

Chapter 8

THE FUTURE OF MUSLIM EUROPE

Aisha woke up crying. She lay motionless on her side in bed, her knees drawn close to her chest. These were the critical moments, the chance to grasp and hang onto the fleeting images that only seconds ago had consumed her. But the stark light of consciousness scattered those remnants beyond her mental reach. All that remained was a queasiness in her gut and a vague sense of being watched. But she knew that this was impossible. Aisha was always alone.

The air inside her room was still. Her nightclothes were wet and sticky. A gentle rain tapped upon the skylight above her bed. For a few moments she watched the droplets trickle down the slanted pane. She rose, showered and dressed, then knelt for her morning prayers. The rhythmic tones of the Muezzin's call to prayer echoed down the Sultan Strasse, reverberating from mosque to mosque across Berlin. When Aisha finished her prayers, she removed the hand-held QuickLink from inside her gown to receive the day's assignments. Across the screen flashed the date: June 1, 2025. A fleeting smile passed across her face. This month marked the tenth anniversary of the League's founding. She felt proud of what they had built in that time, but overwhelmed by the tasks that lay ahead.

"Salam Alakum, und guten Morgen, Aisha." Mirar Erdemli's plumpish, three-dimensional figure appeared within the QuickLink

viewing screen. Mirar's image, recorded the night before, ran down the list of homes Aisha was to visit. Erdinç needed numbing tablets for the pain in his throat. Devrim's children needed new shoes. Feyzi's family needed food. All were families she knew well. All were party members. And though it often pained her to see so many brothers and sisters in need, she took comfort in knowing she could help to ease their troubles. And she knew she was building the party with every home visitation.

None in the party was as respected as Mirar, for few could claim they were present at the creation when the Pan-Islamic League first assembled in Marseilles. Mirar was one of the Party's founding 200, and she had selflessly devoted herself to the PIL's program ever since.

Aisha half listened to Mirar's list. There were eight home visitations in all, and one visit to the Residents in Wellness Center D. If she spent an hour with each, including travel time, it would be a tiring day. She snapped shut the QuickLink as she rose, placed a few chocolate pieces in her purse for the youngest Kattab boy, and headed for the door. In the hallway she slipped into her flat gray walking shoes, but realized she had forgotten her biometric identification card. Thanks to the PIL's lobbying efforts in Brussels, Muslims were exempted from the requirement to have the BICs inserted into the ankle, although the penalties for not presenting one's BIC if stopped by Defenders were severe. Slipping out of her shoes, she stepped back into her bedroom and placed the tiny silver disc into her purse.

Aisha's steps were hurried, her breathing fast. She walked along the Kanal Strasse, her nostrils curled. Though Kreuzberg's streets nearly always stank of rotting garbage, most days she never noticed it. But this morning the odors struck her as especially rank. The masjid trash collection teams were behind schedule this month. Again too few neighbors had paid their dues and the garbage had been piling up behind stores, homes, and restaurants. She passed a cluster of rats gnawing at a garbage heap. A few small children were washing themselves in the canal's filthy waters on her left, while other children kicked a sagging football back and forth. The trees that lined the canal's banks were darkened with a blackish gray dust. Farther down the road, she passed Pasha's Clothing Store, where

the heavy smell of charred embers still drifted down the block. They had lost half their store in a fire last week. It took more than two hours for the untrained masjid emergency squad to quench the flames with what few blankets and buckets they could gather. Despite the passing days, she could still feel the lingering smoke against her cheeks. A black taste settled on her tongue.

Her first stop would have to be Ali's Produce. A windowless storefront concealed from view a wealth of unmodified fruits and vegetables. Aisha did not have to knock. Her approach was announced to Ali at least a minute before she arrived. His cameras scanned the faces of all passersby. Since she was a regular, they had her image in the system. The titanium door slid aside and noiselessly sealed behind her as she stepped inside. Ali's business was one of the few that continued to thrive no matter whether economic conditions rose or fell.

