



The Ideology of the Dutch Party for Freedom

Geert Wilders Explained

Jan Jaap de Ruiter

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Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes,
and prudent in their own opinion.
Isaiah 5: 21

Table Of Contents

Introduction:	9
Part I: Mr. Bosma's book	21
1 Christianity	23
2 Islam	31
3 Jews and Israel	43
4 Left-wing parties	51
5 Emigration and multiculturalism	61
6 The rise of the Party for Freedom	69
7 Statistics and data	77
Part II: Mr. Wilders' book	83
8 Truth	85
9 Culture	93
10 Ideology	103
11 Solution	113
Epilogue	121
References	131

Introduction

The Dutch Party for Freedom (Partij voor de Vrijheid) was established in 2006, amidst a growing wave of populism and nationalist sentiment in the Netherlands and Europe at large. Founded by Mr. Geert Wilders, a former member of the People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (in Dutch: Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie, VVD), the Party for Freedom was created in response to concerns over immigration and Islam's influence on Dutch society. Mr. Wilders quickly emerged as a charismatic leader, articulating a vision that emphasized a strict stance against what he at the time termed the 'Islamization' of the Netherlands.

Mr. Wilders's rhetoric resonated with many Dutch citizens who felt disillusioned by traditional political parties and anxious about cultural changes. His approach was marked by controversial views and statements, often provoking strong reactions both domestically and internationally. The party's platform focused on reducing immigration, promoting Dutch nationalism, and advocating for strict policies against Islam and later Muslims, positioning itself as a defender of Dutch culture and values.

Mr. Martin Bosma played an instrumental role in shaping the policy of the Party for Freedom. Mr. Bosma is known for his eloquent speeches and sense of humor, and he has been a significant voice in the party's parliamentary activities. Together with Mr. Wilders, he has helped maintain the party's visibility and influence in Dutch politics.

The Party for Freedom gained electoral success, first during the 2010 parliamentary elections when it became the third-largest party in the House of Representatives and later on, in November 2023 the biggest party. The party eventually formed a coalition government under the leadership of nonpartisan Prime Minister Dick Schoof from September 2024 to June 2025, Mr. Wilders taking in that time the de facto rule of the country. The emergence of the Party for Freedom signaled a

shift in the Dutch political landscape, reflecting broader trends in Europe where right-wing populist movements have gained traction in response to globalization and immigration challenges.

In the 2010 parliamentary elections in the Netherlands, Mr. Wilders' Party for Freedom obtained 24 of the 150 seats. The Liberal Conservatives and Christian Democrats, together occupying 52 seats, invited the Party for Freedom to officially lend its support to a minority government of these two parties in exchange for certain concessions, thus securing a minimal majority in Parliament of 76 seats. The Party for Freedom thus supported a minority government of Liberal Conservatives (VVD) and Christian Democrats (Christen-Democratisch Appèl; CDA, Christian Democrat Party) led by Prime Minister Mark Rutte (Liberal Conservative). This construction held from October 2010 until the fall of the cabinet in April 2012 on which more below. When the minority government was installed with the support of Mr. Wilders' party, it issued a statement in which Islam was mentioned in the very first sentence. It said that Liberal Conservatives and Christian Democrats regarded Islam as a religion while the Party for Freedom considered it an ideology. The parties involved had agreed to disagree. In any decision it took, the government was dependent on the support of Mr. Wilders' party, so as not to lose its majority in Parliament. On issues of migration, carefully avoiding mentioning the terms Islam or Muslims, the Party for Freedom asserted itself, claiming and obtaining as a concession for its support that the central-right government would pursue a much stricter migration and integration policy. In doing so, however, it collided with European laws to which the Netherlands had committed itself. Carrying out the intended policies would mean breaking up treaties, which would require the consent of all members of the Union. Given these circumstances, the endeavors of the government did not have the intended results.

When Mr. Wilders and his party decided to support the minority government, they could not but also focus on less eye-catching dossiers of a socio-economic nature. The minority government had been in power for a little over a year

when Mr. Wilders' party discovered a new issue that would attract everybody's attention. In February 2012, it put up a website where people could vent their complaints about Eastern Europeans 'who steal our jobs and cause innumerable nuisances by their antisocial drinking and shouting behavior'. Even though the website caused an enormous row, in particular in the European Parliament, the party did not withdraw it. Also in February 2012, the Party for Freedom started negotiations with the two government parties on major extra budget cuts deemed necessary due to the financial crises in the world. Much to the annoyance of his fellow-negotiators, Mr. Wilders pulled out at the last minute, claiming that now that the necessary calculations had been made by the Bureau for Economic Policy Analysis (Centraal Planbureau) he could not live with the financial consequences the cuts would have for his voters, and the government fell in April 2012. In the weeks before the following elections, on 12 September 2012, the Party for Freedom focused virtually entirely on 'the Evil that is Europe'. Muslims or Eastern Europeans were apparently no longer an issue. The parliamentary elections of 12 September 2012 resulted in a major blow to the Party for Freedom, which lost nine of its 24 seats. It was the second blow to hit the party, the first one being the downfall of the Rutte government, which was primarily caused by party leader Wilders. Both events marked a major loss of political power for the party. This did however not result in the use of a milder discourse when it came to the party's policies and focus on Islam and Muslims. On the contrary. The appearance of the movie *The Innocence of Muslims* in September of 2012, followed by the French *Charlie Hebdo* cartoon affair; and the killing of American ambassador Stevens in Benghazi in Libya caused a worldwide wave of protests, indignation and violence, on both sides, i.e. the anti-Islam block and Muslims themselves, but party leader Wilders' comments on what was happening were in no way less harsh in tone than before.

The Party for Freedom came back strongly into the political picture after the parliamentary elections on November 22, 2023, where the party became the largest in parliament

with 37 seats. After intensive negotiations, a coalition government was formed between the Party for Freedom and the other winners of the election, the center-right NSC (New Social Contract) led by former Christian Democratic parliament member Mr. Pieter Omtzigt (20 seats), the BBB (Farmers-Citizens Movement, 7 seats) led by Mrs. Caroline van der Plas, a party that primarily advocates for the interests of agriculture, livestock, and fisheries, and the election loser, the VVD (Liberal Party, securing 24 seats, but losing 10 seats) of Prime Minister Mr. Mark Rutte. During the negotiations, it became apparent that the three coalition parties with which Mr. Wilders was to form a government were opposed to him becoming the prime minister. Traditionally in the Netherlands, the largest party provides the prime minister. The coalition parties, however, were of the opinion that the person of Mr. Wilders was too controversial to represent the Netherlands abroad. Mr. Wilders acquiesced to this demand, and after a challenging search for a "neutral" prime minister—given that the other three parties agreed not to nominate candidates of their own—former security services director Mr. Dick Schoof accepted the position.

During the negotiations for the new coalition, there was sharp criticism, particularly from the NSC, regarding the Party for Freedom's "Islam positions." These included, among other things, the banning of the Koran, closing mosques, and abolishing Islamic schools. The future coalition party NSC, which holds the constitution in high regard, raised significant objections to these positions and to the request to include them in the coalition agreement. Ultimately, party leader Wilders caved to this pressure and stated, when asked, that he would temporarily put the "Islam positions" on ice. Therefore, they would not be part of the governing agreement, and indeed, they were not. The word "Muslim" appears only (and three times) as part of the phrase "Muslim hatred", which, according to the program, must be combated. It was a major concession made by Mr. Wilders, but he seemed willing to pay this price because it allowed him to secure the ultimate prize: he could nestle into the center of power, and the ideology of the Party for Freedom could now influence the country, its people, and the

governing institutions more than ever.

The coalition government began in September 2024 and ended in June 2025. While Mr. Schoof led the government, Mr. Wilders had a significant influence on policies. Party for Freedom MP Mr. Martin Bosma became the Speaker of Parliament. Under the Schoof cabinet, Mr. Wilders and Mr. Bosma brought the Party for Freedom to the center of power, a long-awaited achievement. However, Mr. Wilders, expressing frustration with alleged hidden political forces in the cabinet, introduced a ten-point plan addressing migration and Islam, demanding accepting it from the other three coalition parties. When they refused, the cabinet collapsed. Political analysts suggested this was a strategic move by Mr. Wilders to improve his position in upcoming elections. However it may be, Mr. Wilders manoeuvred himself again in an opposition position, taking his 'old' views on Islam and migrants out of the refrigerator.

The party is unique as a political entity in the Netherlands and Europe because it does not have traditional party structures and organs. The party takes the form of an association with only one human member: Mr. Wilders himself. There is no party office, no research institute, no youth division, and there are no party congresses. Mr. Geert Wilders pulls all the strings. The power of the party is concentrated in his person, and he has surrounded himself with a number of loyal followers who closely monitor the functioning of Party for Freedom parliamentarians, government officials, and representatives in municipalities, provinces, and the European Parliament. There is much criticism of the supposedly undemocratic structure of the party and its lack of oversight. Nevertheless, the party has functioned in this constellation for years and, evidently, given its electoral victories, successfully.

The party's ideology is expressed in the various election programs that the party has run. These texts were generally very brief and often written in everyday language. Nevertheless, two publications have emerged: one from Mr. Martin Bosma, the alleged ideologue of the party, and the other by Mr. Wilders himself. In these two books, the authors take readers along into their thoughts on various subjects. Those two books

provide a deeper insight into the Party for Freedom ideology and are central to my present book. I have subjected both books to an analysis, and the results can be found in the various chapters of this book. The present book is divided into two parts. The first deals with Mr. Martin Bosma's book *The Sham Elite of the Counterfeiters: Drees, Extreme Right, the Sixties, Useful Idiots, the Wilders Group, and Me* (in this book mostly referred to in an abridged form *The Sham Elite*; title in Dutch: *De schijn-élite van de valse munters. Drees, extreem rechts, de sixties, nuttige idioten, Groep Wilders en ik*), published in 2010, and the second with Mr. Geert Wilders' book *Marked for Death: Islam's War Against the West and Me*, published in 2012. Mr. Bosma's book is covered in chapters 1-7, and Mr. Wilders' book in chapters 8-11. All chapters are preceded by an introductory chapter and followed by a concluding chapter. The present book basically combines the translation into English of an earlier book in Dutch of mine, called *De Ideologie van de Partij voor de Vrijheid. Het kwade goed en het goede kwaad* (*The Ideology of the Party for Freedom. The evil good and the good evil*; de Ruiter, 2012a) and an English language essay of mine called *The Speck in Your Brother's Eye. The perceived war of Islam against the West* (de Ruiter, 2012b). Both books analyze and discuss the writings of Mr. Bosma and Mr. Wilders. This book is an updated adaptation of both 'Party for Freedom books'.

In this introductory chapter, I briefly discuss the contents of both books, after which I will go deeper into the various themes of both books in the subsequent chapters.

Writing I

In the autumn of 2010, the book *The Sham Elite of the Counterfeiters: Drees, Extreme Right, the Sixties, Useful Idiots, the Wilders Group, and Me* was published, authored by Mr. Martin Bosma, a member of the House of Representatives for the Party for Freedom and nowadays the Parliament's Speaker. It is a substantial work of over 300 pages. When it came out, I quickly bought a copy, intrigued as I was and still am by everything the Party for Freedom stands for. After reading it and setting it aside, its content continued to occupy my thoughts. The book consists of 28 chapters and an epilogue, but it is not the case that each chapter addresses a single subject. Recurring themes emerge in Mr. Bosma's reflections, including leftist parties, Christianity, Jews, and Israel. I decided to subject it to a more detailed analysis, focusing on the themes mentioned above and other ones as well.

The present book carries this title: *The Ideology of the Dutch Party for Freedom. Geert Wilders' Thinking Explained*. Mr. Bosma will undoubtedly disagree with the use of the word ideology in the title, as he believes that ideologies will become increasingly less important in the future. He bases this idea on the views of American sociologist Edward Shills, under whom he studied in Italy. He articulates this in his book on page 132. At the same time, Mr. Bosma notes in a parenthetical remark on the same page that 'the disappearance of the old ideologies has the footnote that two new ideologies will actually become increasingly more important: multiculturalism and Islam.' What is noteworthy about his parenthetical remark is that he distinguishes between 'old' and 'new' ideologies. According to a preceding paragraph on the same page, the old ideologies would be liberalism and socialism. While it is understandable to consider multiculturalism a new ideology, Islam, whether viewed as an ideology or not, is, of course, much older than the 'old' ideologies of liberalism and socialism, which only truly matured in the century(s) following the French Revolution of 1789. One could also question what constitutes an ideology. The

term was coined in 1796 by the French philosopher Destutt de Tracy (1754-1836) and originally meant 'the science that explains all other sciences' (Hawkes, 2003; pp. 59-61). Later, the term took on the meaning it has today: a system of fairly binding ideas about the world, society, governance, and culture. A characteristic feature of ideology is, according to author Guy Hawkes (2003) in his work *Ideology* that it blurs the view of reality or truth. He refers to it in English as a 'systematically false consciousness'. Ideology is binding and coercive and can therefore lead to very unpleasant, even violent situations, as history teaches us.

An ideology makes statements about issues such as society, governance, and culture, and expects its adherents to support and promote its views. When reading Mr. Bosma's book, several topics arise that he attaches significant importance to, whether positively or negatively. A recurring theme throughout his book is a verse from the Bible, specifically Isaiah 5:20. This verse appears in Hebrew as a motto at the front of his book and is repeated twice in the text on pages 219 and 325:

'Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter.'

With this, Mr. Bosma indicates that, in his view, there are only two ways to look at matters: you judge them as good, or you judge them as bad. Therefore, the fate of those who call evil good and good evil is understandably not to be envied. In my opinion, this aligns Mr. Bosma with the definition of ideology. He holds strict and rigid views on several subjects, and while discussion seems possible, changing his position appears to be out of the question. It is unfortunate that Mr. Bosma did not read further, as Isaiah 5:21 warns us:

'Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight.'

And it is this verse that I have chosen as the motto for this book. A moment of reflection about one's own opinion and interpretation of reality, listening to the judgment of another, can do no harm for those who are so certain about everything. Mr. Bosma is very adamant about his position, and he very rarely puts his statements into perspective. I do not pretend to be better than he is, but I hope that readers will evaluate my analysis of Mr. Bosma's thinking and thus the Party for Freedom thinking with Isaiah 5:21 in mind rather than Isaiah 5:20.

The present book firstly analyzes the themes that arise from *The Sham Elite*. These themes include as mentioned above Christianity, Jews and Israel, Islam, leftist parties, and multiculturalism. Additionally, it addresses the rise of the Party for Freedom as perceived by Mr. Bosma and how he deals with data derived from various sociological studies and statistics in his book. Chapters 1 to 7 present the results of my analysis of Mr. Bosma's book.

Writing 2

Mr. Geert Wilders' book, *Marked for Death. Islam's War Against the West and Me* appeared in the spring of 2012. Given its title, it obviously centers round the 'classic' Party for Freedom theme of Islam and its title is quite personal. The book received some media attention, both in the United States, where it was published, and in the Netherlands. However, the amount of attention was far less than issues related to Mr. Wilders had received previously. I do not know the reasons behind this, but having read the book, and given the permanent bashing of Islam and Muslims, in particular on the Internet, I felt the need to respond to it. Books, however unnoticed they may be at first, can gain considerable influence once the public has discovered them. I was not surprised to encounter the same black-and-white thinking in *Marked for Death. Islam's War Against the West and Me* as in the book of Mr. Bosma. Mr. Wilders follows the path of his party ideologue. From a broader perspective I notice that Mr. Wilders is not the only one who is active in framing this Islamization claim. It is spread by very strong currents, in particular on the Internet. Even if Mr. Wilders would disappear from active politics, his ideology won't disappear with him.

Marked for Death. Islam's War Against the West and Me consists of 13 chapters, preceded by a foreword by Mark Steyn, a Canadian journalist. It ends with notes and an index. The present book reviews *Marked for Death* in four chapters (8-11), focusing on four key concepts arising from it: *Truth, Culture, Ideology and Solution*.

The subtitle of this book is formulated as follows: *Geert Wilders' thinking explained*. Mr. Martin Bosma dedicated his book to Geert Wilders, his party leader, and both are at the cradle of the Party for Freedom. The thinking of Mr. Bosma, as articulated in his book, aligns seamlessly with the content of Mr. Wilders' book. However, because Mr. Geert Wilders is undeniably the leader of the party and as his persona represents the Party for Freedom ideology, I chose to put his name in the subtitle.

Reading both books reminded me of the Gospel of Matthew where Jesus says (7:3): 'Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?' The authors are so utterly convinced of their mission and the evil nature of their adversary that they, in my eyes, lose sight of reality. Now, everybody has the right to write whatever they want, everybody has the right to express their views, I do not contend that, but I do feel that these books should not remain unchallenged. Should the thoughts of these books find their way into a political program and actually be carried out; the inevitable result could indeed be a kind of war. Not a war started by Islam against the world and Mr. Geert Wilders, and for that matter against Mr. Bosma, but a war against Islam, a war against Muslims. Both Party for Freedom politicians are distrustful of Islam's perceived struggle for world domination. But in essence, their strategy is similar to the perceived strategy of Islam: to combat this religion, or, in their terms, this ideology, until it ceases to exist, as Mr. Wilders tells us in the last chapter of his book. What is demanded from (Islam and) Muslims, is quite unambiguous: they are to disappear, to cease to exist. The writings of Mr. Bosma and Mr. Wilders contain a disastrous message to the world, as disastrous as both perceive Islam to be. I hope that the Party for Freedom program will never be realized and that the present book will in some way be able to contribute to that.

