

Europe and Islam

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I. JIHAD AND CRUSADE

Between the two terms of the title of these lectures there is, or there would appear to be, a certain asymmetry. The one, Europe, is a geographical expression, the name of a continent, one of several — the number has varied from two to seven — into which the earth's surface is divided. The other is a religion. One might reasonably speak of Europe and Asia, of Europe and Africa, or one might speak of Islam and Christendom, or of Islam and Buddhism. But what can one say about Europe and Islam?

This asymmetry is more apparent than real. Europe is a European notion, as is the whole geographical system of continents of which Europe was the first. Europe conceived and made Europe; Europe discovered, named, and in a sense made America. Centuries earlier, Europe had invented both Asia and Africa, the inhabitants of which, until the age of European world supremacy in the nineteenth century, were unaware of these names, these identities, even of these classifications which Europeans had devised for them. Even in Europe, the notion of Europe as a cultural and political entity was relatively modern — a postmedieval secularized restatement of what had previously been known as Christendom.

Islam is not a place; it is a religion. But for Muslims this word, *religion*, does not have the same connotation as the word *religion* has for Christians, or even had for medieval Christians. *Religion* for Muslims means both more and less than the equivalent term for Christians. The different words used to designate them are indicative. The word *religion*, now common to virtually all the languages of European Christendom, both Eastern and Western, derives from the Latin *religio* — a pre-Christian term for the cult and rituals of pagan Rome, first Christianized by Saint Jerome in his Latin translation of the Bible. The Islamic term is

dīn, originally Arabic but adopted in all the many languages of Islam. The cognate word in other Semitic languages, notably Hebrew and Aramaic, means law.

For Muslims, Islam is not merely a system of belief and worship, a compartment of life, so to speak, distinct from other compartments which are the concern of nonreligious authorities administering nonreligious laws; it is the whole of life, and its rules include civil, criminal, and even what we would call constitutional law.

But if the term *religion*, in one sense, conveys much more to a Muslim than to a Christian, there is another in which it conveys much less. As a building, as a place of worship, the equivalent of the church among Muslims is the mosque. As an institution, as a power, the church has no equivalent in Islam. Islam has no councils or synods, no prelates or hierarchies, no canon laws or canon courts. In classical Islamic history there could be no clash between pope and emperor, since the caliph, the titular head of the Islamic state and community, combined in himself both political and religious — though not spiritual — authority. There could be neither conflict nor cooperation, neither separation nor association between church and state, since the governing institution of Islam combined both functions.

This well-known difference between Islam and Christendom derives from the different origins — or as some would now put it, the different foundation myths — of the two religions. Muhammad was not, like Moses, forbidden to enter his Promised Land; still less did he suffer, like Jesus, physical death by martyrdom. Nor were his followers obliged to struggle for centuries as a proscribed and persecuted minority under a hostile government. Muhammad became a sovereign during his lifetime. He himself founded the first Islamic state and governed it with his Companions. His spiritual mission ended with his death, but his religious and political — one might also add military — mission was continued by his successors, the caliphs, under whose rule Muslims progressed

from victory to victory, from triumph to triumph, creating in less than a century a vast realm extending from the borders of India and China to the Pyrenees and the Atlantic, and ruling millions of new subjects, vast numbers of whom came eagerly to embrace the new faith and dispensation. The sacred history, one might even say the salvation history of Islam, related in the Koran and in the traditional biographies of the Prophet and his Companions; the semisacred early history of the Islamic state, which constitutes the core of memory, of self-awareness, of Muslims everywhere, tell a story of swift and uninterrupted advance in which the leaders of false and superseded religions were overwhelmed and the way was prepared for the eventual triumph of the Muslim faith and of Muslim arms, bringing the word of God to all mankind and imposing the law of God on all the world.

It is by now a commonplace that the term *Islam* is the counterpart not only of *Christianity* but also of *Christendom*, that is to say, not only of a religion in the narrow Western sense but of a whole civilization which grew up under the aegis of that religion. It is also something more, which has no equivalent in Western Christendom and only an approximate and limited equivalent in Byzantium. It is a political identity and allegiance, transcending all others. Always in the ideal, and for a while even in reality, the world of Islam was one polity ruled by one sovereign, the caliph, and even after the decline of the central caliphal power and the emergence of regional monarchies within the extended Islamic realm, the ideal of a single Islamic polity was strong enough to prevent, until comparatively recent times, the emergence of strong regional or dynastic or national powers, such as were beginning to appear in Europe even in the Middle Ages.

This ideal of a single Islamic polity, transcending both country and nation, still has considerable appeal, as recent events have demonstrated. Both terms, therefore, *Europe* and *Islam*, represent a primary civilizational self-definition of the entities which they designate and may be seen as counterparts, whose association is not

inappropriate. A discussion of the relations between them and of their reciprocal perceptions and attitudes need not necessarily be asymmetrical.

Christendom and Islam are, in chronological sequence, the second and third attempts to create a world religion. The first was, of course, Buddhism. From the sixth century, B.C., Buddhist missionaries from India carried their faith to South, Southeast, and East Asia, where they won great successes. Buddhist missions to Southwest Asia had much less impact. Though their influence was probably greater than was at one time realized, they failed to win converts to their religion or to set up any kind of Buddhist culture. Among two ancient peoples, the Jews and the Persians, religious teachers and leaders developed universalist notions which were later to have the profoundest influence and importance, but neither group made any sustained attempt to teach these notions to others or to convert them to their faith. The idea that there is a single truth for all mankind, and that it is the duty of those who possess it to share it with others, begins with the advent of Christianity and reappears with the rise of Islam. Both faiths originated in the Middle East, and they share an enormous common heritage — Jewish ideas about monotheism, prophecy, revelation, and scripture; Greek philosophy and science; Roman law and government; and going back still further, the surviving traditions of the more ancient civilizations of the region. Both shared this new and almost unprecedented idea that they were the unique possessors of the whole of God's truth. They also shared, or rather disputed, a common territory — southwestern Asia, northern Africa, and Mediterranean Europe.

In many ways, medieval Islam and medieval Christendom spoke the same language. To some extent and in some places this was true even in the literal sense. In many Mediterranean countries, Muslims and Christians shared not only the local vernaculars but also a knowledge of Arabic. Shared concepts, and shared vocabularies to denote them, made it possible not only to argue but

to translate religious texts. Those medieval monks who translated the Koran into Latin in order to refute it were able to do so because Latin, by that time a Christian language, had the necessary terms. In contrast, when converts tried to translate the Koran from Arabic into Persian and Turkish and Indian languages, they had to take their Arabic vocabulary with them, because these languages, and the cultures of which they were the expression, did not possess either the concepts or the corresponding terms.

Speaking the same language at least in the figurative sense, using the same methods of argument and reasoning, and adhering to identical or similar notions of what religion is about, Islam and Christendom could disagree meaningfully. Disputations were possible between Christians and Muslims, as between either and Jews, in a way which would not have been possible between Muslim or Christian divines on the one hand and exponents of the religions of further Asia on the other. When Christians and Muslims called each other infidels, each understood what the other meant, and both meant more or less the same thing. In so doing, they revealed their essential similarity. The Jews, tactfully, agreed with both.

Christianity and Islam were consecutive, not concurrent dispensations, with an interval of six centuries between them. For prophets and preachers, for jurists and theologians, there is obviously a crucial difference between a previous and a subsequent religion. This distinction may help to explain the sometimes sharply contrasting attitudes of Christians and of Muslims toward each other and of both toward the Jews. For Christians, Judaism was a predecessor — an incomplete and superseded religion, fulfilled and replaced by Christianity, but not in itself false. Jews were therefore accorded some measure of tolerance in medieval Europe. That tolerance was always limited, often precarious, sometimes suspended, but somehow Jews managed to survive. Muslims did not, and the reconquest for Christendom of Sicily, Spain, and Portugal was followed, sometimes immediately and sometimes after an interval, by the expulsion or forcible conversion of their Muslim

inhabitants. Muslims and Christians alike were convinced that theirs was not only the whole of God's truth; it was also its final expression. Anything subsequent was therefore necessarily false and harmful and could not be tolerated. There was no place for Muslims in the once lost and now reconquered lands of Christendom, and even the republic of Venice, which lived by the Levant trade, had the greatest difficulty in tolerating even a small inn for visiting Turkish merchants.

For Muslims, on the other hand, Christianity, like Judaism, was a predecessor and deserving of the same degree of tolerance. Like Judaism, it was in Muslim eyes a religion which had been true and had possessed an authentic revelation but was incomplete and superseded by Islam. True, there were sometimes problems with predecessor religions, whose followers were seen as having falsified or corrupted the authentic revelations which they had once possessed. Muslim theologians had difficulty with such Christian doctrines as the trinity and the son-ship and divinity of Christ, which in their eyes were blasphemous absurdities. But in general, they were willing to concede the tolerance to the earlier religions enjoined by Koranic law, despite these perceived aberrations.

No such tolerance could be accorded to subsequent religions, which impugned the veracity and finality of their own dispensations, and by their missionary zeal threatened to mislead the faithful. In the eyes of some medieval Christians, Jews were tolerable as long as they kept to the Old Testament, even if they rejected the New; but they could forfeit that tolerance by following the Talmud, which was in large part subsequent to the advent of Christianity, and which therefore in Christian eyes was full of errors. If, for the medieval Christian, Talmudic Judaism was falsified, Islam was simply false, and, since unlike Talmudic Judaism it sought to convert others, it had to be resisted and overcome. As the Christians feared and persecuted Islam, so did the Muslims fear and persecute such post-Islamic conversionist religious movements as the Baha'is and the Ahmadis. And followers of both reli-

gions, Christians more especially, viewed with particular distrust the emergence of deviant forms of their own faith.

For the Muslim, Christianity was an abrogated religion, which its followers absurdly insisted on retaining, instead of accepting God's final word. They could be tolerated if they submitted. If they did not, they were to be fought until they were overcome and either accepted the truth of the Muslim faith or submitted to the authority of the Muslim state. For Christians, Islam was at best a heresy, more usually a false doctrine, founded by one who was variously depicted, at different stages in the evolution of European consciousness, as a heretic, an impostor, and later, in the age of the Enlightenment, as an Enthusiast.

Though Christendom and Islam were rivals, indeed, competitors, for the role of world religion, and though both shared so many traditions and beliefs, so many purposes and aspirations, neither was willing to recognize the other as a viable alternative. This unwillingness was expressed in a number of ways, and even these illustrate vividly the essential similarity of the two. Europeans in various parts of the continent showed a curious reluctance to call the Muslims by any name with a religious connotation, preferring rather to call them by ethnic names, the obvious purpose of which was to diminish their stature and significance and to reduce them to something local or even tribal. At various times and in various places, Europeans called the Muslims Saracens, Moors, Turks, or Tatars, according to which of the Muslim peoples they had encountered. "Turk," the name of by far the most powerful and important of the Muslim states, even became a synonym for Muslim, and a convert to Islam was said to have "turned Turk" wherever the conversion took place. Medieval Muslim writers show a similar, indeed, an identical, reluctance, and refer to their Christian rivals and enemies as Romans, Slavs, or Franks, depending on when and where they encountered them. When religious designations were used, they were either wholly negative — such as *paynim*, *kafir*, or more generally, *unbeliever* — or else inaccurate

and demeaning. Parallel examples of this are the common Christian practice of referring to Muslims as Mohammedans, and the common Muslim practice of referring to Christians as Nazarenes — in Arabic, Nasara, from Nazareth. The commonest religious term which each applied to the other was, however, *infidel*, and it was in the exchange of this insult that they achieved their fullest and most perfect mutual understanding.

These perceptions, and the resulting attitudes, determined the first encounters between the two religions. They were of course in some respects confirmed, in others modified, by the subsequent realities of the relationship between the two.