"Meribe. Guten Morgen, Aisha," Ali smiled, his squat, burly body lumbering up the aisle to greet her. He bowed slightly at her. "The usual?" he asked. Aisha nodded and forced a smile in return. Ali turned and began loading a bag with oranges, bananas, and other smallish, slightly imperfect but naturally grown fruits. The Greens were right about one thing, Aisha thought. The modified food that most Europeans ate was unnatural and un-Godly.

"Have you seen the news?" Ali asked, handing her several sacks of produce across the counter. Frau Pallaci is addressing Parliament again." Ali touched a finger to his wristwatch and the viewing wall lit up. The bulbous cheeks of Ariana Pallaci filled the screen, her white hair reflecting off the spotlights, her smooth, unnatural skin glistening as she spoke. Aisha turned her face to the ground, but she could not help herself from listening a little longer to the White Tigress, the woman who, with no official governmental position, largely ruled the lives of millions.

"Parliament has failed to make good on its promises. Healthcare is in a state of decay. Seniors across Europe are barely surviving the mistakes of poorly-trained nurses' aides. Nearly 12 percent of elderly cannot afford the cost of pulmonary enhancement devices. Another 4 percent cannot afford. . . ." Aisha could not listen. Her grip tightened on her grocery bags.

The selfishness! How could Pallaci speak of seniors' needs when across Europe children were hungry, sick, and homeless, largely because of her?

Controlling the largest voting bloc in Europe, Pallaci's power knew few bounds. A decade ago, when, at age 69, Pallaci gained control of the Pensioners' Party, she pledged cooperation and balance. But she lied. In those ten years she not only continued the policies of her predecessors, she also expanded them, ratcheting up her demands for seniors, draining away the bulk of taxes to her supporters, leaving ever fewer crumbs to be meted out for social services that existed only in name. "You will be one of us one day," she shouted in every election year. And how the craven politicians groveled for the slightest sign of her endorsement.¹

Aisha was nearly at the exit when Pallaci's voice faded and the news anchor's soothing tones announced the next story. "Tragedy strikes Denmark. Sheikh Hasan Abdul al-Bani, Copenhagen's leading imam, was found dead in his home yesterday evening." Aisha wheeled around at the viewing wall. "Europol investigators have been silent on the cause of death, but EuroNews has learned that homicide detectives were called to the scene shortly after midnight. No further details have been released at this time. In other news, a decision by the Supreme Council of Greater Russia . . ."

Aisha stood motionless for a moment. Something in the video clip of Europol squads caught her eye. "Ali, could you replay that clip for me, please?"

Ali raised a bushy eyebrow slightly and obeyed. The image recurred, showing teams of police milling about in a narrow Copenhagen street. "Freeze that," Aisha snapped. "There, in the lower right corner. Can you zoom to that?" Ali fiddled with his wrist controls and a uniformed man appeared large on the screen.

"Defenders," Ali said with surprise. "You have a sharp eye, Aisha."

They looked like typical Europol investigators, but the light blue lightening-bolt insignia on their chests set them apart. But what would Defenders be doing on a murder case, especially the murder of another imam? It didn't make sense.

Ali saw the question contracting her expression. "There are many

strange things these days, Aisha. If it doesn't concern you, it's best not to inquire."

Ali peered curiously at her. "Did you know al-Bani?" he asked, with a trace of genuine concern.

Aisha hesitated for a moment. "No." She paused. "I never met him." And then she added, "Thank you for asking." She gathered up her groceries and swiftly passed out into the busy, rainy street.

The Defenders worked for BlueBlood Securities, the sole private security agency in Europe. Their reach was great, manufacturing and controlling all surveillance equipment, the software that ran it, and the men who served it. BlueBlood also operated the Wellness Centers, where many young Muslim men were taken for their crimes. According to an agreement forged with the European Parliament, BlueBlood was granted broad police authority as a means of supplementing Europol's limited resources. Defenders were the frontline representatives, vested with the authority to carry arms, interrogate, and arrest suspected criminals. And although they swore oaths to uphold universal human rights, Muslims knew better. No Muslim could help fearing their approach.

Her mind was full of questions. Why would Defenders, who cared only about harassing Muslims, be assigned to the case of another murdered imam? Her heart sank. Somehow, though she'd no idea yet how, Aisha knew that her own fate was tied to al-Bani's. She could sense now that her troubles were just beginning.

