

Europe Rethinks Multiculturalism
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Americans, unlike Europeans, have always made room for new citizens from other countries. Since the end of World War II, however, western European countries have been trying to counter their old patterns of bigotry by welcoming all immigrants fleeing horrors in their old countries. The governments of the UK, France, Germany, and Scandinavia have offered social services, welfare, housing, and public schooling for the newcomers.

What they have not done is to make demands on immigrants that they accept the values and behaviors of their new countries. Such demands, it was thought, assumed that their own cultures were in some way superior to that of the newcomers, a view not popular with multiculturalists. This well-intentioned policy is now facing revision---and many people hope it is not too late.

The American model has been different from that of Europe. We received hordes of refugees from the mid-19th century until World War I, refugees who were needed in the work force. The Americans who were already here certainly did not welcome people with disparate and often unpalatable cultures; every immigrant wave faced bigotry at first. However, within one generation, most of the children of these immigrants thrived and were as American as their neighbors. Immigrants took citizenship classes and worked hard to become Americans. They all learned English and few of them had any desire to return to their parents' countries. They were American.

Although some immigrant groups brought with them criminal organizations: the Italian Mafia, the Chinese Tongs, German Bunds, and Irish criminal-political networks, these were designed to evade, not replace American law. Moreover, American standards of tolerance required that people eventually adopt the values of the host country, and our immigrant populations have been integrated.

Europe's problem was that they did not have a tradition of integrating large numbers of immigrants into their age-old national identities. Even dissident Christian groups such as the Albigensians and Cathars were exterminated when they refused to accept Catholicism. Christianity throughout two millennia never considered the one small group with another religion, the Jews, as acceptable citizens. This only changed during the Reformation, when finally, some Jews were able to distinguish themselves as true German, French, or English citizens.

With the Reformation, however, came a two-century war between Catholic and Protestant states, also waged on the citizens with the wrong religion within those states. The British barred English Catholics from the full rights of citizenship until the Pope stopped persecuting Protestants in Catholic countries. This should be the model of all tolerance: reciprocity.

European countries (and America) have welcomed Muslim immigrants, both the elites who were already educated in European schools (Persians and Afghans), and those perceived to be very downtrodden economic refugees: Turkish, Somali, Indonesian, Pakistani, Iraqi, Chechen, and Palestinian. In Europe, these migrants were admitted unconditionally, with consequences of violence and lawlessness, particularly against women and children. Such groups have representatives with enough political clout to make demands on the larger culture, such as special family law, intolerance of the majority culture's mores, and excuses for religious-based violence. Why else would the British press try to call Pakistani Muslim rapists "South Asian?" Fear of being branded bigots motivates this.

Now, at last, the worm is turning. British Prime Minister David Cameron has proposed new laws that will permit seizing the passports of Britons who have traveled abroad to fight with terrorist Jihadis. They will not be readmitted and will lose their citizenship. Jihadis preaching violence in Britain will no longer be protected by British law. They will be deported.

The Dutch and Danes have finally scrapped their multicultural indulgence of Muslim migrants. They now demand that citizenship requires learning the language, mores, and values of their hosts. France was the first European country to ban the Islamic headscarf in government institutions and the total burqa in public (insulting to women and used as disguises by criminals and terrorists).

The US and Canada have been slower to adopt such measures, which may be changing now. Calling Hassan Nidal's Islam-inspired Camp Hood massacre "workplace violence" instead of Muslim terror is outrageous political correctness.

679 words

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