence and ideological hatred. To stymie the spread of violence, Europe must force the integration of these minorities by legal measures and public policy. The attacks of March 2004 and July 2005 hence become lighthouses on a treacherous coastline—signals not only for national security policy debates but also for wider projects of social engineering and partisan positioning, like the Verdonk headscarf ban.

Verdonk appears herself at two points in Ian Buruma's *Murder in Amsterdam: The Death of Theo van Gogh and the Limits of Tolerance*, a lucid, semi-biographical narrative of the November 2004 murder of the filmmaker by a Dutch citizen of Moroccan extraction. She appears first early on, nonplussed by an imam's refusal to shake hands with a woman. By the end of the book, bafflement has turned into blinkered xenophobia as Verdonk announces that Ayaan Ali Hirsi, a parliamentarian, Somali refugee, and advocate for reform of Islam, will be stripped of citizenship.

This is but one small narrative thread in Buruma's complex tale, which extends backwards from van Gogh's murder to the lives of the main participants: Theo; his partner in film-making Hirsi Ali; his murderer "Mo" Bouyeri; and his sometime mentor Pim Fortuyn, the murdered gay politician who advocated radical limits on immigration.

What ensues in Buruma's telling is a cascade of ironies, a sequence of fun-house mirrors increasingly distorting the subjects' images. One such irony: The ideal of "free speech" for the Dutch is rooted in the late nineteenth century tradition of *scheldkritten*, or "abusive criticism." The virulent polemicist van Gogh, whose ugly anti-Semitic comments and racist remarks about Muslims should not be reprinted here, fed on this tradition. And yet the very people championing this "free speech" tradition, and van Gogh's place in it, turn out to be the country's most vigorous advocates of conformity—and hence silence—for Muslims.

Political figures at opposing poles of the spectrum also turn out to be not so far apart. Hence, the radical gay politician Pim Fortuyn took "a special pride in being different . . . not unusual among minorities." A similar sentiment animated the homicidal second-generation Dutch-Moroccan Bouyeri. Both Fortuyn and Bouyeri tried to validate a distinct minority identity. Both suffered from an excess of narcissism in tension with this minority status. And both the anti-immigrant gay politician Fortuyn and global jihadist *manqué* Bouyeri tried to overcome their minority status by appealing to and creating a larger majority. Hence, Fortuyn built a political party by linking his fear of a new and intruding social conservatism brought by North African immigrants to a broader popular phobia of those same immigrants. The troubled, marginalized Bouyeri, meanwhile, tried to join what he saw as a global majority—the global "Ummah," or Muslim community—as a way to overcome his isolation.

What Buruma's fun-house mirrors do not catch is the subterranean flow of popular sentiments to which Fortuyn, Verdonk and Bouyeri respond. Buruma's subject is limited to the thinking classes. He does not, except momentarily, explore that deeper geology of social feelings among the broader public. A chilling exception comes when he describes a moment at a soccer match when hundreds of thousands of working-class Dutch fans start hissing in disapproval. What seems innocuous at first turns deeply sinister when Buruma's friend explains what the hissing means: The white, presumably Christian crowd is evoking the sound of gas escaping gas chambers, and indicating disapproval of the Jewish ownership of the opposing team.

It is Verdonk's policies that, in some respects, reflect and politically validate this deeply-rooted sediment of ethnic identity. This incident is indeed telling because it highlights the toxic and widespread xenophobia of European themselves, while the press more often highlights the ugly anti-Semitism of Middle Eastern and North African immigrants. Nativist sentiments, suggests Buruma, can be equally directed at both Muslim immigrants and Jewish residents. And it is not migrants from the Magreb who have voted in droves for neo-fascist parties such as Jean Marie Le Pen's National Front in France.

Today's anti-immigrant feeling is deeply rooted in Dutch society, just as in other European societies. Its deep roots are precisely the reason why "assimilation" has proved an elusive goal: How do you assimilate into a culture that despises you? Post-war migrants to Europe from North Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia provided a pool of dirt-cheap manual labor for the economic boom. Like working classes

throughout history, they were viewed with fear and contempt. Without understanding this experience, it is impossible to explain the anger and frustration of second-generation immigrants confronted with cultures that treat them as second-class citizens in education, employment, and daily life. And while Buruma identifies these dynamics, his book does not quite give narrative life to them.

