

The Speck in Your Brother's Eye - The Alleged War of Islam Against the West - Ideology



Wilders regards Islam as an ideology: *'...Islam is not just a religion, as many Americans believe, but primarily a political ideology in the guise of a religion'* (p. 25). *'(T)he political ideology of Islam is not moderate - it is a totalitarian cult with global ambitions'* (p.

26). If Islam is an ideology, its followers cannot be said to be believers. Still Wilders never refers to Muslims as being adherents of an ideology. He does not give them a new name like *'Islam ideologists'* for instance. He goes on calling them Muslims but obviously for him the term Muslim has a different meaning than it has for the average reader, who regards Muslims as adherents of a religion.

The confusion only grows when we learn that Wilders makes a weird distinction between Islam on the one hand and its followers, the Muslims, on the other. He states that *'there are many moderate Muslims, but that does not change the fact that the political ideology of Islam is not moderate'* (p. 26). *'We are fortunate that the majority of the world's 1.5 billion Muslims do not act according to the Koran...'* (p. 26). Islam is evil; Muslims who do not fully implement Islamic ideology are not necessarily evil. Could this mean then that Muslims can be good? This is not what Wilders is saying here but it is what he is implying, either intentionally or not. In the end, making a distinction between the ideology and its followers can only lead to disaster. Because, ultimately, the followers are all potential instruments of this evil ideology and as such a danger to world peace. If Wilders' view of evil Islam and its potentially evil adherents were to become part of mainstream political thinking and acting, would that not create a huge risk of these followers becoming the objects of violence? Would it not create a situation where the people, or even the authorities, convinced of the risk Muslims constitute, will act accordingly and start oppressing and chasing them? It is for this reason that I find Wilders' artificial distinction between ideology and its

followers a highly dangerous one. And in fact, reading Wilders' book, in particular chapters 5 and 6 on the history of Islam, and the last chapter where he presents his view on the (future) path to follow in respect to Islam one notices that where he speaks of 'Islam', he cannot but mean 'Muslims'. When he claims that Islam with its *jihad* caused the deaths of millions of people in India (p. 89), my question to him would be: 'Who, in your opinion, was it that killed in India? Was it Islam? Or was it Muslims?' The distinction proposed by Wilders is ultimately untenable. Ideologies do not kill. It is people who kill. His hatred is not directed at an ideology, it is directed at people, at Muslims.

Following Wilders' view that Islam is an ideology we are not surprised to find that he considers it an ideology like communism or fascism. Islam should therefore not be treated 'more leniently' than the other two, 'just because it claims to be a religion' (p. 26). At the end of his second chapter, he refers to methods, described later in this pamphlet, to 'stop the Islamization of Western civilization' (p. 27). In my chapter called *Solution*, I will go into the details of the proposed methods. In the present chapter, I will continue by giving an overview of how Wilders sees Islam and its history as an ideology that seeks to conquer the world.

Geert Wilders' Freedom Party is not known in the Netherlands as a party that cherishes the values of multiculturalism or the multicultural society. In his book, party-ideologue Martin Bosma states that in multicultural societies neighbors no longer care for each other, while monocultural societies are characterized by social stability (p. 187-189). In fact, monoculturalism has given mankind the best it has ever had and in this regard Mr. Bosma specifies the values that characterize it, such as hard work, discipline, honesty and efficiency (p. 187). In his view, multiculturalism is a whip that Leftist parties have lashed our society with, and the cause of many conflicts and social problems in the Netherlands today. Is it not remarkable then, to say the least, to learn that Wilders looks very favorably on another multicultural society: that of the Arab cities of Mecca and Yathrib, later Medina, in the period just before Islam was born. When he talks about the birth of Islam he describes the Meccans as 'multiculturalists *avant la lettre*' (Wilders' italics). They were pluralistic and tolerant, willing to accommodate new religious groups' (p.34), and 'peace-loving' (p. 38). In 622, the prophet Mohammed left for Yathrib (Medina), 'that was just as tolerant as Mecca'. 'Yathrib was a tolerant, pluralist, multicultural oasis where Jewish, Christian, and pagan tribes lived together peacefully' (p. 165). Then both cities regrettably came

under the tyranny of the prophet and his followers. Their inhabitants thought that by accommodating the Muslims, they would be able to integrate them into their pluralistic societies: it did not work out that way. They lost their freedom forever. The message is that this will happen to us as well if we do not stop the Islamization of the world.

Islam subsequently spread over the world and in the end conquered an area stretching from Spain to the borders of China. All of the conquered peoples became the victims of the aggressive ideology of Islam and its destructive influence. Wilders also refers to the fall of Alexandria in 640 AD. 'Islam had little consideration for science' and thus 'the Arabs ... deliberately burned down its 900-year-old library' (p. 55). Wilders here quotes the Arab leader, Caliph Omar: 'They (the books) will either contradict the Koran, in which case they are heresy, or they will agree with it, so they are superfluous' (p. 55). There are some interesting observations to be made with regard to the example of the book burning in Alexandria. Wilders starts by saying that 'Islam had little consideration for science', but he subsequently uses the word 'Arabs', i.e., Muslims, to refer to the persons who executed the actual burning, instead of opting for a passive construction like 'and the [...] library was deliberately burned down'. Here we once again encounter the consequences of the artificial distinction Wilders makes between Islam and Muslims. Islam is evil, Muslims not necessarily, but in fact it was Muslims that spread the evil ideology of Islam and it was Muslims that apparently burned the books in the Library, not Islam as Islam is not a living person. If you are out to find blame, it is impossible to blame Islam and not blame the bearers of Islam, the Muslims. Even though not all 1.5 billion of them act in accordance with the 'aggressive' Koran, they can, if they want to. Does it not therefore make more sense to be outspoken and to point not to Islam, but to its adherents, the Muslims? Do not get me wrong here. I am not in favor of blaming all Muslims for all the crimes that have been committed by Muslims. On the contrary. But what Wilders is doing here is blatantly hypocritical. He fabricates this confusing distinction between Islam and Muslims, while, basically, what he really wants to say is that in the end all Muslims are evil. Why not simply do away with this artificial barricade and speak out on the issue? In the last chapter of his book he puts a definite end to this embarrassing charade when he says, that, in the end, all Muslims, both the extreme ones and, surprisingly enough but perhaps not so surprising after all, the moderate ones as well, should renounce their Islamic identity. If that were realized, the whole 'Islam-Muslim' distinction

dissolves and will have become useless, but only after having fulfilled a very useful purpose in the path toward it.

Having established the anti intellectual nature of Muslims while dealing with the burning of the Library of Alexandria, Wilders continues by presenting his views on the contribution of Islam to history. Historical studies show that Muslim scholars passed on -parts of- the classical Greek Byzantine heritage to Western Europe. After Islam came to Egypt, Syria and Iraq, scholars set out to translate the works of Greek scientists and philosophers into Arabic, which later on were translated into Latin in cities like Toledo in Spain, and in Italy. But Wilders' version of what happened is quite different. He states that 'comprehensive translations of Aristotle, and other ancient Greek philosophers were made at the Mont Saint-Michel monastery in Normandy half a century before Arabic versions of the same texts appeared in Islam-occupied Moorish Spain' (p. 56). In his opinion, the only science that Islam actually contributed to was that of astronomy. This would have had everything to do with the importance of the establishment of time and place because of the Islamic requirement to perform prayers and fasting at particular times and 'for determining the *Qibla*, the direction toward the *Kaaba* shrine in Mecca, which Muslims must face when they pray' (p. 57). As an example of Western voices claiming that it was Muslims that passed on the Greek Byzantine intellectual heritage, Wilders chooses to single out the name of Nazi scientist Sigrid Hunke, member of the SS think tank, the *Germanistischer Wissenschaftseinsatz* (German Science Service), who claimed that 'the West owes its development to a "pioneering, civilizing Islam" that supposedly transmitted Greek philosophy back to Europe' (p. 56). Wilders does not fail to mention as well that Mrs. Hunke was made an honorary member of the *Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs* at Cairo's Al-Azhar University, although he does not supply us with the source of this information. He is not surprised that Mrs. Hunke expressed these views, given her Nazi background. Mrs. Hunke wrote a book called *Allahs Sonne über dem Abendland* (Allah's sun over the Occident) and Nazis, so Wilders maintains, were fascinated by Islam (see below as well). He therefore 'regrets' the fact that Mrs. Hunke's 'flawed thesis has become widely accepted by Western leaders anxious to pander to Islam's grandiose pretensions' (p. 57). Here Wilders is discrediting an important aspect of Islamic-Western relations. To him, the classical Greek Byzantine heritage was passed on to us by Christian monks and not by Muslim scholars and translators. The only people defending the latter interpretation of history were Nazi 'intellectuals' and later on contemporary

Western leaders apparently followed the Nazi interpretation of history.

One of Wilders' favorite cards obviously is the Nazi one. In the arguments concerning our classical heritage, Wilders links Islam as well as 'Western leaders' to National Socialism. He does not specify who these leaders are or were and to what political affiliation they belong(ed), but one can imagine that he is aiming in particular at leaders with a leftist political background, Wilders generally being very critical of the Left, which, in his perception, has opened our borders to Islam and to 'mass immigration'. Nazism and Islam to him are thus closely related and in his view present-day socialism is deeply influenced by both. These are important lines of thinking both with Mr. Bosma, the Freedom Party's ideologue, and with Wilders. Connecting Islam and socialism with Nazism is a strategic move to discredit both and to add substance to their claim that we are heading for an 'Islamization of the world'. How did they (manage to) put all this together?