Jan Jaap de Ruiter

Utrecht, September 2025

Part I: Mr. Bosma's book

Chapter I Christianity

Proud

Mr. Bosma is proud of Christianity in the Netherlands. He expresses it as follows:

'There are few things that make the Dutch happier than the Christian background of their country. Almost all of our crucial achievements are related to Christianity. Democracy, separation of church and state, tolerance, but also values such as diligence and efficiency. Those who have read Max Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* know that our economic successes are also directly related to Christianity (p. 94).'

It fits within Mr. Bosma's ideology to highly value what he believes belongs to his own country, in this case Christianity. He does not limit himself to identifying what he calls Christian values, such as diligence and efficiency, but goes further by claiming that we owe our democracy, the separation of church and state, and tolerance to Christianity. Democracy in its current form came to the Netherlands after the French occupation that lasted from 1795-1813 and was strengthened by the constitutional revision of 1848 by the liberal politician Mr. Johan Rudolph Thorbecke (1798-1872). Mr. Thorbecke can hardly be called a Christian like the Calvinist foreman Guillaume Groen van Prinsterer (1801-1876) of that time or the Catholic leader dr. Herman Schaepman (1844-1903) later on. The establishment of democracy occurred in a country that was overwhelmed in 1795 by revolutionary French forces, and under the banner of 'liberty, equality, and fraternity,' the foundations for it were laid. That same French Revolution decisively ended the absolute power of the Catholic Church in France,

which naturally resisted the new movement strongly. This new movement was inspired by a group of thinkers and writers known simply as the 'philosophes'. This group primarily consisted of Denis Diderot (1713-1784), Paul Henri Thiry d'Holbach (1723-1789), and Claude-Adrien Helvétius (1715-1771), who had a predominantly atheistic worldview, and particularly Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778), the Enlightenment philosopher who held the romantic view of a society where no possessions existed and we would all be equal (as wonderfully articulated in Philipp Blom's *A Wicked Company. The Forgotten Radicalism of the European Enlightenment*, 2010). The bizarre thing is that later both liberals and socialists considered the principles of the French Revolution as their own foundation or, in the words of J.A.A. van Doorn in his monumental work *German Socialism: The Failure of Social Democracy and the Triumph of National Socialism* (in Dutch: *Duits socialisme. Het falen van de sociaal-democratie en de triomf van het nationaal-socialisme*) (2007, p. 265), which is regularly cited by Mr. Bosma (p. 69):

'The French Revolution forced a historical break in two ways: it created the basis for a liberal-democratic state system and exploded into a popular uprising that ended in terror. It thus had two heirs: the bourgeoisie, who championed the rule of law and—moderately—popular sovereignty, and the masses who sought radical social justice. It is therefore understandable that both liberals and socialists looked back at 1789 as their revolution, the former generally satisfied, the latter awaiting the next "real upheaval".'

To stay within the French context: 'Les deux bien étonnés de se trouver ensemble.' Later in the nineteenth century, Protestants and Catholics in the Netherlands understood that they had better make peace with the system of democracy and formed political parties. The first liberal Prime Minister Cort van de Linden (1846-1935) introduced the system of proportional representation in 1917, replacing the previously existing district system, as well as universal suffrage (for men) instead of the census suffrage, where the right to vote was reserved

for those (men) who met certain income-related conditions. He was promptly ousted in 1918 by a victory of the confessional parties, which formed the next cabinet under the leadership of the Catholic Charles Ruijs de Beerenbrouck. Thus, the democratization of the system turned out to facilitate its confessionalization. Democracy emerged primarily in spite of Christianity rather than as a direct result of it, and the same applies to the separation of church and state. It is inherently contradictory to claim that Christianity (the church) has actively sought to give up its authority in favor of the state.

Tolerance

Tolerance is another concept that Mr. Bosma associates with Christianity. I personally understand that this can be the conclusion when looking at the life of Jesus. After all, he instructed people with the following: 'But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you', (Matthew 5:44) and 'To him who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from him who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt' (Luke 6:29). However, the practice of Christianity has often been quite different. To stay within my own country, the Netherlands: particularly in the eighteenth century, many trials were held against sodomites and homosexuals, and these often led to the death penalty. The ideology behind this witch hunt against gays was that they were believed to behave against the nature of humanity as instituted by God. Your life was not safe if you were an openly homosexual man, and it took a horrifically long time before churches, albeit gradually, recognized homosexuality as an equivalent form of sexuality. Many Christian churches, particularly Protestant and especially Catholic, still express their condemnation of homosexuality. Furthermore, Mr. Bosma acknowledges that the leftist changes he so despises from the 1960s 'also had their good sides.' 'The emancipation of women and gays' was indeed 'accelerated' by them (p. 69). More about this in chapter 4 of this book.

Bashers of Christianity

Because Mr. Bosma holds Christianity in high regard, he is an-

noyed by those who bash the religion. He criticizes the insults directed at Christianity, which he himself witnessed during his studies in the United States. In the politically correct environment of those days, which Mr. Bosma calls the successor to the cultural Marxism of the American universities of the seventies and eighties, there was 'much attention for slavery, racism, the Ku Klux Klan, apartheid, crusades, and colonialism' (p. 68). 'The West and Christianity, on the other hand, were always portrayed as bad' (p. 68). He is irritated by the notion that 'we have something to atone for' (p. 68). Considering Mr. Bosma's entire reasoning, one almost gets the impression that he wants to justify the opposite. Namely that issues such as slavery, colonialism, and crusades were not so bad after all. However it may be, he goes so far in defending Christianity and its geopolitical role in world history that he does not arrive at an explicit condemnation of the aforementioned issues.

In this context, the following event in recent history is exemplary. On July 1st, 2024, slavery was commemorated in the Netherlands in the context of the Commemoration Year of Slavery History. For this occasion it was expected that the Speaker of the Dutch House of Representatives lays a wreath at the slavery monument in Amsterdam. However, in 2024, Party for Freedom MP Martin Bosma was the Speaker; and that was the reason why more than 150 Dutch people and 35 organizations did not want Mr. Bosma to do this. In a letter addressed to the House of Representatives, rapper and actor Akwasi, presenter Andrew Makkinga, former Member of Parliament Sylvana Simons, and others stated that Mr. Bosma has been spreading an 'explicit racist ideolog' with white supremacy as a starting point for twenty years'. They say that he had propagated racist replacement theories and that he had repeatedly expressed negative views about commemorating the slavery past. Mr. Bosma and his party also opposed the government's apologies in 2023 for its role in slavery. After a meeting, Speaker Bosma stated that he would in the end not attend the commemoration. However, no one else represented the Parliament in the end.

It is not surprising that Mr. Bosma refers to the believers of Christianity, the Christians. As is known (see the chapters 8-11

below), the Party for Freedom distinguishes between Islam and its believers, with the premise that Islam is a bad ideology, but Muslims are not necessarily bad people. A similar scenario unfolds surprisingly regarding the combination of Christianity and Christians. I would call the following quote a slip of the pen: 'Just as the Catholic Church had determined people's thinking for centuries, so the leftists had to do the same' (p. 67). In this quote, Mr. Bosma draws a comparison between the significant influence that the Catholic Church has had on people's thinking over the centuries and the desire of the left to impose a similar ideological (terror) regime on the people. The term 'left' has a virtually constant negative connotation for Mr. Bosma (see chapter 4), but comparing the left to the Catholic Church, part of Christianity, gives the impression that Mr. Bosma has forgotten that Christianity represents 'everything we as Dutch people can be proud of'. Or is the Catholic Church, when reasoned from the opposite perspective, equally reprehensible as the left?

Other Christians who receive criticism are, among others, the program makers of the Interconfessional Broadcast Organization (IKON), generally considered politically leftist, that in January 2010 'even had a weekly rubric on the radio that ridiculed voters of the Party for Freedom (p. 105). 'Leftist Christians' are, of course, also viewed with suspicion: 'The leading role of leftist Christians is striking. They oppose the 'enemy image,' call for 'dialogue' and 'understanding' (p. 311). It seems that there is only one group of 'good' Christians, and they are those who voted for the Party for Freedom. 'Nowhere does the party grow as quickly as in the Bible Belt' (p. 97). And: 'The Party for Freedom has now become the second party of Christian Netherlands', according to Mr. Bosma (p. 97).

It is clear that the ideology of the Party for Freedom places Christianity on a pedestal, stripping it of its historical blemishes, attributing the blessings of our democratic system to it, praising its supporters who vote for the Party for Freedom, and condemning its left wing. What Mr. Bosma does is offer his own interpretation of what Christianity is and means, implicitly acknowledging that a religion can take forms that fulfill

the wishes of its believers. The word 'diversity,' which is not very fashionable in Party for Freedom circles, seems appropriate here. However, this privilege is not reserved for Islam, or in Mr. Bosma's words: 'Perhaps individual Muslims adapt here and there, but Islam cannot' (p. 304), which will be discussed further in chapter 2.

Adolf Hitler and Christianity

I was struck by the following quote by Adolf Hitler about Christianity that Mr. Bosma gives (p. 251) from the memoirs of Nazi architect Albert Speer (*Erinnerungen*, 1969, p. 110):

'It is our misfortune that we have the wrong faith. (...) The Mohammedan religion would suit us much better than Christianity. Why did it have to be Christianity with its meekness and compliance?'

Here, too, the reasoning is complex. Mr. Bosma presents this quote by Hitler, I believe, because the Nazi dictator would feel much more affinity with the non-meek and non-compliant Islam than with Christianity, which allows Mr. Bosma to once again demonstrate how reprehensible Islam is while simultaneously showing how good Christianity actually is. A party like the Party for Freedom, which repeatedly erupts in anger at any comparison with Hitler and his Nazis, does the same in its ideological program. However, Mr. Bosma leaves out an essential part of the quote, and this part casts it in a different light. The original quote reads as follows (in German and English translation following):

'Wir haben eben überhaupt das Unglück, eine falsche Religion zu besitzen. *Warum haben wir nicht wie die der Japaner, die das Opfer für das Vaterland als das Höchste ansieht?* Auch die mohammedanische Religion wäre für uns viel geeigneter als ausgerechnet das Christentum mit seiner schlappen Duldsamkeit' (my italics, p. 25).

'We are simply unfortunate to have a false religion. *Why*

don't we have a religion like that of the Japanese, who see sacrifice for the fatherland as the highest value? Even the Mohammedan religion would be much more suitable for us than precisely Christianity with its weak tolerance.'

In the way Mr. Bosma quotes Adolf Hitler, he has indicated a number of dots (...) which is standard practice in quotation conventions. This shows that there is more text present, but you believe that part is of no importance to make your point. The reader then knows that something was there. This is how you give the quoted text its due. So, in full accordance with the rules, he places the dots (between parentheses) for the missing part, but what was on those ellipses is far from unimportant. Hitler mentions not only the 'Mohammedan religion' as an attractive alternative to Christianity in his statement. Hitler seems to have said that everything is better than Christianity, and he first mentions the religion of the Japanese, in my italics, as an alternative: *Why don't we have a religion like that of the Japanese, who see sacrifice for the fatherland as the highest value* (my translation). This puts Mr. Bosma's reasoning in a very different light. Had Mr. Bosma read the context of Hitler's statement, he would have also been able to determine that Hitler certainly did not want to abolish Christianity. For on the page preceding the quote, Speer notes that Hitler said the following about the church: 'Die Kirche ist sicher notwendig für das Volk. Sie ist ein starkes und erhaltendes Element' (p. 109), which I would translate as: 'The church is certainly necessary for the people. It is a strong and sustaining element.' Hitler saw no value in replacing the church with a kind of party religion that someone like SS leader Heinrich Himmler was working on.

'Ein neue Partijreligion würde nur einen Rückfall in den Mystizismus des Mittelalters bringen', Speer said (1969; p. 109); 'A new party religion would only ensure that we would fall back into the mysticism of the Middle Ages' (my translation). According to Speer, Hitler forbade high-ranking Nazis like Göring and Goebbels from withdrawing from the church. Something that Hitler himself never did, according to Speer (p. 109), meaning that Hitler died as a Christian. 'Er blieb es bis zu seinem Selbstmord' ('He stayed as such until his suicide') (Speer; p. 109). This

is an observation that Mr. Bosma does not mention.

Moreover, according to Speer, Hitler also held the Greek culture in high regard:

'Ihre Lebensauffassung, so wie sie sich beispielsweise in der Architektur äußere, sei 'frisch und gesund' gewesen' (p. 110) (my translation): 'Their (= the Greeks) conception of life, as it expressed itself in architecture, was "fresh and healthy"'.

Hitler believed, undoubtedly whispered to him by Nazi historians of that time, that by 'the Greeks' the Dorians were meant, and that these Dorians were a Germanic tribe from Northern Europe that had migrated to Greece. In such a way they could not be regarded as Mediterraneans and thus possessing an inferior culture (p. 110).

Christianity has certainly brought a lot of good to the world, but like other religions and ideologies, it also has its darker sides. The connections that Mr. Bosma makes between Hitler's Nazism and Islam come to be viewed in a different light by the relationships at the time between Nazism and Christianity. Mr. Bosma's analysis of Christianity is selective. The overall picture of Christianity is much more complex than he wants us to believe.

Chapter 2 Islam

Islam Criticism, the Origin of the States-General, the Dutch Parliament

Islam and Muslims feature prominently in *The Sham Elite*. Mr. Bosma claims that those same Muslims served as the impetus for the establishment of the States-General, of which Mr. Bosma is a part and nowadays the Speaker: 'The States-General was established in order to combat Islam' (p. 327), he states. He claims in the *Epilogue* of his book that our Parliament came into existence because 'our founder, Philip the Good,' 'in response to the fall of Constantinople (1453), swore the Oath at the Pheasant, a solemn agreement to put a stop to Islam and to liberate the city from the yoke of Islam' (p. 327). According to Mr. Bosma, Philip gathers the most important citizens of his states, and at the first meeting of the States-General in Bruges in 1464, the war of defense against Islam is discussed. I believe few are familiar with (this interpretation of) this history. Our people's representation apparently stands in the tradition of the struggle against Islam, and now 'Islam criticism is back at the heart of the States-General after centuries' (p. 327). Mr. Bosma refers for his considerations to page 99 of the book *The Netherlands: The National History from Prehistory to Now* (*Nederland. De vaderlandse geschiedenis van de prehistorie tot nu*) by historian Han van der Horst (2002). Van der Horst expresses this as follows:

'At the end of his life - in 1464 - he (Philip the Good) convened a meeting ... for the first time with representatives of the states from all his lands, which was then referred to as the States-General. Philip needed such a meeting to clearly articulate his policy - which, in his old age, again revolved around the crusade - so that the states of the individual areas would agree

to new taxes without much struggle.'

Pages 97-105 of Van der Horst's book discuss the life of Philip the Good, and in addition to the above quote, the crusades are mentioned again on pp. 97-98 in relation to Philip the Good's life:

'Philip adhered to traditional knightly ideals. He openly dreamed of a crusade against the Turks who were advancing in the Balkans. From time to time, he even took certain preparatory measures. On the other hand, the duke never left any doubt that this distinctly Christian act could only be carried out if his own lands were no longer threatened by enemies in the vicinity. Thus, the crusade never got off the ground. But it remained a nice story that could keep people engaged.'

Philip the Good was succeeded by his son Charles the Bold. Van der Horst writes about the latter (pp. 104-105). 'Charles could only feel contempt for the idealistic fantasies about crusades with which Philip tried to give a knightly touch to his reign' (p. 105). Van der Horst's argument about the life and work of Philip the Good presents the image of a ruler who, navigating between the great powers of France, England, and the German princes, primarily sought to enlarge his Burgundian realm by acquiring lands such as Holland and Zeeland, to bring peace, provide them with central governance, and lead them to prosperity. According to Van der Horst, he was relatively successful in this endeavor. Van der Horst further notes that Philip's crusade plans are hardly to be taken seriously; they were more of a dream than a concrete political goal.

In her dissertation titled *The Crusade Plans of Philip the Good* (*De kruistochtplanen van Philips den Goede*) Johanna Dorina Hintzen (1918) describes the plans that Philip cherished throughout his life to embark on a crusade. The reason it never came to fruition mainly lies in the power dynamics of that time. Philip could not simply depart on his own. He needed the English, French, and Germans on his side, if only to ensure that they would not attack his lands as soon as he set out for the East. This

proved to be quite difficult. Hintzen writes: 'France and England continued the (Hundred Years') War, despite the efforts of the Pope and Philip the Good and had no thoughts of a crusade' (pp. 88-89). Therefore, Philip turned to the - German - *Reichstag* in Regensburg, which was specifically convened by the German Emperor Frederick III 'to deliberate about a crusade' (p. 89). This deliberation was to take place in April 1454, a year after the fall of Constantinople. The French King Charles VII was also invited but did not lift a finger. In the end, it was all to no avail. 'Probably somewhat disappointed by the limited success' (p. 103), Philip left Regensburg, having achieved 'none of his political goals. He would never embark on a crusade. Europe was far too busy with itself (p. 103)'. It should be clear that taking a single historical remark out of context to make your point is certainly attractive, but that simple research leads to a much more complex picture that undermines a previously reached conclusion.