At first there seemed every reason why Islam should triumph and Europe succumb. Almost from its beginning, Islam was a world empire and a world civilization extending over three continents, inhabited by many different races, including within itself the seats of the ancient civilizations of Egypt and the Fertile Crescent, to which soon were added Iran and northern India. Muslims had inherited the philosophy and the science of Greece, which Europe did not discover for centuries to come; the wisdom and statecraft of Iran, and much even of the Eastern Christian and Byzantine heritage. While Europe was caught between Islam in the south, the steppe in the east, the ocean in the west and the frozen wastes in the north, the world of Islam was in contact, sometimes in war but often peacefully, with the rich and ancient civilizations of India and China. From the one, they imported positional, decimal notation of numbers; from the other, paper, with immense effect both on their sciences and on their humanities. The Islamic world enjoyed a rich and diverse culture, vast lands and resources, and a complex and flourishing economy. It also had a sophisticated and law-abiding urban society, in such contrast to Europe that as late as Ottoman times, European travelers marveled at the city of Istanbul, where gentlemen and even soldiers walked without swords. The Islamic ecumene was one society and for a while one polity, joined in faith and allegiance

and linked by a network of land and sea routes, created for the double purpose of trade and pilgrimage.

It was also united by one language and the culture which it expressed. In the Arabic language the Islamic world possessed a medium of communication without equal in premodern Christendom — a language of government and commerce, science and philosophy, religion and law, with a rich and diverse literature that in scope, variety, and sophistication was as unparalleled as it was unprecedented. The ossified Greek, debased Latin, and primitive vernaculars of Europe in the early medieval centuries could offer nothing even remotely comparable.

Of the civilizations that were neighbors of Islam, Christianity alone was, in principle, universal — in belief, in self-perception, in intention. It was not regional like India or China but aimed at converting all mankind. In fact, however, Christendom, before the great expansion, was coterminous with Europe. There were, of course, exceptions, but they were of no great importance. The Christian populations under Muslim rule possessed no sovereignty and in any case belonged to different churches and cultures. The kingdom of Ethiopia, the one Christian state outside Europe, was remote and little known. As a civilization, Christendom was as European as Confucianism was Chinese. It was the religion of a region, and not a very large one. Its people were all of one race, belonging to a limited number of interrelated ethnic groups with a strong common culture. In other words it was rather like Hindu India but smaller and drabber and poorer.

Compared with Islam, Christendom was indeed poor, small, backward, and monochrome. Split into squabbling, petty kingdoms, its churches divided by schism and heresy, with constant quarrels between the churches of Rome and the East, disputed between two emperors and for a while even two popes, struggling vainly to establish their authority over a host of kings and kinglets. After the loss of the Christian shores of the eastern and southern Mediterranean to the Muslim advance, Christendom seemed even

more local, confined in effect to a small peninsula on the western edge of Asia which became—and was by this confinement defined as—Europe. For a time—indeed, for a very long time—it seemed that nothing could prevent the ultimate triumph of Islam and the extension of the Islamic faith and Muslim power to Europe.

According to Muslim tradition, the Prophet Muhammad during his lifetime sent letters to “all the kings of the infidels”—Chosroes in Persia, Caesar in Byzantium, the negus in Ethiopia—summoning them to embrace the new faith and submit to its rule and law. Documents survive, purporting to give the texts of such letters. These documents are not accepted as authentic by modern critical scholarship, including much Muslim scholarship, and there is indeed considerable and growing uncertainty concerning the history of the advent and early spread of the new faith. With few exceptions, our information comes exclusively from Arab Muslim sources, orally transmitted for generations before they were committed to writing, and thus inevitably affected, and perhaps distorted, by the bitter factional, sectarian, tribal, and ethnic struggles of the early Islamic state. Modern critical scholarship, by questioning first the accuracy and then the authenticity of a large part of our sources, has darkened rather than lightened the obscurity. All that can be said with certainty is that half a century after the death of the Prophet, Islam had become a new world religion, claiming to supersede Christianity and all other faiths and appealing to all mankind, and that the Muslim polity and community, founded by the Prophet in Medina, had become a vast new empire, advancing—as it seemed at the time with reasonable prospects of immediate success—toward the mastery of the world.

From an early date Muslim law laid down, as one of the principal obligations of the head of the Muslim state and community, the conduct of *jihād*, a term commonly, if inaccurately, translated as “Holy War.” The Arabic word literally means “striving” and is often followed by the words *fi sabil Allāh*, “in the path of

God.” Until fairly recent times it was usually, though not universally, understood in a military sense. It was a Muslim duty — collective in attack, individual in defense — to fight in the war against the unbelievers. In principle, this war was to continue until all mankind either embraced Islam or submitted to the authority of the Muslim state. Until this purpose was achieved there could theoretically be no peace, though truces were permitted which in effect and duration did not greatly differ from the peace treaties that from time to time punctuated the almost continuous warfare waged by the princes of Europe against one another.

The obligation of jihad was in force on all the frontiers of Islam, beyond which lay the lands of the infidels. The obligation was the same, but between these various groups of infidels there was an important distinction. To the east and to the south of Islam, in Asia and in Africa, there were pagans and idolaters, teachable barbarians who, having no serious religion of their own, were seen as natural recruits to the Islamic faith and realm. Only in one area, Christendom, did Islam encounter sustained resistance, from a genuine rival faith embodied for a while in a rival polity. This gave the jihad against Christendom a special character, for it was in these lands that Muslims saw, at different times, the greatest danger and the greatest opportunity. For the Arabs, after their conquest of Iran and central Asia and their inconclusive ventures into the borderlands of China and India, Europe was by far the most important infidel enemy. Some centuries later, for the Ottoman Turks, there was no other. Local kings and chieftains waged jihad against local infidels in South and Southeast Asia and in sub-Saharan Africa, but the great jihad par excellence, the major battlefield of the House of Islam and the House of War, was in Europe.

The first barriers to be overcome in the advance of Islam from its Arabian birthplace into the neighboring lands were the two rival empires of Persia and Byzantium, which controlled the region which we now call the Middle East. The Persian barrier was over-

thrown, and the Persian Empire with all its dependencies was incorporated in the new Islamic state—including its capital city and its ruling elite, whose subjection and subsequent adherence to Islam brought incalculable consequences. The Byzantine barrier was weakened and pushed back but remained standing on a new line, roughly equivalent to the southern and eastern borders of Anatolia.

This was the new eastern frontier of Christendom. Elsewhere, the Christian lands of the Fertile Crescent, of Egypt and North Africa, were one by one incorporated in the Islamic realm and served as launching pads for new attacks on Europe itself. In the east, the Muslim attack was held, and the Byzantines were able to hold the line of the Taurus Mountains and to save the city of Constantinople from repeated siege and attack by the Arab forces. In the west, the swift advance of the Arab Muslim armies took them to the Mediterranean islands and, most important of all, to the Iberian Peninsula. In 710 the first Muslim raiders crossed from Morocco into Spain, invited, so it is said, by a local Spanish ruler with a grievance. By 718 they had occupied most of the peninsula and crossed the Pyrenees into France, where in 732 they encountered and were defeated by the Frankish leader Charles Martel, in the celebrated battle of Tours and Poitiers. In Western legend and historiography, this is seen as the decisive victory, which turned the tide and saved Europe—Christendom—from the Saracen peril. The Arab historians, if they mention this engagement at all, present it as a minor skirmish. For them, the end of their adventure in France was due to their failure to hold the French city of Narbonne, which they first captured in 715 and finally lost in 759. Muslim armies from Spain attacked the city and neighborhood, without success, in 793 and again as late as 840, but they did not capture it, and in time the Muslim forces withdraw south of the Pyrenees. The battle for Spain continued, and almost eight centuries passed from the first Muslim landing to the defeat and destruction of the emirate of Granada, the last Muslim state in

western Europe, in 1492. This was followed, ten years later, by the first of a series of edicts giving the Muslim subjects of the Spanish crown the choice of baptism, exile, or death.

The long struggle for Spain and Portugal and the earlier struggle for southern Italy had ended in Christian victory and Muslim expulsion. Meanwhile a new and devastating Muslim counterattack was gathering force, this time not in the west but in the east, not from the Arabs but from a new Islamic power, the Turks. Already in the eleventh century Turkish armies and migrating Turkish tribesmen had won the greater part of Anatolia from the Byzantines, transforming what had once been Greek and Christian into a Turkish and Muslim land. The eastern bastion of Christendom, which for so many centuries had withstood the Arabs, suffered the first of a series of defeats. In time, these re-drew the frontier between Christendom — Europe — and Islam.

First under the Seljuk and then under the Ottoman sultans, the Turks created one of the greatest and most enduring of the Islamic empires. In 1352 a Turkish force, brought over — like the first Arabs in Spain — as allies of a Christian contender for power, occupied the fortress of Tzympe, north of Gallipoli on the European shore of the Dardanelles. A century later, masters of the whole Balkan Peninsula, they were ready to mount the final attack which added Constantinople, as keystone, to their new imperial structure in Europe and Asia. From their new capital in Istanbul, the Ottoman sultans launched a series of further expeditions, which brought them to the plains of Hungary and twice, in 1529 and again in 1683, to the walls of Vienna. For a century and a half, the Turkish armies, operating from their bases in Buda and Belgrade, offered a nearer and greater threat to the heart of Christian Europe than had ever come from the Saracens in Spain.

Nor was the threat limited to central and eastern Europe. Muslim fleets, operating out of North Africa, waged naval jihad against the western European states — in the Mediterranean and even in the open seas, attacking shipping and coastal towns and

villages. In the early seventeenth century, corsairs from Algeria, now under Ottoman suzerainty, and from Morocco, were raiding the southern coasts of England and Ireland, and once—in 1627—raided as far as Iceland, where their visitation is commemorated in chronicles, sagas, and prayers.

In addition to the Moors and the Turks, there was a third Muslim advance into Europe, often overlooked by Western historians, but deeply burned into the consciousness of the East. During the thirteenth century, Mongol invaders from East Asia conquered much of Russia and eastern Europe and established a state known in Russian annals as the Khanate of the Golden Horde. In the third quarter of the century Berke Khan, the grandson of Jengiz Khan and lord of the Golden Horde, was converted to Islam. He entered into relations with the Mamluk sultan of Egypt and began the process by which the mixed Mongol and Turkish people of his realm became a Muslim nation. They are known in eastern Europe as Tatars, after the name of one of the Mongol tribes, and the period of their domination, from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century, is known in Russian annals as “the Tatar Yoke.” Even after the breakup of the Khanate of the Golden Horde, the successor khanates based in Kazan, Astrakhan, and the Crimea continued to rule—and where they could not rule, to raid—parts of eastern Europe until the extinction of the last khanate, that of the Crimea, in 1783. From 1475, the khans of the Crimea became vassals of the Ottomans. Tatar forces often fought under Ottoman command against European enemies, while Tatar raids on Russian, Polish, and Lithuanian villages provided merchandise, for centuries, for the slave markets of Istanbul.

There were, of course, periods of European counterattack, notably in the series of wars known—in European historiography—as the Crusades. In recent years it has become the practice, in both western Europe and the Middle East, to see and present the Crusades as an early exercise in Western imperialism—as a wanton and predatory aggression by the European powers of the time against

the Muslim or, as some would now say, against the Arab lands.

It was not seen in that light at the time, either by Christians or by Muslims. For contemporary Christians, the Crusades were religious wars, the purpose of which was to recover the lost lands of Christendom and in particular the holy land where Christ had lived, taught, and died. In this connection, it may be recalled that when the Crusaders arrived in the Levant not much more than four centuries had passed since the Arab Muslim conquerors had wrested these lands from Christendom — less than half the time from the Crusades to the present day — and that a substantial proportion of the population of these lands, perhaps even a majority, was still Christian. In the Arabic historiography of the period, incomparably richer than that of the Crusaders, the terms *Crusade* and *Crusader* do not appear at all, and even the notion that these terms represent appears to be missing. The battles against these invaders are described in great detail, but they are usually designated by an ethnic name, the Franks, often simply as the infidels, with appropriate imprecations, rarely as the Christians. With few exceptions, the Muslim historians show little interest in whence or why they had come and report their arrival and their departure with equal lack of curiosity. This was an age of Muslim weakness and division, and the Muslim world, in East and West alike, was invaded by barbarians, both external and internal, from every side — nomads from the northern steppes and the southern deserts, Georgians from the Caucasus, Galicians and Normans from Europe. These Frankish invaders, who first appeared as auxiliaries of the familiar Byzantine enemy and then as independent operators, must have seemed no different from the rest. The “Great Debate” between Christendom and Islam, of which Edward Gibbon speaks so eloquently, was, in its verbal aspect, a monologue, from which the Muslim interlocutor was absent and of which he seems to have been unaware.