In his chapter three, called *Islamofascism*, Wilders claims that the Nazis recognized in Islam 'a kindred soul' (p. 42). Albert Speer, Nazi Germany's Minister of Armament, and Hitler's 'Reichsarchitect' supposedly wrote in his diaries that Hitler regretted that the prophet Mohammed had not come to the Germans and he quoted Adolf Hitler as saying: 'It 's been our misfortune to have the wrong religion. Why did it have to be Christianity with its meekness and flabbiness?' (Speer, 1969, p. 42; translation by Wilders). It is true, that Adolf Hitler in his inner circle condemned Christianity for its meekness. In his politics, however, he did not go so far as to ban Christianity from society. He himself never formally renounced Catholicism, the religion of his ancestors. In his book, Mr. Bosma, the Freedom Party-ideologue, also refers to the Hitler quote on Christianity (p. 251). What is interesting is that neither Wilders nor Mr. Bosma quotes Mr. Speer in full. Mr. Bosma presents the quote as follows (original German quote followed by English translation): '*Wir haben eben überhaupt das Unglück, eine falsche Religion zu besitzen. (...) Auch die mohammedanische Religion wäre für uns viel geeigneter als ausgerechnet das Christentum mit seiner schlappen Duldsamkeit (p.110).*' 'It 's been our misfortune to have the wrong religion. The Mohammedan religion too would have been much more suitable than Christianity of all religions, with its meekness and flabbiness.'

Mr. Bosma put some dots (...) in the quote to indicate to the reader that he left out part of it, obviously because he does not deem that part important for his argumentation. This way, quoted out of context as it were, it can be interpreted as

Hitler preferring Islam and wanting to get rid of Christianity. The point has been made: Nazism and Islam are two of a kind. But the full quote puts quite a different angle on things, when we read the part that has been left out: *‘Warum haben wir nicht wie die der Japaner, die das Opfer für das Vaterland als das Höchste ansieht?’ ‘Why don’t we have that (the religion) of the Japanese, who consider sacrificing themselves for their country as the ultimate honor?’*

The full quote then reads as follows: *‘Wir haben eben überhaupt das Unglück, eine falsche Religion zu besitzen. ‘Warum haben wir nicht wie die der Japaner, die das Opfer für das Vaterland als das Höchste ansieht? Auch die mohammedanische Religion wäre für uns viel geeigneter als ausgerechnet das Christentum mit seiner schlappen Duldsamkeit (p. 110)’. ‘It ‘s been our misfortune to have the wrong religion. ‘Why don’t we have that (the religion) of the Japanese, who consider sacrificing themselves for their country as the ultimate honor? The Mohamman religion too would have been much more suitable than Christianity of all religions, with its meekness and flabbiness (feeble meekness).’*

Hitler supposedly implied that any religion would have been better than Christianity: the Japanese religion or Islam. The correct interpretation of Hitler’s’ quote would therefore first of all be that he felt Christianity was too soft and weak, and not so much that he admires Islam but rather that he would have preferred it or any other ‘heroic’ religion to Christianity. Now, I also put this argument forward in the first version of my publication *The Ideology of the Freedom Party. The evil good and the good evil* (2012), which first appeared as a series of articles published on the Internet (www.nieuwwij.nl) from May to November 2011. As Wilders published his book in April 2012 I would venture to assume that he took notice of my criticism on his party ideologue’s crippled quotation and decided to use the same quote in a way less susceptible to criticism. The parts of the passage that he quotes neither contain the part referring to Islam nor the one about the religion of the Japanese. He refers to Speer’s diary in general terms. He uses what he needs to use to make his point, and the point has been made: the link between Islam and Nazism. In the next few pages, Wilders continues in the same vein. The message is clear: Islam and Nazism are natural friends. Nazism has been beaten, Islam has not yet.

The relationship between Islam and leftist parties today is of a different nature than the one between Islam and Nazism. While describing the fall of the city of Yathrib (later Medina) to the prophet Mohammed and his followers in 622,

Wilders refers to the so-called *Ansar*, the (Arabic word for) helpers, Yathribians, who became allies of Islam. 'Today, Islam finds its *ansar* in Western leftist and other fellow travelers who ferociously attack Islam's critics and other defenders of Western civilization' (p. 176). In Wilders' eyes, the Western Left has been subdued by Islam and is being used as its instrument to Islamize the world. This view is expressed in Mr. Bosma's book as well. To top it all off, Mr. Bosma claims that the present Left is the actual heir of Hitler's political party, the NSDAP (National Socialist German Worker's Party).

Consequently, a modern political party like the Dutch Labor Party, led between April 2010 and February 2012 by Jewish ex-mayor of Amsterdam, Job Cohen, stands in the same line as Hitler's NSDAP. For those who can hardly believe that this is seriously being asserted, I refer to the Freedom Party Election Program of 2010, where it says that each year on the fourth of May the Netherlands commemorate 'the liberation of the (national) socialist occupation' (1940-1945). The site puts the word *national* in parentheses, implying that the Netherlands suffered from five years of *socialist* occupation and terror. It is remarkable that Wilders does not explicitly mention this particular line of thought in his book, but this can easily be explained. Surely, if modern Western labor parties and thus Western labor governments as well, are to be considered Hitler's heirs, this would imply that the Israeli Labor governments from the late forties to the seventies and Mr. Tony Blair's British Labor administration should be seen as Hitler's soul mates, which not only is a ridiculous thought but also quite a risky claim to put in a book published in the United States, a loyal ally of both countries mentioned.

Once he has established that Islam is a reprehensible ideology, and closely allied to Nazism besides, we are not surprised to find that Wilders elaborately discusses its violent past and present. I would like to pick out a number of instructive examples. In his fifth chapter, called *The Yoke of Ishmael*, Wilders enumerates the multiple genocides 'Islam' has committed in the course of its history. He claims that, based on the calculations in Indian historian Lal's (1973) work, 'the population of India dropped from 200 million in 1000 AD to 170 million in 1500, with 60 to 80 million Indians dying as a direct result of jihad' (p. 89). Wilders gives a vivid description of all of the massacres that took place during the jihad in India, and subsequently adds cynically that 'Islam still burns with indignation over the Crusaders' attacks' (p. 89), the idea being that Islam does not regret the millions it killed, but is still whining over the relatively insignificant events that

took place during the Crusader raids in the Middle East. Note that the subject of the sentence quoted is once again *Islam*, an ideology that apparently manages to experience and show the human feeling of indignation. Of course, what we should really read here instead is another grammatical subject: Muslims, flesh-and-blood humans, for only humans can burn with indignation.

In his treatment of what happened in India, Wilders refers to the Crusades. In doing so, he tackles a thorny issue. After all, the Crusades were an initiative of the Christians, and one that cannot exactly be characterized as being a conquest through the word and the pen. On the contrary. But of course Wilders knows he can expect comments like the following: Aren't the Crusaders guilty of killing and plundering as well? Well yes, they are indeed, Wilders concedes when he writes: 'While Islam committed innumerable massacres as it swept through Asia and the Middle East, it should be noted that the Crusaders committed their own excesses in Palestine' (p 90-91). But, he hastens to add, there is a difference though: 'Christians did not find sanction for their atrocities in Christian scripture; neither the Bible nor the example of Christ's life command Christians to kill unbelievers. The Koran and the example of Muhammad's life, however, do' (p. 91). Wilders is realistic enough to acknowledge that 'most people today, even most Christians, will acknowledge that many Christians throughout history committed terrible crimes in the name of Christ' (p. 19), but the line of thought is that Christians know that this 'violates Christian doctrine' (p. 19). 'A Christian who proclaims hatred to any group of people violates Christian principles. Not so with the Muslims' (p. 20). In short: Muslims (not: Islam) kill because their ideology tells them to; Christians kill too, but they are not instructed to do so by their religion. What a relief!

An interesting turning point in the description of the violent history and nature of Islam is the following. While discussing the upcoming European supremacy over the world in the seventeenth century and after, with Islamic countries falling into the hands of Russia, Britain, France, Italy, Spain and the Netherlands, Wilders comes up with the following insights: 'when all seemed lost... Allah saved Islam, orchestrating what in Islamic eyes must look like two miraculous events: the outbreak of the French Revolution and the West's development of an unquenchable thirst for oil' (p. 112). Allah paradoxically was the driving force behind the French Revolution. It was this Revolution that destroyed confessional structures in France and elsewhere in Europe. It was Maximilien Robespierre who

replaced the Catholic faith and God by a metaphysical deism. In Wilders' words, this is the same Revolution that 'revamped Islam at a crucial moment when its resources were diminishing due to its lack of innovation, the decline of its *dhimmi* population, (i.e. Jews and Christians, my italics), and dwindling influxes of new slaves' (p. 113). Wilders' line of reasoning is that Islam by itself does not stimulate development and creativeness. It relies on *dhimmis* and slaves to live and survive. Now that at the end of the eighteenth century *dhimmis* and slaves had been exploited to the bone, Islam needed new resources and innovations: the French Revolution supplied them. One of the dogmas of the French revolutionaries was the complete submission of all the people to the all-powerful state. The French showed the Muslims how they had been capable of submitting their own people and virtually all the European nations on the Continent to the principles of their ideology. It rang a bell and stimulated the Muslims to once again become aware of their glorious past, or in Wilders' words: 'In a sense, Islam encountered a "kindred soul" in Western totalitarian revolutionary thinking' (p. 113). The line of reasoning is complex. Wilders is convinced of the aggressive nature of Islam. Islam had somehow, paradoxically, and against its nature, fallen asleep in the ages preceding the French Revolution. God saved Islam by, paradoxically again, allowing the anti-religious French Revolution to take place. The French, coming to Egypt in 1798, made the lethargic Muslims recall their glorious past. They felt newly inspired and rose in order to try to restore their once so magnificent empire.

