

Oh Canada, Who Stands on Guard for Thee?

The not-so-hidden agenda behind Motion M-103

MADELINE WELD

The process of settlement is a “Civilization-Jihadist Process” with all the word means. The Ikhwan [Muslim Brotherhood] must understand that their work in America is kind of a grand Jihad in eliminating and destroying the Western civilization from within and “sabotaging” its miserable house by their hands and the hands of the believers so that it is eliminated and God’s religion is made victorious over all other religions. (From the Explanatory Memorandum of the General Strategic Goals for the Group in North America, an internal document of the Muslim Brotherhood written in 1991, discovered by the FBI in 2004.)

On March 23, 2017, the Canadian House of Commons passed Motion M-103, officially called “Systemic racism and religious discrimination.” Why are so many Canadians, whose country is supposedly a role model for “tolerance and diversity,” so upset about this motion? Especially since M-103 is “only a motion, not a bill,” that is to say, merely a statement of sentiments, technically of no legal significance, unlike a bill, which could be expected to eventually lead to legislation. A clue to the negative reception of Motion M-103 is provided by the name by which it is commonly

known: “the anti-Islamophobia motion.” Some historical background might explain why so many Canadians are also dubious about the assertions that “M-103 will not lead to Sharia.” Admittedly, the prospects of stonings for adultery, amputations for theft, and the launching of gays from buildings are a distant prospect for Canada, but Sharia law also forbids any criticism of or offence to Islam, the Koran, or Mohammad. And in Canada, the special treatment of Islam is not a distant prospect: it’s been going on for a long time. Looking to Europe, some Canadians are starting to clue in as to what the real intent of M-103 might be.

That some Muslims in Canada are serious about establishing Sharia law was evident by attempts to do so in both Ontario and Quebec, provinces that between them hold over 60 percent of Canada’s population. In Ontario in 2003, the Islamic Institute for Civil Justice tried to establish a Muslim Court of Arbitration, which would be used to mediate family disputes in matters such as divorce and inheritance. After two years of turmoil, Dalton McGuinty, the Liberal premier at the time, declared in September, 2005, that Ontario would reject the use of Sharia law and prohibit all religiously based tribunals. This prohibition primarily affected Jewish courts operating under the 1991 Ontario Arbitration Act, which was established to relieve an overloaded court system by diverting civil cases to arbitration — and under which the Muslims also hoped to operate. McGuinty came to his wise decision despite the recommendation of a high-profile committee led by Marion Boyd, the Ontario attorney general under the previous government, by the New Democratic Party. Boyd’s report concluded that Islamic courts could operate, with safeguards, under the 1991 Act.

An attempt to establish the use of Islamic tribunals in Quebec to settle family disputes in that province was also defeated in 2005, thanks in large measure to the efforts of Fatima Houda-Pepin, a Liberal member of the provincial legislature and a non-practising Muslim born in Morocco. Her motion in the Quebec National Assembly and the vote by that body to condemn efforts to introduce Islamic tribunals in Quebec and the rest of

Madeline Weld is a retired civil servant (Health Canada) who lives in Ottawa. She is president of Population Institute Canada and a board member of Canadian Humanist Publications, which produces the quarterly magazine Humanist Perspectives, of which she is a co-editor. She is the Ottawa chapter leader of ACT for Canada, which aims to protect Canada’s national security and democratic values through grassroots civic action, and a founding member of C3RF, an organization that was formed specifically to oppose the House of Commons’ Motion M-103.

Canada were also a response to Marion Boyd's report, which was published in December, 2004. As Ontarians waited on tenterhooks, Premier Dalton McGuinty dithered and prevaricated for four months after the Quebec vote before reaching his own momentous decision. It is no exaggeration to say that Ontario came within a hair's breadth of allowing Sharia-based family law.

The Islamic world was paying attention. In October 2004, Tariq Ramadan, a prominent Swiss academic and philosopher, addressed Muslim leaders in Cairo. Ramadan's grandfather, Hassan al-Banna, founded the Muslim Brotherhood in that city in 1928 in response to the fall of the Ottoman Empire in 1924. The Muslim Brotherhood seeks to re-establish an Islamic caliphate and bring about the rule of Sharia law throughout the world. While Ramadan is regarded by many as a "moderate," he has never disavowed anything written by his grandfather, but on the contrary has proclaimed his loyalty to al-Banna's ideas. When Ramadan spoke in 2004, the debate about Islamic tribunals in Ontario was still raging, fuelled in part by Syed Mumtaz Ali, who was spearheading the proposal, announcing that the Islamic Institute for Civil Justice would soon begin arbitrating family matters on the basis of Sharia law and warning that Muslims who did not submit cases to Islamic arbitration panels were not "good Muslims."