Aisha returned to the Kanal Strasse and headed toward the S-Bahn. As she passed the neighborhood madrassa, she heard the school bell ring and watched the children file into the glistening new school to begin their studies. She felt proud about Madrassa 9, for she and the PIL had helped make it a shining point of hope for Kreuzberg's children. Aisha thought back to her own childhood, before Saudi beneficence had brought the madrassas into such abundance. It was another lifetime: a time before the Party, before Brussels, even before the GERA itself. She felt old at this moment. Painfully old. Had there truly been a time before the GERA.

No one much noticed it at the time. The media made little mention of it, and those who spoke out against it were portrayed as un-European.

It was one of those things that only in retrospect did people consider a turning point. Only later did people joke of living in “the modern GERA.” Aisha was just a little girl when it all began.

The truth about the GERA was, of course, more complex, for the changes that followed the Great European Reform Act of 2012 were already underway long before. The GERA was not one act, but a series of legislative reforms undertaken around what was called the “Brussels consensus.” It began innocuously enough with tax policy. A movement of industrialists and businesspeople across Europe had been pushing for a common EU tax policy that would lessen the burden on corporations and spur growth. Each success built on the last.

Soon their hand-picked and carefully groomed candidates gained a majority of seats in the European Parliament. Steadily they reduced taxes of all kinds, stimulating economic growth and making Europe a genuine engine of innovation and growth. The gross domestic products of all EU member states rose, and the wealth that individual businessmen accrued was spectacular, until at last, all corporate taxes were outlawed and entrepreneurs were granted special tax-free status on their personal earnings. It was argued that by unfettering the entrepreneurial members of society from burdensome taxes, they would be able to produce more, expand their businesses, create more jobs, and improve conditions for all. Wealth, they insisted, would slither down the social hierarchy to the benefit of all. Of course, there was opposition to the reforms, but the democratically elected Parliament continued to pass them, at first by narrow margins, but then with increasingly convincing majorities.

Concomitant with the tax reforms came a series of even bolder deregulation and privatization acts. With a shrinking tax base and the rising costs of healthcare for a rapidly aging population, businesses could not remain competitive in the global marketplace, it was argued. Europe’s restrictive environmental regulations had to be relaxed. Individual European states could no longer afford as many of the social services they had once maintained, and it was believed that the private sector could provide those same services more efficiently, services like prisons, schools, fire departments, and police.

But as time passed, those private businesses, increasingly owned by fewer and fewer holding companies, found it unprofitable to operate in the poorer districts. Most of Kreuzberg's residents could not afford the trash collection fees and opted not to subscribe. With only one in ten homes in some neighborhoods as paying customers, garbage collection firms were losing money by servicing Kreuzberg and other poorer parts of Europe's major cities. The companies agreed that those neighborhoods should be granted the freedom to dispose of their own trash as they saw fit. A similar pattern evolved with fire departments, schools, and other services previously financed by the public sector.

Aisha boarded the crowded S-Bahn at Kotbussertor and sank into a padded seat as the train ratcheted along its rusted rails. It took nearly half an hour to reach Zehlendorf. She exited and headed through the woods toward the Center.

Tracing a narrow wooded path, she passed the little lake where her mother used to bring her as a child. She remembered those baking summer afternoons, and how, during Muslim swim times, the lake was bursting with children, shrieking and splashing about. She remembered being 12 and swimming during Muslim time, when no men or boys were allowed near. She had wondered what boys her age were like when they swam. Aisha looked out across the lake, surrounded by a thicket of trees, moss and grass sloping down to the water. She saw herself propped up against the base of a gnarled oak, wrapped in a sodden towel, as Nilgul whispered in her ear that Germans swim naked. Aisha shook her head stubbornly. "You lie," she told Nilgul. "Not men and women together, total strangers." It was more the idea of being exposed to strangers than the nakedness that Aisha could not believe.