In the longer perspective of European-Islamic relations, the venture of the Crusades was no more than an episode; its only

measurable consequences, within the Islamic world, were an improvement and extension of commercial relations with Europe, and a worsening of relations with local Christians. In the seesaw of attack and counterattack between Christendom and Islam, this venture began with an inconclusive Christian victory, and ended with a conclusive Christian defeat.

For almost a thousand years, from the first Moorish landing in Spain to the second Turkish siege of Vienna, Europe was under constant threat from Islam. In the early centuries it was a double threat — not only of invasion and conquest, but also of conversion and assimilation. All but the easternmost provinces of the Islamic realm had been taken from Christian rulers, and the vast majority of the first Muslims west of Iran and Arabia were converts from Christianity. North Africa, Egypt, Syria, even Persian-ruled Iraq, had been Christian countries, in which Christianity was older and more deeply rooted than in most of Europe. Their loss was sorely felt, and heightened the fear that a similar fate was in store for Europe. In Spain and in Sicily, Muslim faith and Arab culture exercised a powerful attraction, and even those who remained faithful to the Christian religion often adopted the Arabic language.

It was this fear, more than any other single factor, which led to the beginnings of Arabic scholarship in Europe, to the discipline which centuries later came to be known as Orientalism. In the monasteries of western Europe, studious monks learned Arabic, translated the Koran, and studied other Muslim texts, with a double purpose — first, the immediate aim of saving Christian souls from conversion to Islam, and second, the more distant hope of converting Muslims to Christianity. It took some centuries before they decided that the first was no longer necessary and that the second was impossible.

If that is how the Islamic world looked from Europe, how did Europe look from the Islamic world? Rather, one might say, as central Africa looked to Victorian England. Arabic writings reflect the picture of a remote, unexplored wilderness inhabited by exotic,

picturesque, and rather primitive people from whom there was nothing to fear and less to learn. A few intrepid explorers from Muslim Spain and North Africa ventured into darkest Europe and left accounts of their travels; we can hear the same note of somewhat amused disdain in their writings as we sometimes find in European travelers in Africa and Asia many centuries later. The Arabs were, of course, aware of Byzantium. They knew and respected the civilization of the ancient Greeks of Hellas, and also, though to a much lesser extent, of the Christian Greeks in Constantinople. But they had no respect — indeed there was no reason why they should have any respect — for central and western Europe, which in medieval times was on a significantly lower level of civilization, both moral and material, than the heartlands of Islam.

Yet despite this perception of non-Byzantine Europe as an outer wilderness of barbarism and unbelief, there was at the same time an awareness that the Europeans, even the western Europeans, were not simple barbarians like the other neighbors of Islam in the east and in the south. They were, after all, followers of a real religion, superseded but resting on an authentic revelation and thus vastly superior to the polytheists and idolaters whom the Muslims encountered in other regions. At the same time, unlike those polytheists and idolaters, they were not willing and easily assimilable recruits to Islam but rather remained stubbornly attached to their own superseded faith, with an ambition to make it prevail over Islam.

In the second great confrontation, this time between Renaissance Europe and Ottoman Islam, few were tempted to change their faith, and those who “turned Turk” were mostly adventurers in search of a career in the Ottoman land of opportunity. Muslims remained, as always, impervious to the claims of an outdated and superseded religion, and the growing missionary effort of Christian Europe was directed mainly to the Americas and to the remoter peoples of Asia and Africa, east and south of the lands of Islam. The Islamic threat to Europe, in its Ottoman form, was

primarily military and political and to some extent social. The challenge and opportunity which it offered to European enterprise was not the conversion of the heathen but the exploitation of the vast markets in the expanding Ottoman realms in Europe, Asia, and Africa.

This new situation is reflected in the continuing and changing study of Islam among Europeans. The main purpose of study was no longer to prevent or to achieve religious conversion, and its centers were no longer in the monasteries. Students of Islam and students of the Islamic world were now pursuing different paths, which only recently have once again come in sight of one another. In the universities that were appearing all over western Europe, scholars imbued with the curiosity and enthusiasm of the Renaissance and disciplined by the philological method of the humanists applied themselves to the study of classical Arabic texts, both religious and other. Practical men of affairs, concerned with the conduct of diplomacy, war, and commerce, sought eagerly for the "news from Turkey" and made great efforts to collect and to interpret reports concerning the current situation and recent past of this frightening yet tempting neighbor. In time, these studies attracted the attention even of scholars, though not, until centuries later, of professors in universities. Nevertheless, when Richard Knolles, vicar of Sandwich and sometime fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford, published his *General History of the Turks* in 1603, though he knew no Turkish and had never set foot outside England, he was able to draw on a considerable body of literature in several European languages, including translations of Turkish chronicles, to describe, in great detail and with considerable historical depth, "the glorious empire of the Turks, the present terror of the world."

For a long time, Richard Knolles and his numerous European predecessors and informants had no equivalents among Arabs and Turks, who in general showed the same lack of interest as in medieval times. There is evidence that Ottoman officials and officers were from time to time concerned with developments

beyond the frontiers, but such concern is rarely reflected in scholarship or letters. There was no attempt to learn non-Islamic languages, and when a knowledge of European languages or conditions was required, Muslim rulers were content to rely on their non-Muslim subjects or on refugees and other Europeans in their service. Nowadays I suppose we would call them defectors. The Christian persecution of the Jews, and the Catholic and Protestant persecution of one another, maintained an ample supply of this important human resource. European advances in weaponry and in naval matters received some attention, and were sometimes — to some extent — adopted, but the arts and sciences, even the politics and economics of Europe were seen as fundamentally irrelevant to the life and concerns of Islam, and were therefore ignored. Such an attitude can be understood — in a sense even justified — in earlier times. By the late seventeenth century, though Turkish pashas still ruled in Belgrade and Buda, and Turkish armies still threatened Vienna, it was becoming dangerously out of date.

II. RECONQUEST AND EMPIRE

Between 1555 and 1560, Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq, imperial ambassador to the court of Süleyman the Magnificent, wrote a series of letters in which he expressed his deep pessimism about the prospects of Europe under imminent peril of Ottoman conquest. European Christendom, he lamented, had lost its former dedication, its former valor. Instead of seeking renown on the field of honor and defending Europe against an implacable and dangerous enemy, European Christians preferred to squander their energies “seeking the Indies and the Antipodes across vast fields of ocean, in search of gold.” Christian Europe, weak, divided, and irresolute, seemed helpless before the overwhelming power of the centralized, disciplined Ottoman state:

On their side are the resources of a mighty empire, strength unimpaired, experience and practice in fighting, a veteran

soldiery, habituation to victory, endurance of toil, unity, order, discipline, frugality, and watchfulness. On our side is public poverty, private luxury, impaired strength, broken spirit, lack of endurance and training; the soldiers are insubordinate, the officers avaricious; there is contempt for discipline; licence, recklessness, drunkenness, and debauchery are rife; and, worst of all, the enemy is accustomed to victory and we to defeat. Can we doubt what the result will be? Persia alone interposes in our favour; for the enemy, as he hastens to attack, must keep an eye on this menace in his rear.¹

To Busbecq and his contemporaries, it might well have seemed that Europe was doomed and that the final Ottoman triumph was delayed only by the need to confront another challenge on the far side — the attempt by the Shi‘ite shahs of Persia to establish themselves as the leading rulers of the Muslim world and Shi‘ism as the dominant form of Islam. But this respite would not last long: “Persia is only delaying our fate; it cannot save us. When the Turks have settled with Persia they will fly at our throats, supported by the might of the whole East; how unprepared we are I dare not say!”²

Busbecq was an accurate and perceptive observer of the Ottoman scene, but he was, fortunately for Europe, profoundly wrong in his global perspective. Though the Ottoman power was still to survive for some time, it had already passed its peak. The Ottomans did not in fact “settle with Persia” but continued to fight wars against their Muslim neighbors and rivals until the eighteenth century, by which time neither Turkey, nor Persia, nor indeed Islam posed a serious threat to Christendom. Contrary to Busbecq’s dire predictions, the Ottomans achieved no triumph over Persia, no victory in Europe.

¹*The Turkish Letters of Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq, Imperial Ambassador at Constantinople 1554–1562*, translated from the Latin by Edward Seymour Forster (Oxford, 1927), p. 112.

²*Ibid.*

The final defeat and withdrawal of the armies of Islam was no doubt due in the first instance to the valiant defenders of Vienna, but, in the larger perspective, it was due to those self-saine adventurers whose voyages across the ocean and greed for gold aroused Busbecq's ire. Whatever their motives, their voyages brought vast new lands under European rule or influence, placed great wealth, in bullion and resources, at European disposal, and thus gave Europe new strength with which to resist and ultimately throw back the Muslim invader.

The sequence of events which Europeans called the Discoveries and others have called the Expansion of Europe inaugurated a new age not only in European but in world history, one that an Indian historian, K. M. Panikkar, named the "Vasco da Gama era" of European penetration, infiltration, influence, and finally domination.

This European encounter with the rest of the world, from the late fifteenth century onward, took a variety of different forms. In some regions, as, for example, in northern Asia and North America, Europeans came into uninhabited or thinly inhabited lands, in which they were able to settle and create their own societies. In others, including most of Asia and significant parts of Africa and of Central and South America, they encountered ancient and advanced civilizations — in the Eastern hemisphere, specifically, the civilizations of China, India, and Islam.

Between these three there is an obvious difference. China and India are places, and despite their rich and sophisticated cultures, they remained essentially regional. The first universal religion, Buddhism, was decisively rejected in the country of its birth, and had become increasingly local in the Southeast and East Asian countries to which it had been brought. Islam, in contrast, was a universal religion, which never abandoned its universalist aspirations.

There is another profoundly important respect in which the encounter between Europe and Islam differed from the encounters with India and China. When European and Chinese, European

and Indian, met, they met as strangers, knowing little or nothing about each other. For the European, India and China were names, with a few, almost forgotten, remnants of classical lore and medieval travelers' tales attached to them. If the Europeans knew little about India and China, the Indians and Chinese knew nothing about Europe. They could therefore meet in a relatively open-minded way.

The European and the Muslim, in contrast, knew — or thought they knew — a great deal about each other. They had been neighbors since the very beginnings of Islam in the seventh century — neighbors in constant contact and communication, often as rivals, sometimes as enemies, and with attitudes toward each other formed and confirmed by centuries of experience and, for the Europeans, of fear. The European image of the Muslim was very different from the image of the Indian or the Chinese. The Indians, after all, had never invaded Spain or crossed the Pyrenees; the Chinese had never conquered Constantinople or besieged Vienna. Neither of them had ever made any attempts to convert Christians to their own religious beliefs, the very nature of which was at that time unknown and probably unintelligible to Europeans. Nor — and this was perhaps what counted most — had they condemned the Bible as obsolete and offered a new scripture to take its place. Europe and Islam were old acquaintances, intimate enemies, whose continuing conflict derived a special virulence from their shared origins and common aims.

Indeed, the whole complex process of European expansion and empire in the last five centuries has its roots in the clash of Islam and Christendom. It began with the long and bitter struggle of the conquered peoples of Europe, in east and west, to restore their homelands to Christendom and expel the Muslim peoples who had invaded and subjugated them. It was hardly to be expected that the triumphant Spaniards and Portuguese would stop at the Straits of Gibraltar, or that the Russians would allow the Tatars to retire in peace and regroup in their bases on the upper and lower

Volga — the more so since a new and deadly Muslim attack on Christendom was under way, with the Turkish advance from the Bosphorus to the Danube and beyond threatening the heart of Europe. The victorious liberators, having reconquered their own territories, pursued their former masters whence they had come. The same impetus, the same momentum, which enabled the Spaniards and the Portuguese to drive the Moors from the Iberian Peninsula, carried them across the straits into Africa, around Africa, and beyond Africa into undreamt-of lands; the same impetus, the same momentum, carried the victorious Russians from the liberation of Moscow to the Caspian and the Black Sea and ultimately to a large part of Asia. The two movements, of reconquest followed by empire, were almost contemporary at both ends of Europe. It was in 1480 that the Russians finally ended the Tatar yoke and prepared to invade the Tatar homelands; it was in 1492 that the Spaniards destroyed the last Muslim state in Spain and made a spectacular contribution to the voyages of discovery which the Portuguese had already begun. Other European peoples, who apart from slave raids by land and sea had never been subjected to Moorish or Tatar rule, joined in the vast movement which carried Christian Europe from reconquest to empire.