As reported by *Egypt Today* in October, 2004, Tariq Ramadan advised the Muslim leaders of Canada not to openly mention Sharia law for the time being. That term, he explained, "is laden with negative connotations in the Western mind." Ramadan advised them to instead show "creativity" by using the actual Canadian legal framework to implement Sharia without the name. "It's more useful for Muslims to examine the legal framework they have in Canada, which is one of the most open in the world, and come up with something Islamic that at the same time fits the Canadian reality." A skeptic might say that he was giving his co-religionists cunning advice on how to implement Sharia law without awakening the sleeping masses.

Sadly, Ramadan was not wrong. Canada's aggressive multiculturalism is backed by an official Multiculturalism Act. Religious accommodation has become the norm (the most grating example of which might be widespread Muslim prayer in allegedly secular public schools) and is often enforced by extrajudicial human rights tribunals whose liberal definition of hate and discrimination strike some as practically an invitation to "lawfare" or "jihad by court." It costs a complainant nothing to make an accusation through a human rights tribunal, even if the complaint is dismissed. The accused, in contrast, even if acquitted, is left holding the bag in terms of stress, time, and often large sums of money in legal fees. The weasel-word "Islamophobia,"

designed to conflate the criticism of Islam with discrimination against Muslims, is already touted as a great evil to be resisted at Canadian schools, colleges, universities, and other institutions. Motion M-103 gave it oxygen; a follow-up bill would give it wings. Indeed, Canada is low-hanging fruit for the stealth implementation of Sharia law in the West.

The term Islamophobia is avidly promoted by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), composed of the 56 Muslim-majority countries at the United Nations plus the Palestinian Authority. In response to the deadly rampages set off throughout the Muslim world by the "Danish cartoons," the cartoons of Mohammad published by the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* in 2005, the OIC in 2008 declared its intention to craft a "legal instrument" to fight the threat to Islam posed by "political cartoonists and bigots." The head of the OIC at the time, Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, compared the cartoons to the September 11, 2001, attacks and called on the European Union to adopt new laws against Islamophobia.

In 2011, the OIC drafted Resolution 16/18, whose aim was "to Combat Intolerance Based on Religion or Belief," which was adopted by the UN's Human Rights Council in March of that year. The OIC presented this resolution as an alternative to its previous resolutions on the "defamation of religion," a terminology that had become unacceptable because of its unhidden ramifications on free speech. But Resolution 16/18 is also a not-so-veiled attempt to stifle the criticism of Islam in western countries using language that appears neutral. The Resolution condemns "incitement to discrimination, hostility, or violence," which seems reasonable, but the OIC applies a "consequence-based test" to the definition of "incitement," under which, for example, the *Jyllands-Posten* would be held responsible for the riots throughout the Muslim world in response to the Danish cartoons because it published those cartoons. While UN resolutions are not binding, Canada affirmed the tenets of Resolution 16/18 as one of the member states under the Charter of the United Nations.

This brings us to the current commotion in Canada over Motion M-103. But before we look at Motion M-103, we should consider the petition that paved the way for it, Petition e-411 (Islam). It reads:

Whereas:

Islam is a religion of over 1.5 billion people worldwide. Since its founding more than 1400 years ago, Muslims have contributed, and continue to contribute, to the positive development of human civilization. This encompasses all areas of human endeavors including the arts, culture, science, medicine, literature, and much more;

Recently an infinitesimally small number of extremist individuals have conducted terrorist activities while claiming to speak for the religion of Islam. Their actions have been used as a pretext for a notable rise of anti-Muslim sentiments in Canada; and

These violent individuals do not reflect in any way the values or the teachings of the religion of Islam. In fact, they misrepresent the religion. We categorically reject all their activities. They in no way represent the religion, the beliefs, and the desire of Muslims to co-exist in peace with all peoples of the world.

We, the undersigned, *Citizens and residents of Canada*, call upon the *House of Commons* to join us in recognizing that extremist individuals do not represent the religion of Islam, and in condemning all forms of Islamophobia.