She shook herself back to the present. The lake was empty. There was no time for nostalgia. She approached the wellness center's glass doors and held her BIC to the scanner. Cameras scanned her retinas and fingerprints, matched them instantly with the card, and the glass doors slid silently apart. Mustafa would be glad to see her, Aisha thought, though she was never fully certain what lay behind his contented smile and glassy eyes.

Mustafa was only 16 when he was first admitted to the wellness cen-

ter at Schlachtensee. His alleged crime was stealing 200 grams of cheese from a local grocery store. But his behavior within the center made him a prime candidate for extended treatment. Today, six years later, Mustafa was a model patient. His productivity rates stood on a par with the best on his ward, and his supervisors often praised his agreeableness.

This wellness center had a proud history behind it, for it was one of the first of its kind to replace the old-fashioned prisons that had once littered Europe. Although a few antiquated prisons still remained in tiny, rural pockets of France and Spain, even these were scheduled to be phased out within a few years. But this wellness center in southwest Berlin was a model for rehabilitation institutes. Based on the groundbreaking work of psycho-biologist Horst Kettenacker, the Schlachtensee Center now housed over 1500 patients. Most politicians and policymakers agreed that the wellness centers had dramatically contributed to the sharp drop in street crimes across Europe.

Kettenacker, a member of the faculty of the University of Göttingen and former researcher at Pharmex, made his name with the publication in 2015 of his now seminal paper, "Life Chains of Desire." Kettenacker showed how every individual possesses an innate desire to complete the natural chains of human development: the desire to learn, the desire to form meaningful relationships, and above all the desire to work. In some individuals, however, the links in their natural life chains become severed or malformed. This is particularly true, Kettenacker demonstrated, for the chronically unemployed—those who refused to work for periods of three months or longer. This disruption in the natural human desire to labor most frequently manifests itself in the early stages of adulthood, especially for young men in their late teens and early twenties. These socially maladjusted individuals often distort their natural desire to labor into a desire for crime in a process, which Kettenacker termed "negative dislocation." But Kettenacker's most significant contribution was his discovery that through proper medication and a program of rigorous, continual labor, potential criminals could be transformed into obedient, productive members of society. They would, however, require extended, sometimes lifelong, residency within the nurturing, therapeutic confines

of a wellness center. Kettenacker's research definitively showed the healing power of labor as a means of rejoining one's severed life chains.

Mustafa lived and worked in ward B, which specialized in textiles. While some wards collaborated with industry on developing plastics, paper products, or machine tools, others were devoted to assisting multinational corporations with data entry, customer service, or the handling of complaints. Patients at the centers typically worked between 12 and 14 hours per day. In exchange for their labor, the corporations that utilized their services covered the costs of a patient's medications, his room and board—an arrangement which most patients cheerfully accepted since their medications were prohibitively expensive. Although each patient's drug regimen was tailored to his particular needs, one of Kettenacker's most practical breakthroughs came in his discovery that a combination of Pacifix and Concentra dramatically improved patients' dispositions and enhanced their ability to focus. This minimum treatment helped patients to keep their productivity levels high while at the same time boosting their self-esteem.

There were, of course, certain unavoidable side effects from the treatment. Many patients contracted mild liver and kidney disorders, while others occasionally experienced paranoia and schizophrenia, but all of these conditions could be treated with additional medications at no extra cost to the patient. The long-term side effects were still not fully clear. While patients under treatment for ten years or longer showed higher than normal rates of brain damage, none of Pharmex's extensive studies had yet conclusively linked Kettenacker's treatment to this unfortunate result. Mortality rates had also been substantially reduced since the treatment's initial use. Today only 1 in 10,000 deaths were directly attributable to the treatment. Although the Pan-Islamic League and the Greens had fervently voted against most aspects of wellness center rehabilitation programs, it had to be admitted that violence within the centers was virtually unknown.