Wilders rejects the French Revolution. He reproaches French Revolution-inspired and Enlightenment thinking elsewhere in his book for its totalitarian character. The French Revolution may have given birth to the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen*, the basis of the present Charter of the United Nations, Wilders still condemns it for its totalitarian character, which resulted in terror. He calls Revolutionary France an 'ideocratic state' and groups it together with other 'ideocratic' states: '... such states -whether revolutionary France, the Soviet Union or Nazi Germany - exterminated their perceived enemies with guillotines, gulags and gas chambers' (p. 32). Not a word in his book on the United Nations' *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, or the principle of the equality of man, which were fruits of this revolution as well.

The French Revolution was nothing but evil and it is this evil that woke up that other sleeping evil. 'Islam began from the nineteenth century onward parroting

Western revolutionary jargon, adopting Western technological and scientific innovations, and embracing the belated industrial revolution that Western colonial administration was bringing to the Islamic world - all with the goal of advancing jihad and world domination' (p. 114). This sounds like a paradox again for a religion that for the first 1200 years developed itself quite independently, but apparently that situation had changed. The key issue for Wilders is that 'exposure to Islam is ultimately fatal to us, but for Islam, contact with the West is a vital lifeline. Without the West, Islam cannot survive' (p. 116). This last element gives the West an unexpected dominant position over Islam. All it needs to do is cut its ties with Islamic countries and Muslims in general and Islam will not survive. But then again, one may wonder what 'West' exactly Wilders is talking about. Is it the secular, liberal West, the West as it developed itself from the principles of the French revolution, and thus in Wilders' terms, the despicable West? Or is it the West as created by the Jewish-Christian tradition, so dearly cherished by the author? But can the secular West and the Jewish-Christian West be regarded as two separate entities? More on this in the final chapter of this pamphlet.

Next Chapter: <http://rozenbergquarterly.com/?p=4806>

The Speck in Your Brother's Eye - The Alleged War of Islam Against the West - Solution



The title of Wilders' last chapter speaks for itself: *How to turn the tide*. Having established in the twelve preceding chapters the evil character of the would-be religion of Islam, its devastating effects on the history of the world and the threat it poses to world peace today,

it is now time to come up with a solution. The seventeen pages of this final chapter gives us Wilders' view on how to turn this tide and of the different parts of the solution, I find the following the most telling: 'Muslims must defeat Islam' (p. 212). This sounds a bit strange and not really feasible, but from Wilders' perspective it is quite logical. Islam is not a religion; it is, under all circumstances, an aggressive ideology that seeks to conquer the world. People who follow this ideology are Muslims.

But a real Muslim, in Wilders' eyes, is one that follows the tenets of Islam and complies with what they require him to do in the full devastating sense of the word. Those who do not strictly and fully follow them are in fact no longer Muslims in the true sense of the word. This then is the answer to the question why Wilders did not assign a new term to Muslims who are not fully 'observant'. He makes a distinction between Islam and Muslims and now we understand what it is he wants to say. A real Muslim is the one who acts in full compliance with the aggressive ideology of Islam.

Those who do not do so are in fact not Muslims or are so no longer. In Wilders' own words: 'People who reject Islam's violent, intolerant, and misogynistic commandments may be moderates, but they are not practicing "moderate Islam" - they are not practicing Islam at all' (p. 212). Having read this quote, my question is why Wilders has a problem with what he calls moderate Muslims, if they are in fact, as he says himself, no longer Muslims. If they are not Muslims, they fall outside the scope of Islam, and as such no longer constitute a danger. Naturally, Wilders does not go into this implication of his logic. We will see below that Wilders wants all Muslims, moderate or not, to 'defeat Islam'.

We might ask ourselves what would be the impact if 'Muslims' were to actually 'defeat' Islam? Wilders has the answer: 'If they (Muslims) could liberate themselves from the yoke of Islam, if they would stop taking Muhammad as a role model, and if they got rid of the hateful Koran, they would be able to achieve

amazing things' (p. 212). Earlier in the book he states: 'If only they could liberate themselves from Islam, they, too, could become prosperous and free nations' (p. 65). Take some time as a reader to consider the full impact of these words. Imagine for a minute that the same advice was given to Christians: 'If they (Christians) could liberate themselves from the yoke of Christianity, if they would stop taking Jesus Christ as a role model, and if they got rid of the hateful Bible, they would be able to achieve amazing things'. This is in fact what Wilders is asking Muslims to do. Renouncing the Koran and renouncing following the example of the prophet Mohammed, two key elements in Islam. But if you take away the Koran, and do away with the prophet, what would Muslims be left with? To what can they cling in order to live their lives, as they believe they should if there is no longer a Holy Book and no Holy Prophet? Would they really be inclined to do so just because Wilders says that '(I)in liberating themselves from Islam, they will ensure a happier life for themselves and their children, and a safer, more peaceful world for the rest of us' (p. 212)? Now we can also understand the impossibility of answering the question formulated above why moderate Muslims, who are in fact not Muslims at all, should 'defeat Islam.' Wilders' 'solution' of renouncing the Koran and the Prophet cannot but apply to all Muslims as for all Muslims the Koran and the Prophet are essential. Here Wilders takes off his veil. His distinction between moderate and extreme Muslims is made only to ultimately 'lure' *all* Muslims into accepting his solution.

I think I am not exaggerating if I claim that the solution Wilders offers is ridiculous and belongs to the world of fairies. It is dangerous even. What Wilders is doing here is to strip the Muslims' of their very identity. He robs them of their essential self and offers nothing in return except the vague promise of a happier life for themselves and their children. How are they supposed to realize this? On what are they to subsequently base their values? Is the hidden message that they should convert to Christianity? Wilders does not make this suggestion.

Suppose we gave Wilders' solution a shot, how should it be implemented? How are we going to convince the Muslims to denounce the kernels of their faith? Wilders offers us a number of suggestions in his 13th chapter and in other parts of the book. His solution is centered around four points (p. 213-215). 'First, we must defend freedom of speech'. 'Second, we must reject all forms of cultural relativism'. 'Third, we must stop the Islamization of the West'. 'Fourth, we must cherish our national identity'. The consequences if these four criteria were to be

realized are evident. Wilders describes them in clear terms. Immigrants in the West must assimilate to Western societies, adapt to their values, and abide by their laws. Or in Wilders' words: 'If you subscribe to our laws and values, you are welcome to stay and enjoy all the rights our society guarantees' (p. 214). But he also presents the consequences if you do not adapt and abide by these laws: 'If you commit crimes, act against our laws, or wage jihad, you will be expelled' (p. 214). Mind that Wilders does not say that such people are to be jailed and/or fined. No, they are to be expelled, whereas normally in a democratic state no one is expelled for breaking the national law. Apparently there are two different judicial systems operating here, one for 'us' and one for 'them'.

Let us take a look at some more consequences. Islamic schools must be closed down, 'for they are totalitarian institutions where young children are indoctrinated into an ideology of violence and hatred' (p. 214). At present, there are around 40 Islamic elementary schools in the Netherlands. They all fall under the control of the Ministry of Education and whereas they were doing badly some years ago, teaching and output numbers have improved over the last few years. Furthermore, the construction of new mosques, 'which Islam regards as symbols of its triumphs' must be forbidden (p. 214). 'A free society should not grant freedom to those who want to destroy it', and consequently 'every *halal* shop, every mosque, every Islamic school and every *burka*' constitutes a threat (p. 214). On an international level, Wilders suggests that 'Western nations should refuse to make any financial contributions to the UN' (p. 215). The point here is that Islamic nations have their own version of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the so-called Cairo Declaration, which formulates Human Rights in accordance with the Sharia, Islamic law. The Islamic states that support this Cairo Declaration must be expelled from the UN and until the time this is effectuated Western Nations should stop their financial contributions to this organization. The chapter describes in abundant detail the solution Wilders has to offer for the Islam problem in the Netherlands and the world.

If I were a Muslim seeking full integration in the West, in Europe, in the Netherlands, I would be utterly discouraged. I am asked to renounce my Islamic identity, however meager that eventually may be, and I have to face the disappearance of Islam from the public and private space. I could only live a life here if I accommodated fully to the West. Wilders blames Muslims for wanting to Islamize the world; he himself is doing the same thing by obliging Muslims to

westernize fully. Mohammed and Fatima have to change into John and Mary, not only in name, but also inside.

The key question, also tackled in the preceding chapter, is what exactly this Western culture looks like that Wilders cherishes so highly? An answer to this question is presented below. But before we go into this, let us first take a look at how Wilders' political party has been trying to implement its program in the Netherlands.

In the 2010 parliamentary elections in the Netherlands, Wilders' Freedom Party obtained 24 of the 150 seats. The Liberal Conservatives and Christian Democrats, together occupying 52 seats, invited the Freedom Party to officially lend their support to a minority government of these two parties in exchange for certain concessions, thus securing a minimal majority in Parliament of 76 seats. This construction held from October 2010 until the fall of the cabinet in April 2012, when the Freedom Party pulled out the plug, refusing to put its signature under new government cuts that had to be implemented due to the ongoing global financial and economic crises. When the minority government was installed with the support of Wilders' party, it issued a statement in which Islam was mentioned in the very first sentence. It said that Liberal Conservatives and Christian Democrats regarded Islam as a religion while the Freedom Party considered it an ideology. The parties involved had agreed to disagree. In any decision it took, the government was dependent on the support of Wilders' party, so as not to lose its majority in Parliament. On issues of migration, carefully avoiding mentioning the terms Islam or Muslims, the Freedom Party asserted itself, claiming and obtaining as a concession for its support that the central-right government would pursue a much stricter migration and integration policy. In doing so, however, it collided with European laws to which the Netherlands had committed itself. Carrying out the intended policies would mean breaking up treaties, which would require the consent of all 27 members of the Union. Given these circumstances, the endeavors of the government did not have the intended results. Still, government services silently acted in accordance with the strict suggestions and proposals of the Freedom Party. The policies implemented with regard to refugees and asylum seekers resulted in their being detained, even children, and in the massive violation of international law. A study carried out by Siebers and Mutsaers (to appear) indicates that there is a large degree of convergence between migrant-hostile voices like Geert Wilders' and everyday practice in carrying out Dutch

government policies towards migrants. These are voices and policies that increasingly fit the concept of ethnic cleansing. The authors of the study propose using the concept of low-intensity ethnic cleansing to capture the increasingly militaristic way in which these policies and voices are framed.