This petition overstates Islamic achievements (in the modern world, they are modest) and shows a questionable understanding of “infinitesimally small,” given that 10 to 15 percent of Muslims globally are thought to be active in or supporting terrorism, and an Environics poll in 2007 showed that 12 percent of Canadian Muslims thought that the terror plot of the “Toronto 18” (which included blowing up the Parliament buildings and beheading the prime minister) was justified. The assertion that the violent individuals in no way reflect the values and teaching of Islam flies in the face of admonitions in the Koran and Hadith to fight, subdue, and kill infidels. By condemning Islamophobia, Petition e-411 condemns the conclusions that any reasonable person might draw about Islam, and certainly should have the right to express in Canada. But criticising Islam is forbidden under Sharia law and, not surprisingly, it was a proponent of Sharia law, Samer Majzoub, who initiated Petition e-411.

Samer Majzoub initiated Petition e-411 in June, 2016, and gathered close to 70,000 signatures before it was presented in Parliament in early October. It passed, but not unanimously, the first time it was read, because some Conservative members shouted “Nay.” However, on October 26, 2017, with only 79 Members of Parliament present (out of a total of 338), the motion was unanimously adopted. Samer Majzoub is the long-time public face of the Muslim Association of Canada (MAC), which receives financial support from Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. Ever since its creation, MAC has presented itself as a disciple of Muslim Brotherhood founder Hassan al-Banna, and its president, Wael Had-dara, was one of the principal advisers to Muslim Brotherhood head and President of Egypt Morsi in 2012 to

2013. As documented by the website Point de Bascule, MAC openly defended Hamas (2004) and hosted a promoter of suicide attacks (2009). Between 2001 and 2010, MAC transferred \$296,514 (Canadian dollars) to the charity IRFAN-Canada. In April, 2011, the Canada Revenue Agency revoked IRFAN’s charitable status for transferring \$14.6 million to Hamas from 2005 to 2009 alone. On April 24, 2011, IRFAN itself was added to the list of banned terrorist organizations.

It is frightening that MAC and its leaders represent mainstream Islam in Canada. Samer Majzoub is the recipient of a 60th Jubilee medal celebrating Queen Elizabeth II’s ascension to the throne and is frequently called upon by the media. Politicians make a point of attending the annual banquet of the Canadian Muslim Forum (CMF), of which he is president and which has been promoting action against Islamophobia since at least 2010. As president of CMF, he has condemned “bigotry” as a crime, and “hate speech” as not being “freedom of expression but evil.” Frighteningly, in celebrating the unanimous passage of Petition e-411, he wrote that the “next step is for the federal government to set up policies and orientations to address and deal profoundly at all levels, social, economical, and political, with Islamophobia symptoms that present themselves strongly in our society.”

And that next step seems to be Motion M-103, a private member’s motion tabled on December 1, 2016, fast on the heels of the Parliamentary endorsement of Petition e-411, by Liberal MP Iqra Khalid. Titled “Systemic racism and religious discrimination,” it reads:

That, in the opinion of the House, the government should: (a) recognize the need to quell the increasing public climate of hate and fear; (b) condemn Islamophobia and all forms of systemic racism and religious discrimination and take note of House of Commons’ petition e-411 and the issues raised by it; and (c) request that the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage undertake a study on how the government could (i) develop a whole-of-government approach to reducing or eliminating systemic racism and religious discrimination including Islamophobia, in Canada, while ensuring a community-centered focus with a holistic response through evidence-based policy-making, (ii) collect data to contextualize hate crime reports and to conduct needs assessments for impacted communities, and that the Committee should present its findings and recommendations to the House no later than 240 calendar days from the adoption of this motion, provided that in its report, the Committee should make recom-

mendations that the government may use to better reflect the enshrined rights and freedoms in the Constitution Acts, including the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Iqra Khalid was born in Pakistan and was president of the Muslim Students' Association (MSA) at York University in Toronto while she was a student there. Iqra Khalid's father, Dr. Hafiz Khalid, is a long-time supporter of the Islamic Society of North America and a vocal supporter of Jamaat-e-Islami, an Islamist group in Pakistan. Both the MSA and ISNA are Muslim Brotherhood organizations. On February 8, 2017, Iqra Khalid tweeted that she was "delighted to reconnect with Muslim community leaders in Ottawa today" and included the hashtag #motion103. The community leaders she reconnected with included the executive director and other members of the National Council of Canadian Muslims (NCCM), an organization formerly known as CAIR-CAN, or the Canadian branch of the Council on American Islamic Relations. This Muslim Brotherhood group was found to be an unindicted co-conspirator in the 2008 Holy Land Foundation (HLF) trial in Texas, in which the HLF was found guilty of having funneled millions of dollars to Hamas. NCCM renamed itself in 2013, presumably because the CAIR brand had started to lose its shine.