Understanding that history requires some excavation—work that Zachary Shore does in another new book. Shore traveled around Europe and spoke to self-identified Muslim leaders and Muslims. In his interviews, Shore captures much of the nuance and contradiction of a community being asked to integrate into national polities that exploit them economically, treat their faith as a second-class superstition, and fail to deal with persistent, widespread racism. Shore, though, is ill-served by his publisher, who has permitted (or perhaps insisted on) a title—*Breeding Bin Ladens: America, Islam, and the Future of Europe*—that is inaccurate, incendiary, and just plain foolish.

To understand that alienation, racism, and the deprivation of opportunity is the soil in which violent radicalism might grow is not the same as justifying or condoning violence. People who are wronged can, and often do, commit even greater wrongs in their misguided efforts at revenge. Indeed, perceived incidents of anti-Muslim bias in Europe often trigger reactions among Muslims that are far more hateful, bigoted and stupid than the initial incident.

This understanding, nevertheless, is important if European governments are to stall the growth of oppositional ideologies

among Muslim minorities. As Shore notes, the United States has gone through the same set of fears that Europe is going through today with Muslims—except in the United States it was with respect to Catholics. As time went on, American Catholics largely overcame this bigotry and wove themselves into American life. They mobilized politically, often finding common ground on policy matters with other religious communities.

European Muslim minorities, by contrast, are rarely represented today in European parliaments (with the exception of the U.K.) despite their size. Bridging this representational divide is a vital first step. Important, too, is addressing discrimination in education and employment, which cuts off opportunities for the ambitious. It will be through measures like these that Europe can build the kind of durable pluralism demanded by the 21st century's new threats to peace.

Aziz Huq directs the Liberty & National Security Project at NYU School of Law's Brennan Center for Justice. He is co-author of *Unchecked and Unbalanced: Presidential Power in a Time of Terror* (forthcoming March 2007) and a 2006 Carnegie Scholars Fellow.

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Wednesday, November 29, 2006

## EUROPE'S QUIET INTEGRATION

Zachary Shore

Lately European leaders seem seized by acute Islamophobia. First President Jacques Chirac perceived a threat to French identity posed by schoolgirls decked in head scarves. Then Prime Minister Tony Blair of Britain spoke of outlawing the veil from public view. Now, after calling for a nationwide burka ban, Christian Democrats in the Netherlands have won the most seats in Parliament.

Most Western European nations are tightening their immigration laws while fretting over free speech in cartoons, plays and print. All the while, right-wing xenophobic parties are on the rise across the Continent. One year after riots set French housing projects ablaze, Europe appears to be shifting sharply to the right.

Just below the news media's radar screens, however, a countertrend is under way, which promises a kinder, gentler and potentially more successful approach to Europe's Muslim quandary.

While right-leaning ministers at the national level are talking tough to Muslims, progressive officials and private citizens at local levels are spearheading innovative programs to aid Muslim integration. In Berlin, Renée Abul-Ella runs Al-Dar (The Home), an organization dedicated to helping Arabic women and their families integrate into German society. Al-Dar provides language, typing and computer training to Muslim women and counsels them on issues they cannot discuss in most contexts. Abul-Ella told me that nearly every family she knows has had some incidence of domestic violence.

Al-Dar works with fathers, too, some of whom have prevented their daughters from attending school. "We don't make the people who come to us feel ashamed about their culture," Abul-Ella said. "Instead, we show them that what is appropriate in one country may not be appropriate in another.

At the other end of Germany, Michael Blume is at work in Stuttgart pushing through a series of radical policy shifts in the state of Baden-Württemberg. Blume

had not even finished his doctoral thesis on comparative religion when he received a call from the state's minister-president. It was just after the 9/11 attacks, and the minister-president was repeatedly being asked about his government's policies toward Muslims, who comprise 5.7 percent of Baden-Württemberg's population, and whose numbers are swelling fast. He had no policies, and there was no one on his staff to handle it.

Having heard about Blume's provocative research, the minister-president invited the young Ph.D. student to tea, and in the course of their discussion asked Blume to join his staff. Since then, Blume has initiated a pilot program in 12 public schools serving large concentrations of Muslim children. With the schoolteachers' and parents' consent, these schools now offer classes in Islam as well as the usual courses on Christianity. Religion has always been taught in German schools, but the study of Islam had never been part of the curriculum. The aim is to encourage a sense of Muslim inclusion within German society and discourage the all-too-common development of a parallel society existing outside the mainstream.