Freedom Party MPs are known for expressing their opinions clearly, in many cases in abusive and insulting language. A strong example is the so-called 'kopvoddentax' (literally '*head rags tax*'). In September of 2009, Wilders presented the proposal in Parliament to tax Muslimas wearing headscarves in public. He did not use the normal term to refer to this item of clothing, but instead used the deliberately abusive and contrived term *head rag* for it. He never seriously meant to impose such a tax, for which there would never be a parliamentary majority anyway. He just meant to insult wearers of the scarf and to intimidate them. Wilders' proposal in 2007 to shoot young Moroccan gang members in the city of Gouda in the kneecaps should be interpreted in the same way. Gouda, an old Dutch city (in the deep polders of the country) famous for its cheese, has a sizable Moroccan community whose younger members were causing trouble and harassing people. In 2008, the Freedom Party suggested sending in the army to tackle the problem. Not the pen or the word to solve this problem, which Wilders preaches as the proper way of the West, but the use of the weapon instead. There are far more instances of aggressive discourse than these, another one being Mrs. Stassen, Freedom Party representative in the province of Limburg, calling mosques 'palaces of hate'. Mentioning all of them would take up too much space here.

What is more important is the question to what extent Wilders and his party influence Dutch politics, and Dutch society. When I presented my other book on the party, *The ideology of the Freedom Party. The evil good and the good evil*, I stressed in the Dutch media that maybe we were not only facing this perceived Islamization of the country, but a 'Freedom Party-ization' as well (my apology for the unhappy term). In the numerous meetings and debates I have taken part in, I could sense the influence of the Freedom Party's racist ideology. Muslims no longer feel welcome in the Netherlands. They hide. They keep their heads down. Some assimilate so completely that they have become more Dutch than me, at the same time realizing, now more than ever, that they are ultimately not accepted in our society. Numerous other books and publications on the rise of the Freedom Party have seen the light. NEXUS director and public intellectual Rob Riemen

does not mince words. In a recent publication he makes it quite clear that he considers the Freedom Party a contemporary form of fascism. This provoked an enormous row and Mr. Riemen was criticized heavily for saying it but he maintained his point of view and his pamphlet (in translation) *The Eternal Comeback of Fascism* (2010) sold very well. My Bachelor student of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Henk Bovekerk, wrote his BA thesis (2012) on the question whether the Freedom Party should be considered as fascist in the terms of Robert Paxton's book on fascism (2004). In his own words: 'The PVV does not use physical violence, but its rhetoric is at times highly combative. It carries the same message as early twentieth-century fascist violence: that only the Freedom Party is tough enough to save the nation from hostile threats. Such militant rhetoric can give its supporters the idea that violence is justified, and regrettably it has done so in the recent past'. Bovekerk concluded that the Freedom Party can be placed in what Paxton refers to as the third stage of fascism. His thesis was never meant for publication, but in January 2012 the media got wind of it and Mr. Bovekerk and myself and my colleague professor Jan Blommaert as his supervisors were met with sneers and threats. It goes without saying that the Freedom Party wants to avoid any comparison with the fascist parties of the thirties like Adolf Hitler's NSDAP. That is why they claim it is not them but the present Left-wing parties that are the true heirs of this fascist, or (national) socialist tradition, a point that I dealt with in more detail above.

The question to what extent the Freedom Party's discourse influences people, people's choices and in particular the Muslims' position in the Netherlands is not an easy one to answer. How can it be proven empirically that Muslims not only feel intimidated but also that they are actually experiencing the negative consequences of this discourse on a personal level as well? Siebers and Dennissen (2012) proved convincingly that Muslim people in the context of their work are facing the dark consequences of the prevailing anti-Muslim attitudes in the Netherlands, an immediate consequence of Wilders' utterances and politics. In their study, they show that statements made in Dutch politics and the Dutch media by people like Geert Wilders trigger discussions among colleagues at work, with majority colleagues reproducing these statements and employees with a Muslim and Moroccan background having to or feeling the need to defend themselves. Wilders' stigmatizing discourse is reflected in these discussions, which eventually fuel acts of discrimination and result in exclusion of colleagues with a Moroccan and Islamic background. The study shows how statements by

Wilders fuel discrimination and exclusion in work settings.

Rejecting any form of violence, Wilders tells us that the weapons with which Islam ideology should be combated are the word and the pen. Fighting what you believe to be wrong using the word and the pen is a noble goal and nobody will contend it. But nevertheless *words* can cause severe psychological damage. Will Muslims not feel insulted to the bone when their scarves are referred to as 'kopvoddien', *head rags*? The term is in fact more offensive than can be brought out in an English translation, since the use of the Dutch word 'kop' (rather than 'hoofd') is offensive as well, as it is normally reserved to refer to the heads of animals. Another instance of offensive use of language, and like the previous one uttered by Wilders himself in the Dutch Parliament, is his reference to Muslim Labor Party voters as *Islamic voting cattle*. One could argue that Parliament is the place *par excellence* of free speech and that every MP has the right to state anything he or she wants. But here is a party whose leader claims in his *Marked for Death* that the pen and the word, and Christian values in general should be the guideline for our thoughts and actions, and whose Party ideologue Mr. Bosma writes in his book that values such as modesty, respect and discipline are highly valued by the party and should be the criteria to act upon (p. 187). The sad truth is that there is no party in Parliament so rude and insulting as Wilders' party, blatantly contradicting the principles expressed in their own books. In this context, it should not come as a surprise that Wilders and the other MPs of his party hardly ever participate in discussions. They have been and still are invited by virtually all societal organizations, NGOs, universities and TV talk shows, but the number of times they have actually participated in an open debate with the public, with intellectuals, can be counted on the fingers of one hand. I myself have tried over and over again to come into contact with Mr. Bosma, whose book I discussed in my book. It never happened. He never ever responded. On April 17, 2012 I was on national television in *Pauw & Witteman*, the most popular late-night talk show in the Netherlands, and I invited him then and there on camera to finally accept my invitation to enter into a debate with me: he has remained silent to this day. The party clearly is not interested in taking part in public debates and the reason for this is plain. They simply cannot afford to, for fear of losing voters. Their claims are too easily refuted. They would lose such debates. The party's policy is thus to remain in its own secure world, spread its message to the public from there in a most insulting way, and thus try to achieve the solution formulated by Wilders in his book.

In the following and final chapter, the Wilders doctrine is placed in the context of Christianity, Islam and the principles of the French Revolution.

Next Chapter: <http://rozenbergquarterly.com/?p=4809>

The Speck in Your Brother's Eye - The Alleged War of Islam Against the West - The Speck In Your Brother's Eye



The title of this pamphlet contains words spoken by Jesus, admonishing us to take a good look at ourselves before we judge others. I believe that Wilders' and his party's discourse and ideology are not innovative or new at all, and that they fit seamlessly in the world's history of

religions and ideologies characterized by a strained relationship with violence, be it psychological or physical. I am not going to get into a discussion about what is a religion and what is an ideology. Both can mean a lot to people and both have a special vision or view of the world, the universe, and the questions of life. Both strive for ideal societies, religions all do so with regard to the afterlife and, if possible, here on earth as well; ideologies are restricted to the latter.

Wilders is very outspoken on Christianity, Islam and the ideas that fuelled the French Revolution. He praises the first and considers the second and third evil by nature. Still, the three of them have more in common than Wilders wants us to believe. In what follows I would like to draw a concise comparison between the three, formulating their respective goals, and subsequently discussing the ways in

which the three aim to realize these goals. The discussion I present is in no way exhaustive.

Christianity is characterized by a strong sense of millenarianism. Christ clearly stated in his teachings that his kingdom is not of this earth. It is in heaven and Christians should live their lives in such a way that they deserve to get to heaven in the afterlife. To attain heaven they will have to adhere to the principles of Christianity, which basically entails no more than behaving in accordance with the commandment to love your neighbor as yourself, and do unto others as you would be done by. Love, one could say is the basic tenet of Christianity. Today there are over 2 billion Christians in the world.

Islam likewise cherishes an afterlife, maybe even more so than Christianity. In Islam, the basic tenet is solidarity. All Muslims are equal in the face of Allah and Muslims must take care of each other. They form one big family and the poor and the needy are to be taken care of. In the afterlife, Muslims too are judged on their behavior and accomplishments here on earth and God himself decides who can enter paradise and who cannot. Today there are over 1.5 billion Muslims in the world.

The principles of the French Revolution are threefold: liberty, equality and fraternity. It was the first time in history that politicians came up with the idea of 'the equality of all people'. The philosophy of the Revolution, as expressed in particular in Jean-Jacques Rousseau's work, formulated this principle of the equality of all people. With liberty of conscience and choice, and with fraternity and equality, mankind would be able to create a paradise on earth. It was a tempting and alluring perspective for mankind. A non-religious way of thinking (I am avoiding the word ideology) was presented to people and unlike religions it promised heaven on earth. The principles of the French revolution have resulted in present day liberalism and (Labor) socialism, which have the sympathy of billions of people in the world and which form the basis of many governments, especially in the West. It goes without saying that people can be Christians or Muslims and at the same time have liberal or socialist political views.

