

Georgie Anne Geyer is a nationally syndicated columnist and the author of several books on international affairs. Soon to be published is her newest book, *Americans No More: The Death of Citizenship in America*. This column appeared in the *Washington Times* on September 4, 1994 and is reprinted by permission of the Universal Press Syndicate.

## Europe's Islamic Encounter

By Georgie Anne Geyer

One of the leading Dutch editors was surveying the mood of Europe this summer, when his attention focused on three compelling key words — refugees, Islam and commitment.

"After World War II, we young people were opposed to the old way of thinking," said Hans Moll, a top editor at the big newspaper *NRC Handelsblad*. "Then in the 1960s, there was a strong cultural relativist undertow in intellectual thinking. The idea was that all cultures were the same. Then came the new immigrants with different ways of thinking.

"When I was growing up, we made a laughingstock of the Roman Catholic Church — but when the Islamicists began to come, we stopped making those religious jokes. Nobody said anything against Islam. We were all cowards."

Today, Mr. Moll, a charming and thoughtful man who still dresses in the style of '60s (although he is balding now), thinks differently. Today, he and his friends see the ethos of this changing Europe predominantly reflected in three new factors: (1) resentment against aliens in general, (2) strong feelings they were "taken" by Islam, and (3) a conviction that it is high time European countries demand far more commitment from refugees than has hitherto been the case.

Indeed, everywhere one looked on the Continent this summer, one could see the dramatic degree to which Islam has lost that early panache for young Europeans, for whom it served as a vehicle for handy, if shallow, expression of resentments against their fathers' generation. At the same time, it is becoming ever clearer that the radical fundamental strains of Islam entering Europe are posing a real threat to European societies. That threat is marked not only by numbers of people but by new and lethal forms of both political and cultural immigration that were quite deliberately designed to infiltrate and change European societies.

● In Paris, French police this August staged a massive crackdown on Islamic activists who had been tunneling in among the 3 million Muslims in France, following the brutal killings of five French officials August 3 in Algeria. The police staged 13,000 spot ID checks, and the extremist Algerian "Islamic Salvation Front" actually issued a "declaration of war" against France. (It should be noted that most of Muslim

immigrants are law-abiding workers, and many actually come to Europe to escape from the violence and intolerance of the fundamentalists.)

● In France, too, officials laid out the new immigration and asylum laws recently passed. Birthright citizenship, by which any child of anyone born in France is automatically a citizen, has been changed — now those children between the ages of 16 and 22 must actively seek French citizenship. As well, on other levels, there has been a tightening of immigration laws, as well as a number of court cases dealing with Muslim immigrants who have insisted they have the "right" to practice their barbaric female circumcision (removal of the clitoris at age 9) in contradiction of French laws and cultural and moral norms.

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● In England for the last few years, as reported in London papers, the British state has been actively and dangerously challenged by extremist Muslim groups, 155 of whose members from 47 separate organizations actually met two years ago to form a "Muslim parliament" in England as an announced prelude to forming "Muslim states" in Europe. These states would embrace polygamy, instantaneous divorce, and the abolition of mixed-sex workplaces and public transport.

● In still another instance, Commonwealth immigrants from India in Great Britain have set up "British Hindu Untouchability," or in effect "no go" areas for untouchables — not in India, but in the country that is the world's very wellspring of equality before the law!

According to varied sources, Europe is awakening to the fact that immigrants are coming to actively change European society. France's conservative government recently warned that "the problems of immigration are ahead of us and not behind us," as the government noted that, by only the year 2000, 60 million of the 130 million population in just Algeria,

Tunisia and Morocco will be under 20 years of age and "without a future."

Most interesting to me is the fact that men and women in their 40s, such as Hans Moll, are no longer deluded. "These immigrants, they take an oath to nothing here," he said, "My girlfriend works with asylum-seekers. She sees them as a microcosm of conflicts to come. She's for a stern approach: making things clear from the moment they come, what can be done and what can't." Socialization of the immigrants into Dutch society? "There is none whatsoever," he concluded.

One wonders when these commonsense and appropriate measures of European countries, which have every reason to be proud of themselves and to protect what they have so painstakingly created, will ever reach America's still utopian shores. ■