The story I have sketched above might sound fanciful, and indeed, it is merely a fictional account of one of Europe's possible

futures. It is not, however, wholly implausible. One of Europe's distinguishing features since the late nineteenth century has been the rise of the welfare state. The growth of social democracy, a political movement that has sought to protect and nurture all members of society, has made parts of Europe an enviable place to live when one is in need of social services. It is less enviable if one resents paying 50 percent or more of one's income in taxes to support those services. As the number of Muslims increases across the continent, there is good reason to expect that the welfare state, as Europe has known it, will disintegrate, to be replaced by the privatization of services once thought solely the responsibility of the state. Here's why:

America may not even recognize Europe in a few short decades. Within the next ten to twenty years, as European society becomes more Muslim and more infused with those from non-European cultures, social democracy will break down. The welfare state that has characterized European governments, whether on the political Left or Right, since the Second World War, will begin 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. 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 high as 70 percent 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, cultural norms, and work ethic.

This sense of social solidarity is certain to disintegrate as individual European states become more ethnically, racially, reli-

giously, and culturally diverse. Danes are already beginning to realize that their heavy tax burdens are going to support people who, in their minds, are not Danes: they do not look the same, they do not share their same religion, culture, or social norms. Most critically, they have different values. At least, this is the perception that will grow over time, be it true or false. 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. It will be painful, because it will mean a fundamental reordering of European society. Europe will come to resemble America—only a more extreme version.

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. This does not mean that individual Americans have never overcome racial divides, but as a whole, American society has demonstrated limited ability to forge deep interethnic bonds—again, as Hurricane Katrina made abundantly clear.

Income redistribution can occur when the historical context permits. In the ebullient 1990s, when it seemed that the Dow and NASDAQ would rise forever, some economists triumphantly declared that the great debate between Friedrich von Hayek and John Maynard Keynes was over, and Hayek had won. They argued that Keynesian economics had led to deficit spending, inflation, Leviathan bureaucracies, and growth-crushing welfare states. Hayek, who prophesied a road to serfdom unless states adopted liberalization and strict free-market principles, now appeared prescient and vindicated by history—or so the argument ran.

The problem with such black-and-white debates is their failure to consider the historical contexts. Each theory of political economy was necessitated by the spirit of the times. In postwar 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 Europe recovered. Wealth redistribution was not only 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 Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher economic revolutions called for curtailing redistribution and a cutting of taxes. The more affluent, successful members of society, they declared, should be able to keep more of what they earned. President Reagan 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. Suddenly, the economically disadvantaged had become enemies of the state. Since then, the condition of single working mothers—black, white, Latina, and others—has grown steadily more tenuous. Taxation rates, however, have dropped substantially.

Bill Clinton and Tony Blair embraced and perpetuated the tenets that Reagan and Thatcher had popularized. Their political acumen is shown most clearly in their policies toward welfare. They sensed that the zeitgeist had shifted Right, and they had no intention of bucking the trend. Instead, they skillfully rode the tide of public opinion. In the early 2000s, even Germany's Social Democratic and Green coalition government bowed to that same public mood, lowering taxes and cutting social services. If these measures are shown to improve economic growth, the rest of Europe will likely follow the same course.

Neither Reagan and Thatcher nor Clinton and Blair forged a new consensus. 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-percent 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 bipolar disorder over time? It mainly comes down to cultural 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. Americans have grown increasingly resistant to taxation in part because of this belief. As Europeans come to believe the same about their Muslim neighbors, European socialism as we know it will end.

Muslims and other non-ethnic Europeans are just beginning to reach population levels high enough to concern ethnic Europeans. These "foreigners" with their perceived foreign values are becoming increasingly visible in major cities, from Paris and Berlin to Amsterdam and Madrid. Their share of news coverage is growing, with stories typically reporting on their incidence of crime, violence, or foreign practices such as wife-beating, honor killings, or female genital mutilation. Their objection to the publication of twelve Danish cartoons further reinforced the view that Muslim Europeans are opponents of free speech and the foundations of a democratic society. The public consciousness is rising, prejudices are being reinforced, and a public mood is slowly forming. This is what allows for the waxing popularity of right-wing, anti-immigrant, anti-foreigner political movements witnessed across Europe—even in countries like Holland, Denmark, and Switzerland, where tolerance and openness have long been their trademarks. Most of these far right-wing parties are unlikely to seize power, but they are likely to influence national and European-wide poli-

cies and to shape the public mood. Their impact will most strongly be felt in the lowering of taxes, the cutting of social services, and the gradual dismantling of the welfare state.