The story of the Oath at the Pheasant, cited by Mr. Bosma, fits within the history outlined. De Maesschalck (2008) vividly describes in his work *The Burgundian Princes 1315-1530* (*De Bourgondische vorsten, 1315-1530*) how this expensive oath was sworn in the city of Lille during festivities that began on January 31, 1454, and lasted at least until February 17 of that year. On occasion, 'a living gold-colored pheasant was presented, upon which the duke (Philip the Good) took the oath. He swore to take up the cross and, if necessary, to engage in a duel with the Great Turk.' However, as De Maesschalck writes, 'in the well-prepared text (on the oath, JdR), Philip had protected himself, for he would only embark on a crusade 'as long as his lands lived in peace and tranquility'. It would never happen, the crusade of Philip the Good. (p. 152)'

I mentioned it earlier in the introduction to this book. A text that Mr. Bosma cites a number of times is Isaiah 5:20: 'Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter.' I find this Bible verse interesting because it deals with sharp contrasts. And nothing is easier in life than dividing everything and everyone into two mutually exclusive groups. What is sweet is not bitter and what is bitter is not sweet. But you

probably already sense it. Light and darkness, sweet and bitter, these contrasts may still be empirically substantiated. But what is evil and what is good? And then I hear the voice of Mr. Wilders, who said in a parliamentary debate on May 28, 2009: 'They (Mr. Wilders refers to the left-wing elite) relativize everything away. Good and evil, logic and common sense, it has become one large gray stripe – without beginning or end' (p. 293). According to Mr. Bosma and Mr. Wilders, it is clear what is good, for example Christianity, and what is evil, Islam. But I repeat the question: what is good and what is evil? In the foreword to the book where Mr. Bosma wishes the reader well, *Lectori Salutem*, he describes the journey of his life 'with the thought that there are many roads to Rome, but always only one road to Mecca' (p. 11). Christianity, see chapter two of this book, would be characterized by diversity (although the goal is the same), but Islam would be indivisibly one. Light or dark, bitter or sweet, good or evil. Islam is evil.

Islam is evil

Islam, considered evil, has established itself in our country and is furthermore out to occupy the land, just as it was in the past with Constantinople. Along what lines does Mr. Bosma reason to make his point? None of the numerous references in Mr. Bosma's book regarding Islam, Muslims, or Islam-related concepts are even slightly positive. While the emancipation of women and LGBTQ+ individuals was seen as one of the rare positives of those 'terrible 1960s', dominated by the left (see chapter 4), Islam has truly brought nothing good. If there is only one road to Mecca, it follows that Islam 'cannot change. Islam tolerates no critical minds; any criticism is immediately criticism of Allah, and that poses many dangers to one's health' (p. 173). By this, Mr. Bosma means that an Islam critic can easily be killed, as happened to the Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh, killed in 2002 by Mohammed B. 'Islam brings us mutual distrust, certainly no multicultural enrichment' (p. 321), is another conclusion that Mr. Bosma comes to.

The concept of *taqiyya* also appears in the debate about Islam. It refers to the possibility that Muslims conceal their true religion

because they feel threatened in a non-Muslim environment. Mr. Bosma arrives at a different definition: 'Taqiyya literally means 'to hide the true intention': Islam encourages lying about true intentions if the aim is to strengthen Islam' (p. 176). Strothmann (1974) defines taqiyya as 'the dispensation one receives to refrain from practicing religious obligations in cases of coercion or the threat of harm'. In cases of threat, Muslims may conceal their faith. A significant question is, of course, what is meant by threat. Taqiyya, in my opinion, is an unfortunate concept that enhances distrust in Muslims and Islam. However, linking taqiyya to deliberately lying about true intentions is a bridge too far and, moreover, simply incorrect.

Furthermore, Mr. Bosma asserts that Muslims do not take their obedience to the state seriously in the Netherlands: 'In the As-Soennah mosque in The Hague, the imam loudly proclaims that believers should not pay taxes to the pagan Dutch government' (p. 190). For convenience, it is forgotten that the vast majority of Muslims in the Netherlands simply pay their taxes. 'For them (many local Muslim 'youth' from Amsterdam-West), he (then police inspector Mr. Hero Brinkman, former Party for Freedom MP) represents more of an occupier than the Dutch law enforcement' (pp. 194-195). Mr. Bosma offers a very cautious qualification: 'It is therefore important to always make a distinction between the adherents and the ideology. Islamic cultures are permeated with Islamic ideology' (p. 174), but at the end of his book, the final judgment is: 'Perhaps individual Muslims adapt here and there, but Islam cannot' (p. 304).

There is not a single positive word in the entire book about the contribution of Muslims or people with an Islamic background to Dutch society, not even a reference to the self-proclaimed atheist writer Hafid Bouazza or the acclaimed author Abdelkader Benali, both of Moroccan origine. And what about the initiative by the Foundation for Moroccan Dutchmen (*Stichting Marokkaanse Nederlanders*) to address homosexuality within Moroccan circles? The vices of Muslims are many, but so are their virtues. However, that creates too many shades of gray, which does not fit into the good-and-evil discourse of Isaiah.

Islam and Nazism

In his book (pp. 251-253), Mr. Bosma mentions the Mufti of Jerusalem, Haj Amin al-Husseini (c. 1893-1974), who was a guest of Hitler in Berlin during several years of the war. The Mufti expressed his admiration for the genocide policies of the Nazis. Mr. Bosma cites the Mufti from the works of Emerson Vermaat (2010), *Heinrich Himmler, and the cult of death* (*Heinrich Himmler en de cultus van de dood*). The Mufti was a known Jew-hater with blood on his hands. Mr. Bosma mentions the Mufti's visit to the extermination camp Auschwitz, 'where he calls on the guards to work even more efficiently' (p. 253). Simon Wiesenthal (cited by Schechtman, 1965; note p. 160) reports that the Mufti visited both Auschwitz and the extermination camp Majdanek. Furthermore, the Mufti personally ensured that 4,000 Jewish children would not be repatriated to Palestine via the Balkans, but deported to extermination camps (Schechtman, 1965, pp. 157-159). At the end of the war, the Mufti fled to Switzerland, which immediately expelled him to France. However, he was able to remain in Paris for quite some time. Both the French and the English were aware of the blood on his hands but both countries did nothing. They deemed their political and strategic interests in the Middle East to be of too great importance to trouble the Mufti, who could count on considerable support in the same region. Ultimately, the Mufti managed to get from France to Egypt in 1946. Schechtman (1965, pp. 167-199) describes this embarrassing story for the Allies in his biography of the Mufti, who would eventually die in 1974. Mr. Bosma makes no mention of the reprehensible behavior of the English and the French.

By discussing the relationship between the Mufti and the Nazis, Mr. Bosma once again attempts to demonstrate how corrupt Islam and Muslims are. However, the book by Vermaat, from which Mr. Bosma cites, also includes examples that speak in favor of Muslims, but that Mr. Bosma does not mention. 'Certainly not all Muslims were on the side of the Nazis' (p. 137). Vermaat refers to the Moroccan king Mohammed V, who explicitly defended his Jewish subjects against Vichy France. As did the Tunisian leader Ahmed Pasha Bey and his nephew and suc-

cessor Moncef Bey. 'Both did everything within their power to protect the Jews against 'Vichy' and later against the Germans themselves' (p. 137). A very striking example is that during the German occupation, persecuted Jews and resistance fighters found refuge in the underground spaces of the Great Mosque in Paris, led by the Algerian religious leader Si Kaddour Benghabrit. The mosque provided certificates to at least a hundred Jews as if they were Muslims. After all, both are circumcised (p. 137).

Another example that Mr. Bosma gives of this unholy relationship between Nazism and Islam is the Islamic SS divisions, which consisted of 'halal-eating Muslims in special Islamic SS uniforms, with a fez adorned with the National Socialist eagle' (p. 253). Mr. Bosma specifically refers to the Handschar division, the 13th Mountain Waffen-SS Division, which was established in 1943 in the Nazi puppet state of Croatia (Lepre, 1997). The story of this division is remarkable and little known. Lepre (1997) describes the formation and experiences of this division. Heinrich Himmler, 'Reichsführer-SS', was particularly interested in Islam. He admired the supposed disdain for death exhibited by Muslims (Lepre, 1997, p. 17). Moreover, the SS hoped that the formation of a Muslim SS division would also serve as a gesture to the 'Muslims around the world, numbering 350 million... who are decisive in the struggle against the British Empire' (Lepre, 1997, p. 17).

The aforementioned Mufti of Jerusalem was also involved in the formation of the SS division and visited Croatia from March 30 to April 14, 1943. He urged young Muslim men to enlist in the division (Lepre, pp. 31-35). However, the Croatian despot Ante Pavelic had little regard for Muslims and saw no benefit in a separate Muslim SS division. He insisted that Catholic Croats should also be part of it. Himmler, very much against his will, ultimately had no choice but to agree to a ratio of one Catholic to ten Muslims (Lepre, p. 35). Thus, while the Handschar division was predominantly composed of Muslims, it also included Catholics.

Incidentally, and this is also not mentioned by Mr. Bosma, there were 20,000 young men in the Netherlands who joined

the Waffen-SS in the Second World War (Van Roekel, 2011). The conclusion is that making comparisons with Nazism and its excesses always results negatively for all parties. Exclusively linking Muslims to Nazis evokes hundreds of similar unholy connections. And there are just as many counterexamples. For instance, those who take the time to visit WWII cemeteries of Allied soldiers will notice that alongside tombstones for Christians (Cross) and Jews (Star of David), there are also tombstones marked with the Islamic crescent for Muslim soldiers. They too died for our freedom.

The islamization of the Netherlands

Islam is evil, and it is therefore to be expected that Mr. Bosma sees this evil as a threat that he wishes to combat. The references in the book to the Islamization of our society are possibly even more numerous than the references to Islam and Muslims. The core of this thinking is expressed in the following quote: 'In the long term, there is a significant possibility of the introduction of sharia in (parts of) the Netherlands. In the medium term, the topic of islamization will have a paralyzing effect on the political system' (p. 119). Mr. Bosma expects that in time, sharia will be introduced in (parts of) the Netherlands, and the catalyst for this process is Islamization. The use of the term 'introduction' gives the impression that this will occur through decision-making processes, and the term 'Islamization' is used to indicate that the minds need to be prepared for that eventual introduction. However, I find the use of the parenthetical phrase 'parts of' confusing. It suggests that sharia will not be implemented everywhere in the Netherlands. Perhaps only informally in areas where many Muslims live? Or in Mr. Bosma's words: 'This within the larger triangle of Malmö, Marseille, Manchester, where Islam will assert itself most strongly. The borders of those enclaves will not be peaceful' (p. 149). Thus, sharia is primarily imposed in areas where Muslims are predominantly present? Mr. Bosma's texts remain ambivalent on these two thoughts. Other quotes from his book suggest that the introduction of sharia is an issue that is realized at a national level. A common misconception resulting from this

is that a national Islamic majority would be necessary before the introduction of sharia (p. 147). Again, Mr. Bosma compares this to World War II: 'A small, well-motivated minority can get quite far. We saw this with the takeover by New Left in the Dutch Labour Party that was revamped in a more revolutionary form of socialism in the sixties by a movement that was to be called 'New Left'; see chapter 4), with the communists taking over the universities, and with the extreme left seizing power in Germany in 1933' (p. 321). It could very well be that the introduction of sharia occurs through central democratic means. Moreover, Muslims do not do this by their own strength. They are significantly assisted by the left: 'Support for the introduction of sharia does not necessarily have to come from Muslims. The dominant factor that determines whether sharia is introduced in the Netherlands is not so much the *ummah* (the international Islamic community), but the powerful leftist establishment, with its crucial positions of power' (p. 148). Thus, the statement that 'a small, fanatical group can get quite far' (p. 148) is disqualified because that small, fanatical group apparently needs the support of 'the dominant factor' on the left. Islam as an independent faction is apparently not as powerful as Mr. Bosma claims it to be.

Nevertheless, the process of the introduction of sharia—whether it occurs informally in certain areas or formally nationwide—is preceded by the Islamization of the country. Mr. Bosma does not provide a definition of the term Islamization, but the following quotes may indicate what he means. 'This climate of self-censorship, withdrawal, and fear is essentially the Islamization of public opinion. Because it means that, through the back door, the norms and values of Islam determine the discussion' (p. 129). 'The limits of what you can say in the Netherlands are no longer determined by democratically established laws, but by the consideration of whether speaking out might lead to you being ritually slaughtered along the public road' (p. 130; see also above). Mr. Bosma's assertion is that the ideology of Islam (in its most orthodox form, as there is only one path to Mecca) now shapes the thinking and, from there, the actions of politicians, policymakers, journalists, and media

anchors. The main goal is to say nothing that could offend our Muslim compatriots and to accommodate them as much as possible in their wishes. If you do not do this, you risk being killed, as happened to the Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh. According to Mr. Bosma, 'Islam has already won a bit. Dhimmitude has made its entrance' (p. 121).

Dhimmitude is a recently coined term derived from the Arabic word *dhimma*, which refers to non-Muslims, especially Jews and Christians, living in a Muslim society who are allowed to practice their faith under certain conditions and restrictions. They are second-class citizens (MacDonald, 1974). The latter two serve the former. Mr. Bosma provides relatively few examples of this kind of Islamization. However, he does mention that comedians make jokes about Christianity, but hardly about Islam. 'We now also understand why brave leftist comedians have been making jokes about Christianity for decades but never dare to say anything bad about Islam' (p. 298). They are afraid of offending Muslims and suffering the consequences.

Moreover, I notice that, in the past, segments on *The Daily Show* by the Dutch comedian Jan Jaap van der Wal included jokes about Muslims, such as on the late Osama bin Laden, and serious mockery of Muslims appeared on the *PowNews* news show of the Dutch broadcasting company *PowNed*, along with increasingly more short segments from the rubric *Lucky TV*, which provided humorous commentary after episodes of the popular television program at the time of *De Wereld Draait Door* (*The World Keeps Turning*) on Islam-related topics. Could this increased freedom be due to the stronger political position of the Party for Freedom and its support for the government at the time? It is possible. After all, 'a small, well-motivated minority can get quite far' (p. 321).

The text from Isaiah, which divides the world into two mutually exclusive parts, aligns perfectly with Mr. Bosma's thinking: Christianity is good, Islam is evil. If you base your politics on this way of thinking, there is much to fear for the future of Muslims in this country. Because you cannot help being black and not white: you are never a full-fledged conversation part-

ner, and you will never become one. Or is there still hope for Muslims based on this last quote from Mr. Bosma? 'First, let's ensure clear positions, and then see who wants to join. Water can always be added later; let's first make sure the wine tastes good' (p. 30). The wine may be flavorful, the Party for Freedom is established, but when it came to real politics, the wine lost some of its taste. During the 2023 coalition negotiations that ultimately formed the Schoof cabinet, party leader Wilders put his often-unconstitutional Islamic positions "on ice" as a concession to become part of the new government as the largest party. However, this did not mean that the party is retracting its Islam positions; they may become relevant again at a later stage. Regardless, the party has successfully maneuvered itself into the center of power with the current Schoof cabinet, which is in the end an ideological victory for the party. Behind closed doors, wine is being enjoyed that suits the tastes of the Party for Freedom and it is to be expected that this same 'pure' wine finds its way further into society with the increasing political and societal power the party enjoys.

Chapter 3 Jews and Israel

The Israeli flag

If you were to ask a Party for Freedom voter which flag hangs in the office of Member of Parliament Mr. Bosma, I think nine out of ten voters would say the Dutch tricolor. However, nothing could be further from the truth. In the market of Tel Aviv, Mr. Bosma 'bought the largest Israeli flag I could find...' And he hung it 'in the window so that people outside know that this is a liberated area' (p. 219). The Israeli flag represents a liberated area, and of course, this raises the immediate question of which area is liberated and by whom. The following quote provides the answer to this question: 'In that year (1967), the Jewish state miraculously turned an attack by (almost) all its neighbors into the liberation of Jerusalem and of Judea and Samaria' (p. 273). The neighbors Mr. Bosma refers to are Syria, Jordan, and Egypt, all Arab and—largely—Islamic countries. According to Mr. Bosma's interpretation, the areas have been liberated from their Arab-Islamic rulers and belong again to the continent of freedom, because, as Mr. Bosma continues, 'Israel has become the symbol of our freedom and the desire to continue that freedom' (p. 274). 'The flag of Israel is thereby the flag of all free people' (p. 275). 'The land is a barometer of our future' (p. 275). Should the opposite happen, the occupation of Israel by Arabs or Muslims, then that freedom is at an end: 'If the armies of Hamas and Hezbollah march through the streets of Tel Aviv, then Amsterdam and Paris are irretrievably lost' (p. 275). If Muslims were to conquer Israel, they would also do so in Europe, as they are already present there. In a nutshell, this is Mr. Bosma's vision of the state of Israel: not a forward post but the headquarters for everything that means freedom. If Israel perishes, Europe perishes.

It is not surprising in the context described above that the

references to the state of Israel in *The Sham Elite* are always positive. It begins in Chapter 1, where Mr. Bosma describes how he came into contact with Mr. Wilders. 'Geert was also one of the first in politics to recognize the danger of Islamic terrorism. He made a name for himself by saying that he 'would do away with the headscarves (literally in Dutch: 'to eat the headscarves raw'). 'And he is also a pro-Israel hardliner—what more could a person want?' (pp. 15-6). The link between these allegedly dangerous Muslims and the symbol of freedom, the state of Israel, is clear: Next to the Israeli flag in Mr. Bosma's office hangs the previously cited text from Isaiah (5:20): 'Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter' (p. 219).