For many, the great voyages of discovery were themselves part of a religious war, a continuation of the Crusades and of the reconquest, against the same Muslim enemy. When the Portuguese arrived in Asian waters, it was Muslim rulers around the Indian Ocean who were their main opponents and who tried without success to stop them. As far away as Ceylon and the Philippines they continued to see and name their Muslim enemies as “Moors.”

For a long time, the successes achieved by the Christian counterattack were limited to the periphery — to the Eurasian steppe and to the remoter lands of South and Southeast Asia, while in the center, in the Muslim heartlands around the Mediterranean, the Christian advance was held and, in some areas, reversed. The Ottoman conquest of Syria and Egypt in 1517, followed by the

extension of Ottoman suzerainty in North Africa as far as the Moroccan frontier, greatly strengthened Muslim power in the Mediterranean, where even the much-vaunted Christian naval victory at Lepanto in 1571 made little real difference to the balance of power. In the West, the Spanish and Portuguese attack on the North African coast, from Tunis to Morocco, was decisively defeated by Ottoman and Moroccan forces. In the East, Portuguese attempts, from their new bases in India, to penetrate the Red Sea and Persian Gulf were brought to nothing by the Ottomans and the Persians. In the central arena of Christian-Muslim warfare, on the European mainland, the Ottoman threat to Vienna and to the heart of Europe seemed as imminent as ever.

On 12 September 1683, after a siege of sixty days, the Turkish armies encamped outside Vienna began to withdraw. This was their second attempt and their second failure to take the city, but between the two sieges there was a vast difference. In 1529, when the armies of the Ottoman sultan Süleyman the Magnificent first reached the walls of Vienna, they were at the crest of a wave of conquest. The attack failed, but the failure was neither final nor decisive. The retreat was orderly, the defeat inconclusive; the siege initiated a century and a half of stalemate during which the two empires — of the Hapsburgs and the Ottomans — battled for the control of Hungary and ultimately of central Europe.

The second siege and the second withdrawal were quite a different matter. This time, the failure was clear and unequivocal. The withdrawal from Vienna was followed by defeats in the field and the loss of cities and provinces. The victories of the Austrians and their allies were confirmed and established in the peace treaty of Carlowitz, signed on 26 January 1699.

This treaty marked a crucial turning point, not only in the relations between the Ottoman and Hapsburg empires, but, more profoundly, between Europe and Islam. For centuries past the Ottoman sultanate had been the leading power of Islam, representing it in the millennial conflict with its Western Christian

neighbors. The real power of Islam in relation to Europe had, in many respects, declined. The advance from eastern Europe across the steppes, from western Europe across the oceans, threatened to enclose the Islamic heartlands in a pincer grip. The pincers were already in place — they would soon be ready to close. And now at the center, the war had shown that the Ottoman armies, once the strongest and best in the world, were falling behind their European adversaries in weaponry, in military science, even in discipline and skill.

The Muslim world was also falling behind Europe economically, notably in the mobilization and deployment of economic power. The rise of mercantilism in the West helped European states and companies to achieve a level of commercial organization and concentration unknown in the Islamic lands. The extraterritorial immunities bestowed on them — as an act of condescension — by Muslim rulers made it easier for them to exploit and in time to dominate the open markets of the Islamic world.

For a while, these changes were still hidden from the sight of Christians and Muslims alike by the still imposing panoply of Ottoman military power. After the withdrawal from Vienna and the military and political defeats that followed it, the new relationship became clear to both sides. Europe still had a Turkish problem, because Turkey remained an important factor in the European balance of power, but it was now the problem of Turkish weakness, not of Turkish strength. And Islam, which had long ceased to be regarded by the Christian churches as a serious religious adversary, now ceased to be even a serious military threat.

The change was clear both in the terms of the treaty which ended the war and in the procedures by which it was negotiated. For the Ottomans, this was diplomacy of an entirely new kind. During the early stages of the Ottoman advance into Europe, there were no treaties in the proper sense and very little negotiation. The state of war between the advancing power of Islam and its infidel enemies, conceived as a perpetual religious duty, was from

time to time interrupted by truces, dictated in Istanbul by the victorious Turks to their defeated foes. It was not until the Treaty of Sitvatorok, signed in November 1606, that for the first time the Ottoman sultan conceded the title of emperor to the Hapsburg monarch, hitherto dismissively designated in Turkish protocol as “the king of Vienna,” and dealt with him more or less as an equal.

The seventeenth century began with a grudging concession of equality; it ended with an unequivocal admission of defeat. For the first time, the Ottomans were compelled to sign a peace after a war which they had unmistakably lost in the field, and on terms which were dictated by their enemies.

The eighteenth century, despite some occasional successes, was a bad time for the Muslim powers, who, far from being able to fulfill their religious duty of expanding the frontiers of Islam, were hard pressed to retain what they already held. The awareness among Muslims of their changed position is indicated in the saying, current at the time, that “this world is the paradise of the unbelievers and the hell of the believers.” The Austrians continued their pressure in the Balkans. They were joined by the Russians, whose southward advance against the retreating Tatars brought them eventually to the frontiers — and across the frontiers — of the Ottoman and Persian empires.

For a while both Turks and Persians seemed to be holding their own against their northern enemies, but a new war, launched by Russia against the Ottoman Empire in 1769, ended in total disaster. The Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca of 1774 was rightly described by the empress Catherine II of Russia as a success “the like of which Russia has never had before.” Russia’s gains at Turkish expense were enormous and brought a decisive change in the power relationships, not only between the two empires, but between the two civilizations.

The war and the treaty which ended it gave Russia three kinds of advantages, all of which served as models for other European powers to follow, and as a starting point for further Russian

advances. The first gain was territorial. Though the actual territory ceded to Russia was of small extent, its importance was considerable. Apart from a small foothold which the Russians had seized at the beginning of the eighteenth century, the Black Sea had hitherto been entirely under Turkish Muslim control. The treaty gave Russia two ports on the eastern tip of the Crimean Peninsula and a fortress at the mouth of the Dniester River, effectively breaking the Turkish monopoly. The Crimean Peninsula itself, hitherto the seat of a Tatar khan under the suzerainty of the Ottoman sultan, was now declared independent, and the Tatar khan and his territories along the northern shore of the Black Sea were removed from Ottoman control or even influence. This prepared the way for Russian annexation a few years later in 1783. The new Russian seaport of Odessa was founded in 1795 on the ruins of a Tatar village.

Beyond the obvious strategic importance of a Russian naval presence in the Black Sea, these territorial changes had another significance. As a result of their earlier defeats in the Austrian wars, the Turks had been compelled to cede extensive territories to Christian powers. Most of these, however, had been recently conquered lands inhabited by Christian populations. The Crimea was different; these people were Turkish-speaking Muslims, whose presence in the Crimea dated back to before the Mongol conquests of the thirteenth century. This was the first cession of old Muslim territory inhabited by Muslim peoples, and it was a bitter blow to Muslim pride.

A second advantage was in trade. By the terms of the treaty, Russia gained freedom of navigation and commerce in the Black Sea and through the straits into the Mediterranean, as well as overland in the European and Asian provinces of the Ottoman Empire. This too marked an important step toward the commercial penetration of the Ottoman Empire in which all the European powers participated during the nineteenth century.

Associated with this was a third advantage — the acquisition by the Russians, and later by others, of positions of power and in-

fluence within the Ottoman realms themselves. These were of several kinds. The most immediately important was the conferment on Russia of a special position in the Danubian principalities. Though these remained under loose Ottoman suzerainty, they now received a considerable measure of internal autonomy and with it of Russian influence. At the same time Russia was given the right to open consulates wherever she pleased in the Ottoman lands — a privilege long sought after by the Western powers — and also to build a Russian church in Istanbul and “make in every circumstance various representations to the Porte in favour of the below mentioned church.”³ Though originally limited to a single Russian church in the capital, this right of remonstrance was, by careful and continuous misinterpretation, expanded into a right of intervention and protection for all the Orthodox Christians of the Ottoman Empire, including many in the Arab lands as well as most of the Ottoman subjects in the Balkan Peninsula. The right of intercession on behalf of the Catholics, long claimed by the king of France, was similarly converted into a right of interference and a virtual protectorate over a smaller but still significant minority among the sultan’s subjects.

In this treaty, we can see very clearly the main patterns of European expansion and penetration in the Middle East in the course of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This was the classical age of European domination — a time when the European powers annexed or occupied much of the Middle East and penetrated and influenced the rest.

The most visible form of European expansion was military conquest and annexation, in which, in several successive phases, the Russians took the lead. The annexation of the Crimea in 1783 was followed by a rapid expansion, eastward and westward, along the northern shores of the Black Sea, leading to a series of wars against Turkey, Persia, and local rulers, and to the extension of

³The quotation is from article 7 of the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca.

Russian power, by annexation or by some form of protection, in both the Balkan Peninsula and the Caucasian land bridge between the Black Sea and the Caspian. By 1828 Russia was in possession of the territory now forming the three Soviet republics of Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan. The French expedition to Egypt, led by General Bonaparte in 1798, had considerable impact in that country but ended in defeat and produced no territorial change. Anglo-French encroachment on the heartlands began at the extremities, with the British naval presence in the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea, the French annexation of Algeria in 1830, the British seizure of Aden in 1839.

A new wave of advance began in the mid-nineteenth century, with the Russian pacification and eventual annexation of the central Asian khanates. This in turn was followed, in short order, by the French occupation of Tunisia in 1881 and the British occupation of Egypt in the following year.

Another wave began in 1911, with Russian pressures on Persia and a Russian military invasion of the northern provinces of that country. Despite Persian resistance, from this time until the outbreak of the First World War the country was effectively under Russian and British domination. Soon after, the steady extension of French influence in Morocco culminated in the establishment of a French protectorate in that country in 1912. Meanwhile, the Italians, latecomers to the imperial game, declared war on the Ottoman Empire in September 1911 and announced the annexation of the Ottoman provinces of Tripolitana and Cyrenaica, which both became Italian colonies. They were united by Italian royal decree on 3 December 1934 to form a single colony renamed Libya. It has retained that name ever since.

The European pincers around the Islamic Middle East, formed by the expansion of Europe at both ends since the sixteenth century, were coming together. They were finally closed during the First World War, with the defeat and dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire and the partition of its territories between the

Allied and associated powers; they were broken and discarded in the aftermath of the Second World War, when all but one of the European empires that had ruled Islamic lands came to an end and were replaced by sovereign independent states. After so long a period of European paramountcy, domination, or rule, their societies, their politics, even their self-perception, were transformed almost beyond recognition.

Less immediately visible, but certainly no less important than the military and political consequences of the rise of Europe, were the economic effects on the relationship between the two worlds.

The European voyages of discovery and, to a much greater extent, the commercial and colonial empires which the Europeans established, brought a dramatic change in the conditions and content of trade between Europe and the Islamic world. In medieval times, Europe had very little to offer in exchange for the rich and varied products of the Islamic lands. Its industry was primitive, its agriculture barely sufficient for its own subsistence. One of its major exports seems to have been its own people — or, to be more precise, eastern Europeans, sold as slaves (whence the name), and delivered to the Muslim markets across the Mediterranean or through Spain. This traffic continued, despite papal and sometimes even royal bans, until the advancing Turks and Tatars did to the European slave trade what Vasco da Gama did to the Eastern spice trade. They went to the sources and collected their own.

Another early export from Europe was weapons. This continued through the Crusades period and into modern times. European powers never seem to have had the slightest compunction in selling weapons of war to enemies who were determined to destroy them. Perhaps they were right — these enemies did not destroy them but instead were themselves destroyed. Apart from European slaves, weapons, and steel, which are often mentioned and were much appreciated, there were also some minor items, such as coral from the Mediterranean, amber from the northern seas, and fine woolen cloth from Florence, Flanders, and later, England. English

scarlet is mentioned by the fourteenth-century Persian historian Rashid al-Din; "London cloth" appears in Turkish customs regulations of the fifteenth century.

