

# LOSING TOMORROW TODAY: ISLAMISING GERMANY

A new generation of collaborators is caving in to the new conquerors of Europe, says **Henryk M. Broder**

**M**y mother, Fela Broder, was not a writer but a Krakow housewife who loved to tell stories that were neither appropriated nor invented about the ordeals that Polish Jews had suffered between 1939 and 1945. The immediate post-War era, too, provided her with a good deal of narrative material. The Nazis were gone but the collaborators remained, the so-called kapos, those Jewish and non-Jewish Poles who had performed auxiliary services for the Nazis. Most of them had simply been trying to save their lives or get better rations and a less onerous job. But some performed their duties with enthusiasm.

One of these kapos, said Fela Broder, was a particularly vicious sadist. His specialty was to whip those guilty of minor disciplinary violations until they couldn't stand, walk or breathe. He did far more than the camp administrators expected of him. On a good day, though, he would turn a blind eye to infractions or give a prisoner a piece of bread. Even a kapo wanted to be human now and then.

His wife and my mother had known each other from before the war. When it was all over, she went to my mother and asked her to testify in court as a witness for her husband. 'Fela,' said the wife of the kapo in part explanation, part apology, 'who could imagine that the Germans would lose the war?'

## Accommodating the inevitable

This one sentence is all that is necessary to understand the phenomenon of collaboration—the anticipatory obedience and identification with the aggressor by cowed and conquered populations. After the Nazis had brought a large part of Europe under their control in an astonishingly short time, the idea that the triumphant Nazi war machine could ever run out of gas was beyond imagining to Hitler's followers; even the remaining decent Germans found it difficult to imagine that Hitler could lose the war. Given the circumstances, one hesitates to blame the collaborators ready and willing to come to an accommodation with the Nazi regime when offered the opportunity to do so. Even the pre-war critics of Hitler who had not emigrated in time conformed to the new regime by going into internal exile.

A similar kowtowing to a seemingly invincible opponent occurred in the 1950s. When the Soviet Union, at the height of its power, crushed the uprisings in Hungary and Czechoslovakia, many in West Germany had no doubt that the Red Army would soon march west. The West German peace movement (whose sponsorship by the KGB and the Stasi was still unknown) supported unilateral

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disarmament, and was entirely sincere about the correctness of its slogan ‘better red than dead.’ Chancellor Helmut Schmidt and other proponents of the ‘dual strategy’—to simultaneously rearm and negotiate—were regarded as warmongers. They risked a nuclear inferno despite the ‘reality’: the Soviet Union, the home of all friends of peace, was invincible. Those who picked an argument with fate were dooming all to destruction.

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### Islam and the intellectuals

More than 30 years later, history is repeating itself. Except this time the colour on the horizon is green, not red.

Islam—or, as some prefer to say, Islamism—is on the march, though it is employing different means than the communists. Its demographic weapon is changing the face and landscape of Europe, as demonstrated by repeat controversies over wearing the burka and the construction of minarets. The ideology of accommodation-cum-collaboration with an invincible force is again proving attractive, especially to many intellectuals, not despite but because of its simplicity.

These enlightened individuals are volunteering for service. Not to stand athwart the oncoming superpower (which is considered dangerous and futile) but to show it the way, just as a pilot guides a ship into port. The European elites who dominate the opinion pages in broadsheet newspapers in countries such as Germany may be too sophisticated to be seduced by slick ad slogans to buy a flat-screen TV or tempted by last-minute deals for Caribbean vacations, but they are easily succumbing to the charms of a new totalitarianism.

Take for example the commentator in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (SZ), a centre-left German broadsheet, who argued for recognising Sharia law as a complement to the Western legal system. On the SZ opinion pages, Andreas Zielcke, a German lawyer, maintained that the West should

not compromise its core values to facilitate the complicated integration of Muslims. However, rather than be ‘anchored in its non-negotiable legal culture,’ Zielcke says the West ‘must demonstrate to Islam its civilized ability to forge ties across all spiritual gaps.’

This sort of legal vagueness makes any lawyer’s heart beat faster. Although he accepts that Western legal culture is ‘non-negotiable,’ Zielcke argues that it is nonetheless the West that must prove ‘its civilized ability to forge ties’ with Islam and not the other way around.

Zielcke makes clear how flexible he expects the West to be. Polygamy, which ‘is still practised in many Islamic regions (although it is on the decline),’ cannot be accepted in Germany. Yet if ‘the husband dies and leaves behind many widows, then German social legislation should direct that the pension entitlements be evenly distributed among them all.’ In this way, says Zielcke, one could ‘eliminate polygamy, but also address the harmful consequences of exclusion.’