Taking them at face value, an innocent reader learning of these three views of the world would undoubtedly greet them with enthusiasm. Who would oppose such laudable ideals and not want to follow (one of) them? Unfortunately, their histories are not quite as uplifting. When we take a look at the history of

Christianity, Islam and the French Revolution, we discover that all three of them are marked by very dark chapters indeed.

Many are the Christians that were inspired by the words of the last book of the New Testament, the Book of Revelation. Revelation contains a very outspoken millenarist view of the end of times, when the earth will suffer enormous waves of violence and blood will flow knee-high. This book in the past and present has been an inspiration to many Christians aiming to establish paradise on earth or to help God speed up the realization of paradise in the afterlife. The result of this was that minor and major Christian movements and sects have resorted to violence aimed at the opponents of Christianity. The world had to be purified, cleansed of the elements of evil, and in this vein the Catholic Church, considering itself sacrosanct, in the Middle Ages set up the Inquisition, persecuting infidels like the Cathars and 'crypto' Jews. Influenced by Protestant orthodoxy, city courts burnt or hanged witches and homosexuals in seventeenth and eighteenth century Western Europe. Modern Christian movements, in particular those in the United States, stood and still stand up against the Federal Government, considering it the Antichrist, and even revert to violence, as evidenced by the Waco massacre in 1993 and the Oklahoma attack in 1995. Numerous are the groups that cherish violence to this day in order to realize a pure, Christian United States of America. The Anglican Church is bitterly divided on its position with regard to homosexuality. In particular in African countries like Uganda, the anti-homosexuality discourse is very strong indeed and gay people there face serious consequences, even death, if they dare to come out. And it goes without saying that the numerous child abuse scandals in the Catholic Church are outrageous.

Islam in its turn from its very beginning failed to stick to the principles of solidarity and mercy as preached in the Koran. The coming of the prophet Mohammed to the oasis of Yathrib, later Medina, was first followed by the expulsion of a Jewish tribe living in the oasis, and later by that of another tribe, after which the male members of the last remaining tribe were killed and their women and children were turned into slaves. When Islam had settled in the Middle East and North Africa and later in the Balkans, Jews and Christians were treated as second rate citizens, *dhimmis*. They had to pay extra taxes, were forced to wear certain clothing, were limited in their choice of professions, were hardly accepted in government positions and became the victims of Islamic rage in times of economic crisis. Today we are witnessing intensifying threats and terror aimed

at Christians by Muslims in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Palestine. It is not an exaggeration to say that a veritable ethnic cleansing is going on in these countries. In theocratic Iran, gay young men are hanged, often under the pretext of ordinary crimes like theft. The Al Qaeda movement killed nearly 3,000 people in the September 11 attacks and many, many more in Islamic countries. The custom of marrying off really young girls and the sexual abuse of boys in a country like Afghanistan is as outrageous as the child abuse by Catholic clergymen.

More than once Wilders refers in his book to quotes from various American presidents on Christianity and Islam, one of them being Thomas Jefferson, who 'waged war against the Islamic Barbary states of North Africa in order to stop the pillaging of ships and the enslavement of more than a million Christians' (p. 16). Jefferson is quoted several times by Wilders, stressing the former American president's perceived anti-Islamic points of view and his support for the Christian cause. The problem with quotes is that in most cases they can be countered by other quotes from the same person. It was also Thomas Jefferson who said:

'Millions of innocent men, women, and children, since the introduction of Christianity, have been burnt, tortured, fined, imprisoned; yet we have not advanced one inch towards uniformity. What has been the effect of coercion? To make one half the world fools, and the other half hypocrites. To support roguery and error all over the earth. Let us reflect that it is inhabited by a thousand millions of people. That these profess probably a thousand different systems of religion. That ours is but one of that thousand. That if there be but one right, and ours that one, we should wish to see the 999 wandering sects gathered into the fold of truth. But against such a majority we cannot effect this by force' (Jefferson, in Peden, 1954, p 160).

Jefferson clearly shows an attitude of cultural relativism, the very same cultural relativism that Wilders abhors so much. The quote does not need further elaboration. Mr. Jefferson knew how to judge the world's diversity of religions, knew about their dark sides and the impossibility of wiping them out and replacing them by only one. Mr. Jefferson was a wise man that Mr. Wilders could have taken as an example to follow.

It did not take long before the French revolution, which began so full of hope for a better future, resulted in terror. The revolutionary council that governed France

under the leadership of Maximilien Robespierre in the period 1793-1794 had more than 40,000 people killed. Ideology turned into nightmare and left Napoleon Bonaparte later with nothing but loathing for the term and its disastrous consequences. The principles of the French revolution led to liberalism and peace-loving social democracy, but they led to Marxism and communism as well. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels were inspired by its principles of equality and fraternity when they developed their views on world history and the ultimate realization of a workers' paradise. History has shown us and is still showing us today how devastating the effects of Marxism and communism have been. Stalin's communist terror led to the deaths of at least a million Soviet citizens. Chairman Mao's Cultural Revolution killed half a million Chinese. Today we can still see the gruesome effects of communism in Cuba, and in North Korea in particular.

How in God's name can we explain all these aberrations? Why all this violence? What is it that turns people into such fanatics that they are willing to sacrifice everything and everybody to reach their goals? This pamphlet is not the proper place to answer this question; it would require a lot more paper. For the moment, it suffices to conclude that apparently there is something in man's nature that is inclined to fanaticism to realize certain goals, to secure heaven in the afterlife or create it here on earth. Any good religion or ideology should take this vile human inclination into account. But do they? Do Christianity, Islam and the French Revolution include (enough) safeguarding elements to promote an approach without violence? Regrettably, the historical records of all three show many instances of followers being incited implicitly or explicitly to use violence or lines of approach that can be interpreted as such. I would say that a good religion or ideology will always be unambiguous in its commandments to its followers. Any spoken or written text that could be interpreted as allowing violence should never be part of a religion or ideology.

The instances in the Bible, the Koran and the revolutionary writings that incite people to violence or that can be explained as allowing their followers to resort to violence in order to reach their goals are numerous. Reading in Exodus about the people of Israel travelling from Egypt to the Promised Land, one is stunned by the violence they are allowed to use against the peoples they encounter. Rock bottom is the killing of the Midianites. After a day of slaughtering people by the thousands, Moses is angry at the Israelites for not having killed adulterous Midianite women too, as he had ordered (Numbers 31:17). Earlier we saw that a

modern killer like Anders Breivik interpreted the words of Jesus in such a way that he considered them a license to kill. Koran verse 5 from Sura 9 incites Muslims to kill infidels: 'Kill the polytheists (or infidels or unbelievers) wherever you find them' (9:5). Many Muslims, to this day, have taken these words literally and acted on them, believing they are following a divine command. Finally, the words of Enlightenment philosopher Jean Jacques Rousseau were equally disastrous when he wrote in his *Contrat Social* that the citizen, who does not want to bow to the will of the people or the community, has a serious problem and will have to be killed:

'Again, every malefactor, by attacking social rights, becomes on forfeit a rebel and a traitor to his country; by violating its laws he ceases to be a member of it; he even makes war upon it. In such a case the preservation of the State is inconsistent with his own, and one or the other must perish; in putting the guilty to death, we slay not so much the citizen as an enemy'.

This onerous concept of the will of the people, which Robespierre used as justification for the Terror, and which was later adopted by communism and fascism, has led to the deaths of millions.

One may pose the question if there are no differences in intensity and frequency with which the adherents of the three religions and ideologies used and still use violence. If we conducted a historical study, a possible conclusion might be that Islam records the lowest number of victims fallen at the hands of its followers, followed by Christianity, followed in turn by French-Revolution spin-offs like communism. This might be one of the findings. Are we then going to judge the French Revolution and similarly inspired movements as being the most evil, followed by either Christianity or Islam? But what would be the point of such an exercise? The three will not cease to exist. We can, of course, establish the fact that some -isms are absolutely evil – fascism and National Socialism come to mind, having brought nothing but evil to the world. This, incidentally, is also why I have left these two ideologies out of my comparisons. They are just utterly bad. And my personal judgment of Stalinist and Maoist communism is also clear: I condemn both of them. Present-day social democracy, on the other hand, has a strong peaceful tradition. I would certainly not condemn this branch of French Revolution-inspired thinking. By the same token, I would not reject liberalism either. This argument leads me to another consideration. We established the fact that French Revolution-inspired thinking also laid the foundations for non-violent

movements like the ones I mentioned earlier. There are people and movements that seek to realize the paradise of the Enlightenment through peaceful means, without taking recourse to force or violence. Apparently, we cannot condemn the whole heritage of the Revolution. And what about Christianity and Islam? Do we not observe the same peace-loving convictions there as well? Are there not numerous Christians and Muslims that seek to realize their dreamed society in a peaceful manner? Are there not countless Christians and Muslims that independently and united in brotherhood seek the best interest of all people? Christianity is said to have gone through an enlightenment stage, as a result of which most Christians no longer take the violence in the Bible literally. There are Muslims who have likewise reconsidered the contents and message of their Koran even though Islam as a whole still has a long way to go in this respect. What happened to Christianity can also happen to Islam.