With the expansion of Europe into the Western hemisphere, and the growth of European power in South and Southeast Asia, the situation changed dramatically. As Halil Inalcik has shown, it was the establishment of a strong European presence on both the eastern and western sides of the Islamic world, rather than, as was once believed, the circumnavigation of Africa and establishment of direct links, which brought the real change.⁴ The immediate economic effects of the Portuguese voyages were limited, but with the consolidation of the Dutch and British commercial empires, Europeans had won not only access but control. Moreover, with their eastern and western possessions, they had a much wider range of commodities to sell.

Indeed, they had a great deal to sell and before long were exporting considerable quantities of colonial merchandise, including some commodities which were first introduced to Europe from or via the Middle East and which for long were staples of Middle Eastern exports to the West. Coffee, first cultivated and used at the southern end of the Red Sea, in Yemen and Ethiopia, was brought to the Mediterranean lands in the sixteenth century, and by the late seventeenth century was of some significance among Middle Eastern exports to Europe. By the eighteenth century, however, the English, the Dutch, and the French were growing coffee in their tropical colonies in Central America and Southeast Asia, and before long, colonial coffee, cheaper though not better than the local product, came to dominate Middle Eastern markets. Nor was coffee the only commodity which was switched from the export to the import column. Sugar and paper, the one originally from India, the other from China, had long since been accepted

⁴ Halil Inalcik "Osmanli Imparatorlugunun Kurulus ve inkisaf devrinde Türkiye'nin iktisadi vaziyeti üzerinde bir tetkik münasebetiyle," *Bellekten*, no. 60 (1951), pp. 629–84, especially pp. 661ff.

and then produced in the Middle East and had been exported to Europe since the Middle Ages. By the late seventeenth century, colonial sugar was being extensively refined in Europe and exported to the Turkish domains. The Ottomans, while refusing to desecrate their holy script with a printing press, nevertheless copied their holy books and wrote their imperial decrees on water-marked paper manufactured in Europe. Perhaps most striking of all was the change in the trade in manufactured textiles, for long one of the most characteristic products and exports of the Islamic Middle East. With the growth of European power in South and Southeast Asia, coupled with the industrialization of western Europe, the Middle Eastern market was now open to textile imports from both sides — cheap cottons brought by European merchants from India, as well as the older trade in manufactured woollens directly from Europe.

In comparison with Europe, both eastern and western, the Middle East had by the nineteenth century become far weaker than it had been in the great days of the sixteenth century. There is some evidence, though this is less certain, that the decline in the economic power of the Middle East was absolute as well as relative.

Several factors, in addition to the new European mercantilism, combined to bring about this change. In their dealings with Europe, the Muslim powers were affected by the increasing complexity and resulting higher cost of armament and war. Their trade and their internal economies were adversely affected by the great inflation of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, fueled by the influx of American precious metals and the ensuing rise in prices. Their external trade, as we have seen, deteriorated after the development of European-operated trade routes across the Atlantic, around southern Africa, and into South Asian waters. These processes were accelerated by the technological lag in agriculture, industry, and transport within the countries of the Islamic world. Internal weakness thus contributed significantly to the

growing economic advantages gained by European arms, commerce, and industry.

It is not uncommon in history for an economy to be stimulated by the commercial impact of another, more active and technologically more advanced society. What is special in the European impact on the lands of Islam, especially in the Middle East, is that on both sides the agents and beneficiaries of the resulting economic change were aliens. The outsiders were of course Europeans, but even in the Middle East the principal actors were either foreigners or members of religious minorities, seen and treated by the dominant majority society as marginal to itself. The new, evolving middle class thus consisted largely of foreigners and of native Christians and, to a lesser extent, Jews, enjoying the favor and protection of the European powers. As a result of this process, these elements became ever less identified with their Muslim compatriots and rulers, ever more with Europe. It was not until a comparatively late stage that a Muslim bourgeoisie, not inhibited by social separation from the ruling polity and majority society, was able to have some political and social impact.

The predominance of foreigners and members of minorities in financial matters may be illustrated by examples. In 1912, forty private bankers were listed in Istanbul. Not one of them was a Turkish Muslim. Those who can be identified by their names included twelve Greeks, twelve Armenians, eight Jews, and five Levantines or Europeans. A list of thirty-four stockbrokers in Istanbul included eighteen Greeks, six Jews, five Armenians, and not a single Turk,

Conquest and commerce were not the only factors in the changed power relationship in Europe and Islam. At least equally important was the immense transformation that was taking place within Europe — the upsurge in science and technology, in cultural and intellectual life, in European societies and polities, all of them stimulated by capitalist expansion and by bourgeois demands and contributions. These changes, which, albeit in different

degrees, affected all of Europe, had little effect and no parallel in the Islamic world, where, with the partial exception of the armed forces, science and technology, production and distribution, for long remained substantially as they had been in the past.

This new and widening disparity brought significant changes in European attitudes toward Islam and toward the Ottoman and other Islamic powers. In earlier times, it will be recalled, the menace of Islam was seen as something which threatened the souls as well as the bodies of Christian Europe — the threat of Islamic proselytization seemed as great or even greater than the threat of Muslim conquest. After the end of the Middle Ages this was no longer seen as a threat. The number of Europeans embracing Islam was minimal, apart from a handful of adventurers and refugees who sought their fortunes in the Ottoman lands and, as part of their preparation for their careers, embraced Islam and became what Christians called renegades and Muslims called *muhtadi*, those who have found the right path. Islam, for European intellectuals, now became an object of scholarly study, something to be looked at with scientific curiosity, rather than a dangerous adversary to be encountered and refuted. Insofar as European writers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries expressed a religious interest, it was in the Eastern Christians more than in the Muslims. In the great struggle between Protestantism and Catholicism in Europe, some in both camps thought that the uncommitted Eastern Christians — uncommitted, that is to say, in relation to the struggles of the Reformation — could bring a useful accession of power.

At about this time there was another change in the European perception of Islam, shown in the increasing use of the adjective *barbaric*. This was not a medieval notion; it was very much a Renaissance notion and is common in the European literature of the time, where the struggle against the Turk is no longer presented as one between true believers and infidels but, rather, as a continuation of the ancient struggle between Hellas and Persia—

between the inheritors of Greek civilization and the remote Asian successors of the great kings of Persia, whom the ancient Greeks had held back but to whom the modern Greeks had succumbed. These echoes of classical history and literature are frequent in writings of the Renaissance period about the Turks and the Persians, who for this purpose are not very clearly distinguished. The notion of the barbarian comes directly from the Greek classics; with it came related ideas of barbaric splendor and oriental despotism, contrasted with classical austerity and European freedom.

As well as changes in European perceptions of Islam, there were also changes in Islamic perceptions of Europe — though these changes came much later and were at first of limited scope and confined in the main to civil and military officials. In the Muslim perception of Christianity as a religion, there was no significant change. Christianity was still, in Muslim eyes, a superseded revelation. But there was some change in the attitude toward Europe and especially toward the peoples of the West. As the Turks had replaced the Arabs as the rulers of Islam, so the “Franks” had replaced the Byzantines as their principal Christian adversary. There was a continued willingness, as there had always been in medieval times, to acquire, buy, imitate, or adopt the military technology of Christendom — from the Byzantines, Greek fire; from Frankish Europe, artillery. Right through the centuries of Ottoman advance, as well as retreat, Turkish Muslims were ready to adopt, or at least consider, elements of European technology — but not European civilization. Civilization, as Muslims saw it, was defined and determined by religion and by the revelation on which it was based, and that they had no desire to change.

What was adopted therefore was limited to what was recognizably and immediately useful — weaponry, naval construction, the practice of medicine, along with some devices the most important of which were clocks and watches, eyeglasses and telescopes. But as far as possible, these were stripped of their cultural associations and thus reduced to dead artifacts, without or-

ganic roots. There was no desire to learn European languages, no interest in European arts or letters — not even in recent history — which might have had some practical value as political intelligence. A six-volume Ottoman history, covering the period from 1590 to 1660, discusses the Ottoman-Hapsburg wars in great detail and devotes no more than a couple of pages to the Thirty Years' War, consisting mostly of random and somewhat inaccurate details. One might have thought that Ottoman readers would take some interest in these internecine struggles among their main enemies, not far from their frontiers. Apparently, they did not.

From surviving documents, it would seem that at least some Ottoman statesmen and officials were better informed. From a remarkably early date, some among the Ottomans saw the danger that threatened them and tried to draw attention to it. Lûtfî Pasha, grand vizier to Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent, had, according to his own testimony, warned his imperial master: “Under the previous sultans there were many who ruled the land, but few who ruled the sea. In the conduct of naval warfare the infidels are ahead of us. We must overcome them.”⁵ In about 1580, an Ottoman geographer, in introducing the first Muslim account of the New World, warned his patron, Sultan Murad III, of the dangers resulting from the establishment of Europeans on the coasts of America, India, and the Persian Gulf, and of the consequent disturbance to Islamic trade and danger to the Islamic lands. Reviving a project already discussed in the 1530s, he advised the sultan to open a canal through the Isthmus of Suez and send a fleet “to capture the ports of India and drive away the infidels.”⁶

In 1625 another Ottoman writer, in a comment on the same book, saw the danger in a more acute form.⁷ European ships were

⁵*Das Asafname des Lutfî Pascha*, ed. and trans. Rudolf Tschudi (Berlin 1910), pp. 32–33, trans. pp. 26–27. Cf. B. Lewis, *The Muslim Discovery of Europe* (New York, 1982), p. 43.

⁶*Tarih al-Hind al-Garbi* (Istanbul, 1142/1729), fol. 66f.; cf. B. Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, 2d ed. (Oxford, 1968), p. 27.

⁷From an unpublished manuscript, quoted by A. Zekî Velidi Togan in *Bugünkü Türkîli (Türkistan) ve Yakın Tarihi*, vol. 1 (Istanbul, 1947), p. 127.

sailing all over the world and carrying goods everywhere, crowding out Muslim commerce, and earning vast sums of money. Because of this, gold and silver were becoming scarce in the lands of Islam. The only remedy was to control the shores of Yeinen and the trade passing that way.

These counsels were not entirely neglected. After their conquest of Egypt in 1517, and of Iraq a few years later, the Ottomans mounted naval expeditions in the Red Sea, the Persian Gulf, and the Indian Ocean to meet the threat of the Portuguese and even sent an expedition as far away as Sumatra to help the local Muslims fight their new Christian enemies. But all these expeditions came to nothing. Ottoman ships, built for the waters of the Mediterranean, were no match for the Portuguese and the Dutch, whose shipbuilders and seamen faced the challenge of the Atlantic. Stouter vessels, heavier armament, and better seamanship crushed the Ottoman attempt to break the pincers and established European Christian naval supremacy in the Indian Ocean. Without naval power, the plan to dig a canal through the Isthmus of Suez was evidently pointless and was abandoned.

In 1569 the Ottomans, now more concerned with the immediate Persian danger than with the remote Russian threat, considered a plan to open a canal between the Don and Volga rivers and thus extend their naval reach from the Black Sea to the Caspian. But this project too was blocked and abandoned, and in time even the control of the Black Sea was lost to the advancing power of Russia.

For the Muslim world, Christendom, at first in the Mediterranean and later in eastern Europe, had been a kind of frontier to which Muslims had looked, rather as Europe had looked to colonial America and as independent America looked to its own west. At first, it was the still unconquered wild west of Islam, offering the alternatives, equally seductive to different minds, of booty, land, or martyrdom. Then, as the west was conquered and settled, it became the land of hope and opportunity, where fortunes could be made, and where, in the freer spirit of the frontier, the perse-

cuted, the independent, and the unfortunate might hope to find a home and a refuge. For medieval Arabs, the newly conquered lands of North Africa and Spain for a while met this need — until in time, the Islamic west was sufficiently rich and advanced to throw off the authority of the east and establish independent states, one of which, that of the Fatimid caliphs, for a while became a dominant power even in the east. Some centuries later the Ottomans, in their turn, served as the frontiersmen of Islam, discovering, conquering, and colonizing new lands and bringing the faith and civilization of Islam to the effete and superseded Greeks and to the benighted barbarians of Europe. The closing of the frontier, when the Turks finally came to barriers which they could not cross or remove, posed grave problems to a society and polity that for centuries had been shaped and maintained by a process of continuous conquest and colonization.