By the way, and this is a side note, one of the slogans of the Egyptian Arab spring revolution of January 2011 was 'freedom': it was more than a yell; it was a cry for help. I have not heard any heartfelt expressions of sympathy from the Party for Freedom regarding the desires of the Egyptian people. After all, 'woe to those who call evil (Egypt) good.' The previously observed thinking in contrasts can also be seen in Mr. Bosma's and the Party for Freedom's attitude towards Israel. They openly stand behind the Israeli hardliners who view Judea and Samaria—which others call the West Bank—as inalienable Israeli territory, and they support these parties as well.

In the aftermath of the Hamas attack on Israel on October 7, 2023, and the Israeli response to this attack, the debate over the potential for a Palestinian state became relevant again. The Schoof cabinet represented the official government stance, which is the two-state solution, regardless of how unrealistic it may seem. However, party leader Wilders of the Party for Freedom made his well-known stance clear: He does not support a two-state solution and stated during the discussion that there is already a Palestinian state, namely Jordan. These remarks led to significant irritation in the Jordanian kingdom, and as a result, the Dutch ambassador was summoned. Nonetheless, Mr. Wilders was undeterred and visited Israel in December 2024, where he was received by Prime Minister

Netanyahu and the Israeli president. This intervention was not the only one that Mr. Wilders allowed himself. Even though his party is the largest in the coalition and Prime Minister Schoof is the highest authority within it, Mr. Wilders frequently takes the opportunity to express his opinions, sometimes to the great annoyance of the other coalition parties and the non-partisan prime minister. The image is that Mr. Wilders is the real person who is holding the power.

Antisemitism

It is not surprising that Mr. Bosma also addresses anti-Semitism. He almost automatically relates anti-Semitism to Hitler and specifically chooses the following quote from the many quotes by Hitler: 'How can you be a socialist without being an anti-Semite?' (p. 256). He then extensively discusses the almost unbreakable bond between anti-Semitism and what he calls the left. In his view, Hitler's National Socialism is a leftist movement. After all, 'genocide as a policy instrument emerges already at the origins of socialism' (p. 258; see also below). Moreover, today's left is the heir to that National Socialism: 'There is plenty of anti-Semitism in the Dutch extreme left today' (p. 263), but more on that in the chapter 4.

Mr. Bosma does not address the roots of Hitler's anti-Semitism except to link it to Marxism and socialism. There is no mention of the persecutions and hatred of Jews instigated by the Catholic and Protestant churches, long before there was any Enlightenment, French Revolution, or the despised socialism. It is also telling to note what is not included in Mr. Bosma's book or which terms are not mentioned. The literature on anti-Jewish sentiments and the murders of Jews caused by the anti-Semitic thinking of the churches is overwhelming. Chapter I of Part I of Raul Hilberg's magnum opus, *The Destruction of the European Jews 1939-1945* (2003), is particularly moving, where Hilberg describes anti-Semitism inspired by Catholicism and Protestantism. Table I.1 in his first chapter, which compares the anti-Jewish measures of canonical (Catholic) law through the ages with the Nazi measures, shows how great the similarities are. Mr. Bosma does not mention these dark pages in

'our' Christian history. After all, Christianity is the foundation of our civilization, and we owe the good in our society to it (see chapter 1). Anti-Semitism is certainly not part of that.

Another variant of anti-Semitism is addressed: that of Islam. After all, 'Anti-Semitism is one of the core values of Islam, and the victim role of the so-called Palestinians provides a convenient hook for that hatred of Jews' (p. 269). In this quote, Mr. Bosma states that Islam is permeated with anti-Semitism and that anti-Jewish or anti-Israeli feelings are further reinforced by the victim role of the Palestinians. Correction: the so-called Palestinians. Given his view on Israel and the Palestinian issue, I conclude that, in Mr. Bosma's eyes, there is no Palestinian people. The words Palestine or Palestinians also scarcely appear in his book. This is yet another notable case of 'not naming' and fits into his black-and-white thinking, or in this case, his 'existence/non-existence' thinking. Israel exists, and Palestine does not. And if a Palestinian people would exist and a Palestinian state would be established party leader Wilders refers to the Kingdom of Jordan as the relevant 'Palestinian' state (see remarks above).

But I want to focus on that so-called anti-Semitic core value of Islam. Mr. Bosma recounts an incident at an Islamic school in Amsterdam where a lesson is taught about the Holocaust. 'The next day, a number of fathers come to complain. They wonder what kind of idiotic ideas their children are receiving and hope, insh'Allah (if Allah wills), that such lessons will no longer be taught' (p. 270). Mr. Bosma also mentions the issue of the farewell lecture of Professor of Judaic Studies Pieter W. van de Horst at Utrecht University in 2006. His lecture, which, among other things, addresses the myth of the supposedly enduring notion of Jewish cannibalism, is censored by Rector Gispén because it could be offensive 'to the well-organized Muslim students at the university' (p. 271). Furthermore: 'Jews are also leaving Malmö, which is over a quarter Muslim. The same goes for Antwerp and London' (p. 271), and Mr. Bosma talks about the security that Jewish schools in Amsterdam need against threats from Muslims (p. 272). In short: 'It is one of the cruelest effects of Islamic immigration' (p. 273), all thanks to the mass

immigration initiated by the left. And according to Mr. Bosma, it's even worse: 'The Muslims became the new Jews, and the Jews became Nazis' (p. 273).

He then concludes again with the assertion: 'To appease Muslims, Israel must be sacrificed, as the demand of the extreme left and Muslims rings out in unison' (p. 273). Thus, Israel is placed on a pedestal in the fight against Islam and Muslims, and Mr. Bosma situates the issue of what he calls mass immigration in an extremely sensitive context: that of anti-Semitism, a debate that can hardly be conducted with distance in our society, given the fact that around three quarters of the Dutch Jewish community was killed in the Holocaust. The same applies to the position of the Jews and Israel, and one might ask whether he does a service to either. I will elaborate on this question at the end of this chapter.

The Jewish community in the Netherlands

First, I would like to address the reaction of the Jewish community as articulated by Mr. Bosma regarding the film *Fitna*, released in 2008. *Fitna* was a film developed by filmmaker Theo van Gogh and Islam critic Ayaan Hirsi Ali. The film focuses on the alleged women unfriendly view of Islam on women. Mr. Bosma cites Mr. Ronny Naftaniel, 'a member of the Dutch Labour Party' and director of the CIDI (Center for Information and Documentation on Israel), Rabbi Awraham Soetendorp, Rabbi Lody van de Kamp, and former deputy director of the CIDI, Hadassa Hirschfeld, all of whom criticize the film *Fitna* and say they do not recognize themselves in Mr. Wilders' viewpoint on Islam (pp. 113-114). However, Mr. Bosma contends that the statements of the Jewish elite do not represent the voice of the Jewish community because 'Jewish Netherlands has embraced the Party for Freedom' (p. 114), followed by a quote from a Jewish parent who is fed up with threats from Muslims in the Amsterdam neighborhood Buitenveldert. And: 'In a political debate at the Maimonides school community, a quarter turned out to vote for the Party for Freedom' (p. 114). Throughout his book, Mr. Bosma is critical of all elites and always claims to advocate for the voice of the people. This

would apparently also be the case for the Jewish community in the Netherlands.

The Party for Freedom, Israel and Jews.

It is clear that Mr. Bosma, Mr. Wilders, and the Party for Freedom hold pronounced pro-Israel positions and believe that with their views on Islam, they can embrace a significant part of the Jewish community. The question, however, is whether this is genuine love or opportunistic behavior. The Party for Freedom is primarily a party that is 'against Islam. Against the multicultural project. For a halt to immigration from Muslim countries' (p. 37). Everything must be done to advance, proclaim, spread, and normalize that position. Israel fits perfectly into this, being threatened as it is by everything that is Islamic and Arab. In a sense, Israel is hitched to the Party for Freedom's wagon. The same applies to the Jews in the Netherlands. The anti-Jewish sentiments among the Islamic populace align seamlessly with the Party for Freedom's positions regarding Islam and Muslims.

But does this also mean that the Party for Freedom can actually do something for Israel and the Jews? The 2010 coalition agreement did not articulate the Party for Freedom's vision on Israel's politics. The Rutte government at the time had a fairly moderate stance and allowed the Palestinians a certain amount of space. It is therefore extraordinarily easy for the Party for Freedom to support the hardliners in Israel. In a sense, it is gratuitous because, formally speaking, the Party for Freedom had in those days little influence on the government's foreign policy. In the Netherlands, the topic of kosher slaughter emerged as a critical test case. In 2018, the Party for the Animals put forward a legislative proposal to prohibit unstunned slaughter for both kosher and halal practices, unexpectedly receiving support from the Party for Freedom. This move had a significant effect on the Jewish community, particularly among Orthodox Jews. While the Party for Freedom aimed to resist Islam and Muslims, it placed halal slaughter in jeopardy alongside kosher practices. Ultimately, the proposal failed in the Senate, not because the stance of the Party for Freedom senators had changed, but due to a renewed critical response

from liberal and socialist members of the House.

What strikes me further is the absence of the term 'Judeo-Christian' in *The Sham Elite*. This term has become quite popular in recent years and refers to the Dutch history and national character that is said to be Judeo-Christian. However, Mr. Bosma talks about the Christian nature of our country and people, not the Judeo-Christian. This surprises me, especially since he holds the state of Israel and Jews in general in such high regard. Apparently, this goes too far for him. Is the Jewish characteristic of our society not Dutch enough?

Antisemitism and islam

Anti-Semitism among Muslims is undeniably present. The political situation in the Middle East does not help improve the situation. I know it's a cliché, but everything must be done to combat anti-Semitism among Muslims, and that is why it is good that initiatives are taken for excursions for students with an Islamic background to the transition camp of Westerbork in the Netherlands from which Jews were transported to the death camps in the east in World War II, and extermination camp Auschwitz or separate lesson programs about the Holocaust. The initiatives by Mr. Ahmed Marcouch, who is of Muslim and Moroccan origin and today mayor of the Dutch city of Arnhem, are therefore of great value. He advocates for a joint approach to hatred against Jews and hatred against LGBTQ+ individuals, and he also calls for the mandatory inclusion of the Holocaust in final secondary school exams. However, these initiatives are not mentioned in Mr. Bosma's book. You do not have to be pro-Israel or specifically support Jews in the Netherlands to condemn anti-Semitism. Universal human values of respect and tolerance are sufficient to condemn and attempt to prevent any mechanism of exclusion. But Mr. Bosma escalates the issue and, in a provocative manner, he uses Israel and Jews in the Netherlands to support his vision of condemnation and exclusion of Muslims.

In chapter 1, I noted that Mr. Bosma has an extraordinarily positive view of Christianity, and whether one agrees with his

statements or not, he truly believes in them. In chapter 2 I found out that Mr. Bosma has an extraordinarily negative view of Islam, and he stands 100% behind his opinions there as well. In the present chapter, I note that Mr. Bosma praises Israel and embraces the Jews in the Netherlands. However, his defense is unconvincing and opportunistic: his view on Jews and Israel serves his fight against Islam. The Jews of the Netherlands are deeply familiar with both anti-Semitism and philosemitism and are therefore very capable of determining whether the Party for Freedom has anything to offer them and, if so, what that might be.

Chapter 4 Leftist Parties

'That good old Labour Party'

When Mr. Geert Wilders speaks about the left, particularly about the PvdA (Partij van de Arbeid, Labour Party), he often uses adjectives that express disgust. The word 'terrible' is on his lips when he refers to left-wing parties, and he also includes the democrats of political party D66 in that group. One would think that *The Sham Elite* is filled with the most negative statements about anything left. However, that is not the case. In his fourth chapter, titled *Berendans, (Dance of the Bears)* Mr. Bosma recounts his entrance into the House. 'The tiny room in the building of the House of Representatives where I will work is not the most glamorous environment to be in' (p. 38). But: 'Still, it feels like coming home to me' (p. 38), after which he nostalgically refers to the time and place where he grew up. 'I grew up in the red Zaanstreek, the area north of Amsterdam where almost everyone voted Labour, and the rest CPN (Communist Party of the Netherlands)', 'Before the war, red flags waved *en masse* on May 1st, and there were parades' (p. 38). His grandfather and father were happily part of the red pillar, members of VARA (the Socialist Broadcast Organization), members of the socialist trade union, the NVV, and of course, they read the socialist newspaper *Het Volk (The People)* and later *Het Vrije Volk (The Free People)*. 'They were proud to belong to that pillar' (p. 39). 'Such people once formed the backbone of Dutch social democracy' (p. 39). Mr. Bosma describes, Mr. Bosma does not condemn, Mr. Bosma seems to cherish his red roots. He gives the impression that the SDAP (Social Democratic Labourers Party, the precursor of the Labour Party) and later the Labour Party of his grandfather and father were solid parties, that stood for their ideals, that achieved something, and of which one could be proud.

Mr. Bosma is positive about that time. But not anymore about the Labour Party of today, because: 'At some point, something went terribly wrong with my grandfather's party' (p. 39). What exactly happened?

The revolutions of the sixties

The Partij van de Arbeid (Labour Party) went into decline at the end of the 1960s and was no longer the party of Mr. Bosma's grandfather and father due to the takeover by 'the young Turks of New Left' (p. 39). Party members Han Lammers, André van der Louw, Arie van der Zwan, Max van der Stoel, Marcel van Dam, and Jan Nagel took power at a Labour Party congress. After the takeover, 'the sixties ideals awaited a bright future' (p. 39). This bright future consisted, according to Mr. Bosma, of opening the borders for what the Party for Freedom calls mass immigration and forming and accepting a multicultural society. New Left is responsible for these two dramas that have befallen the Netherlands, according to Mr. Bosma, which will lead our country to ruin if we do not intervene. Nevertheless, nuances appear in his narrative. He frequently mentions that 'it is only a small elite that is radicalizing, raising their clenched fist and calling for Che Guevara or Ho Chi Minh' (p. 40). '30 to 50 percent of Dutch students voted for the VVD (Liberal party) or one of the predecessors of the CDA (Christian Democratic Party) in the 1970s' (p. 40). 'New Left is part of a small but fervently fanatic elite' (p. 41). And there are also people who do not have anything to do with that New Left at all. Mr. Bosma goes into considerable detail regarding the position of the old Mr. Drees (a Labour member who was prime minister in the fifties) and his son the young Mr. Drees, and in this context, the following quote about Drees Jr. is telling: 'It is important to emphasize: the first party (Mr. Bosma is referring to the political party DS '70 that young Mr. Drees established) that opposes mass immigration is a primordial social democratic heir of the authentic tradition of the Partij van de Arbeid (Labour Party), led by someone with the most glorious surname of the modern labor movement' (p. 44). Note the positive adjectives in this sentence: the

Labour Party of that time is 'primordial social democratic' and 'authentic'. Mr. Bosma extensively discusses the opposition to mass immigration by father and son Drees, but it was all to no avail. Not even the fact that in 1974 'the Labour Party wanted to punish companies with a levy for bringing in foreign workers. The socialists also opposed the general pardon' (which was a topic of discussion at the time; p. 60). 'The 1970s read like a period of extremely leftist takeovers. One by one, they fall: newspapers, broadcasters, universities' (p. 71). Moreover, the leftist upper world also joins forces with the leftist underworld, especially regarding the approach to the at that time upcoming racist Centrumpartij (Centre Party) of Hans Janmaat, where violence and attacks were not shied away from (p. 79). The left, small and fanatic, supported by an underground faction, has a grip on the Netherlands and delivers the country to mass immigration and multiculturalism. Mr. Bosma's Chapter 5, titled *A Strongly Deviating Lifestyle*, reads as if it is only the left that has burdened the country with migration and multiculturalism.

Leftist governments?

Mr. Bosma cannot avoid addressing the question of where parliament and government stood on these issues. Is it inconceivable that matters would have taken place without parliamentary approval? On page 77, Mr. Bosma answers this question: 'It is therefore reasonable to conclude that the integration of a million Muslims into the Netherlands has at best, only a nominal democratic legitimacy. That is correct. But that legitimacy does not go much further.' Democratic legitimacy is always formal, and I would not know how democratic decision-making is informally legitimized. In my view, Mr. Bosma is stating here that parliament and government are primarily and ultimately responsible for what he calls mass immigration and multiculturalism. Well, were the various parliaments and governments dominated by the left? During the relevant period from 1967 to 1989, it was DS'70 that sat in the Biesheuvel cabinet from 1971-1972, but according to Mr. Bosma, DS'70 had a politically correct vision regarding mass immigration and multiculturalism, so responsibility cannot be placed on that go-

vernment. The center left cabinet of prime-minister den Uyl (Labour Party) was in power from 1973-1977, and only in 1989 did the Labour Party return to longer-term power in the third cabinet of CDA politician Mr. Lubbers (1989-1994). The period when the Labour Party was part of the second cabinet of prime minister Mr. van Agt (Christian Democrat) lasted less than a year (1981-1982). Mr. den Uyl is only mentioned in passing in Mr. Bosma's book, and he is even given the benefit of the doubt somewhat as Mr. Bosma states that Mr. den Uyl, during the revolution of New Left, along with former Labour prime minister Mr. Willem Drees, still tries to 'push back' but later 'chooses the side of the rebels' (p. 40). Furthermore, Mr. Bosma notes that in 1974, during the den Uyl cabinet, the Labour Party was not very keen on mass immigration, as I indicated above. Therefore, blaming the left for mass immigration and multiculturalism is, to say the least, twisted. However, Mr. Bosma is not completely blind to political reality: 'The most liberal family migration policy that the Netherlands has ever known is carried out by the Christian Democrat (CDA) Liberal (VVD) cabinet of prime minister van Agt, and cabinets I and II of prime minister Mr. Ruud Lubbers (Christian Democrat) (p. 63). Yet, he continues to blame the left for mass immigration and multiculturalism. This is undoubtedly related to the following observation: 'The 1960s are still alive and well to this day' (p. 72). Mr. Bosma knows history very well but stubbornly clings to his assertion that left or right, the left is the cause of the problems with mass immigration, multiculturalism, and of course, the presence of Muslims here. When the issue at hand became the subject of public debate in October 2011 and Labour Party member of parliament Martijn van Dam articulated an article in the Dutch newspaper *de Volkskrant* titled 'Mass Immigration Came from the Right' (2011), exactly mirroring the analysis formulated in this chapter, Mr. Bosma casually acknowledged that the historical facts were correct but maintained his position. This fits into the way of thinking described in earlier parts of this series regarding Mr. Bosma and the Party for Freedom, based on verse 20 of Isaiah 5: 'Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for

light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter.' The left is evil; the left is not good, even if the right shares in 'the blame.' I will speak about guilt again at the end of this argument. First, I will address the alleged historical roots of the left in the next paragraph.