But unlike Petition e-411, Motion M-103 did not quietly slip under the radar. There was concerted opposition to it, MPs were visited by concerned constituents and received over 900,000 emails against it, anti-M-103 rallies were held and electronic petitions circulated (receiving over 150,000 signatures opposing it), and opinion columns were written (both for and against). The motion was debated on February 15, with several Conservative MPs speaking against it, and the vote was put off. The next day, the House debated a Conservative party counter-motion to M-103. It was similar to M-103, but did not use the word "Islamophobia" and instead condemned discrimination against "Muslims, Jews, Christians, Sikhs, Hindus, and other religious communities." Virtually every non-Liberal Member of Parliament voted for the Conservative counter-motion, but all Liberals voted against it.

The delayed vote for M-103 would normally have sent it to the bottom of the order paper (i.e., to the end of the queue) for a vote in April. Presumably in an attempt to pass M-103 before it got more publicity, the vote was advanced to March 23 (by trading places with another private member's bill). It passed by a vote of 201 Yeas against 91 Nays. All of the Nays were cast by the Conservative party and the Bloc Québécois, the federal separatist party in a province less afraid than most in asserting its cultural identity. In contrast, every Liberal and New Democrat (NDP) and the lone Green Party member supported the motion. While Canadians were assured

that M-103 is just a motion, not a bill, Liberal MP Raj Grewal suggested what the intent of the motion might be: "*One of the most important things about the motion that Canadians should understand is that it encourages a committee to collect data and to present that data in a contextualized manner so we, as members of Parliament elected to this chamber, can study it and propose laws.*"

On April 15, 2017, Iqra Khalid was awarded a special "thanks and appreciation" plaque at the annual Gala of the Palestine House marking Land Day (symbolizing the commitment to "liberate" Palestine). Could it have been for successfully getting Parliament to pass Motion M-103? Palestine House had for many years received federal money for services to the Palestinian community in Toronto, but was de-funded by the Conservative government in 2012 for its "pattern of support for extremism."

It is not difficult to draw a line between the OIC's Resolution 16/18, on the one hand, and Canada's Petition e-411 and Motion M-103 on the other. Further reinforcing the link is the fact that within four months of Motion M-103 being passed by the Canadian Parliament, Omar Alghabra, the Liberal MP for the Toronto-area riding of Mississauga-Centre and Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Consular Affairs), was able to share the good news of Motion M-103 with his brothers in Islam at an OIC symposium in London. The title of this symposium, held July 15–16, 2017, was "Mechanisms to challenge Islamophobia legally and through the media." One of the central themes of the OIC conference was the legal status of "defamation of religion," a term used by the OIC in predecessor resolutions to Resolution 16/18 and which member countries of the UN with a tradition of freedom of speech finally figured out was unacceptable. Prior to attending the conference in London, Alghabra visited Abidjan, Ivory Coast, on July 10–11, to attend the 44th session of the OIC's Council of Foreign Ministers.

Aside from his meeting with the OIC about Islamophobia shortly after the passage of Motion M-103, there are legitimate reasons for Canadians to have concerns about Omar Alghabra himself. In December 2005, when he won the nomination to be the Liberal candidate in a Toronto-area riding for the upcoming federal election, there were reports of celebratory calls from his supporters of "This is a victory for Islam! Islam won! Islam won!...Islamic power is extending into Canadian politics!" Around that time, Alghabra was reported to have condemned CanWest newspapers for labeling groups like Hamas and Hezbollah "terrorist" groups, blamed Jewish students for silencing campus discussions when Arab students at Concordia University in Montreal shut down a speech by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, called for the total abolition of Canada's

anti-terrorism laws, and expressed his support for the Sharia tribunals that had recently been nixed in Ontario. In 2004 and 2005, Omar Alghabra was president of the Canadian Arab Federation (CAF), which in 2009 was cut off by the Conservative government from federal funding for its English language program for promoting anti-Semitism and supporting Hamas and Hezbollah. In 2014, the Federal Court of Appeal dismissed the CAF's effort to reverse the government's decision.