We cannot change the fact that there are different religions and ideologies in this world. Trying to wipe them out by force or through persuasion is impossible as American President Thomas Jefferson rightly observed. And we do not need to either. We can very well live with a peaceful Christianity, a peaceful Islam and peaceful French Revolution-inspired movements. This will demand from each and every one of us a tolerant and open attitude, first of all from the believers and supporters of the religions and ideologies themselves. They have a special responsibility to respect other people's views, opinions and lifestyles. We will, obviously, never realize a paradise on earth. This at least is what history teaches us. The only option open to people therefore is to strive for it in a peaceful way, respecting each other's love (Christian), solidarity (Islam) and equality (French Revolution) commandments. In short, I would promote tolerance in the building of societies and I would expect the same from religious authorities, politicians and governments. I realize that this is another ideal than that of creating a heaven on earth, but it is quite a bit easier to accomplish than millenarist views of an earthly or heavenly paradise.

It goes without saying that the views expressed by Wilders in his book on Muslims and Islam form an ideology in themselves and I am sorry for Wilders, but unlike in Christianity, Islam and the French Revolution, I cannot see anything positive in his thinking. In following Wilders' analysis of Islam and his evaluation of religions and ideologies, we have repeatedly been confronted with the question what Wilders' ideal society actually looks like. In his last chapter, he tells us that he

highly values the heritage of 'Rome, Athens and Jerusalem'. This gives us a clue. Rome and Athens stand for the classical heritage and Jerusalem for Judaism and Christianity. For obvious reasons he does not mention Paris. In a sense this is strange or at least surprising, when we realize that Wilders grew up as a politician in a free and open democracy, which is, after all, built on the principles of French Revolution. He mentions the word 'democratic' in relation to the West in the following quote, which I already cited earlier: 'When you compare the West to any other culture that exists today, it becomes clear that we are the most pluralistic, humane, democratic, and charitable culture on earth (p. 31).' But he labels this Western culture Judeo-Christian (p. 31) and rejects the accomplishments of the French Revolution, one of which is the establishment of democracy. Where, then, does democracy come from, according to the Freedom Party leader? Does not the very mentioning of the word imply that secretly he acknowledges its vital value for the West? Is democracy part of his dreamed society? I would really like to know if Wilders is striving for a Christian society, a Liberal society, or a mix of both. It is important in this respect to stress (once again) that one of the things that he considers absolutely vital and which he mentions in his last chapter is the freedom of speech. It is this freedom in particular that is a basic part of the heritage of the French Revolution. Regrettably, we are forced to conclude that Wilders does not paint a clear picture of what his dreamed society looks like in detail and this should not come as a surprise to us either. His is basically a one-issue party, his one and only mission is to rid the world of 'the evil of Islam', to bring about a society, a world, without Islam, or one where Muslims have denounced their religion. Wilders' ideology is one of the thoroughly negative kind.

Wilders pretends to be presenting a peaceful solution to the problem of Islam and Muslims. But how can this be brought about peacefully? Are the 1.5 billion Muslims on earth going to listen to his 'compelling' advice and renounce the Koran, the Prophet and thus Islam? It is at all possible to imagine that, if Wilders' program were to be carried out, this would not lead to resistance, violence, terror and bloodshed? Why should it be impossible for Muslims to work on a peaceful interpretation of the Koran? Why does Wilders not mention this option? Does history not show us in the examples of Christianity and French Revolution spin-offs like social democracy and liberalism that this is a viable scenario?

The solution Wilders presents involves a high risk of invoking violence, even if he

states repeatedly that his program should be realized by the word and the pen. Who will give me the assurance that this would indeed be the case? Who can guarantee us that there will not be people who, like so many_ Christians, Muslims and French revolutionaries, will take up the sword and 'help' to realize their goals that way? Wilders' book brings us nothing new. Not only that, it is also completely counter- productive. Wilders' message is not like that of religions and ideologies, which not only have a negative but also a positive side. It is exclusively negative. He focuses on the shortcomings of the other, accuses the other of being violent by nature, and uses words that can easily be interpreted as allowing violence to fight the enemy. He acts in exactly the same way as he perceives his opponent does. He sees the speck in his brother's eye but fails to see the log in his own.

It may very well be the case that Geert Wilders will in due time give up his position as leader of the Freedom Party and leave the Dutch political arena. He might indeed, as was suggested, join an American think tank or travel the world spreading the message of the danger of Islam. Irrespective of where his career leads him, this will not mean that the anti Islam discourse will die out. On the contrary, it is supported by numerous others and in particular on the Internet it is very strong. Therefore countering this ideology by arguments, by pamphlets like this, remains necessary.

I hope the readers of Wilders' book in the English language will give my response to it some consideration as well. I am Dutch, like Wilders. His is my country too. I believe my solution to 'the Muslim problem' is a not only a different one but a better one as well: we should exercise tolerance, and respect each other in realizing our goals. The truth that lies in the middle, the truth that may be grey, the truth that is not extreme and therefore maybe not attractive to believers and followers, the truth that brings peace, that is my truth.

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Note

Verses I quote from the Bible are from the Revised Standard Version (RSV). It is

the authorized revision (1946) of the American Standard Version (1901), which in turn was a revision of the King James Version, published in 1611. Verses from the Koran are from <http://www.clearquran.com/>. The Bible and Koran quotes of Wilders and the Bible quotes of Breivik stem from other translations.

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Napoleon, the Simpsons and the Dutch



Illustration from
Only in Holland,
Only the Dutch

As time marches on, the Dutch will continue to perplex and astonish people throughout the world, although, paradoxically, they will carry on their cultural ideologies of striving to be just average and acting normal because that's weird enough. People from all parts of the world will continue to envision Holland as this idyllic place full of fairy-tale images, tulips, windmills, cheese, picturesque landscapes and happy-go-lucky inhabitants. People will continue to envision the capital city, Amsterdam, as this insidious place where everyone is high on drugs,

engaging in licentious street prostitution and killing their unborn and elderly. People will also continue viewing the Netherlands as a bastion of liberalism where traditionalism is rejected and where socialistic policies are undermining capitalism and helping to steer the world towards communism. And people will continue to envision the Dutch as these strange people who still walk around in those infamous wooden shoes. The Dutch have been misunderstood since the beginning of their existence; some things just don't ever change.

In fact, the longest-running primetime animated series in history, *The Simpsons*, recently perpetuated the wooden shoe stereotype of the Dutch. In a recent episode, Moe the bartender proclaimed to his friends that he was Dutch and then awkwardly walked out of the bar wearing cumbersome, Dutch prototypical wooden shoes. Although somewhat disconcerting to many Dutch, the wooden shoe typecast, along with the many other Dutch stereotypes, isn't going away anytime soon, especially with preeminent television sitcoms propagating such images on a global scale. Even with such categorizations, the Dutch, as they've done for centuries, will continue to focus on just doing their own thing and continue marching to the beat of their own drum, without ever skipping a beat.

De Zilvervloot

People can say what they want about the Dutch with their intriguing ways, controversial policies and inimitable country, but world reports have consistently ranked the Netherlands as possessing one of the best qualities of life in the entire world. In the United Nations Human Development Report of 2004, the Netherlands was ranked fifth in the world and second in the European Union (EU) in terms of health and life expectancy, education and earnings. The report stated that the Netherlands had an average life expectancy of 78.3 years, among the highest in the world. The liberal and socialistic policies of the Dutch and their unique customs and mannerisms certainly don't seem to be having an adverse effect on their country, as many people from around the world would like to believe.

As in the patriotic song, *De Zilvervloot*, where the Dutch honor the naval hero Piet Hein by proclaiming your name is small but your deeds are great, the tiny country of the Netherlands has achieved, and continues to achieve, monumental accomplishments. The Dutch astonishingly survived raging waters and reclaimed the majority of their country through the use of ingenuity and cooperation. Because of this monumental feat, the Dutch are fond of stating, "God may have

made the earth, but the Dutch made Holland.” They further went on to build one of the mightiest economic empires that the world had ever seen. The Dutch continue to be one of the most industrialized nations in the world and are leaders in the field of social justice. For the modern-day Dutch, as their country is throttling full steam ahead, it’s simply business as usual.

What started out as a small trading association between a handful of countries, The European Union (EU) is now the driving force in European politics and economics. European integration and cooperation is paramount in order for the EU to continue building upon its successes. Many European nations find such cooperation and acceptance of other cultures daunting, but for the small trading nation of Holland, such foreign cooperation and interaction is simply business as usual. The Dutch built their robust economic infrastructure through international commerce, cooperation and acceptance of other cultures. The Dutch are active participants in attempts at further solidifying the European Union and claim to be willing to forfeit some of their national identity and sovereignty in order to assist with this comprehensive objective.

As they recently abandoned their precious guilder with little resistance or remorse, the Dutch are progressively looking forward and cooperating with their neighbors in working towards European integration that, they feel, will enhance the qualities of life for all of its members. Even with such altruistic efforts of sacrificing national sovereignty for the advancement of the EU, the Dutch will, undoubtedly, never forfeit their Dutchness and will continue being so Dutch, as they have throughout their existence. The great transformations occurring in Europe in the context of culture, politics, economics, sociology and even psychology, cannot alter the persevering nature of the Dutch in preserving their deeply ingrained Dutch ideologies and attributes.

A fine line

The Dutch will continue to balance the fine line between capitalism and socialism. As a small trading nation with deeply established mercantile roots, the Dutch strive for profitability; but with egalitarianism also deeply rooted, the Dutch won’t leave even their frailest of citizens isolated or neglected in the fast-paced, money driven world in which they operate. The Dutch will continue relying on pragmatism in dealing with universal problems and will continue to alleviate them with practical, very Dutch-like solutions. The Dutch perceive such problems as seeds of opportunity. As they seize these opportunities, the Dutch will continue to be pioneers in the world with breakthrough, revolutionary solutions, which,

undoubtedly, may be just too radical for some cultures to accept. The Dutch have been confronted with intense global scrutiny over many of their revolutionary social policies. The Dutch merely shrug off such scrutiny and like to proclaim, rather superciliously, that “the world will come around to our way of thinking eventually.” With many nations throughout the world following in their footsteps by exploring, and even implementing, similar social policies, the Dutch haughty proclamation holds merit.

