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James Kurth: Europe's Identity Problem and the New Islamist War Study Guide

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JAMES KURTH: EUROPE'S IDENTITY PROBLEM
AND THE NEW ISLAMIST WAR
STUDY GUIDE, 2007
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Outline

A. INTRODUCTION (541)
    1. Historic Bubble Since the Early 1970s
    2. Recent Return of European History
        a. Western Europe has chosen a **secular, liberal identity**
        b. European liberalism is profoundly unsuited for a long war with **Islamism**
B. WAR AND IDENTITY (541-44)
    1. Fundamental **Transformations of Identity**
        a. Consequence: great wars
    2. *From Christendom to **Catholic, Protestant, and Secular Identities***
        a. Pre-Modern Christendom
        b. Protestant Reformation
        c. Wars of Religion
        d. Consequence: three identities
        e. Development of secular philosophies
    3. *Liberal, Socialist, and Nationalist Identities*
        a. **The Enlightenment**
        b. French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars
        c. Struggle between three distinct secular ideologies and identities:
            liberalism, socialism, nationalism
    4. *Democratic, Communist, and Fascist Identities*
        a. Radicalized secular ideologies: democracy, communism, fascism and
            national socialism
        b. The Second World War was defined by the struggle of these radicalized
            ideologies
            1) Fullest discrediting of nationalism did not occur until the 1960s
        c. Cold War between (liberal) democracy and communism
            Western nations established extensive social-welfare systems (at least in
            part) in order to win the struggle with communism
            1) Fullest discrediting of socialism did not occur until the 1990s
    5. The Supremacy of the Liberal Identity
        a. Liberalism Is an Ensemble of Several **Elements**: **Liberal Democracy**
            (Politics), **Free Market** (Economics), **Open Society** (Social Structure),
            Expressive Democracy (Culture)
            1) Hyper-Individualism
            2) Resemblance to the myriad of pagan identities in ancient times
    6. Summary
C. THE ISLAMIST WAR AND ITS THREE FRONTS (544-48)
    1. War with Islamist Terrorists Who Are Inspired by Salafism and Wahabism
    2. **Three Arenas**
        a. Central Front
        b. Eastern Front
        c. Western Front
    3. *Muslim Communities in Western Countries: Differences Between Europe and the
        United States*

a. Immigrant communities are hostile to the culture of the host countries
b. "Muslim countries comprised major parts of the British, French, and Dutch empires."
c. The United States
d. The great divide: a double and reverse asymmetry
4. *The European Theater and the Liberal Ensemble*
a. Three elements (liberal democracy, open society, and individualistic culture) make it very difficult to legitimize **security measures** directed at Islamist networks
b. The free market element makes it almost impossible to establish a stable **equilibrium** between Muslim communities and European peoples
c. The open society element has encouraged **Muslim immigration**
1) "Even if the economic rationale for Muslim immigration (promoted by the business-based right) has been discredited, the social ideology of human rights (promoted by the academic and media-based left) has kept immigration at a high rate."
d. The ensemble of liberal ideas has dissolved the cohesion of European peoples
D. THE EUROPEAN CATASTROPHES OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY: DIAGNOSES AND PRESCRIPTIONS (548-52)
1. European Elite Diagnosis: Nationalism Blamed for the World Wars
a. National identity itself was implicated by the 1960s
b. Consequence: "For much of the European population, the only identity remaining is an individualistic, even hedonistic, one."
2. Great Class Conflicts, c. 1900-1950
a. Welfare state regarded as a solution
b. This solution "seriously debilitated European peoples and rendered them dangerously weak in their growing conflict with Islamism."
3. *The Demographic Consequences of the Welfare State*
New Range of Serious **Social Problems**
a. Higher unemployment
b. Reduction in the numbers of the young
1) Declining **fertility rate**
c. Decline in the willingness of European couples to have children
1) Young people seen as economic burdens
2) Consequences of old-age benefits
d. The politics of birth control
4. *The Demographic Consequences of Liberal Individualism*
a. Ideological and cultural developments
1) **Generation of 1968**: Traditional views replaced by expressive individualism
b. The logic of individualism leads to demographic decline
c. The story of birth control over the past three decades is "a triumphal narrative of the fulfillment of liberal ideas."
1) Consequence: a new narrative of Muslim demographic rise
5. *The Transformation of the European Working Class*
a. Western European boom (1950s-1960s) and Southern European boom (1980s-1990s)
1) Old European working class promoted into the middle class
b. Consequence: Immigrants now do the dirty work
6. *The Creation of a Muslim Working Class*
a. Much of it is more like an **underclass**
b. Europe's success in solving its old problems made it "weak and vulnerable in dealing with the new problems."
E. A TALE OF TWO NATIONS (552-55)
1. Steady and Severe European Population Decline Is Anticipated

2. Consequence: Division of European Countries into Two Nations
    a. The ex-European nation [cf. Roger Scruton's "culture of repudiation"]
    b. Muslim and non-European nation
       1) A new kind of settler state
    c. Europe's bleak prospects if it continues to adhere to its liberal identity
       1) The politics of demographic despair
 3. *The Revival of Alternative European Identities?*
    a. *The Socialist Identity*
    b. *The Nationalist Identity*
       1) Anti-national reaction
       2) Absence of cultural vigor [Roger Scruton recommends preserving the high culture]
       3) Divisiveness
    c. *The Christian Identity*
 4. *The Resources of Catholic Social Thought*
    a. Papal encyclicals
F. A COUNTERFACTUAL EUROPEAN HISTORY (555-56)
   What If European Had Adopted/Practiced the Precepts of Catholic Social Thought?
 1. *High Unemployment*: Lowered
 2. *Demographic Decline*: Efforts to maintain equilibrium
 3. *High Immigration*: Unnecessary
 4. *Muslim Underclass*: Sojourners status
 5. Other Issues: Christian references in the EU preamble, exclusion of Turkey from the EU, avoidance of the Danish cartoon affair
G. FROM COUNTERFACTUAL PAST TO POTENTIAL FUTURE (557)
 1. Need for a Sound Religious Basis on Which to Confront the Muslim Challenge
    a. "To win against Islamism, an extremist form of religion, the West will have to become more religious than it had been before."
    b. "The best way for Europe to regain its future is to reclaim its history. That means to return to the Christian faith that attended and vitalized Europe for almost two thousand years."

Review

Europe's chosen identity   liberalism vs. Islamism   transformations of identity
elements of liberalism   three fronts of the Islamist war legitimizing security measures
what encouraged Muslim immigration   welfare state as a solution
problems of the welfare state   problems of liberal individualism alternative European identities
Catholic social thought and a counterfactual history