The resulting crises caused much heart-searching and gave rise to many discussions on the broad questions of what was wrong and how it could be remedied. For a long time, Ottoman analysts made no attempt to devise or apply new methods but sought rather to revive and restore the good old ways that had, in bygone days, brought them success and greatness. While these memoranda make fascinating reading, few reforms of any great importance were attempted, let alone accomplished. For that something more than a halt and a stalemate were needed. The second defeat at Vienna, and the retreat that followed it, provided the necessary stimulus. Muslim Turks — statesmen, soldiers, and scholars — began to confront the bitter fact of their weakness and vulnerability and to compare their own society with that of Europe, in the hope that the latter might provide some of the answers they were seeking. In their references to Europe, there is a change in tone, which passes from amused disdain to alarmed dislike. Ambassadors and memorialists express a growing concern about the states and peoples of European Christendom, no longer seen as a group of picturesque barbarians who in due course would be con-

quered and incorporated into the divinely guarded realms and introduced to a higher and better way of life but rather, for the first time, as a source of danger. There had long been an awareness of European wealth; there was now also a growing awareness of European power.

In Muslim eyes, the Christian religion and the culture which was based upon it, remained negligible, as they had always been. But there was increased respect for the material wealth and armed might of Europe — the one manifested in manufactures and in the changing conditions of trade, the other in the balance of military power — demonstrated in a succession of Muslim defeats.

Defeat in the battlefield is surely the most perspicuous of all forms of instruction and has a cogency lacking in purely verbal communication. The discussion of the lesson began almost immediately after the Treaty of Carlowitz and developed in time from specific defects to the larger questions about the state and fate of the empire. There is a rather refreshing quality of self-examination and self-criticism in the writings of these Ottoman memorialists. The Ottomans were after all a sovereign power, entirely responsible for their own affairs; they had long been masters in their own house and indeed in many other peoples' houses. The memorialists did not blame the outside world, occult powers, or secret conspiracies for their setbacks and troubles. Rather did they ask Where did we go wrong? and, of course, What can we do about it?

During the last three centuries, these questions came to dominate both debate and policy in the Ottoman Empire, and ultimately in the whole Islamic world. The attempt to answer them, and to put that answer into effect, brought profound, indeed, shattering, changes into every aspect of Muslim life.

III. RETREAT AND RETURN

By 1920 it seemed that the triumph of Europe over Islam was total and final. The vast territories and countless millions of the Muslim peoples of Asia and Africa were firmly under the control

of the European empires — some of them under a variety of native princes, most under direct colonial administration. Only a few remote mountain and desert areas, too poor and too difficult to be worth the trouble of acquiring, retaining some measure of sovereign independence. In the former Russian empire, now called the Soviet Union, revolution and civil war had caused a temporary relaxation of control from the center and had permitted the emergence of independent regimes in some of the former czarist possessions. The Bolshevik victory brought a reassertion of central control. In Europe, the Soviets were constrained to relinquish, for a while, the Baltic, Polish, and Balkan territories which the czars had acquired; in the Muslim territories, the reconquest and reintegration were complete. In April 1920 the short-lived independent republic of Azerbaijan was overthrown by the advancing Red Army, and a Soviet republic, precisely modeled on the Russian Soviet Republic, was installed in its place. This was followed by other similar republics among the Tatars, the Bashkirs, and the Muslim peoples of central Asia, in which local Communist commissars could play, at best, the role of native princes. The Muslims of the Soviet Union, like those of the British, French, and Dutch empires, were once again part of a political system with its center in a European capital; unlike them, they were also subjugated to vigorous state-sponsored anti-Islamic propaganda, conducted both directly and through such bodies as the League of the Militant Godless and the Institute of Scientific Atheism. This propaganda was certainly not Christian and differed greatly from the much more cautious and tentative work of the Christian missions in the Western empires. It was, however, inspired by a radical secularism of which the intellectual origins, though not the subsequent development, were entirely European.

In the central heartlands of Islam, only two Muslim states, Turkey and Iran, had retained their independence. But Iran, during the First World War, had become a battlefield in which Russian, British, and Ottoman forces operated freely, and the country

degenerated into a state of chaos, from which the cessation of hostilities brought no immediate relief. The Ottoman Empire, for centuries first the spearhead and then the shield of Islam, lay prostrate in defeat — its capital occupied, its provinces partitioned between the victorious Western powers and their Greek allies. The dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire was confirmed and itemized in the Treaty of Sèvres, signed by the sultan's representatives on 10 August 1920.

The town of Sèvres is famous for its delicate porcelain wares. The treaty fashioned there by diplomatic craftsmen proved both leaky and fragile, and it was soon shattered beyond repair. The hammer that broke it was wielded by a Turkish general called Mustafa Kemal, later surnamed Atatürk — the last victorious Ottoman soldier, and the first president of a secular republic in a nation-state called Turkey. According to a well-known piece of American folk wisdom, “if you can't beat them, join them.” Kemal Atatürk did both, and his consecutive actions in rejecting European domination and embracing European civilization mark a turning point, comparable in different ways, with both the victory at Constantinople and the defeat at Vienna.

This was not the first defeat administered by an Asian to a European country. In 1905 the victory of Japan over Imperial Russia and the halting of Russian expansion in the Far East had sent a thrill of joy and hope to all Asia, including the Ottoman Empire. But Russia, though European, was not Western, and Japan, though Asiatic, was remote and little known, particularly in the Islamic lands, where Asianism as a concept had not yet taken root. When Atatürk drove out the Greeks and faced down the mighty British Empire, he gained the first major Muslim victory against a Christian power for centuries, and a wave of exhilaration passed through the entire Islamic world, from French and British West Africa to the Dutch East Indies.

In its early stages, the Kemalist movement in Anatolia expressed itself in almost exclusively religious terms. Its aims, ac-

According to its declarations, were to free “Islamic lands” and “Islamic peoples” and to repel and eject the infidel invader. Muslim dignitaries were prominent among the early supporters of the Kemalists, and no fewer than 73 of the 361 members of the First Grand National Assembly, convened in Ankara in 1720, were professional men of religion. In February 1721, a pan-Islamic congress was held at Sivas, to mobilize support. Many delegates from the Arab countries attended, and one of them, the sheikh of the Sanusi religious order in Libya, presided. Those who fell in battle were described as *shahid*, and the victorious leader himself was hailed as Gazi. Both terms belong to the vocabulary of jihad, the holy war for Islam. The one denotes a martyr fallen in the cause; the other a victorious fighter. An Algerian author, Malek Bennabi, in his memoirs, describes vividly how the reports of the new Muslim hero in Turkey and of his victories against the colonial powers electrified young Muslims in Algeria. All over Asia and Africa, Mustafa Kemal was the shining example whose triumphs others strove, with greater or lesser success, to emulate in their struggle against the alien and infidel imperialist.

In recent years, another myth of Atatürk has begun to appear and in some Muslim quarters has supplanted the earlier shining hero. In the demonology of Muslim radicals and militants of the present time, Atatürk occupies a prominent place — not as the valiant defender of his people, who confronted the Europeans and beat them, but rather as the miscreant who, in his moment of victory, joined them, and was thus guilty of the ultimate surrender and betrayal. In the thought world of the fundamentalists, Islam is and has for some time been under double attack, from outside and from within. The external enemies are numerous and powerful and include such figures as the imperialist, sometimes also known as the crusader, his ally the missionary, his puppet the Zionist, his rival the Communist. In certain circles, especially those, including some fundamentalists, influenced by European ideologies, these roles may be interchanged. But it is the internal

enemy that is both more evil and more threatening; more evil because his enmity is not open but is furtive and treacherous, more threatening because he strikes from within and by his machinations deprives the Muslim community of the religious integrity and divine guidance with which it could otherwise shrug off the ultimately insignificant attacks of these external foes.

These internal enemies are politically heterogeneous; they include such diverse figures as King Faruk and President Nasser in Egypt, the shah and his liberal and socialist opponents in Iran, Presidents Hafiz al-Asad of Syria and Saddam Husayn of Iraq. What they all have in common is that they are modernizers — that is to say, in the eyes of resurgent Islam, they are neopagans, whose aim is to weaken and remove Islamic norms, laws, and values and replace them with pagan norms and laws and values imported from the West — to desacralize, to de-Islamize, in a word, to Westernize the divinely established and divinely guided Muslim polity. And their common predecessor in these evil ways, the pioneer who first presumed to abolish the caliphate, set aside the holy law, and deprive its accredited upholders of the authority which they had for centuries wielded in law and justice, culture and education, was Mustafa Kemal Atatürk.

Kemal Atatürk was certainly the first Muslim ruler to disestablish Islam, repeal the Shari'a, and adopt European practices over the whole range of public and social life, including even such previously sacrosanct matters as marriage, headgear, and the alphabet. By his decrees, Muslim Turks were obliged to write their language in the Latin script, marry only one wife at a time, and abandon their fezzes and turbans in favor of caps and hats. These changes were not mere whims of a capricious autocrat. They were the outward and visible expression — and acceptance — of a profound social and indeed civilizational transformation. Many of his Westernizing reforms have been followed by other Muslim states, including some headed by Islamic militants of both the radical and traditional varieties. But none has pursued them with comparable zeal, consistency,

or success. Of late there has been a strong reaction against them in the Islamic world, which has even touched the Turkish republic.

The Kemalist revolution, and the philosophy which inspired it, had a long prehistory, which can, in a sense, be traced back to the first Turkish incursions into Europe. The Turks early realized the vital importance of following the Europeans in weaponry and other military arts and were inevitably brought into contact with the men who made and sold and, to some extent, even operated these weapons. They were, almost from the start, economically involved with many European states, through a great and growing import and export trade in both raw materials and manufactures. But in these and in most other contacts with the infidel West, the Ottomans and other Muslims were preserved from contact and, as they saw it, contamination, by a large class of intermediaries consisting in part of the non-Muslim subjects of the Muslim states, augmented by considerable numbers of manumitted slaves, and in part of refugees and renegades, seeking haven or fortune in the lands of Islam. These intermediaries served as a cushion, or perhaps more precisely as an insulation, protecting the host Muslim society from the culture shock of European impact. Jewish refugees from Europe were allowed to establish printing presses as early as the late fifteenth century, and their example was followed by the Greek-, Armenian-, and Arabic-speaking Christians. But they were allowed to print only in their own and in European scripts and not in the Arabic script and in the Arabic or Turkish languages. It was not until 1727 that an imperial decree was issued, authorizing the establishment of the first Turkish printing press in Istanbul. It was initiated by a Hungarian convert to Islam and a Turkish official returning from a diplomatic visit to Paris. Some ascribe this long-standing ban on Arabic typography to the sanctity of the script in which God's book was revealed; others to the vested interest of the guilds of scribes and calligraphers. Either way, the result was the same.

Apart from the enforced travel and restricted access of captives taken by land and sea, diplomatic missions provided virtually the only opportunity for educated Muslims to travel and stay for a while in Christian Europe, and to meet and converse, on more or less equal terms, with educated European Christians. Such missions were, however, few and far between, and usually limited alike in purpose, duration, and effect. Some European monarchs, like Francis I of France and Elizabeth I of England, may have flattered themselves that they had won the respect and even the goodwill of the Ottoman sultan, and had entered into some form of alliance. There is no evidence of any such perception on the Ottoman side. Since the days when the rival leaders of the Crusade to liberate the Holy Land had set up four contending principalities in the Levant, which promptly began to court Muslim allies against one another, Muslim princes had realized that Christendom, even more than Islam, was divided into petty, warring sovereignties, whose internecine conflicts might be used to some advantage. The Christian merchants who accompanied and followed the Crusaders competed in Muslim markets, buying and selling a variety of commodities, and offered even weapons and other war materials at good prices and with favorable financing. There were, of course, also Muslim contacts with the far more numerous European diplomatic missions in Islamic lands, including resident consulates and embassies, and with the active and growing international communities in seaport towns like Alexandria, Beirut, and of course Galata. But on the whole, Muslim rulers seemed to have attached little importance to these contacts, and Muslim intellectuals even less. Ottoman officials were surely aware of the squabbling tribes and “nations” beyond the northwest frontier but were generally content to leave their management to specialized officials, whose duty it was to maintain order in the marches and to keep an eye on the unsubjected, or not yet subjected, peoples that lay beyond them.