With globalization and an ever-shrinking world, the preservation of cultures is becoming an arduous and painful task for many nations around the globe. Many cultures are fighting incessantly the increasing trends of global corporate hegemony, which they feel are leading to social inequality and pervasive consumerism. General Douglas MacArthur dramatically stated in his farewell address to congress after his abrupt dismissal during the Korean conflict, “Old soldiers never die, they just fade away.” As with the old soldiers, many cultures are increasingly fearful that their traditions, customs and values will just fade away as corporate consumerism gains even more momentum and proceeds to obliterate the cherished, age-old cultural attributes that stood the test of time.



Dazzling but odorless flowers

The Dutch, meanwhile, are disinclined to expend needless energy on things they cannot change, but focus mainly on those areas of life where they can make positive impacts. The Dutch have the uncanny ability of succeeding in the principle of doing less and accomplishing more. By accepting people, situations, circumstances and events as they occur, and by focusing in those areas of life that truly matter, the Dutch will continue surprising the world with remarkable achievements and imaginative solutions to the world’s worst problems, in spite of their modest and humble cultural attributes. In the process, their deeply ingrained Dutchness will remain steadfast as it has for thousands of years.

Political subjugation, religious oppression, military assaults and global ideological transformations were even unsuccessful at deposing this unwavering institution of Dutchness.

The uniqueness of the Dutch has led to much ambiguity, and even frustration, as people try to figure out these Dutch-like ways and mannerisms. Annoyed with this Dutchness, Napoleon Bonaparte dismissed Holland as “a smoke-room full of obese cheese-mongers and devious bank cashiers.” The foreign oppressors who lived in Holland and keenly observed the intriguing ways of the Dutch, however, saw a deeper, underlying reason for this Dutchness. Frenchman Joseph Garat attempted to explain the inexplicable to Napoleon and members of the French Senate in a memorandum espousing the underlying virtues of the Dutch people, who, at the time, lived under the regime of the Batavian Republic.

“The Batave is much more Dutch than the Englander is English, the Frenchman French or any other people in the world anything. It is not exactly their patriotism which gives the Bataves this quality of eternal fixity of character; but rather their land, their climate, their whole manner of being and living, all of which resemble nothing else that can be seen on the face of the earth...He who has built his dwelling with his own hands will never leave it; the Dutch built Holland and they have the air of forever saying “What we have done is good,”...their dazzling but odorless flowers grown beneath the fogs of Haarlem; the wreaths of smoke from their tobacco delight their senses far more than the most exquisite perfume under the most perfect skies...They believe that if this is taken from them they will simply cease to be Bataves; for them it is not just a matter of losing their name, it would be to lose their very lives.”

Fervent cyclists, overarching conformity

These sentiments certainly lay claim to the proposition that the Dutch are the most unique people in the world. What’s next for the Dutch and for Holland? How will these Gentle Giants in this intriguing land perplex the world in future years? One can only anxiously wait, for the Dutch are in no rush for anything. For the time being, people will continue to visit Holland and continue to observe the peculiar ways of the Dutch and the mystifying makeup of the land.

Whether it’s the leaning buildings, the scantily-clad ladies in windows, the aromas emanating from the numerous hash houses, the nonchalance of the Dutch, the spectacular museums and cultural exhibits, the controversial social policies, the capricious weather, the fervent cyclists, the intriguing canals, the ingenious

windmills, the towering heights of the Dutch, the overarching conformity, the resilient individuality, or any of the other oddities that transpire within the Dutch borders, people will continue to be in awe and will often find themselves shaking their heads and muttering to themselves, “Only in Holland, Only the Dutch.”



From the 3rd updated edition

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About the author

As a military officer and international business consultant, Marc Resch has spent time exploring many cultures around the world. His observations of the Netherlands and his working and social interactions with the Dutch laid the groundwork for this book. Marc is a graduate of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, continues to work in international business and currently resides in New Jersey.

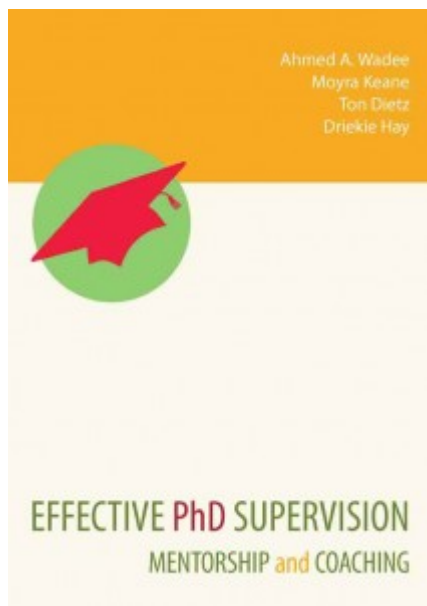
Marc Resch - Only in Holland, Only the Dutch. An in-depth look into the culture of Holland and its people

Rozenberg Publishers - ISBN 978 90 5170 800 4. 3rd and updated edition. 2010

Visit www.onlyinholland.com for more information about the book and the Netherlands with up to date Dutch news, travel tips, links and much more.

Taking you on a trip through his life in the Netherlands, Marc Resch makes us grateful for his powers of observation and capacity to remember all that assaults your consciousness and sub-consciousness alike. - XPat Review

Effective PhD Supervision - Mentorship and Coaching



The complete book online

[Chapter One: Chapter One: Introduction](#)

[Chapter Two: Guidelines for Supervisors](#)

[Chapter Three: Guidelines for Mentors](#)

[Chapter Four: Coaching: Charting your own Path](#)

[Chapter Five: The Relationship between PhD Candidate and Supervisor](#)

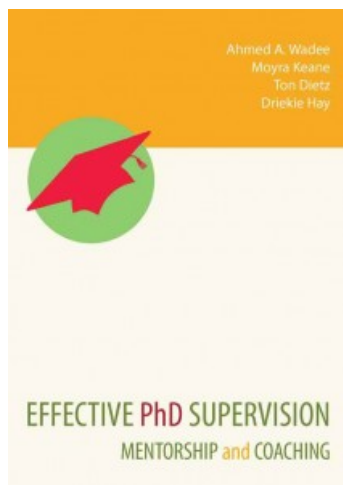
[Chapter Six: A Holistic Approach to PhD Support](#)

[Chapter Seven: Bibliography and Recommended Reading](#)

[Appendices and Acknowledgments](#)

Effective PhD Supervision -

Chapter One: Introduction



Foreword by Ms. M. Metcalfe

I am very pleased to present this second edition of the South Africa-Netherlands Research Programme on Alternatives in Development (SANPAD) Supervision Workbook.

The Workbook is yet another contribution by SANPAD towards improving the quality of supervision of doctoral students in South Africa. The Department of Higher Education and Training is particularly encouraged by these efforts, as they continue to enhance the overall quality of our PhD graduates and future academics. PhD qualifications are generally considered to be the first real entry points into the rigorous world of research. As a result, the focus on improving the academic experience of students at this level through improved supervision and mentoring will go a long way towards increasing the overall numbers of PhD graduates at our institutions.

It has become clear that although the number of students enrolling for PhD studies in South Africa has increased over the years, a large proportion of these students do not complete their studies. The reasons for this are many, among them the relationships between supervisors and their students and the overall quality of supervision. The difficulties often stem from the fact that not all supervisors have been properly trained for supervision duties. The mistake that is often made in higher education institutions across the globe is to assume that every academic, by virtue of his or her experience in teaching or research, knows what is required to supervise postgraduate students. Studies show that this is not

usually the case and, in fact, academics need proper training and support if they are to effectively carry out their supervision responsibilities. This Workbook will provide a useful guide for both supervisors and PhD candidates on how to structure their working relationships into better interaction and supervision experiences.

This book sets out to serve as a challenge for improving PhD supervision, mentoring and coaching both in South Africa and in the Netherlands. It can be utilised as a training manual for supervisors in both countries. The book is also easy to use, as it provides practical examples and scenarios. Moreover, it provides strategies on how to deal with some of the challenges commonly experienced by both supervisors and candidates during PhD supervision, mentoring and coaching. For these reasons, I offer my support for this publication.

Finally, I would like to thank the individual authors of each section of this book for their hard work in putting together such an important text. My sincere thanks also go to the people and institutions that have provided support for the production of this book. I really hope that this resource will stimulate and inform. In this way it will contribute positively to the improvement of our postgraduate students and research system.

MS M. METCALFE

DG: HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Chapter 1 - INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to this Workbook

SANPAD (South Africa-Netherlands Research Programme on Alternatives in Development) has had a proud history of over ten years in providing a platform for promoting a research culture in South Africa in partnership with the Netherlands. SANPAD's flagship programme has been its research capacity building programme for pre-doctoral candidates. Two hundred and thirty candidates were selected for the RCI programme during the period of 2002-2008; all candidates registered for their PhD degrees. Of these, 125 have graduated from their respective universities, and the remaining 105 candidates who registered between 2005 and 2008 are expected to complete their PhDs and graduate by the end of 2010.