Further west, the French city of Strasbourg is also experimenting with new integration strategies. Here sits the European Parliament, with its ornate marble stairways and plush voting chambers, and the Council of Europe, devoted to ensuring human rights and social cohesion throughout the continent. But travel just a few minutes to the other side of Strasbourg, to the neighborhood of Neuhof, and you will see dilapidated housing, shattered windows and crumbled streets. Drugs have plagued the neighborhood, but the city is attempting to revitalize it, not just by constructing decent housing. Outside the Ecole Maternelle Reuss, scores of immigrant children play tag with all the boisterous energy you would find in any playground. Behind the playground, a more serious course is under way inside a prefab concrete two-room structure where the mothers are learning French. Many came from Bangladesh, Turkey, Morocco or Algeria with little

education. All say they are grateful to learn the language, and their courses are paid for by the city if they cannot afford to pay themselves.

These are just a few of Europe's smart steps toward Muslim integration. There are many others. In Berlin, the Aziz Nesin Europa elementary school is completely bilingual. Half of all courses are taught in German; the other half in Turkish. Most policy makers insist that only by mastering European languages can immigrants and their children prosper. The Aziz Nesin school is proving that early bilingual education enhances cognitive ability, fosters curiosity about other cultures, and may even improve academic performance. And the school is not just for Turkish children. It is mixed between Turkish-German and German kids, fostering bonds between cultures at a very early age.

Tough talk and burka bans may win votes at the national level, but municipal governments cannot afford to let their Muslim residents remain closed off from the community and open to extremism. If any of the progressive local projects succeed, they will eventually be adopted nationwide. Europe's leaders have no other choice. If they keep fiddling with the politics of exclusion, Paris will again be burning.

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Friday, July 15, 2005

## WHERE NEXT?

Zachary Shore

If isolating the United States in Iraq is the terrorists' main objective, we can make a good guess about their next target. Italy and Denmark are where many expect the next strike to occur, partly because of their troop presence in Iraq and partly because of threats made after the London blasts. But Germany, with its 3.2 million Muslims, is due for a hit. Despite its opposition to the Iraq war, Germany has some 2,000 soldiers operating in Afghanistan, and their presence is just as provocative to Al Qaeda as are American forces in Iraq. One senior German officer told me that he could see the disdain in Afghan men's eyes as a young female German soldier directed them out of her way.

If interethnic tensions are potent in Italy and Denmark, they are worse in Germany. Most of Germany's Muslims hail from Turkey's less-developed hinterlands. Many do not speak German, live in predominantly Muslim neighborhoods and have limited social interactions with ethnic Germans. Their unemployment and high-school dropout rates are above the already depressing national averages. Most disturbing, some surveys find that the younger generation of Turkish Germans express surprising hostility toward Europe and the West. In one study, the sociologist Wilhelm Heitmeyer and his colleagues at the University of Bielefeld found that almost one-third of those polled agreed that Islam must become the state religion in every country. Even though they live in Europe, 56 percent declared that they should not adapt too much to Western ways, but should live by Islam. More than a third insisted that if it serves the Islamic community, they are ready to use violence against nonbelievers. Almost 40 percent said that Zionism, the European Union and the United States threaten Islam.

On a visit to some mosques in Kreuzberg, the predominantly Muslim district of Berlin, I gathered a sampling of fliers on offer. All were in Turkish, and most were from the Islamic organization Milli Gurus. Milli Gurus was formed 10 years ago in Germany by supporters of Turkey's Islamist Refah (Welfare) party. Refah was eventually banned in Turkey. Its more moderate Turkish offshoot, the Justice and Development Party, is the ruling party of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Although Refah has been disbanded, Milli Gurus remains alive and well. It claims some 87,000 members across Europe, including 50,000 in Germany. It helps run about a fifth of Germany's 2,500 mosques, where it distributes its Islamist literature. Among the material I gathered was a leaflet announcing a meeting to be held in someone's home to discuss "atrocities" in Iraq and Palestine. "We invite anyone, man or woman, young or old, who says no to the oppressing imperialists' desires," the flier read.

London showed how even the most vigilant surveillance of known terrorist cells cannot prevent a determined attack. The best defense therefore must be a strong offense, but not only against the terrorists. The war must be taken to their ideology.

The Cold War was not won by hunting down every Communist soldier. Communism collapsed when those living within its grip rejected Communist ideology. Until the West invests the same amount of resources and conviction to counteracting the ideological appeal of Islamic extremists, the bombs across Europe will become painfully banal.