In diplomatic relations as in so much else, the retreat from Vienna marked the beginning of a new era. For the first time in their long history, the Ottomans were faced with the need to negotiate a peace treaty, and to do so from a position of weakness, as the defeated party in a long and exhausting war. The efficacy of Western weaponry had been demonstrated in battle; the usefulness of Western diplomacy emerged in the course of the negotiations. Britain, France, and the Netherlands, for reasons of their own, were anxious to save the Turks from the full consequences of their defeat or rather, to be more precise, to deprive the Austrians and their allies of the full fruits of their victory. Thanks to the skillful intervention and wise counsel of the British and Dutch envoys in Istanbul, the Turks were able to get rather better terms than they might have been able to achieve through their own unaided efforts.

In the course of the eighteenth century, Ottoman diplomatic missions to Europe had become more frequent, and there is a new tone in the envoys' reports, expressing interest, sometimes even admiration, and occasionally going so far as to recommend certain European practices as worthy of imitation by the Sublime Porte. By the end of the century, the Ottoman sultan Selim III had established permanent embassies in several European capitals, thus following the European practice of continuous diplomatic communication through resident missions. This was a radical departure from the previously universal Islamic practice of sending an ambassador only when there was something to say and recalling him when it had been said. These embassies prepared the way for the integration of a major Islamic state in the European political system; they also provided opportunities for successive generations of young Turkish officials to spend a few years in a European city, learn a European language, and acquire some firsthand knowledge of European civilization.

In the year 1693, at a time when the Turks were still retreating before the advancing Austrians, William Penn published a

little book in which he suggested the establishment of an organization of European states to arbitrate disputes and prevent wars.⁸ Remarkably, for a man of his time, he suggested that Turkey be invited to join this European association, upon the condition that the Turks renounce Islam and embrace Christianity. Compliance with such a condition was of course then and remains now impossible to the point of absurdity. No such condition was imposed when, by article 7 of the Treaty of Paris of 1856, the European powers formally admitted the sultan to that jangling concatenation of discords known as the Concert of Europe. Nor have religious questions been formally raised in the context of Turkey's application for membership in the European Economic Community, though there are signs that such considerations are not entirely absent from the debate. In modern secular Europe, inside or outside the community, the idea of imposing a religious condition would seem both offensive and anachronistic. But most Europeans would still lay down an entry requirement, stated in terms not of religion but of civilization — of culture, of social mores, and above all of political norms. Whether Turkey and other Islamic states are willing or able to meet these requirements, and whether the states of Europe, after all that has happened, are still entitled and able to impose them, are two crucial and interrelated questions.

To play in the Concert of Europe, the Turks, and after them other Muslim peoples, had to acquire and master new instruments and learn new tunes — European tunes, very different from the music of their own culture. Specifically, they had to learn European languages, and the unhallowed script in which they were written. In earlier times, this had not been thought necessary or even desirable. For the necessary minimum of communication, Muslims relied on their own non-Muslim subjects, or on Europeans who came to them, whether as refugees or adventurers, as merchants or envoys. In early medieval times, a significant proportion

⁸William Penn, *An Essay towards the Present and Future Peace of Europe*.

of the philosophic and scientific works of pagan Greece, though nothing of Greek literature or history, had been translated into Arabic and had become an important part of the Muslim cultural heritage. There was no comparable movement to translate the products of Christian Europe, tainted as they were with a rival and, in Muslim eyes, a superseded religion. With a very few, unnoticed exceptions, no European books were translated into Arabic or Turkish or Persian; apart from some sailors and traders and other men of low estate, who used a kind of pidgin Italian known as the *lingua franca*, there were few Muslims who could speak or understand a European language, and even fewer who could read a European book.

This too changed in the course of the eighteenth century, the first age of Islamic reappraisal. The first Muslim of rank who is known to have mastered a European language was one Said Efendi, who accompanied his father to Paris in 1720 on a diplomatic mission. He returned speaking, according to a contemporary French witness, “excellent French, like a native,” and was, not coincidentally, the co-founder of the first Turkish printing press.⁹ One of the first books printed in this press was a treatise describing the states and forms of government existing in Europe; the physical and military geography of the continent; and the armed forces maintained by the European states, with some discussion of their training, their command structure, and their methods of combat.

It was military necessity, even more than the need for political intelligence, that drove Muslims to undertake the distasteful task of learning infidel languages and, even worse, venturing into infidel lands. To hold the advancing European at bay, it was necessary to master European military methods, and for this European teachers were required. In the course of the eighteenth century,

⁹Preface to *Relation de l'ambassade de Méhmet Effendi à la cour de France en 1721 écrite par lui même et traduite du turc par Julien Galland* (Constantinople and Paris, 1757). Cf. Fatma Müge Göçek, *East Encounters West: France and the Ottoman Empire in the Eighteenth Century* (New York and Oxford, 1987), pp. 69–70, 80.

several European instructors were employed in training the Ottoman forces — mostly renegades and adventurers who either learned Turkish or taught through interpreters. At the end of the century, Sultan Selim III asked the government of the recently established French Republic to send a military mission — the first of a long series to which many European states, small as well as great, contributed. In the early nineteenth century, no fewer than three rulers, the pasha of Egypt, followed by the sultan of Turkey, and the shah of Persia, sent groups of young men to Europe as students, to study the military and, incidentally, the other arts of the infidel continent. Progress in learning European languages was slow, and as late as 1844 an English resident in Istanbul, Charles White, could name only a bare dozen educated Turks who had mastered a European language and had read European books. But thereafter progress was more rapid. The Greek war of independence, and the consequent hanging of the last of the long line of Greek dragomans of the Sublime Porte, persuaded the Turks that they could no longer entrust what had become the vital business of dealing with European states to their Greek subjects and that they must themselves acquire the necessary skills and knowledge. A language office was set up at the Sublime Porte, and later in the various other Ottoman ministries. The acquisition and use of infidel languages was no longer demeaning. On the contrary, it was increasingly seen as acceptable, then useful, finally necessary.

While the study of languages gave a limited number of educated Muslims access to European knowledge and ideas, the development of the translation movement, accompanied and followed by the spread of printing, brought this knowledge and these ideas to a vastly greater audience. Until the end of the eighteenth century, very few European books were translated into Muslim languages, and most of these dealt with such obviously useful topics as geography and medical science, among the latter especially works dealing with the diagnosis and treatment of syphilis, a disease which was introduced by Europeans to the Middle East

very soon after its introduction to Europe, and which is still known at the present day — in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish alike — as *firangi*, the Frankish, or European, disease. It has sometimes been used by Muslim authors as a metaphor for the introduction and spread of European ideas and practices.

The first translations issued from the printing presses of Istanbul and Cairo at the beginning of the nineteenth century were still devoted, in the main, to the “practical” sciences, but they included several works on history, including three on Napoleon, one on Catherine the Great, and, a little later, Voltaire’s history of Charles XII of Sweden. Perhaps these too were seen as practical, at the time. The same may be said of a translation of Machiavelli’s *Prince*, prepared in 1825 for Muhammad Ali Pasha. It was not printed but survives in manuscript. The translation of literary works — poetry, fiction, and later, drama — dates from the mid-nineteenth century. By the early twentieth century, great numbers of literary works had been translated into Arabic, Persian, and Turkish, and a new literature was developing in all three languages, profoundly affected by European models. By the late twentieth century, traditional literary forms were extinct in Turkish and reduced to insignificance in Arabic and, to a lesser extent, in Persian.

In the arts, Europeanization began earlier than in literature and went much further. For artists the European impact was direct and immediate, unimpeded by the barriers of language and learning. From an early date Turkish and Persian painters revealed the influence of European pictures which they had seen, and by the eighteenth century, European decorative motifs appear even in mosque architecture. In the course of the nineteenth century, the traditional high arts — architecture, miniature painting — were in effect supplanted, surviving only in the work of a few diehard and for the most part neglected traditionalists and, later, in the form of a rather mannered neoclassical revival. In contrast, European art music had a cooler, slower welcome. Though enjoying the

same advantage of immediacy, and in addition, at certain times, of vigorous state patronage, the composition, performance, and even appreciation of Western music have made far less progress in the Islamic lands than in other, much remoter non-western societies, such as China, Japan, and India.

The speed and scope of Europeanization, notably of the Muslim view of the world and of recent and current events, were enormously increased by the introduction, from Europe, of the mass media. The first newspapers published in the Middle East were a gift of the French Revolution — first, a newspaper printed and published in the French embassy in Istanbul, and then others published by the French occupying authority in Egypt. All these were in the French language and therefore had very limited effect. The first indigenous newspapers appeared in the early nineteenth century, in Cairo and in Istanbul, in Arabic and in Turkish, and were published under the authority of the pasha and of the sultan. An early editorial in the Ottoman official journal, published in 1821, explains their purpose. The journal, it said, was a natural development of the office of the imperial historiographer; its purpose was to make known the true nature of events and the real content of the laws and orders of the government, so as to prevent any misunderstanding and preclude any ill-founded criticism. Another purpose was to provide useful knowledge of commerce, the sciences, and the arts.

The first nonofficial newspaper was founded by an Englishman, William Churchill, in 1840 and devoted some attention to news from home and abroad. But the real development of newspapers began with the Crimean War, when, for the first time, Turkey was involved in a major war with two western European powers as allies. The presence of British and French armies on Turkish soil, the activities of British and French war correspondents at the battlefronts, and the bringing to Turkey of the telegraph, encouraged the development of an appetite for daily news and provided the means of satisfying it. Thereafter, the spread of

the newspaper press was rapid and reached not only the literate population but many others who had newspapers read to them by neighbors and by friends.

The advent of the newspaper in the lands of Islam created a new perception and a new awareness of events, notably in Europe, where the decisive events, at that time, were taking place. The need to discuss and explain these events led to the creation of new languages, from which modern Arabic, Persian, and Turkish have evolved. They also led to the emergence of a portentous new figure, the journalist, whose role in the development of the modern Islamic world has been profoundly important. The period of Anglo-French rule in the Middle East gave the newspapers an interlude of relative freedom, which contributed significantly to their maturing. In 1925, Turkey, followed by most other countries in the Muslim world, initiated radio broadcasting. Television was introduced in the 1960s, and this too has become universal in the Islamic world. Radio and television broadcasts, unlike newspapers, cannot be stopped and confiscated at frontiers. Though many journalists, and their employers, still adhere or have returned to the purposes laid down by the Ottoman editorialist of 1821, the listener or viewer at the present time at least has the option of choosing between various authoritarian and foreign messages. The possibility, and exercise, of such choices may also be counted as part of the Europeanization of the Islamic world.

Along with the journalist, another new and portentous figure, also derived from a European prototype, entered and helped to transform the Islamic world — the lawyer. In the traditional Islamic order, there is in principle no secular law but only the God-given Holy Law of Islam. In practice this was not always so, and secular laws were in fact recognized and administered. But there was no secular jurisprudence, and there were no secular jurists to challenge the monopoly of the doctors of the Holy Law. The change began when the Turkish, Egyptian, and eventually other Muslim governments promulgated sets of rules, which in time

became codes of law. These dealt primarily with commercial matters and were necessitated by the growing extent and variety of European commercial activities in the Islamic lands. There were also new provisions in other matters, notably in criminal law. The new laws required new courts and new judges, different from the qadis and the muftis of the Holy Law. In time they produced a new profession, that of the advocate, previously unknown to either the theory or the practice of Islamic jurisprudence, and another non-Islamic innovation, the court of appeal, with all the complications and delays which that involves. In traditional Islam, there is no appellate jurisdiction, either in this world or in the next.

Schools, and a little later, colleges, were a central part of the classical Islamic order, dating back almost to the beginning. The education they provided was dominated by religion and was in the main conducted and administered by professional men of religion. The new army, the new courts, the new administration of the age of reform required a new kind of personnel and new schools to train and educate them. These schools were manned by schoolmasters and professors, who came increasingly to resemble their European equivalents and who joined the journalists and the lawyers in a new secular, activist intelligentsia. By the modernization of justice and of education, two areas in which their control had previously not been challenged, the ulema lost a great deal of their power. Even in their last stronghold, the shari'a law of personal status, their influence was whittled down by modernizing regimes and, in the Turkish republic, formally abolished.