(National)(-)socialism

I was not surprised to notice that Mr. Bosma's brings up the history of National Socialism and World War II. This time, he links this to his reflections on leftist political parties. He mentions Mr. Jacques de Kadt (1897-1988), who was a member of parliament for the Labour Party from 1948 to 1963: 'From communist, he becomes a communist eater' (p. 207). De Kadt portrayed, according to Mr. Bosma, 'National Socialism as a form of socialism' (p. 207). Mr. Bosma cites historian Jacques van Doorn, who published a monumental work (2007) on socialism and National Socialism at the end of his life (see chapter I as well). According to Mr. Bosma, Mr. van Doorn concludes that National Socialism almost harmoniously emerged from socialism. But that conclusion is ridiculous. The title of Van Doorn's work already speaks volumes: *German Socialism: The Failure of Social Democracy and the Triumph of National Socialism*. Social democracy and National Socialism are two distinct movements. The essence of Van Doorn's considerations is that social democracy failed to prevent (failure) National Socialism from coming to power (triumph). It would have been more suitable for Mr. Bosma to omit the parentheses that he places around the word 'national' in the combination 'National Socialism' (it was also presented that way in the 2010 Party for Freedom election program). The Van Doorn he praises so much did not do that either.

The title of chapter 22 of Mr. Bosma's book is again telling: *Adolf Hitler; Socialist*. What triggers Mr. Bosma's considerations in this chapter becomes clear from the following quote: 'The image presented to us looks like this: Hitler was a right-wing lunatic, financed by big corporations' (p. 246). But that is not true. Hitler was, paraphrasing Mr. Bosma, a left-wing lunatic who forced the large companies into his model sha-

ped by socialist ideas. 'The truth is: Hitler actually ended the free-market economy' (p. 246). Regarding Hitler's NSDAP, Van Doorn wrote: 'The basic program from 1920, which was later regarded as final and unchangeable, breathed a socialist spirit in parts and, as a whole, an anti-capitalist ethos...' (p. 247). Furthermore, Mr. Bosma cites Jonah Goldberg's *Liberal Fascism* (2007), who states that 'National socialism has the same origins as Roosevelt's New Deal and Italian fascism: the will to centrally organize and systematically manage the economy' (p. 249). Mr. Bosma recounts other goals of Hitler's NSDAP, such as a classless society, sustainability, and ecological diversity. He mentions the example of SS leader Heinrich Himmler, who wanted the entire SS to switch to organic food (p. 254). 'Not really concepts from the right lexicon. So what made Hitler right-wing?' (p. 254). Mr. Bosma also talks about Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin and communism in the then USSR, and this is his view of World War II: 'The war is a war over who is in charge on the left' (p. 251), the National Socialists of Hitler or the communists of Stalin. Mr. Bosma further notes that the NSB's (the Dutch National Socialist Party at the time) election program from the 1930s contains various themes that, for example, would also resonate with a party like present day center left party D66: 'Which party is pioneering the European idea in the Netherlands? Once again, the NSB' (p. 261). He then poses the question of where Mr. Mussert, the then leader of the Dutch National Socialist Party, would end up if he were to fill out the *Stemwijzer* (Vote Match) today, suggesting that it could only lead to the left. In the following Chapter 23, Mr. Bosma makes a link to modern times, with a title that again speaks volumes: *The New Nazis*. 'The left has succeeded in making Hitler a symbol of the right. The logical next step is that Muslim immigrants are the new Jews, the reversal of all reversals' (p. 267). According to Mr. Bosma's interpretation, the current left sees the Party for Freedom as right-wing extremist 'just like Hitler', targeting the Jews of the modern era, the Muslims, and the left has taken it upon itself to protect Muslims from this danger; thus promoting mass immigration and multiculturalism, and so the Party for Freedom fits into

the tradition of the right. Nothing could be further from the truth, according to Mr. Bosma. The current left is the successor of the left of Hitler and his associates, and the blame for the many deaths in World War II that we commemorate every year lies with the left of that time and consequently also with today's left. This reasoning, which was grasped late, a year after the publication of *The Sham Elite* prompted former Labour Party member of parliament Mei Li Vos (2011) in 2011 to call in the Dutch newspaper *Trouw* for the yearly May 4 commemoration where the victims of the Second World War are commemorated to be held without Party for Freedom representatives, which earned her ridicule and voices of disapproval, although she did have a point. In chapter 2 of this book, which is about Islam, I noted that Mr. Bosma connects this religion to National Socialism, thus bringing the circle back around.

Original Sin

The image that *The Sham Elite* evokes of the left is as bad as Islam is bad. How could it be otherwise with such a National Socialist predecessor? And it started off poorly. After all: 'Genocide as an instrument of policy already appears at the origin of socialism. Friedrich Engels (1820-1895) labels Scots, Bretons, and Basques as 'Völkerabfall' (p. 258) ('trash people).' Mr. Bosma refers here to an article by Friedrich Engels in the *Neu Rheinische Zeitung* from January 13, 1849. The full quote, which Mr. Bosma does not provide, is as follows:

'Es ist kein Land in Europa, das nicht in irgendeinem Winkel eine oder mehrere Völkerruinen besitzt, Überbleibsel einer früheren Bewohnerschaft, zurückgedrängt und unterjocht von der Nation, welche später Trägerin der geschichtlichen Entwicklung wurde. Diese Reste einer von dem Gang der Geschichte, wie Hegel sagt, unbarmherzig zertretenen Nation, diese Völkerabfälle werden jedesmal und bleiben bis zu ihrer gänzlichen Vertilgung oder Entnationalisierung die fanatischen Träger der Kontrerevolution, wie ihre ganze Existenz überhaupt schon ein Protest gegen eine große geschichtliche Revolution ist. So in Schottland die Gälén, die Stützen der Stuarts von 1640 bis

1745. So in Frankreich die Bretonen, die Stützen der Bourbonen von 1792 bis 1800. So in Spanien die Basken, die Stützen des Don Carlos. So in Österreich die panslawistischen *Südslawen*, die weiter nichts sind als der Völkerabfall einer höchst verworrenen *tausendjährigen Entwicklung*. Daß dieser ebenfalls höchst verworrene *Völkerabfall* sein Heil nur in der Umkehr der ganzen europäischen Bewegung sieht, die für ihn nicht von Westen nach Osten, sondern von Osten nach Westen gehen sollte, daß die befreiende Waffe, das Band der Einheit für ihn die russische Knute ist - das ist das Natürlichste von der Welt.'

'There is no country in Europe that does not possess, in some corner, one or more remnants of peoples, the remains of a former population, pushed back and subdued by the nation that later became the bearer of historical development. These remnants of a nation mercilessly trampled by the course of history, as Hegel says, these '*Völkerabfälle*' (national remnants) will, each time, and will remain until their complete extermination or denationalization, the fanatical bearers of counter-revolution, just as their entire existence is, in general, a protest against a great historical revolution. Thus, in Scotland, the Gaels, the supporters of the Stuarts from 1640 to 1745. Thus, in France, the Bretons, the supporters of the Bourbons from 1792 to 1800. Thus, in Spain, the Basques, the supporters of Don Carlos. Thus, in Austria, the pan-Slavic South Slavs, who are nothing more than the national remnants of a highly convoluted thousand-year development. That this similarly highly convoluted national remnant sees its salvation only in the reversal of the entire European movement, which for it should go not from west to east but from east to west, that the liberating weapon, the bond of unity for it, is the Russian whip - this is the most natural thing in the world.'

Engels discusses in his article peoples that occupied a minority position in contemporary and earlier nation-states and who, ideologically speaking, supported the 'wrong' rulers as counterrevolutionaries. He anticipates that these peoples will either be exterminated (*Vertilgung*) or denationalized (*Entna-*

tionalisierung), meaning that they will lose their national character. It is tempting to translate the term *Vertilgung* as genocide. However, the term genocide implies the existence of actively government-initiated policies that systematically aim to eliminate a particular people or population group. In Engels' quote, there is no active subject mentioned. Therefore, translating *Vertilgung* as genocide is a step too far. Nevertheless, that discussion is somewhat academic. After all, the communists have committed terrible acts of violence against opponents, undoubtedly inspired by, among other things, this quote. Moreover, Engels also indicates that ideologically lost peoples can merge into other peoples, and in that sense, it is perhaps a less bloodthirsty solution but still a completely undesired one.

Having read Engels' quote, the conclusion is that socialism has never amounted to anything and remains nothing even now. It is 'terrible,' as party leader Mr. Wilders repeatedly articulates so aptly speaking about the left. However, something is amiss in the reasoning. Let me employ an Old Testament argument to illustrate my point. Mr. Bosma's thinking regarding the left aligns seamlessly with the text as stated in Leviticus 14:18: 'The Lord is patient, great in love, who forgives iniquities and transgressions, and does not leave the guilty unpunished, but punishes the iniquities of the fathers upon their children, to the third and fourth generation.' We are talking about the principle of original sin. Today's socialists must atone for the alleged (or not) misdeeds of their – distant – ancestors. It does not matter if you are a peace-loving social democrat; it does not matter if you have a Jewish background like former Labour Party leader Job Cohen at the time. You are tainted by the bloody past of your predecessors. A grotesque reasoning.

But I dare to ask, what about the father and grandfather of Martin Mr. Bosma, who, paraphrasing Mr. Bosma's characterization, were 'authentic primordial social democrats'? And didn't the old and young leftist Mr. Drees also get it right? The line of thought is as follows: The start of Marxist-socialism was already skewed, the struggle on the left culminated in a gigantic world war, and today the left remains terrible. But the period from, say, the 1950s to the mid-1960s, when the Zaanstreek,

Mr. Bosma's birth ground, was still a happy red stronghold, it was different. Those were the good old red days. It is a peculiar twist in Mr. Bosma's thoughts, and it somewhat flatters him. He does not engage in 'nest pollution': he would certainly never claim that his father and grandfather were (national) socialists, would he? However, the exception he grants the authentic left of that time and region casts his entire consideration of the left in a peculiar light and makes his analysis even more implausible than it already was.

Once again, I assert that thinking in stark oppositions is hardly sustainable. It seems that what is evil can easily be seen as good, and what is good can easily be seen as evil. This reminds me of a statement by the Christian thinker Augustine (354-430). In his *On the City of God Against the Pagans*, Book 11, Paragraph 22, Augustine writes: 'Even poisons that have a devastating effect when used ignorantly turn into beneficial medicines when applied knowledgeably. Conversely, things that provide pleasure, such as eating and drinking and even light, can be experienced as harmful if used excessively and incorrectly' (quote from: Larrimore, 2001, p. 55). I do not know whether Mr. Bosma includes Augustine under that Christianity which he views positively, but Augustine's words convey an important life lesson. Upon closer examination, things are sometimes the opposite of what they appear. The forest of socialism consists of trees bearing fruits that can both be extremely toxic and extremely beneficial.

Chapter 5 Migration and multiculturalism

The Moluccan Islands

The Islamic calendar marks the emigration of the Prophet Mohammad in 622 AD from Mecca to Medina as its starting point. Emigration and Islam are therefore closely linked, and it is based on this observation that Mr. Bosma arrives at the following statement: 'Emigration has always been an important weapon of Islam' (p. 177). He adds an element: emigration is a *weapon* of the Muslims, not merely a phenomenon. Islam was and is meant to be spread throughout the world. Conversion zeal is not foreign to any major religion, especially not to Christianity, which Mr. Bosma seems to praise. Christians and Muslims often obstruct one another in the border areas of both religions. Mr. Bosma provides an example, citing: 'In the Moluccas, where the local Christian population had been 'faithful through the centuries' (Mr. Bosma's quotation marks) to the Netherlands, these Christian natives have encountered problems due to Muslim immigrants [in Dutch: *inwijkelingen*; this word has a negative connotation, as if they are 'uninvited guests']' (p. 177). This quote is interesting for several reasons. Mr. Bosma assumes that the Moluccas were originally Christian, that the — note the term — *local* population adhered to Christianity, but then Muslims — again note the term — [*inwijkelingen*] immigrants arrived and caused problems for the population, which, please note the wording, 'had been faithful to the Netherlands through the centuries'.

A glance into historical works about the Moluccas generates a very different picture of their history and religions. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, the Moluccas came into the sights of European colonial powers, notably of Portugal. Knaap states in Knaap, Manuhutu & Smeets (1992) that 'Muslims were already present on the Ambon Islands in the fifteenth

century' (p. 11), and that the process of Islamization began in earnest around the year 1510. In 1512, the Portuguese arrived in the Moluccas, and between 1536 and 1538, the 'pagan' village (Knaap's quotation marks) of Hatiwe requested an alliance with the Portuguese and was the first to convert to Christianity (p. 12). A century later, 'the VOC (Dutch East India Company) conquers the Portuguese positions on the Ambon Islands' (p. 12). Knaap's conclusion regarding the history of the Moluccas is as follows:

'Upon closer examination of the aforementioned chronology, it becomes evident that the first cluster, covering the years 1510-1520, marks the period of Islamization, the arrival of Europeans, and the influence of the Ternatans and the cloves culture. The second cluster, from 1536 to 1538, highlights the introduction of Christianity and the onset of European colonial governance. Lastly, the eighth cluster, spanning 1652-1658, signifies the complete subjugation of the coastal populations in the western Ambon Islands to colonial authority, along with the resulting limitations on the cultivation area for cloves, making these clusters the most significant overall (p. 13).'

It is clear that Islam reached the Moluccas before Christianity, and that the Moluccas were primarily a colony for the clove culture. This perspective is further supported by the work of de Graaf (1977), who describes the history of the Moluccas according to the aforementioned chronology. He makes remarks regarding the name *Moluccas*, noting that some believed the name of the islands comes from the Arabic word '*malik*,' meaning king. Thus, 'the Moluccas would be the *Islands of Kings*' (p. 20). Arabic as a language is inextricably linked to Islam. De Graaf later states (p. 23) that 'Ambon has known few times in its history as rich in significant events as the years around 1500. Two have already been discussed: the introduction of *clove cultivation* and the arrival of Islam. The third is the discovery of the Moluccas by the Portuguese' (the italics are by De Graaf).

This brief historical exercise demonstrates that there is much to be questioned regarding Mr. Bosma's perspective. Islam established itself in the Moluccas earlier than Christianity, and the islands were primarily a colony, first for the Portu-

guese and later for the Dutch. This puts the alleged loyalty of the 'indigenous Christian population through the centuries' in a very different light. Mr. Bosma's Eurocentrism is striking, as is his paternalistic view of the Moluccans who were 'so loyal to the Netherlands.' It is probably best the Moluccans do not hear this; they are deeply disappointed, if not severely frustrated, with the behavior of the Dutch government. This is all related to history. For centuries, the Netherlands ruled over what was then known as Dutch East Indies. In 1949 the Netherlands finally recognized the independence of the archipelago after years of bitter struggles. It would become known as the Republic of Indonesia. Quite a few residents of the Islands had served in the Royal Dutch East Indies Army, and independence had been promised to the Moluccas by the Netherlands. However, that promise was not fulfilled, and many Moluccans were brought to the Netherlands in the 1950s. The pursuit of independence, however, had not faded, and out of frustration due to the lack of action from the Netherlands, young Moluccans resorted to violent actions, such as hijacking a train and simultaneously taking over an elementary school in the spring of 1977. This resulted in several deaths and injuries. Understandable or not, it was Moluccans who resorted to violence, yet there is no mention of this in Mr. Bosma's book.

Columbus' America

Mr. Bosma aims to provide examples of the absurd forms that multicultural thinking can take. In one quote, he states: 'Anyone who dares to say that Columbus discovered America can expect a serious reprimand: the native Americans were already living there, weren't they?' (p. 203). Mr. Bosma arrives at this statement in his discourse on the ideology of multiculturalism, which had gained significant traction in various sectors of American society at the time. Having spent several years working and studying in the United States, he argues that claiming Columbus discovered America reflects Eurocentrism, which he considers, with a flair of sarcasm, 'a serious deviation from the party line' (p. 203). Let me provide another quote before returning to the example of America and the native

Americans. Mr. Bosma quotes historian Maarten van Rossem (1998) who would have written (source text lost): 'Almost all multicultural states have disintegrated after a lot of misery' (p. 188). Building anyway on this line of thought, I argue that the United States will ultimately disintegrate in a manner akin to the dissolution of the Soviet Union. If anywhere in the world there is a country where people with different identities and backgrounds live, it is America, with its Black people, Hispanics, Native Americans, and other groups, irrespective of the recent politics in this regard of the second Trump administration. In my view, America is a multicultural society and, according to Mr. Bosma, it is therefore doomed to fail. Continuing this line of thought: the tragedy that America is heading towards could have been prevented if Columbus and his fellow Europeans had never settled and colonized America. Then it would have remained a 'monocultural' Indian territory, the Native Americans would not have been nearly exterminated, and we would have had a large 'monocultural' Indian nation instead of the multicultural United States.