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Wednesday, December 8, 2004

## EUROPEAN DISUNION

by Zachary Shore

With the murder of Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh receding from the headlines, most people will classify this episode as a grisly case of Islamic extremism. They will stack it upon a heap of mental clippings together with Madrid's train bombings and America's 9/11. Others will file their memories of Holland's anti-Muslim hate crimes in the folder marked "European Xenophobes," just next to France's headscarf ban. But the episode belongs to a wholly different category, one not yet understood by policymakers, pundits, or politicians. Future historians will correctly label the Van Gogh affair and its bloody aftermath under the heading, "The Americanization of Europe."

The Van Gogh affair and those like it are part of an ongoing European-wide phenomenon that will end not in Mass carnage and destruction, but in a massive restructuring of the welfare state. Europe's sense of social solidarity is certain to disintegrate as individual European states become more ethnically, racially, religiously, and culturally diverse. And when enough Europeans come to resent working and sacrificing for those who are seen as unlike themselves, they will resist income redistribution schemes. Social Democracy will then die a painful death. And it will be painful, for it will mean a fundamental reordering of European society.

In order for wealth redistribution to take root within a society, its citizens must possess a strong sense of shared identity. People will accept high taxation rates in exchange for generous social services so long as they believe that their wealth is being redistributed to others "like themselves." In other words, people can be persuaded to work in part for the benefit of others if they feel a common bond with the welfare recipients. Danes pay, for example, as much as 70% of their income in taxes. Italians, French, and Swedes all pay far higher taxes than do Americans. They have always done so in part because they knew their money was going to other Danes, Italians, Frenchmen, or Swedes. They believed that

they were giving a helping hand to those who shared their values, their cultural norms, their work ethic, and surely also their genes. But if incidents like the van Gogh murder, female genital mutilation, and Imam-inspired sermons of hate continue to grab the headlines, and if European Muslim unemployment and crime rates remain disproportionately high, then ethnic Europeans will increasingly view Muslims as possessing foreign values.

One reason why Social Democracy never succeeded in the United States is precisely because America is a starkly heterogeneous land. Despite the melting pot myth, Americans have rarely felt close bonds with those of different races. One need only consider the treatment of the native Americans, African slaves, or Latino migratory farm workers for evidence. This does not mean that Americans are bad people, or that individual Americans have not ever overcome racial divides. But as a whole, American society has demonstrated limited ability to forge deep interethnic bonds. Even today less than two percent of marriages are inter-racial.

Income redistribution can indeed occur when the historical context permits. In post-war Europe, *laissez-faire* was not a realistic option. The massive devastation of war necessitated government intervention, job programs to curtail widespread unemployment, and welfare programs to support the many who could no longer work and the many more who needed a helping hand as the continent recovered. Wealth redistribution was not simply appropriate; the public demanded it.

But by the 1970s, Europe's economic recovery, fueled by the Marshall Plan and Germany's *Wirtschaftswunder* (economic miracle) were history, and the *Zeitgeist* slowly began to shift. The Reagan and Thatcher revolutions called for a curtailment of redistribution and a cutting of taxes. Hard-working individuals, they declared, should be able to keep more of what they earn for themselves, to spend as they see

fit. At times Ronald Reagan even made the prejudicial underpinnings of Reaganomics explicit. The President spoke of welfare moms living in fancy hotels, cashing in their food stamps and welfare checks to live high on the hog—at the expense of hard-working families. Since then the condition of single working mothers, black, white, Latina and others, has grown steadily more tenuous. Taxation rates, however, have dropped substantially.

Reagan and Thatcher, Clinton and Blair, did not forge a new consensus within their respective nations. They articulated a message that their publics were ready to hear. They did not lead; they followed. A Thatcherite running for office in 1946 Britain, calling for cuts in social services in a war-ravaged land, would have represented the lunatic fringe of society. She would have had no more success carrying that message in 1946, than an American politician calling for 70% taxation would have today. Wealth redistribution is contingent on the public's mood.

But what makes a society's mood change? Why do nations seem afflicted with bi-polar disorder over time? It mainly comes down to values. When people believe that their wealth is being given to those who share their values, they can be persuaded to bear heavy tax burdens. But if that perception changes, and people believe that they are working to support those with "foreign" values, resistance to redistribution will mount.

Long after the smoke from Van Gogh's murder has cleared, Europeans will look back upon this violence as just one incident among many in the slow unraveling of social democracy. In a few short decades, Europeans may not even recognize themselves because they will look so much like Americans.

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