On January 23, 2006, Liberal candidate Alghabra won his seat in the federal election that brought the Conservative government of Stephen Harper to power. One of Alghabra's first actions was to write to Foreign Affairs Minister Peter MacKay, urging him not to cut funding to the Hamas-led Palestinian Authority. In January 2007, Stéphane Dion, the (Liberal) Leader of the Official Opposition, appointed Omar Alghabra as Official Opposition Critic for Citizenship and Immigration. Alghabra's political career suffered a set-back in the federal election of October 2008, when he lost by 239 votes to the Conservative candidate in his riding, nor did he win a seat as a Liberal candidate in the federal election of May 2011. When Justin Trudeau was elected as the leader of the Liberal Party in April 2013, one press account described Alghabra as a "long-time personal friend." Alghabra was a senior organizer in Trudeau's election campaign and his job was to get out the Muslim vote for Trudeau. Trudeau visited a large number of mosques during his campaign and showed himself very sympathetic to Muslim interests.

Fortune smiled on both Trudeau, who was brought to power in a landslide victory for the Liberal party in the federal election of October 2015, and on Alghabra, who won the seat for the Mississauga Centre riding as the Liberal Party candidate. Alghabra was soon appointed as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Consular Affairs), putting this Saudi-born son of Syrian parents into a decision-making position while Canada accepted over 40,000 Syrian refugees by early 2017. Trudeau soon began repealing some of his predecessor Harper's anti-terror legislation, such as the law that stripped Canadian citizenship from dual citizens involved in terrorist activities, and eased the requirements for obtaining Canadian citizenship.

What are the statistics on which the assertion made in Petition e-411 of "a notable rise of anti-Muslim sentiments in Canada" is based and which made Motion M-103 a matter of such apparent urgency? Hate crimes (including vandalism) against Muslims doubled from 45 in 2012 to 99 in 2014, which seems to have been the peak year, as they were reported to be 24 in 2016. In a population of about one million Muslims in Canada, this number is not large. In any given year, the number of attacks

against Jews is about twice that of Muslims, despite the population of Muslims being three times that of Jews. Attacks against blacks are also higher than against Muslims. The vast majority of hate crimes in Canada do not involve physical violence. This does not excuse them, but it raises questions about the need for Motion M-103 and the hype about Islamophobia to which Canadians are being subjected.

The wording of Petition e-411 suggests that terror attacks — successful and thwarted — by Muslims against Canadians are less of a concern to their government than the possibility that Canadians might use those attacks as a "pretext" for "anti-Muslim sentiments." In a democracy with freedom of thought, one might ask why the government is even concerned with condemning sentiments. But if it feels that it must, one might ask why the government shows no concern about the decidedly "anti-kuffar" (anti-nonbeliever) sentiments, some of which could be interpreted as calls to violence, that have been documented in mosques in Canada. Apparently, there is less urgency to quell the radicalizing sentiments expressed in mosques than to quell the "Islamophobia" that might arise in response to violence perpetrated in the name of Islam, as it is condemned in both Petition e-411 and Motion M-103.

But "Islamophobia" is not defined in Petition e-411, Motion M-103, or in the Canadian criminal code. That means that "Islamophobia" can mean whatever the user wants it to mean, and for the OIC, it means dislike or criticism of Islam or anything associable with Islam. It is a sure bet that this definition will be used by some Muslims in Canada. Criticism of Islam, the Koran, and the Prophet Mohammad is forbidden under Sharia law and is a serious — even a capital — offence in many Muslim countries. It is abundantly clear that some Muslims in Canada would like to "quell" any criticism of Islam in Canada.

The Muslim Brotherhood's Explanatory Memorandum, cited above, makes clear its intention to "destroy western civilization from within and sabotage its 'miserable house' by their own hands." The Canadian Parliament seems determined to help this Civilization-Jihad get under way. Petition e-411 and Motion M-103 were brought before Parliament by individuals who were major players in organizations affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood. Canada's envoy to the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (why do we have one?) is an avowed supporter of Sharia law. At least 201 out of Canada's currently serving 338 Members of Parliament do not seem to have fully thought through the implications of condemning "Islamophobia" or would openly like to introduce Sharia law. Canadian parliamentarians — as the guardians of our freedoms — owe it to us to do better than that. ■