Monoculturalism

'Monoculturalism, supplemented by Christian Western values such as diligence, discipline, honesty, and efficiency, has led to an unparalleled peak in human history. It has given humanity everything it has ever desired' (p. 187). There you have it: the stance of Mr. Bosma and the Party for Freedom regarding culture. There is no mention of, for instance, the highly disciplined, efficient, and respectful cultures of Asian countries like China, Korea, and Japan. According to Mr. Bosma, Christianity and the West hold primacy over humanity. Furthermore, he states, 'Democracies rarely go to war, especially not with other democracies' (p. 188). If we are to consider the United States a democracy, this last statement takes on a particularly questionable character. What about the world's largest democracy, India? Since its founding, the country has been in a near-constant state of conflict with neighboring Pakistan. Countless counterexamples stand against Mr. Bosma's assertions about the ideal of a monocultural society. Moreover, he claims, 'A non-multicul-

tural society also seems to be a condition for something else: the welfare state' (p. 188). After all, 'in a country where the population considers itself one family, people are more likely to help those who are struggling' (p. 188). He argues, quoting Putnam (2007) that 'immigration and diversity reinforce social isolation' (p. 189). The Netherlands is a country with many established cultures. It is also a welfare state which by the way is currently being rapidly dismantled, partly due to the influence of the Party for Freedom. Isn't that already a counterexample to Mr. Bosma's last assertions? This reminds me of the motto of the Dutch Protestant leader Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920), which was 'sovereignty in one's own circle.' During the period when the Netherlands (roughly between 1860-1970) was characterized by a pillarized society, with Protestant, Catholic, and socialist pillars, it was virtually unthinkable to join each other's sports clubs, trade unions, or read each other's newspapers. In a sense, it was everyone for themselves, but society nonetheless consisted of diverse sub-societies, each with its own culture. In that sense, the Netherlands has never been monocultural, and I increasingly find myself questioning which society truly is monocultural. Mr. Bosma does not provide specific examples. Moreover, it was quite monocultural states, such as France and Germany, that initiated or engaged in numerous wars with other nations and with each other, and even the 'monocultural' England had its share during the colonial period in Africa and Asia. The counterexamples I present are not acknowledged in Mr. Bosma's book, and unencumbered by any factual knowledge, he continues his crusade against multiculturalism.

The multicultural ideology

A number of quotes regarding multicultural ideology: 'Multiculturalism has become our national state ideology due to the upheaval of the sixties' (p. 320); 'The 'anti-fascism' brings us a totalitarian ideology, leading to the downfall of the welfare state, democracy, and social stability' (p. 320); 'The multicultural society is the result of the erosion of democracy' (p. 119); 'Even in multicultural Netherlands, language is a way to influence

thinking. Through the use of words and terms and the framing of concepts, we are imposed the worldview of the multicultural elite' (p. 237). 'Muslim immigrants are the shock troops of May 1968; it is the Muslims who must succeed where the sixty-eighters failed: the establishment of the post-racial, multicultural, egalitarian utopia full of brotherhood and devoid of archaic national symbols—and certainly without Christianity' (p. 318). And this continues for quite some time. Mr. Bosma's crusade culminates in his Chapter 7b, titled A.

Profession of Faith.

In this chapter, he summarizes multiculturalism in 20 articles. In 11 of the 20 articles, references are made to Islam, Muslims, the Koran, or Moroccans, thereby linking multiculturalism with Islam. Ultimately, it comes down to this: multiculturalism is the plaything of the leftist elite; the masses want nothing to do with it; it is imposed upon the masses, and the Muslims with their well-known dual agenda are happily playing along to eventually seize power, islamize the country, and implement sharia law when there is no turning back. 'At some point, an immigration flow reaches a tipping point. Then, it is not the immigrants who adapt to the host country, but the host country is adapting to the immigrant' (p. 141). All of this follows and applies to the theses of the multicultural profession of faith (Chapter 7b).

Hitler and multiculturalism

Mr. Bosma does not attempt to draw comparisons between multiculturalism and Hitler's National Socialism this time, which is quite challenging. While multiculturalism may currently be the rallying cry of the left, it was certainly not the case for its 'predecessor.' Hitler was an ardent proponent of utterly abhorrent racial ideas, and I need not elaborate on the consequences of that. The official appointed by Hitler to govern the Netherlands, Arthur Seyss-Inquart, initially expressed 'good' intentions: 'We are not here to enslave and destroy a people or to deprive a country of its freedom' (quote from Vermaat, 2010, p. 250), but ultimately our country was ruthlessly exploited, robbed, terrorized, and our people were killed. Once again,

it is important to note which words and ideas are absent from Mr. Bosma's book.

Discussing cultures is, in my view, much more complex than the simple dichotomy of monoculture versus multiculturalism. People have always mixed, whether we like it or not. Cultures can be extremely tolerant, whether mono- or multicultural, or extraordinarily cruel, whether mono- or multicultural. There are an immense number of aspects to consider when discussing cultures. I do not wish to downplay the observation that some cultures are more pleasant to live in than others, but I also acknowledge that fixating on what constitutes monoculture and the ideal society it would engender, along with an aversion to everything multicultural, is historically and empirically untenable.

What stands out to me, and I offer a variation on an earlier quote by Mr. Bosma, is that 'even in - Party for Freedom Nederland, language is a way to influence thinking. Through the use of words and terms and the framing of concepts, we are imposed the worldview of the Party for Freedom elite' (p. 237). This constant bashing of everything left ('terrible') and Islamic ('voting cattle'), not to mention anything labeled as multicultural ('multicul', where 'cul', written in Dutch as 'kul', means nonsense), leads the populace and elite—staying true to Mr. Bosma's terminology—to express themselves in increasingly vitriolic terms regarding especially Muslims. The politics of exclusion that the Party for Freedom pursues occurs through language: in the written text of Party for Freedom politician Mr. Bosma and in the spoken words of Party for Freedom representatives throughout the country, who are increasingly appearing in the media.

Chapter 6 The emergence of the Party for Freedom

A trendy and above all human party

If one hears the Dutch word 'hip' or 'trendy' in English, one is likely to think of the hippie movement of the 1960s and 1970s, along with the 'terrible' New Left that took the old Dutch Labour Party by storm. I discussed the latter in chapter 4 of this book. Nonetheless, it is remarkable that Mr. Bosma, reflecting on the rapid developments of the Party for Freedom at the end of his book, calls his own party 'hip': 'We have become hip' (p. 329). Appropriating the terminology of others is a well-known strategy to market oneself. 'Hip you are? Then you must be with the Party for Freedom!' *The Sham Elite* is characterized by Mr. Bosma's own development as a Party for Freedom member and that of the Party for Freedom itself. Party leader Mr. Geert Wilders is mentioned in a history that Mr. Bosma describes as a mission requiring both struggle and commitment: 'We must function as a kind of semi-underground resistance organization' (p. 29). Regarding Mr. Geert Wilders, he notes, 'He will never see his home again (p. 24; after the murder of Theo van Gogh in 2004, which leads to Mr. Wilders having permanent protection and at first living in different secret locations). There are *setbacks*: 'We silently gaze out the window. We have a long way to go' (p. 33) after a disappointing campaign evening in the southern Dutch city of Den Bosch. There is *tension*: 'All our blood, sweat, and tears have been shed in the weeks and months beforehand, now it's a matter of waiting' (p. 198) on the evening of the elections of November 22, 2010. There are *triumphs*: 'The looks on the faces of the people from other parties say it all: we are the party crashers, the unwanted intruders. What are we doing here?' (p. 199) following the electoral victory on the same date. There is a *sense of sacrifice*: 'I will never forget how Geert says: "This is exactly

why we are here. Even if we only secure one seat, this is simply our task"', (p. 226) amidst the commotion surrounding the film *Fitna* (see chapter 3). There is *relief*: 'These are moments that make up for a lot. The Netherlands is starting to understand us better' (p. 226) after reactions from people in the cities of Volendam and Drachten who voted for the Party for Freedom. There is *corporate spirit*: 'The Party for Freedom has grown into a gathering of jovial ... patriots. People who oppose 'those who call the evil good and the good evil, who turn darkness into light, and light into darkness, who make bitter sweet and sweet bitter' (p. 325). And there is a *sense of history*: 'In a hundred years, people will remember Mr. Geert Wilders as someone who had the moral clarity to tell the truth that needed to be told' (p. 227). In short: nothing human is foreign to the Party for Freedom.

Norms and Values

It is nice to note that Mr. Martin Bosma and Mr. Geert Wilders are flesh-and-blood individuals with all the emotions that come with that. Moreover, the text of Mr. Bosma's book reveals a system of norms and values: 'The generation of May 1968 rebelled against the bourgeois values of traditional leftists on issues such as discipline, tidiness, work ethic, moderation, respect for the elderly, and appreciation for our history and national symbols' (p. 285). 'Monoculturalism, supplemented by Christian Western values such as diligence, discipline, honesty, and efficiency, has led to an unparalleled peak in human history' (p. 187). I have argued above that Mr. Bosma views the good old Labour Party of the 1950s with a relatively mild perspective, and in that light, I conclude that he values highly traits such as discipline, tidiness, work ethic, and moderation (the first quote), and, in any case, diligence, honesty, and efficiency (the second quote). It is all very beautiful and commendable. I think that no one could disagree with the importance of the mentioned values.

However, there is a contradiction here, as the daily practice of Party for Freedom operating is certainly not characterized by moderation and respect for the elderly, in particular. One

can eloquently argue that one is not against Muslims as individuals but against Islam as a phenomenon; however, I cannot imagine that when you are labeled as 'Islamic voting cattle' or as bearers of 'head rags' (i.e. head scarves; see below), you perceive that as being characterized by moderation and respect (I interpret respect for the elderly here as respect for every human being; after all, why should one have respect for the elderly but not for the young?). The language and style of the Party for Freedom are marked by extraordinary coarseness and bluntness. There was a criminal trial against Mr. Wilders in 2010 and 2011. He was suspected of group insult, incitement to hatred, and incitement to discrimination. The trial was triggered by an article by Mr. Geert Wilders in the newspaper *de Volkskrant* on August 8, 2007, in which he described Islam as a fascist ideology and stated that he wanted to ban the Quran. As a result, various individuals filed complaints. Still, he was fully acquitted in the verdict. In its ruling though, the court found Mr. Wilders' statements about 'a tsunami of Muslim's to be 'coarse and derogatory.' Regarding other statements, the court remarked, 'These statements were on the edge of what is permissible and they are incendiary'. A second lawsuit against Mr. Wilders took place following his so-called 'fewer Moroccans' statement made during the election results evening of the municipal elections in March 2014. During the results evening on March 19, 2014, when the Party for Freedom participated in municipal elections of the cities of The Hague and Almere, Mr. Wilders addressed a café full of Party for Freedom supporters and asked them whether they wanted more or fewer Moroccans. The audience chanted 'fewer,' to which Wilders responded, 'Well, then we'll arrange that.' On December 9, 2016, the court ruled on this case. Geert Wilders was found guilty of group insult and incitement to discrimination but was acquitted of incitement to hatred. The court decided not to impose a penalty, but Mr. Wilders now had a criminal record.

Another example of offensive and coarse language is the proposal by the Party for Freedom in 2009 to impose a tax on wearing headscarves. Such a measure is already an expression of the party's characteristic disdain for Muslims, but Mr.

Wilders did not use the term headscarves; instead, he coined the term 'kopvodden' ('head rags', a derogatory slang term). He referred to this as a 'kopvodden tax,' and it is clear that he used this language to insult the Muslim community (see also below, chapter 11).

The examples on language use stand in stark contradiction to the values that the Party for Freedom claims to uphold. Additionally, I myself held the Party for Freedom up to a mirror of its own morality in an article in the Dutch newspaper *de Volkskrant* on September 26, 2011. There was considerable commotion in the Parliament at that time due to the outright unparliamentary language of Party for Freedom parliamentarians during the general debates. My assertion was that the Party for Freedom politicians should strive to behave according to the Christian principles they so loudly praise. The response from Mr. Bosma in *de Volkskrant* on September 30, 2011, was devastating (Bosma, 2011). In passing, I was thrown onto the dung heap of academic history alongside Mr. Diederik Stapel, a disgraced professor at my university who was unmasked as an academic fraudster, stripped of his titles and in the end dismissed. It was all quite unedifying and in stark contradiction to the norms and values so highly praised by the Party for Freedom.

Grubbenvorst and Zuidlaren

In the elections for the Provincial States on March 2, 2011, there were 2,776 votes for the Party for Freedom out of 17,509 valid votes in the southern municipality of Horst aan de Maas, which includes the village of Grubbenvorst. This represents a percentage of 15.85% with a voter turnout of 55.48%. In the northern municipality of Tynaarlo, which includes the village of Zuidlaren, 1,291 people voted for the Party for Freedom out of a total of 16,821 valid votes cast, with a turnout of 67.07%. The Party for Freedom share was 7.67%. What should these figures mean to you, the readers? The following quote provides some clarification: 'Many politicians I speak to (informally) are incredibly jealous of our organizational model. No hassles with the party or the program committee that sud-

denly removes you from the list because someone from a specific province or background needs to be included. Wonderful! But of course, they can never say that. For their spot on the list, they depend on that same party democracy, so they must praise the wisdom of the Grubbenvorst or Zuidlaren branch' (p. 217). Mr. Bosma reports in his book about the structure and growth of the party. According to electoral law, every political party must be an association, and although Mr. Wilders and Mr. Bosma would prefer to choose a foundation model for the Party for Freedom, that is neither allowed nor possible. Instead, they were almost forced to establish the *Vereniging Partij voor de Vrijheid* (Association of the Party for Freedom), which has only two members: Mr. Geert Wilders himself and the *Stichting Vrienden van de Partij voor de Vrijheid* (Foundation of Friends of the Party for Freedom) (p. 216). With a certain arrogance, Mr. Bosma describes in chapter 18 of his book the proceedings within the association: 'Every year there is an annual meeting, and even that obligation is followed to the letter. Proper minutes are taken, there is a round of questions. Usually, Geert has no input. After that handful of minutes, the party goes back into hibernation' (p. 216). This passage showcases the rigid character of the Party for Freedom. While the Party for Freedom, as an association, is free to recruit members, it does not genuinely do so at all.

We must, however, remember that we are dealing with a now powerful political body, the Party for Freedom which supported in the period 2010-2012 the government and today it is the largest party in the Schoof coalition government. The derogatory tone towards voters in places like Grubbenvorst near the greater city of Venlo and Zuidlaren, near the greater city of Groningen, where more than 4,000 people voted for the Party for Freedom in the Provincial States elections of 2011, contradicts the principle of respect for people and moderation previously mentioned. One could easily conclude that the Party for Freedom does not care about the opinions of its voters. The Party for Freedom has a top-down established program, and people either agree with it or not—or in Mr. Bosma's words: 'We are our own boss' (p. 216). However,

if a Party for Freedom voter from Grubbenvorst or Zuidlaren comes forth with a phenomenal idea, it remains uncertain whether and how the Party for Freedom will respond.

I find this particularly remarkable because Mr. Bosma's book is also filled with anti-elite phrases. He creates the impression of advocating for ordinary people, such as those in Grubbenvorst and Zuidlaren. A few quotes illustrate this: 'The people who do not receive things for free, the ordinary people, have never shown any sympathy for mass immigration' (p. 284). 'Anyone who wants to belong to the elite must utter the moral password and condemn Mr. Geert Wilders' (p. 286). 'Will the multicultural elites and patriotic public grow closer to each other?' (p. 289). The Party for Freedom opposes the elites but is itself becoming an elite, now more than ever as the Party for Freedom is nowadays the most powerful political party in the country, as there is no channel for the voice of the 'ordinary man,' let alone that his ideas can be part of the party program. On the contrary, that seems explicitly not to be the intention.