Lawyers and journalists were wholly new professions, with a vested interest in modernization. But even the older pillars of the state — the soldiers, the civil servants, the men of learning — played their part in the process of change. For all these, the ultimate purpose of their work was to preserve the Islamic state and society from destruction by their enemies; a significant proportion of these had come to the conclusion that the only way to resist the European enemy was to meet him on his own terms and fight him

with his own weapons. In the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the state, the administration, the armed forces, the schools and colleges, were reshaped and redirected and given the appearance, and sometimes more than that, of their European models. Some went even further. Seeing in constitutional and parliamentary government the secret talisman of Western wealth and power, they tried to obtain these advantages for their own societies, if necessary by opposing and overthrowing the autocrats who ruled over them.

Along with these reforms, the countries of the Islamic world also adopted a number of other changes, in the direction of a greater resemblance to Europe. Some of them were symbolic but nevertheless important, such as the adoption of European attire, first by the bureaucratic and military servants of the state, then by other urban males. The change in headgear, the last bastion of Muslim conservatism, was inaugurated, against considerable resistance, by Kemal Atatürk; it has since been accepted, at least partially, in most other Muslim countries, notably in the armed forces. In the armies of even the most radical Islamic states, officers wear slacks, belted tunics, and even peaked caps, European style. The Westernization of weaponry may be ascribed to simple military necessity; the Westernization of uniforms marks significant cultural change. But the change was limited. The Europeanization of female clothing came much later, was more strongly resisted, and affected a much smaller proportion of the population.

Some of the changes were primarily social, such as the abolition of chattel slavery, the emancipation of women and restriction of polygamy, and the granting, in principle, of equal legal rights to non-Muslims. There were other major changes, which transformed even the infrastructure of society, through the introduction of street lighting and other municipal services, of gas and electricity, of a network of modern communications on land, sea, and air, and, increasingly, the factory system of production. All these furthered and facilitated the incorporation of the Islamic world

into the world economy that had been created by, and was for a long time dominated by, Europe. They also generated increasingly dangerous tensions within Islamic society, which became more visible and more audible when television brought the sight and sound of innovation and inequality to the remotest places and the deepest layers of the social pyramid.

For a long time, the ideologies for change, by reform or by revolution, against native or foreign oppressors, came mostly from Europe and were imported by returning students, diplomats, and, as the changes began to work, exiles. In the nineteenth century the most important new ideas came from western Europe, especially patriotism and liberalism — patriotic loyalties defined by country and liberal aspiration to a freer and more open society. In the twentieth century, with the fragmentation of patriotic identities and the failure of liberal experiments, new ideologies were found, this time in central and eastern Europe; fascism in the 1930s and early 1940s, communism from the 1950s to the 1980s, and the rise in ethnic nationalism throughout the period.

But not all the movements of opposition were of European inspiration or expressed in European terms. Some Muslims opposed foreign domination and domestic change in the name not of their nation or country or class but of their faith and saw the real danger as the loss of Islamic values and the real enemy, at home even more than abroad, as those who sought to replace Islamic laws and obligations by others derived from secular or, as they would put it, infidel sources. There have been several such movements of Islamic defense and renewal — the Wahhabi rising against the Ottomans at the turn to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; the resistance of the religious devotees of Ahmad Brelwi to the British in northern India (1826–31); of Shamil to the Russians in Daghestan (1830–59); of ‘Abd al-Qadir to the French in Algeria (1832–47); the pan-Islamic movement against the European powers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; the resistance of the Basmachis and other Islamic rebels against

Soviet power in the 1920s; the brief upsurge of radical Islamic movements in the Arab lands and Iran in the late 1940s and early 1950s. All of these were crushed and their leaders killed or rendered innocuous. The first to achieve success and to gain and retain power was the Islamic revolution which began in Iran in 1979. The impact of that success was felt all over the Islamic world.

It is easy to understand the rage of the traditional Muslim, confronted with the modern world. Schooled in a religious culture in which, from the beginning, rightness has meant supremacy, he has seen that supremacy lost in the world to Western power; lost in his own country to foreign intruders, with their foreign ways and their Westernized protégés; lost in his own home to emancipated women and rebellious children. Brought up in a complex but functioning system of social loyalties and responsibilities, he finds those loyalties, defined by faith and kin, denounced as sectarian and nepotistic, and those responsibilities derided and abandoned in favor of capitalist acquisitiveness or socialist expropriations. Impoverished by real economic and demographic problems aggravated by mismanagement and misgovernment, he is made painfully aware, by the now ubiquitous mass media, of the discrepancies between rich and poor, now richer and poorer, and more visibly so than ever before in history. And he does not fail to notice that the way of life of the rich and tyrannical — their homes, their clothing, their style, their food, their amusements — are modeled, at least in appearance, on those of the infidel West. The Westerner may think, and sometimes dare to say, that these resemblances are in fact no more than appearance, and that the underlying reality, though it has ceased to be Islamic in any meaningful sense, has not become European. Traditional Muslims who up until now have had little opportunity to observe European realities, could hardly be expected to accept such fine distinctions, and it is not surprising that so many of them have found in the idea of resurgent Islam a new identity and dignity and an ideology for the critique of old and the devising of new regimes.

The movement inspired by the charismatic leadership of Khomeini and led by the mullahs of Iran was by far the most effective of these Islamic movements — if not perhaps in the attainment of its ultimate objectives, then surely in the mobilization of support. But it was far from being the only such movement. In virtually every country in the Islamic world, as well as among Muslim minorities elsewhere, there were powerful and passionate movements of Islamic resurgence. Some of them were sponsored and directed by governments, as instruments of state policy; others — including some of the most important — arose from below and drew their strength from the mass of the common people. But all of them were driven by the same feelings of revulsion against the West, of frustration at the whole new apparatus of public and private life, inspired by or derived from or mimed after Western originals, and all of them were drawn by the same vision of a restored and resurgent Islam, through which God's law and those who uphold it would prevail over all their enemies.

The victories of Kemal and later of Kemalism were in a sense a paradox — the first decisive victory and the repulsion of European power, the final decisive steps in the acceptance of European civilization. Muslim radicalism today presents a rather similar paradox — the denunciation and rejection of European and more generally Western civilization, coupled with a new and massive Muslim migration to Europe, and also to America.

The resulting Muslim presence represents a major change in attitude and action, entirely without precedent in the Islamic past. Muslim law and tradition devote much attention to the legal situation of the non-Muslim under Muslim rule, which is discussed at great length and regulated in great detail. Very little, however, is said about the corresponding problem of the Muslim under non-Muslim rule. This is not surprising. During the early centuries of Islamic history, when Muslim traditions were collected and committed to writing and the basic rules of Muslim jurisprudence laid down, the Muslim state and community were expanding almost

continuously, and great numbers of non-Muslims were brought under Muslim rule. In contrast, virtually no Muslim territories were lost to non-Muslim invaders, and apart from occasional tactical withdrawals along the Byzantine frontier, usually of limited extent and brief duration, the loss of Muslim territory was for several centuries unknown and therefore inconceivable. It was not until the eleventh century that the reconquest in Europe, the irruptions of the Christian peoples of the Caucasus into the Middle East, and the invasions of the Crusaders and, later, of the heathen Mongols, created an entirely new situation. But by then the basic norms of the Shari'a had long since been established.

The initial assumption of the jurists in discussing this matter is clearly that for a Muslim to live under non-Muslim rule is undesirable and, according to some, forbidden, and only dire necessity could lead a Muslim to do such a thing. For jurists of the Maliki school, which was dominant in North Africa west of Egypt, in Sicily, and in Spain, and which was therefore the most immediately concerned with Europe, there was only one lawful reason for a Muslim to visit the lands of unbelief; this was to ransom captives, and at least until the eighteenth century Moroccan embassies to Europe, whatever their real purpose, were officially so designated. Some jurists were prepared to go a step further and allow Muslim merchants to visit the lands of the unbelievers for trade, specifically to purchase food in times of scarcity, but some thought even this was forbidden, since such purchases would enrich the unbelievers and thus strengthen them for war against Islam. Other juristic schools were less stringent and seem to have approved the establishment of small colonies of Muslim merchants in infidel territory, but these were established mainly among the unfanatical peoples of Asia and Africa and did not therefore face the problems of their coreligionists in Europe.

The reconquest raised a new and pressing question — that of the Muslim who, without leaving home, finds himself under Christian rule because his country has been conquered by Christian in-

vaders. The Maliki jurists, again, were the first to confront this problem and generally took the view that in such a case, Muslims must emulate the example of the Prophet, who migrated from pagan Mecca to found a new polity in Medina, in which he and his followers could live a true Muslim life. Some, like the Tunisian jurist al-Māzari, writing after the Norman conquest of Sicily, accepted the general principle that Muslims must withdraw from a land conquered by Christians but found a variety of excuses and subterfuges which would enable them to remain, at least for a while. Another, al-Wansharisi, a Moroccan jurist writing shortly after the completion of the reconquest in Spain, took a harsher line and ruled that the Muslims of Spain must leave their homes and travel to a Muslim land. Most of them in fact did so, partly no doubt because of such rulings but mainly because the new rulers of Spain left them no other option if they wished to remain faithful to Islam. Al-Māzari had argued that if the non-Muslim ruler allows Muslims to live a full Muslim life, there would be a case for their remaining; al-Wansharisi, on the contrary, laid down that even if the new Christian rulers were just and tolerant, they must still leave.

From its very beginnings, during the lifetime of the Prophet, Islami was a polity as well as a community, and Muhammad was a sovereign as well as a prophet. One of the basic duties of a Muslim as defined in the Qur'an is "to command good and forbid evil." Doing good and avoiding evil are individual choices, possible in almost any situation, but commanding and forbidding are possible only from a position of authority. The logic of the position adopted by the Maliki jurists, as well as a number of others, is quite clear. In the East, however, when some of the heartlands of Islam were conquered by pagan rulers, the question of mass emigration could hardly arise, and new compromises were therefore found.

Until modern times, the entire discussion of the position of the Muslim under non-Muslim rule was considered in relation to two

situations — the practical needs of the short-term or long-term visitor to an infidel land, and the sad predicament of a Muslim community conquered by infidel invaders. What never seems to have occurred to any of the classical jurists was that great numbers of Muslims, of their own free will, would go and live under the rule of non-Muslim governments, subject themselves and their families to non-Muslim personal law, and sent their children to be educated in non-Muslim schools. But this is precisely what has happened. This is the situation in which many millions of Muslims, from North Africa, the Middle East, South and Southeast Asia, and elsewhere now find themselves in every country in western Europe. These special problems, of Islam without authority, without the law of personal status, without separate education, especially for their girls, are the more acute in that the vast majority of these immigrants come from the more traditional social classes and from the more traditional regions of their countries of origin. It is clear that many of them still feel that it is their God-given duty to command what is good and forbid what is evil, in their new no less than in their old homes.

There are other changes in the relationship between Europe and Islam, some of them a reversion to earlier patterns, some of them entirely new. Once again, as in the days before the imperial expansion of Europe, the Middle East offers an attractive market in which European merchants and their governments compete to sell their wares. The imbalance in favor of Europe in military and industrial resources and capacity and in the production and, to a lesser extent, the use of technology remains and is, indeed, if anything wider. But the financial situation, and to some extent even the military situation, is reversed. Between 1939 and 1945, probably for the last time, European states fought out their wars on Middle Eastern soil, with little concern for the Middle Eastern peoples. Now it is Middle Eastern powers that, using different weapons and military techniques, sometimes fight out their wars on European soil, with similar unconcern. And, in the financial

markets, it is now Muslim governments and individuals that invest and lend vast sums and dispose of immense assets in Europe.

Some have even described the present situation as the third Muslim invasion of Europe, more successful than either the first or second. According to this view, capital and labor have succeeded where the armies of the Moors and the Turks both failed. There are now close to two million Turkish and other Muslims in Germany, similar or greater numbers of North Africans in France, and of Indians, Pakistanis, and Bangladeshis in the United Kingdom, as well as others in Belgium, Holland, Switzerland, Austria, Spain, Italy, and the Scandinavian countries, establishing, for the first time since the retreat across the Straits of Gibraltar in 1492, a massive and permanent Muslim presence in Europe. These communities are still bound by a thousand ties of language, culture, kinship, as well as religion, to their countries of origin, and yet, inexorably, are becoming integrated in their countries of residence. They, and their children and grandchildren, will have incalculable but certainly immense consequences for the future both of Europe and of Islam.