Accept this, and the floodgates will be opened. The only question left will be deciding which German government agency will issue licences that permit a man’s multiple wives to enter Germany under the family reunion law.

### Law

You might think calling for the recognition of Sharia is a bold move, considering the public outcry when the Archbishop of Canterbury proposed this for Britain.

Zielcke, however, didn’t hesitate because he found another legal expert to support his view that there can be Sharia without such ‘atrocities’ as ‘beheadings and mutilations.’ ‘In Germany we make use of Sharia every day,’ says Mathias Rohe, Supreme Court judge and Professor of International Law in Erlangen.

For example, in a divorce case heard at a family court in the state of Hesse, the judge advised the plaintiff to stay a little longer with her Moroccan-born husband who beat her because ‘in this [his] culture,’ it was ‘not unusual for a husband to have the right to punish his wife.’ The judge said that the German-born wife should have known about this when marrying a man who had grown up in a Muslim country.

This decision sparked nationwide outrage and led to the judge being removed from the case.

But the spirit of Sharia had already been breathed into German law, with jurists recognising ‘honour’ as a mitigating motive in killings. ‘Sharia lite’ is in force—it’s like Oktoberfest without the beer!

### Muslim immigration and integration

Zielcke is right about one thing, though: ‘The norms of Sharia migrate along with the “stowaways”.’ Like the kapos, he is giving in to tomorrow’s victors today. He is waving the white flag to say, ‘I’m on your side! Please remember that!’

Yet Zielcke remains very much the benevolent intellectual. He wants to adopt persecuted minorities and accept reality only in part. He wants to modify the norms of Sharia to do what’s best for Muslim migrants.

This overlooks the fact that millions of Muslims have left their homelands to escape the barbarities of Sharia. They leave for Europe just like the millions of Europeans, from the Pilgrim Fathers to the Jews, once left for life and liberty to the New World of America. But what about those Muslims in Europe who don’t want to live by Sharia?

Zielcke doesn’t care about them. Having moved on from the wretched of the earth, the proletariat, and the poor victims of imperial exploitation in the Third World, intellectuals have discovered the Muslims who are offended, hurt and injured by the West, by the Pope and his Regensburg speech, by the Danish cartoonist Kurt Westergaard who drew one of the famous Muhammad cartoons, by the Dutch politician Geert Wilders and his film *Fitna*.

Muslims who are not offended, insulted or hurt in their feelings by debate about Islamic-influence in Europe are ignored or scolded by the intelligentsia. Independent Muslim critics of Islam frustrate their self-appointed guardians, especially when the critics are women like Ayaan Hirsi Ali.

In late February, the Central Council of Ex-Muslims was founded in Vienna, inspired by similar groups in Germany and the Netherlands. Its first chairman, a 30-year-old Austrian-born Muslim, said in an interview, ‘The ex-Muslims are needed to bring about the long-overdue Islamic

Enlightenment. Many Muslims living here are already ex-Muslims without knowing it. Their way of life has little to do with the Islam preached by strict believers.’

### Culture

But the more Muslims speak up for themselves, the more fervently the intellectuals believe they have a mortgage on expertise, goodness and truth.

Andrian Kreye, the opinion editor of *SZ*, wrote after the attempted assassination of Westergaard that the Danish cartoonist differed from Salman Rushdie, the author of *The Satanic Verses*, on whom the Ayatollah Khomeini imposed a fatwa more than 20 years ago:

One cannot compare a work of world literature—in which one of the most gifted writers of our time, when culture is at its historical zenith, is addressing the religious tensions of his home country, India—with the crude wisecracks of a Danish cartoonist. One is an intellectual masterpiece, which must be defended, the other a deliberate provocation, which is about as intelligent as attempting to train a tiger by offering him only a ham sandwich, whereupon he drags you away.

Stripped of the literary pretensions, this amounts to the intellectual deciding what’s worth protecting and what’s not. Rushdie’s death would have been a pity but not Westergaard’s. This babble amounted to collaboration with the seemingly invincible force of Islam, with the conceited intellectual thinking he can set the terms of engagement.

### Politics

Contrary to a deeply cherished misconception, many free spirits are attracted to a lack of freedom.