The Party for Freedom in the Dutch Parliament

Anyone following the media coverage of the internal functioning of Party for Freedom parliament members gets the impression that strict discipline prevails. How often don't we hear a member of parliament or a provincial council member state, when asked for comment, say that they have none and refer instead to Mr. Geert Wilders himself or the provincial leader of the Party for Freedom? During the vote in the House of Representatives on the bill concerning the unanesthetized slaughter of animals in June 2011, Party for Freedom MP Wim Kortenhoeven voted against it. He was subsequently prohibited from speaking to the press. Mr. Bosma describes the internal dynamics within the parliamentary group: 'The portfolio holders in the faction have enormous freedom' (p. 220). Geert follows the line of his mentor former Liberal party (VVD) leader Frits Bolkestein: 'Frits Bolkestein had a clear political line, but he gave great freedom to his faction members in the implementation' (p. 219). This creates the impression that Mr. Geert Wilders is the visionary who focuses on the big

picture while leaving the details (with 'enormous freedom' and 'great freedom') to his faction members. However, the catch lies in the following quote: 'The chief whip, the 'chief whip', ensures that everyone is indeed going in the right direction' (p. 219). And who is this chief whip? 'Geert has dubbed me (Mr. Bosma) chief whip' (p. 219). Mr. Bosma is not only the party ideologist but also ensures, as a good party ideologist should, that everyone stays in line. This presents a curious system of contrasting observations. There is something else to consider. In setting up a national network for the elections, the Party for Freedom was to gather the required number of 30 signatures in each electoral district. Mr. Wilders and Mr. Bosma intended 'to ensure that this operation was to run flawlessly' (p. 197). They would do everything possible to counter the image that the - leftist - press describes the Party for Freedom as the inheritor of the former utterly racist parties Centruumpartij and Centrumdemocraten from the 1980s and 1990s: 'Even those people, citizens who would have no political responsibility in the organization, I would still question them about their potential ties to any clubs from the eighties. Even someone whose uncle had once appeared on a list of the Centrumdemocraten, I will therefore show the door' (p. 197). The screening procedures are draconian and extreme; Mr. Bosma himself calls them 'ridiculous' (p. 197). Again, this observation raises questions. In the fall of 2010, numerous scandals surfaced involving new Party for Freedom MPs such as Mr. James Sharpe (fraud and aggressive behavior), Mr. Richard de Mos (lying about his CV), and especially Mr. Eric Lucassen (indecent with subordinates). Something had indeed gone very wrong with the screening. Presumably, the candidates for the Party for Freedom list were exhaustively questioned about their ideological pasts but not about whether they were legally unblemished. The explanation for this oversight? I quote Mr. Bosma: 'The ideology had blinded the observation' (p. 283).

The formation of the Party for Freedom and the personal development of Mr. Bosma as a Party for Freedom politician fit perfectly into the black-and-white, good-and-evil framework we have previously seen in the assessment of Christia-

nity: good. Islam, bad. Left, bad. Multiculturalism, bad. Jews and Israel, good. Mr. Bosma speaks in strong terms that align with such a simplistic worldview: a struggle for good and a struggle against evil. I find this concerning. The Party for Freedom was the support partner of the Rutte I government and these days the leading party in the Schoof government, and thus it influences strongly policy, governance and the public opinion, which we are increasingly noticing. The entire narrative of the formation of the Party for Freedom and the functioning of its parliamentarians and staff serves the black-and-white thinking where the mechanisms of exclusion of Muslims mentioned in earlier chapters become increasingly evident.

In addition, it is intriguing that the party, which professes to represent ordinary people against the elite, has a rather autocratic nature and does not grant these individuals a voice within the organization. Perhaps we should not consider Mr. Bosma's book as representative of the party, although I admit that this thought is rather naive. Mr. Bosma writes in this regard: 'This is my book. I have written it in a personal capacity' (p. 333), but in the same breath, he thanks Mr. Geert Wilders: 'Not only because he gave me the opportunity to write this book, but especially for the journey I have now been taking with him for six years' (p. 333). From this quote, I conclude that Mr. Wilders supports the content of *The Sham Elite*. Moreover, Mr. Wilders is not the type to tolerate genuinely oppositional voices; had that been the case, this book would never have been published. Mr. Bosma concludes his expression of gratitude to Mr. Wilders with the phrase 'Never a dull moment' (p. 333). I think he is correct: we are not heading towards dull times. However, I am unable to feel the excited tension that Mr. Bosma conveys in this English expression. I foresee extraordinarily unpleasant tensions ahead and fear that we have not yet seen the extreme outcomes of the Party for Freedom ideology as it is being applied more and more these days.

Chapter 7 Statistics and data

Statistics

Mr. Bosma's *The Sham Elite* is a political and ideological book. It provides insight into how Mr. Bosma and, by extension, the Party for Freedom think. In this, numbers and facts are of secondary importance. They are presented and interpreted in light of the Party for Freedom message. Therefore, it seemingly makes little sense to delve into the cited figures and facts in Mr. Bosma's book. I have addressed the facts in the various chapters of this book. However, after reading Chapter 12 of *The Sham Elite*, the scientist in me was more stimulated than ever. In this chapter, titled *The Green Danger*, Mr. Bosma asserts that 'it is good to look at the opinions of newcomers. After all, their share of the population will increase in the coming years' (p. 169). A sensible exercise: letting those people speak who are largely the focus of the book, the Muslims. Mr. Bosma goes all out, and the picture he paints based on various studies is not trivial. For instance, he presents data from a study conducted by the *Research and Documentation Center* (Mr. Bosma's note 1 of chapter 12) of the Ministry of Security and Justice: 'Three-quarters of indigenous youth believe that unlimited freedom of speech (understood as the right to mock God) should apply, while there is little enthusiasm for that unlimited freedom among Muslim youth (Turks: 17 percent; Moroccans: 7 percent)' (p. 169). He also cites research from countries of origin, such as a study conducted by the Bahçesehir University in Istanbul in 2009, which showed that 64% of (Turkish) respondents do not want to live next to a Jewish neighbor. Additionally: 'Only 15 percent prefer a democratic system' (p. 170). From a study conducted by the Moroccan magazine *Telquel* in December 2007 among Moroccans, Mr. Bosma also cites several pieces of data. I will note a few of them here:

- 40 percent refuse any contact with (Moroccan) Jews;
- 61 percent do not accept living together with Muslims and non-Muslims;
- 75 percent reject the idea of Muslims changing their faith;
- 66 percent believe that Islam provides a solution for everything (medicine, science, economy, politics, technology);
- 21 percent of the youth endorse jihadist movements;
- 17.6 percent of the entire population agrees as well with the preceding statement.

Mr. Bosma then cites data from several studies conducted in the Netherlands. Due to space limitations, I will note a few examples (all references can be found in Mr. Bosma's book; the index lists the various references):

- Nearly 50 percent of Muslims in the Netherlands believe that sharia should take precedence over the constitution and should be implemented;
- Only 18 percent of Moroccans oppose the introduction of sharia in the Netherlands;
- A majority of both indigenous people and Muslims believe that the Western way of life is incompatible with that of Muslims;
- 40 percent of Moroccan youth in the Netherlands reject Western values and democracy. Young Moroccans, in majority, oppose the right to free speech regarding the allowance of offensive statements, especially when it pertains to Islam.

Representativeness and Verifiability

Presenting research with percentages only is always risky. As a researcher and academic, I ask students who submit papers and theses about absolute numbers as well. So when it states that 'nearly 50 percent of Muslims in the Netherlands believe that sharia should take precedence over the constitution and should be implemented,' I want to know: '50 percent of how many people?' Is it from 100 people or from 10,000 people? In this case, I verified the source cited by Mr. Bosma. He refers to an article by Nahed Selim in the Dutch newspaper *de Volkskrant* dated April 18, 2005 (not online anymore). I quote the

relevant text: 'A recent study commissioned by Nova (Dutch news show at the time) revealed that nearly 50 percent of the approximately one million Muslims living in the Netherlands believe that sharia should take precedence over the Constitution and should be implemented in the Netherlands.' It seems improbable that all one million Muslims were surveyed, and the source is also unverifiable: 'a study commissioned by Nova.' That is too vague for me. However, criticism of representativeness and sources is easy. Mr. Bosma provides the sources, and in most cases, these can be checked effectively. While not providing absolute numbers may be academically irresponsible, it is quite common in the media. How often does one not read in a newspaper that a certain percentage of the population supports or opposes something without any mention of absolute numbers? Representativeness and verifiability are important, but also because of the consideration not to overwhelm people with too many detailed figures, almost all media handle this quite loosely.

Image Formation

What bothers me, however, is the imbalance. When you read Chapter 12 of Mr. Bosma's work, particularly the initial pages where all those studies are cited, you can only conclude that the ethical and moral beliefs of Muslims in the Netherlands are in very poor shape. They are not very fond of freedom, are attached to their conservative religion, and essentially display asocial behavior, among other things. Mr. Bosma cites studies that suit his narrative. This is truly a grave sin, especially if you aim to present an objective picture of your research group. And does Mr. Bosma want that? Certainly, as he indicated earlier the importance of 'looking at the opinions of newcomers' (p. 169). If you choose to examine the opinions of newcomers, do it thoroughly. The cited WODC study reveals other important findings as well. Researchers Phalet and Güngör (2004) conducted an experiment on tolerance, testing the democratic ideal of respect for the rights of dissenters. One of the other results was as follows: 'On average, the overwhelming majority of both immigrants and natives, in line with Dutch anti-racism

legislation, oppose the application of the right to free speech to racist groups (71% of Turkish, 77% of Moroccan, and 63% of indigenous youth; older generations of Turks and Moroccans are even more opposed, at 83% and 87%, respectively)' (pp. 75-76). Additionally: 'Once again, immigrants and natives find common ground in their attitude towards racists: the vast majority cannot feel sympathy for them (81% of Turkish, 70% of Moroccan, and 65% of indigenous youth)' (p. 76).

Thus, we observe that there are also results indicating similarities between natives and immigrants. However, Mr. Bosma only focuses on the differences that suit him. Looking into the foreign studies he cites can also be beneficial. The research from *Telquel* mentioned by Mr. Bosma, conducted in Morocco, naturally contains more data. In response to a question about the relationship between religion and politics, 24.9% of respondents believe that religion becomes dangerous when it interferes with politics, while 26.1% think the opposite. Additionally, 48.8% have no opinion on the matter. Regarding individuals and political organizations, 41.5% of respondents believe that politicians should keep religion at arm's length, while 18.1% support the opposite view. Furthermore, 47.6% oppose political parties that present themselves as religious, with only 10.3% in favor and 39.6% neutral. Moreover, 41% of respondents believe that the Moroccan nation is made up of Moroccans of different religious beliefs, including Muslims, Jews, and Christians. This shows that nearly half of Moroccans want nothing to do with a connection between religion and politics. This contrasts with Mr. Bosma's belief that Islam (and thus Muslims) is solely aimed at political domination. Additionally, 1,156 Moroccans participated in the study conducted by *Telquel*.

Other values

In addition to the sources cited by Mr. Bosma, there are others. *The Atlas of European Values* (Reeskens et al., 2022) provides extensive reports on surveys conducted in 47 European countries and regions, including Turkey, covering a wide range of topics. The results of these surveys are available on the Atlas website. The data I mention here come from the

2012 website of the Atlas. With the exception of about ten countries or regions, an average of 1,500 people participated in the surveys per country. Since Turkey is part of the research, it is interesting to see whether Turks stand out negatively again. Regarding the question of whether respondents want children to learn their faith at home, the percentage of Turkish participants is 47%. Italians rank lower at 37%. The Greeks are close to the Turkish percentage at 42%, but the Romanians lead with 74%. Furthermore, 95% of Turks consider work very or fairly important in life. This is also true for the French (95%) and Italians (96%), but less so for the British (74%) and Germans (82%). Additionally, 39% of Turks state that they go to a place of worship at least once a week, placing them alongside the Irish, who are at 41%. In contrast, 29% of Romanians attend church once a week, while the percentage for Poles is 54%. Respondents were also presented with the statement: 'Democracy may have problems, but it is better than any other form of government.' Among Turkish respondents, 93% agreed with this statement, placing them in line with the Dutch (93%) and Germans (95%). In comparison, Bulgarians scored relatively low at 83%. Lastly, 52% of Turks claim to be (very) involved in the living conditions of immigrants in the country, which stands out positively against other percentages: only 10% of Dutch, 17% of English, and 27% of Germans express similar feelings.

There is also much discussion regarding partner choice. Islamic marriage candidates are often said to have partners imposed on them. However, comparative research by Bartels & Storms (2008), along with earlier studies, shows that there is increasing openness among Turks and Moroccans to discuss their partner choices and reject forced marriages. Discussions about arranged marriages elicit responses from research participants indicating that such practices are a thing of the past and no longer occur. Bartels & Storms conclude that trends among Turks and Moroccans, such as considering free partner choice as a given, are persistent. It is clear that the portrayal of Turks and Moroccans, of Muslims if you want, is much more nuanced and varied than Mr. Bosma suggests. I understand that a book has limited space and that choices must be made. However,

Mr. Bosma exclusively opted for (certain parts of) studies that present a negative image for the research group, the Muslims.

Mr. Bosma rightly states in his book: 'I am not a historian, but a simple member of Parliament' (p. 317), and I couldn't agree more. If he had submitted *The Sham Elite* to me as a Master's thesis, I would have sent him home with the assignment to truly turn it into an academic work. I would never have allowed it to come to this extent, but that is beside the point. Of course, I know that here we have a politician and ideologist speaking, who is only interested in data that fits his narrative and facts that he interprets in a convoluted manner. In that sense, he does little differently than the left-wing press he so despises, as he himself states: 'Often journalism searches for facts that align with leftist biases' (p. 100). He accuses the leftist press of tunnel vision. To paraphrase: 'Often writing a book involves searching for facts that align with right-wing biases.' Furthermore, Mr. Bosma's methodology confirms his own criticism of Dutch democracy: 'In a democracy, there should be a level playing field for both sides of the discussion. This is not the case in the Netherlands' (p. 113). The increasing 'Party for Freedom-ification' of society will lead to an even more one-sided discussion than it already is. More on this in the last chapter. First though I present in the following section my analysis of the book Mr. Wilders wrote.

Part II: Mr.Wilders' book

Chapter 8 Truth

Marked for Death contains 217 pages and the words 'truth' or 'true' are mentioned in it at least eleven times. As an academic I am suspicious of the word 'truth'. I teach my students that undoubtedly, there is such a thing as the truth, but each one of us, including those we see as great thinkers, has his own concept of what the truth is. It was Socrates who postulated that what we see around us is not the real world, that what we see is but an image of it and that we can in effect hardly see reality and if so only with a great deal of effort. Philosopher Immanuel Kant argues that basically we cannot know things, we can only guess at what 'reality', at what is 'real'. Friedrich Hegel does not rule out man fully knowing things but foresees perfect knowing as a result of a long development the end of which we have not reached as yet. The apostle Paul also claims that as yet we do not know things fully (1 Corinthians 13: 12): 'For now we see in a mirror; dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall understand fully, even as I have been fully understood'.

Knowing things, knowing reality is not only a subject that occupies the minds of academics, thinkers, philosophers and theologians. It concerns each one of us. If asked to describe an event they have witnessed, different people tend to give different versions of it and may disagree with each other's interpretations. This is not limited to daily events but also goes for major events in people's countries or for things happening in the world. Some may blame the 2008 economic crisis on the irresponsible behavior of banks, while others may claim with equal force that the crisis has been caused by mass immigration.

Man is aware that there is something like the truth but cannot come to an agreement on what truth is, what it consists of.

Never in the history of mankind have there been societies that were uniform in terms of what was considered the truth. Sure, there were and are societies where regimes impose their truth on the people, but ultimately none of them have succeeded in convincing everyone. There will always be individuals who disagree, who have different views on things. It must be a blow to all those who believe in 'the truth', but the truth is that there is simply no such thing as the one and only truth.

Having said this, we should not object to people venting clear opinions. There is absolutely nothing against people expressing their interpretation of reality, their interpretation of the truth. All I would demand from people in this respect is that they take into consideration that when they express their views and opinions, they should realize that there are other people whose truths may be different from theirs. And here we get to the heart of a problem. Because while wise people will indeed realize that other truths exist beside their own, there are also people who do not want to accept the truth of their fellow men and will even want to impose their own truth on their brothers and sisters. This can lead not only to arguments, but also to conflicts, and ultimately to war. History is full of examples of wars based on religion or ideology. The challenge for mankind is to respect the multiple interpretations of the truth in order to maintain peace.

This elaborate introduction makes clear where I stand. I acknowledge that all persons are entitled to their own truth, but I do want to make myself heard to those who claim theirs it is the one and only truth and I would want to make myself heard even more if they wanted to impose their truth on others. In particular those holding power or wielding major religious or political influence in a given society should heed this warning. It is live and let live. Tolerance is the key word.

Now let us turn to the instances where Mr. Geert Wilders in his book talks about the truth. The first time he uses the word 'truth' in his first chapter, called *The Axe Versus the Pen*, he puts it in inverted commas: 'There is no better metaphor to illustrate the difference between Western values and the "true faith of Islam" than the difference between a pen and an axe'

(p. 4). Mr. Wilders makes it quite clear that he has no intention of even so much as tolerating his opponent's truth being different from his: the faith of Islam is 'true' in inverted commas, in other words: It is not true. He confirms this statement by writing on the following page (p. 5): 'Armed only with our pens, we must defy Islam's axes and knives. We must continue to speak our minds, knowing there is nothing more powerful than the truth. That is why we write our books and speeches, draw our cartoons, and make our movies and documentaries. The truth will set us free. That is what we really believe.' Mr. Wilders does not juxtapose his truth with Islam's truth. He denies Islam's truth and states that there is only one truth, his own. The question obviously is what exactly his truth consists of. Let us therefore look at other instances where the truth is mentioned in *Marked for Death*.

In the same first chapter, Mr. Wilders deals with the speech on Islam that American President Obama gave in Cairo on June 4, 2009. In this speech, Mr. Obama declared that 'he consider[ed] it part of [his] responsibility to fight against negative stereotypes of Islam wherever they appear' (p. 13). Mr. Wilders' reaction to this statement is: 'But what if these so-called 'negative stereotypes of Islam' are the truth – will you denounce people for telling the truth?' Here Mr. Wilders' truth comes out: The negative stereotypes of Islam are the truth. Its violent character, its wish to impose itself on others and conquer the world, as he points out later in the book, this is the truth about Islam. This truth is something negative, something evil, as Mr. Wilders declares in the last chapter of his book, called *How to Turn the Tide*: 'Islam is one of those evil empires and it too will collapse once people begin telling the truth' (p. 209). Mr. Wilders reminds us of the fact 'that Islam is not the truth and that we have no obligations to this ideology' (p. 126). Mr. Wilders is being very outspoken here. Because of the simple fact that Islam is not the truth, we do not owe it anything. And not only is Islam not the truth, but it is also evil.

