

# Needing to wake up, West just closes its eyes

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In five years' time, how many Jews will be living in France? Two years ago, a 23-year-old Paris disc jockey called Sebastien Selam was heading off to work from his parents' apartment when he was jumped in the parking garage by his Muslim neighbor Adel. Selam's throat was slit twice, to the point of near-decapitation; his face was ripped off with a fork; and his eyes were gouged out. Adel climbed the stairs of the apartment house dripping blood and yelling, "I have killed my Jew. I will go to heaven."

Is that an gripping story? You'd think so. Particularly when, in the same city, on the same night, a Jewish woman was brutally murdered in the presence of her daughter by another Muslim. You've got the making of a mini-trend there, and the media love trends.

Yet no major French newspaper carried the story.

This month, there was another murder. Ilan Halimi, also 23, also Jewish, was found by a railway track outside Paris with burns and knife wounds all over his body. He died en route to the hospital, having been held prisoner, hooded and naked, and brutally tortured for almost three weeks by a gang that had demanded half a million dollars from his family. Can you take a wild guess at the particular identity of the gang? During the ransom phone calls, his uncle reported that they were made to listen to Ilan's screams as he was being burned while his torturers read out verses from the Quran.

This time around, the French media did carry the story, yet every public official insisted there was no anti-Jewish element. Just one of those things. Coulda happened to anyone. And, if the gang did seem inordinately fixated on, ah, Jews, it was just because, as one police detective put it, "Jews equal money." In London, the Observer couldn't even bring itself to pursue that particular angle. Its report of the murder managed to avoid any mention of the unfortunate Halimi's, um, Jewishness. Another British paper, the Independent, did dwell on the particular, er, identity groups involved in the incident but only in the context of a protest march by Parisian Jews marred by "radical young Jewish men" who'd attacked an "Arab-run grocery."

At one level, those spokesmonsieurs are right: It could happen to anyone. Even in the most civilized societies, there are depraved monsters who do terrible things. When they do, they rip apart entire families, like the Halimis and Selams. But what inflicts the real lasting damage on society as a whole is the silence and evasions of the state and the media and the broader culture.

A lot of folks are, to put it at its mildest, indifferent to Jews. In 2003, a survey by the European Commission found that 59 percent of Europeans regard Israel as the "greatest menace to world peace." Only 59 percent? What the hell's wrong with the rest of 'em? Well, don't worry: In Germany, it was 65 percent; Austria, 69 percent; the Netherlands, 74 percent. Since then, Iran has sportingly offered to solve the problem of the Israeli threat to world peace by wiping the Zionist Entity off the face of the map. But what a tragedy that those peace-loving Iranians have been provoked into launching nuclear armageddon by those pushy Jews. As Paul Oestreicher, Anglican chaplain of the University of Sussex, wrote in the Guardian the other day, "I cannot listen calmly when an Iranian president talks of wiping out Israel. Jewish fears go deep. They are not irrational. But I cannot listen calmly either when a great many citizens of Israel think and speak of Palestinians in the way a great many Germans thought and spoke about Jews when I was one of them and had to flee."

It's not surprising when you're as heavily invested as the European establishment is in an absurd equivalence between a nuclear madman who thinks he's the warm-up act for the Twelfth Imam and the fellows building the Israeli security fence that you lose all sense of proportion when it comes to your own backyard, too. "Radical young Jewish men" are no threat to "Arab-run groceries." But radical young Muslim men are changing the realities of daily life for Jews and gays and women in Paris, Brussels, Amsterdam, Copenhagen, Oslo and beyond. If you don't care for the Yids, big deal; look out for yourself. The Jews are playing their traditional role of the canaries in history's coal mine.

Something very remarkable is happening around the globe and, if you want the short version, a Muslim demonstrator in Toronto the other day put it very well:

"We won't stop the protests until the world obeys Islamic law."

Stated that baldly it sounds ridiculous. But, simply as a matter of fact, every year more and more of the world lives under Islamic law: Pakistan adopted Islamic law in 1977, Iran in 1979, Sudan in 1984. Four decades ago, Nigeria lived under English common law; now, half of it's in the grip of sharia, and the other half's feeling the squeeze, as the death toll from the cartoon jihad indicates. But just as telling is how swiftly the developed world has internalized an essentially Islamic perspective. In their pitiful coverage of the low-level intifada that's been going on in France for five years, the European press has been barely any less loopy than the Middle Eastern media.

What, in the end, are all these supposedly unconnected matters from Danish cartoons to the murder of a Dutch filmmaker to gender-segregated swimming sessions in French municipal pools about? Answer: sovereignty. Islam claims universal jurisdiction and always has. The only difference is that they're now acting upon it. The signature act of the new age was the seizure of the U.S. Embassy in Tehran: Even hostile states generally respect the convention that diplomatic missions are the sovereign territory of their respective countries. Tehran then advanced to claiming jurisdiction over the citizens of sovereign states and killing them -- as it did to Salman Rushdie's translators and publishers. Now in the cartoon jihad and other episodes, the restraints of Islamic law are being extended piecemeal to the advanced world, by intimidation and violence but also by the usual cooing promotion of a spurious multicultural "respect" by Bill Clinton, the United Church of Canada, European foreign ministers, etc.

The I'd-like-to-teach-the-world-to-sing-in-perfect-harmonie crowd have always spoken favorably of one-worldism. From the op-ed pages of Jutland newspapers to les banlieues of Paris, the Pan-Islamists are getting on with it.