Some flirt with Sharia, while others stand at the ‘intersection between leftist politics and Islamic religion.’ Such is the case with Oskar Lafontaine, a left-wing politician and former German finance minister. In an interview with the socialist *Neues Deutschland* newspaper, he said:

Islam depends on community and so opposes exaggerated individualism, which threatens to doom the West to failure. The second point of contact is that the devout Muslim is obliged to share; the left, too, wants the strong to help the weak. And third: in Islam, the payment of interest is still prohibited, as it once was in Christianity.

So Sharia can even be harmonised with orthodox Marxism. To a self-styled progressive politician like Lafontaine, all the non-progressive archaic, authoritarian and totalitarian elements (from the suppression of democracy, to the violation of human rights, to the oppression of women and non-believers) are acceptable so long as Islam still ‘bans interest payments.’

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### The West

Lafontaine and his ilk seek a political accommodation with Islam based on socialist principles. Others have simply given up on the idea of the West. In Germany, they have even coined a new term to describe the critics of Islam’s many tyrannies: Enlightenment Fundamentalists. It is them, not the Islamists, who are denounced as the real ‘preachers of hate.’

Worse than the failed underpants bomber on that Delta Airlines flight from Amsterdam to Detroit at Christmas time in 2009, complained Thomas Steinfeld in *SZ*, was that this failed terrorist attack was ‘all it takes’ to get the debate about Islam up and running again with the same allegedly unsound people expressing the same unsound views.

Steinfeld singled out the Berlin sociologist Necla Kelek (a Turkish-born Muslim) who maintains that ‘Muslims must break away from

Sharia, they need to reject political Islam and unreservedly embrace civil society and its rights and obligations.’

Such intolerance—of violent jihadist force, to be sure—could not be tolerated, Steinfeld says, adding that:

If you run around pushing ‘Western values’ as aggressively as radical Islam does its holy scriptures, then you’re behaving just like those you’ve selected as the enemy. And even worse: you’re destroying the social and moral institutions that you purport to defend ... if one insists on tolerance, one cannot cease being tolerant if someone else does not wish to be tolerant.

Let’s translate this into its practical meaning: Steinfeld calls for tolerance of intolerance. Likening defenders of Western values to radical Islamists is the equivalent of likening Martin Luther King to the Ku Klux Klan. This is suicidal nonsense. Moral equivalence is the fashionable form of unconditional surrender.

### Full circle

It was Günter Grass, Germany’s leading intellectual and moral conscience for half a century, who, when seeking to understand the motives of the terrorists only a few days after September 11, located the root cause in the West. According to Grass, Islamic terrorism was caused by the policies that empower us and exploit them—even if the terrorists come from middle-class families and have enjoyed the benefits of the good life in the decadent West.

When Grass’ home town of Lübeck applied for selection as one the EU’s European Capital of Culture, he suggested that a local church be rededicated as a mosque. This ‘great gesture,’ Grass argued, would improve relations with Muslims. ‘Once again,’ as Gunther Latsch put it in *Der Spiegel*, ‘G.G. has stimulated the G-spot of his clientele—those who, in an effort not to seem intolerant, maintain a masochism that approaches self-renunciation.’

Grass and many ‘critical intellectuals’ believe ‘we’ are the cause of all of the problems. The Crusades, the Inquisition and the Holocaust

oblige the West to accommodate Islamism. During the debate about the 12 Mohammed cartoons published by the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten*, Grass called the violent protests by outraged Muslims a ‘fundamentalist response to a fundamentalist act.’ He called for restraint ... by the West: ‘We have lost the right under the law to seek protection for freedom of speech ... and we should not forget that there are places that have no separation of church and state.’

Perhaps these attitudes arise from the bad consciences of the great-grandchildren of Godfrey of Bouillon, Tomás de Torquemada, and Heinrich Himmler. But it is also possible that an opportunistic calculus is in play. The intellectuals have nothing to lose by laying down with the Islamists. If the Islamists lose the ‘clash of civilizations’ and the ‘hegemony of the West’ remains in place, it won’t matter. Civil societies, like the West, take offence at nothing and have a short memory.

### Conclusion

Intellectuals have long had an affinity for totalitarianism. Halldór Laxness defended the excesses of Stalin; Egon Erwin Kisch was impressed by cultural life in the Soviet Union; and Luise Rinser was so taken with the North Korean dictator Kim il-Sung that she would have preferred to live in his empire if the Greens hadn’t asked her to be a candidate for the Germany’s presidency.

Today it’s the poor, persecuted Islamists who must be protected from the fury of the intolerance of Western critics. The guardian has again found a ward. The tolerant one is he who speaks the word of intolerance.

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F. A. Hayek

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