

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 Wilder's 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 'kopvoddens', *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>