Following the first edition, the approaches to supervision and mentoring have evolved over time (with some new facilitators), but the essence of running the workshops from which this publication emanates has essentially remained the same. However, in this second edition, as implied by the revised title, we have included coaching as an important means of promoting graduate student success. This expands the coverage and includes numerous improvements to the original material. The first edition of this workbook filled an obvious gap at the time and met with gratifying reception from the academic community both in the Netherlands and Southern Africa, but there were areas that required further expansion and new information needed to be included. The PhD candidates, their supervisors and the facilitators in the Research Capacity programme (RCI) were a valuable source of information that motivated the authors to revise the first edition. Hence, the second addition was born. The changes in the second edition respond to the experiences of both the students and the facilitators in the SANPAD pre-doctoral programme and the input that we received from the broader academic community in South Africa over the last five years. More importantly, the book engages readers in dialogue and active reflection on the strategies of effective supervision of PhDs. Accessibly written, it encourages supervisors to reflect on and enhance their research supervision practice with a diversity of students on a variety of research projects. There is a special focus on research skills development and on supporting students through and beyond the examination process.

High quality postgraduate education is of central importance to the creation of the ever more highly skilled workforce that is necessary if our country and continent is to flourish in an increasingly complex and competitive world. It also brings great benefit to individuals and, through them, to society as a whole. Over the past decade we have witnessed some really quite dramatic and challenging changes in the shape, nature and volume of education at this level; changes that not only support our immediate needs for the workforce and knowledge-based economy but also reflect today's remarkable and rapidly advancing technology. Of course, such changes don't come for free and I am only too well aware of the various pressures to which postgraduate education is subject, pressures that in turn impact upon staff and students alike. It is against this backdrop that we present this comprehensive workbook on supervision and mentorship.

The first edition was immensely successful, as is so evident from the positive

feedback that we received. The book has been most notably recommended as reading for many postgraduate programmes on the African Continent and so has had a much wider remit. I am convinced that this new edition will be even more successful than the first, successful with both postgraduate students and their supervisors.

'If only this book had been available when I was a PhD student'

1.2 South African Perspectives on the PhD

Since 1994, South African higher education has experienced a major transformation - particularly in redressing the educational backlogs and needs of previously disadvantaged students. A lot has been achieved in widening access for black students at the undergraduate level, specifically. However, with regard to postgraduate students and research output, the system is not yet making the progress desired, since insufficient numbers of black and women postgraduate students obtain doctoral degrees. Subsequently, institutions find it hard to reach staff equity targets and not enough black supervisors exist to serve as role models for black students. The Education White Paper 3 sounds the alert about the 'insufficient research capacity in higher education that is amongst others poorly coordinated and inadequately linked to postgraduate studies.'[\[1\]](#) This paper has also prioritised the access of black and women students to master's, doctoral and postdoctoral programmes. These race and gender imbalances are found in the demographic composition of researchers in higher education, research councils and private-sector research establishments.

The participation and completion rates of black postgraduate students are crucial in order to deal with employment equity targets and the creation of a new generation of scholars/academics in South Africa. Although progress has been made in terms of the staff compilation of higher education institutions and black academics now constitute approximately 30% of the higher education workforce, they still produce less than 10% of all peer-reviewed articles in the latter part of the previous decade. In terms of equity, black students constitute about 30% of all master's and doctoral enrolments in higher education. However, they only constitute about 20% of the postgraduate enrolments at the historically white universities. It thus seems that in the case of research, which includes master's and doctoral degrees, it has been more difficult to break down the apartheid legacy than it has in terms of student access, research funding and staffing.[\[2\]](#)

The training of supervisors and promoters is becoming increasingly important as is the need to change dated ways of providing supervision. We need to consider how cultures meet, what kind of interactions should take place, and how applicable and acceptable the methods are for postgraduate students. The realities of a complex supervisory relationship, where colonial/West and African, the scholastically advantaged and disadvantaged, and a number of different cultures and languages interact, often with conflicting and deviating political and worldviews coming together, have not yet been researched sufficiently within the new higher education dispensation.

1.2.1 Complexities in postgraduate supervision

The predominant assumptions and values that have characterised postgraduate supervisory practices in the South African higher education system are mainly derived from aspects of European culture. However, higher education is a narrow culture that rewards specific ways of knowing and instinctively discounts other ways of knowing (nonverbal, empathetic, visual, symbolic or nuanced communication are often not valued, for example). Accepted postgraduate supervisory practices usually conform to the traditional ways of knowledge creation, research paradigms and worldviews, and utilise one specific methodology to oversee postgraduate research. What has thus emerged in the South African higher education system is a lack of conscious cultural identity among postgraduate students in higher education, since in most cases a single common norm is advocated and the culture-conscious postgraduate student is viewed as frivolous.

1.2.2 Supervisory challenges in the Southern African context

An array of challenges still face postgraduate supervision in the South African context, amongst them, inadequate academic literacy and writing skills, power relations, and inadequate preparation in research methodology.

1.2.2.1 Academic literacy skills

A great area of concern is the inadequate academic literacy levels of postgraduate students whose mother tongue is not English, as it is expected from them to write and articulate their ideas at the level at which they are working and thinking.

Working in another language clearly hinders this. Often students need to translate what they hear and read. This slows down postgraduate students' thinking and expression, impeding thought processes.

1.2.3 Power relations in postgraduate supervision

Power relations between supervisors and students usually emanate from the authority position of the supervisor, exacerbated in the case of non-traditional postgraduate students who work in English as a second (third, fourth or fifth) language. In a multi-cultural supervisory relationship, it is imperative to reflect on whether pedagogical approaches to supervision and research, and the suggested values and outcomes underpinning these, are themselves culture- and value-free or a product of cultural ideologies. In the South African context non-traditional postgraduate students and those representing first generation postgraduate students are expected to fit into the culture and practices of historically advantaged (predominantly white) higher education institutions and are expected to assimilate into these institutions' beliefs and practices. This needs to be done with great sensitivity and to be built on a relationship of trust and respect. One way of achieving this, is to draw on Vygotsky's work on mediated learning experiences.[\[3\]](#)

Vygotsky, a founding theorist on socio-cultural learning issues, reminds us that all uniquely human or higher mental functions are transformed social relationships which emerge and are shaped in the course of joint activities with others. The crux of the matter is that what people come to know, that is, how they learn to learn, to think and to act in particular contexts, is constituted in a relationship between their existing cognitive schemes, knowledge, skills and dispositions, the functional demands of the activities they participate in, and the forms of mediation they are afforded in such activities.[\[4\]](#) The implication is that, regardless of how much potential postgraduate students have, if they do not have opportunities to participate in activities that develop specialised forms of knowledge and functioning and/or are not afforded sufficient opportunities of mediation by others experienced in those activities, they are unlikely to develop such forms of functioning. Consequently, the notion of mediated postgraduate learning experiences and how they should be brought into supervisory practices is becoming increasingly important for transforming the typical South African postgraduate context. This should be viewed against the fact that the gap in many of our postgraduate students' educational backgrounds and in their limited

research training at undergraduate and honours degree levels needs to be closed by helping students along their way, in other words, closing the gap between what is known and what is to be known.

The following guidelines, drawing on the actual experiences and observations of exemplary supervisory practices within South African universities, should be considered when attempting to improve the practice of supervision: – Applying appropriate selection measurements which could include instruments that will assess the student's level of readiness to engage in rigorous postgraduate work.

- Considering the training of supervisors as a serious matter, since underprepared supervisors can hamper the quality of postgraduate work, retention and success rates. Training should include aspects such as technical, personal, legal, ethical, administrative and professional aspects of supervision.

- In addition, an induction programme for new supervisors in the field should be designed so that they gradually learn to supervise, ideally under a mentor, starting initially as a co-supervisor.

- Creating reporting opportunities for new supervisors in the field, so that they can receive constructive feedback on emerging problems and take corrective action before serious problems surface.

- Offering structured and regular opportunities for students to provide feedback on the quality and effectiveness of supervisors and on their experiences of the overall supervisory process. Such a practice will ensure that students at risk can be identified early so that necessary and timely interventions can be brought to bear.

- Ensuring that universities, faculties and departments have an updateable Handbook for Supervision which outlines the code of conduct for all involved. This will ensure that every supervisor and student is aware of and familiar with the often complex administrative regulations, requirements and deadlines that accompany this process.

- Holding supervisors accountable for the progress of supervision by requiring regular reports on each student. A 'logbook' is often very helpful, as it keeps a record of all the meetings and interactions between student and supervisor as well as what should be done in terms of follow-up action and preparations for the

next meeting.

- Looking carefully at the workload of supervisors and preventing a novice supervisor from supervising more than one or two students.
- Getting to know the postgraduate student early on. Although this is hard for cases of supervision at a distance, for those students who are nearby and on-campus, it is important to get to know the students.
- Building the confidence of the postgraduate student: students should be encouraged to put ideas on paper. This will help the supervisor to judge whether the student understands the nature of the doctorate and will provide opportunities for positive feedback.
- Dealing effectively with pressures in the supervisory relationship: there are the pressures of the developing relationship and pressures to get the student completed in the designated timeframe. Students need to understand that they must work hard early on and have regular meetings. At the end of a meeting, the next meeting needs to be scheduled.
- Keeping to timeframes. Supervisors have a responsibility to get students to stick to timelines. Establishing this habit early on in candidacy is crucial.
- Monitoring student focus. The supervisor needs to keep one step ahead of the student to keep the student from being sidetracked. If the student is going off in different directions, pull them back into focus.
- Encouraging publications from the beginning. Supervisors should encourage students to publish, although this will depend on the student and the topic. If a student is able to be published in a good journal, this will help the examination. But getting published needs to be balanced with getting the thesis written. Writing the thesis should be the first priority.

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Next Chapter: Chapter Two - <http://rozenbergquarterly.com/?p=1863>

[\[2\]](#) Bawa & Mouton (2002): 320, 328

[\[3\]](#) Vygotsky (1978)

[\[4\]](#) Bradbury (1993)