Speaking the truth, he says, is not an easy task. 'Sometimes speaking the truth invites physical threats, persecution, or the loss of money or power' (p. 130). When you express yourself

and receive hostile reactions; that can be the price you have to pay. For quite a while now, Mr. Wilders has been living under police protection due to anonymous threats. This is a well-known fact in the Netherlands. In the last part of his book he describes the personal conditions he is forced to contend with: 'It is the price for speaking the truth about Islam' (p. 143). Here Mr. Wilders touches on a subject I discussed earlier: Each person is entitled to one's own truth but he crosses a line when he wants to impose his truth on others or physically fight others who cherish conflicting opinions. In being threatened and forced to surround himself with bodyguards, Mr. Wilders is experiencing his opponents' defying his truth. He expresses his views on Islam, gets threatened as a result and experiences what can happen if intolerance reigns. Faced with a situation like that, one would expect Mr. Wilders not to react in a fashion similar to that of his opponents. He knows from experience what can happen if people believe in their own truth one hundred percent, cannot accept opposition to it, and act violently based on this strong belief. But Mr. Wilders, in his turn, does the exact same thing as his opponents. He denies Islam its claim to the truth. There is only one truth, and that is Mr. Wilders'. He could have opted for a less strict reaction to Islam. He could have chosen to attack the consequences of Islam's perceived evil nature and avoid the 'truth' discussion. Had he opted for combating the negative characteristics of Islam, and not its 'universal truth' claim, he might have won more support, as there are more voices in the world that criticize Islam and Muslims. But he chooses not to and instead adopts the same approach as that perceivably taken by his adversary.

His personal, explicitly expressed interpretation of the truth has quite a number of consequences for the perceived evil character of Islam. To give an example, in his fourth chapter, called *In the Dark Doorways*, he details the concept of martyrdom in Christianity and Islam. Christian martyrdom, so he explains, 'refers to suffering unto death for the sake of faith' (p. 64). Islam's, he goes on to argue, is different: 'Islamic martyrs are not those who suffer and die for the truth, but those who are killed while making others suffer and die.' What it comes down

to is that martyrdom in Islam consists of blowing oneself up and taking with one as many infidels as possible. In Christianity, the martyr surrenders to his enemy and allows him to slay him. The difference is clear: An Islamic martyr is basically egocentric; a Christian martyr is unselfish. Closer inspection, however, soon reveals that 'the truth' is much more complex than this. Wars that Christian crusaders fought were considered legally permissible. They were called 'Just Wars', the Latin term being *Bellum Iustum*. Christian thinkers like Augustine of Hippo and later Thomas Aquinas ideologically underpinned the Just Wars. In Just Wars, attacking and killing the physical enemies of the Christians was permitted, and the Christians that fell in such wars were considered martyrs as they died as fighters in God's cause. Martyrdom in Islam, as perceived by Mr. Wilders, is thus found in Christianity as well. Similarly, the selfless martyrdom that Mr. Wilders relates exclusively to Christianity can be found in Islam as well. During President Nasser's reign of Egypt many Muslim Brothers were put into concentration camps and died for the sake of their faith. They had killed nobody: they were killed. Now, I am well aware of the fact that the subject of martyrdom in both religions is a thorny issue. In both cases, martyrdom is not quite as selfless as it is supposed or made out to be. But Mr. Wilders' black-and-white interpretation of martyrdom for the two religions does not do either of them justice. His interpretation is a consequence of his own truth and his denial of the truth of Islam.

In his chapter three, bearing the title *Islamofascism*, which does not offer much hope for a respectful debate on Islam, Mr. Wilders discusses the rules of warfare: 'Ideological and theocratic regimes ... have made 'the universal truth' (as they see it) into a political ideology, they do not obey rules of warfare. Prisoners are slaughtered and the concept of betrayal applies to those who renounce the side that pretends to be the vehicle of truth' (p. 38). The idea is that there are rules of honor in warfare but that Islamic regimes do not obey to them. The implication obviously is that Western governments, who, according to Mr. Wilders, are the bearers of the best culture in the world, a point that he elaborates on in the next chapter;

do respect the rules of warfare. Once again, his claim is easy to refute. In the First World War, both Germany and the Allies, the Germans more so than the Allies, used poison gas against each other, as decades later Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein did against his own population and against the Iranians in the Iran-Iraq war from 1980-1988. The Americans used chemical weapons in Vietnam. No belligerent nation ever stuck to the 'noble rules of warfare'.

In the example on warfare we touch on an important aspect of Mr. Wilders' truth that was already briefly mentioned at the beginning of this book: Islam is not a faith; Islam is an ideology. 'Islam is not just a religion ... but primarily a political ideology in the guise of a religion' (p. 25). In Mr. Wilders' book, ideology is something reprehensible. Ideology implies tyranny. Ideology is not the truth. In Mr. Wilders' perception, ideology is evil, and nothing good can come out of it. He relates it, and this will be discussed more extensively in the *Ideology* chapter, to Nazi Germany, to the Soviet Union and also to France in the days of the Revolution. Islam should therefore not be treated 'more leniently than other political ideologies like communism and fascism just because it claims to be a religion' (p. 26). An approach like that has quite a number of consequences. He puts it short and not so sweet: 'That is the crux of Islam: it is an ideology of global war' (p. 78). Surprisingly, he attenuates his view of Islam as a violent ideology by stating that 'I am talking about the ideology of Islam, not about individual Muslim people. There are many moderate Muslims, but that does not change the fact that the political ideology of Islam is not moderate – it is a totalitarian cult with global ambitions' (p. 26). If I were a Muslim and intent on a dialogue with Mr. Wilders, I would lose all hope after reading such a statement. I may be moderate; I may be open to others, to other people's truths, but none of that changes the fact that my faith, my 'ideology' is violent and not the truth. It blocks all possible dialogue and therefore any hope of creating a *modus vivendi*.

In this chapter, we established what the truth is in Mr. Wilders' view: Islam and ideologies in general are evil and do not possess any truth. Having heard what Mr. Wilders considers

evil, one wonders what he believes is good. In the next chapter, called *Culture*, I will try to find this out.

Chapter 9 Culture

The following quote is unequivocal about where Mr. Wilders stands in regard to what can be considered the best possible culture in the world. When discussing Western civilization he states: 'When you compare the West to any other culture that exists today, it becomes clear that we are the most pluralistic, humane, democratic, and charitable culture on earth' (p. 31). Specifying his claim he refers to the 'Judean-Christian civilization', which he recognizes is 'no doubt imperfect' but of which 'it is unfair to denounce its faults in a historical vacuum' (p. 31). Mr. Wilders claims Western culture is superior to all other cultures by comparison but fails to specify which other cultures it is supposed to tower over, apart of course from Islam. Not a word on for instance Asian, i.e. Chinese, Japanese or Korean, cultures. And does Western culture include the Balkans, or Russian culture or Christian African culture? I will come back to these questions later in this chapter.

In his chapter five, *The Yoke of Ishmael*, Mr. Wilders makes some interesting remarks on the allegedly superior Western culture. Pages 80-85 deal with the creation of the state of Israel and here he explains why he 'always feel(s) at home in Israel: it is animated by the same spirit that made Western civilization great – that of the soldier protecting the frontier and the pioneer settling the land' (p. 84). In the lines preceding this sentence Mr. Wilders writes: 'Their (the Jewish settlers) spirit is the spirit of the West, the spirit of the pioneers who settled America and spilt "their blood ... in acquiring lands for their settlement," as Thomas Jefferson wrote in 1774' (p. 84). Both quotes refer to violence. They speak of soldiers and of blood that was spilt acquiring lands. This contradicts what Mr. Wilders said earlier and which was discussed in the chapter 8 on *Truth*, namely that the West should be defended with the

word and the pen and not with axes and knives, weapons used by Islam. Or do these lines perhaps require a different interpretation? That superior Western civilization established itself using violence, but that once settled the need to use violence disappeared. This suggestion appears to be corroborated by what we read on page 120: 'Our commitment to truth, human dignity, and a just and honorable defense of the West do not permit us to resort to bloodshed or to give in to despondency.' Are we supposed to infer from this that the West no longer uses violence?

Some pages later, Mr. Wilders discusses the influence of books like the Koran, the Bible and Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf*. He argues that 'most people in the West are fair-minded and educated enough that they can't be incited to commit violence against a group of people just by reading some book' (p. 122). The West is clearly inhabited by peace-loving people who would never settle their arguments using force. But Mr. Wilders is not completely blind. 'There is,' he says, 'a minority of easily impressionable people who *can* be incited, and this danger is magnified when people believe they are reading a book ordained by God' (p. 122-123, italics Mr. Wilders). Here Mr. Wilders is talking reality. But does he give examples of such people being misled and using violence? Does he refer at all to the Roman Catholic Inquisition, which, inspired by the Scriptures, burnt apostates by the thousands, or to Protestant convictions that found their way into laws that ultimately led to condemning homosexuals and witches to death? And what about the Christian-inspired anti-Semitism that led to the harassment and persecution of millions of Jews through the ages in virtually all European nations? No, Mr. Wilders does not have much more to say than just that 'the Bible ... shaped all of Western civilization' (p. 123). And indeed, I would say, it did. Mr. Wilders' idea is that the Christian West has led us and is still leading us to peace and any relation with violence is accidental. In the course of history, only a few individuals have resorted to violence inspired by the Bible, but the majority of us Westerners have always been rational, respectful people.

Mr. Wilders having thus established the fact that Western ci-

vilization is superior and peace-loving, we are not surprised to read the following quote: 'The West never 'harmed' Islam before it harmed us. It was Islam which took the Middle East, Christian Northern Africa and Constantinople by aggressive wars of conquest' (p. 134). The West was attacked by 'these aggressive Muslims' and thus simply had to act. Western civilization would never take the initiative and start 'aggressive wars of conquest' itself, now would it? I would like to connect the last quote to the earlier ones, which speak of this Western spirit that made Western civilization great, the blood that was spilt acquiring lands. And where was it that the West acquired lands? Right, in the Americas and Australia. Western explorers travelled the world, 'discovered' the New World, and spread their superior Western culture. With the word? With the pen? We know that this was not the case. The West conquered half the world and depopulated large parts of it through violence and diseases. Levene (2005) gives a shocking account of what happened. The native Americans in Northern America, the aborigines in Australia, the Tasmanians on Tasman Island, all of them underwent the presumed blessings of Western civilization. The Tasmanian people were decimated in less than 80 years after being 'discovered'. When the British landed in Tasmania in the early 1800s, there were approximately 4,000 to 5,000 people living on the island. In 1876 not a single original inhabitant of the island was left alive, due to Western violence and diseases. Australia as a whole registered a 97% loss of its aboriginal population and Mexico lost 'some 18,75 millions of its number in the period 1520-1524 downwards to a brink of around 1 million in 1605' (p. 10). Whether we want to acknowledge it or not, the West has committed a worldwide genocide, one of the, conveniently, forgotten genocides of history.

Now Mr. Wilders hates cultural relativism, he rejects the idea that all cultures are equal and from this point of view he condemns Westerners criticizing their own culture: 'Westerners who disdain cultural relativism, who are willing to denounce barbarism when they see it, and who believe that the West, indeed, is the center point of civilization today, are dismissed as haters' (p. 135). But *criticizing* one's own culture does not

mean rejecting one's own culture. I would consider it a sign of strength to be willing to acknowledge the weaknesses of one's own culture. In fact, those who do so should be praised by Mr. Wilders as he strongly suggests that Muslims should do the same: 'What is needed in Islamic countries is not a change in leadership, but for Muslims themselves to renounce Islam and liberate themselves from the ideology's mental prison' (p. 209). This goes very far indeed: Mr. Wilders suggests that Muslims should give up their religion, which, of course, is unacceptable to them. I will come back to this suggestion later in this book. But if we were well disposed towards the intention behind this advice, we could conclude from it that he considers self-criticism to be a good thing. Why then would this not apply to the bearers of the best civilization on earth?

A regrettable aspect of Mr. Wilders' claim that Western culture and civilization are the best in the world today is that it is hardly ever mentioned as an independent statement. It is virtually always mentioned in comparison with the perceived evil nature of Islam. On pages 80-82, Mr. Wilders, as I mentioned before, deals with the creation of the state of Israel. He reports on the migration to Israel of Jewish communities living in Arab countries after it was founded in 1948. He labels them refugees and states that '(N)o one talks about the Jewish refugees anymore because they quickly made new lives for themselves in Israel, Europe and America, even though many of them had arrived penniless' (p. 82). Mr. Wilders wants to make it clear that there is no point in dwelling on the past. His motto is 'Look to the future.' He also mentions 'the Germans who were expelled from the Sudetenland and the lands east of the Oder and the Neisse rivers, the Greeks who were expelled from the Aegean coasts of Anatolia' and other such cases. All of these people let bygones be bygones and got on with their lives. Islamic and Arab countries, on the other hand, are eternally, it seems, postponing a solution to the issue of the Palestinian refugees of 1948 and 1967. What keeps them from permanently settling down and getting integrated in countries like Lebanon, Syria and Jordan? Why do these governments refuse to settle things, like the Jews once did, and the Germans

and the Greeks? Well, this, Mr. Wilders observes, has to do with 'a strong characteristic of Islam: it nurtures resentment, passing it on from generation to generation' (p. 82). 'Islam', he continues, 'still complains about the Crusades, as if France would still moan about the Hundred Years' War...' (p. 82). I would agree that at some point one has to come to terms with the past, one has to stop brooding over it; one has to look to the future, however difficult that may be. But is this mentality of being prepared to leave things behind you, forgetting about the past, letting bygones be bygones, a specifically Western characteristic? Does it mean that the West is not suffering from any kind of memory syndrome?

28 June 1389 is the date of the Kosovo Battle, which took place near *Kosovo Polje*, Black Bird's Field, where Serbian warriors were slain by Ottoman armies. This battle has been commemorated each year ever since, right to this day. In 1914, it was on this specific day that the heir to the Austria-Hungarian throne, Grand Duke Franz-Ferdinand, was killed by Serbian terrorist Gavrilo Princip, which eventually led to the outbreak of the First World War. In a speech in Kosovo Polje in 1987, then leader of Serbia, Slobodan Milošević, proclaimed that no one had the right 'to beat up' the Serbian part of the population in Kosovo, which at the time was dominantly inhabited by -Muslim- ethnic Albanians. The Serbs in Kosovo complained about the abuse they underwent from the Muslim majority. It was this speech that later marked the start of the Kosovo war in 1999. Apparently, people from the Balkans do not forget. Particularly when it comes to battles with Muslims, even when these go back as far as 1389. Are the Muslims to blame then for the 1999 war? Who caused the Muslim population of Kosovo to flee in 1999? Was it not Mr. Milošević's 'Christian' Serbian armies? And are we to conclude that the Eastern Orthodox Balkans, having such a hard time forgetting about the past, are not part of Western civilization? That Western civilization consists solely of countries like, say, the United States, the United Kingdom, France and Germany? And supposing the inhabitants of these countries are so good at forgiving and forgetting, what about the German people who once lived

in what is now Western Poland and the former Sudetenland. Are they at peace with what happened to them right after the Second World War? How come there are numerous associations whose members long for the days when their ancestors were still living in these regions? How come the Scottish people still cherish sentiments of independence from the English? Why do they not simply accept the fact that they are part of the United Kingdom? An even more telling example is the tragedy of Northern Ireland. Why did it take so long before the people of Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic accepted the partitioning of the island in 1922? Is it not another example that flatly contradicts this presumed Western spirit of forgetting about the past and moving on, as it took 30 years of bloodshed and more than 3,000 dead before finally a fragile balanced peace was established? And what about the continuous battle going on between the Basques and the Spanish authorities? Why do they not settle their dispute in the 'go-for-it' spirit of the West? And am I mistaken in sensing perhaps a wee bit of resentment when reading on page 134 of Mr. Wilders' book that 'the West never 'harmed' Islam before it harmed us' and that it was 'Islam which took the Middle East, Christian Northern Africa and Constantinople by aggressive wars of conquest?' The Middle East, Christian Northern Africa and Constantinople belonged to us, to the civilized West. And they, the aggressive Muslims, took them from us. But this happened more than a thousand (Northern Africa and the Middle East) or more than 500 (Constantinople) years ago! Is it not about time to forgive and forget, which after all we are so good at? Mr. Wilders' Party ideologue, Mr. Bosma, his book being treated in chapters 1-7, argues that the fall of Constantinople in 1453 was the incentive to establish the forerunner of what is now the Dutch Parliament. He recalls that with the entrance of the Party for Freedom into the Dutch Parliament in 2006, the Parliament's original mission had been restored: the fight against Islam. This interpretation of history, apart from it being highly contestable, does it not contradict this Western spirit of forgetting the past and moving on? Let me give another example of the perceived superiority of Western civilization. In

his chapter four, Mr. Wilders talks about a trip he once made to the Middle East and how he became 'fascinated by the decorative splendor of a copy of the Koran that was for sale' (p. 58). He bought the book, took it home, read a translation of it and was utterly disappointed. 'I expected to find injunctions to 'love thy neighbor' and other commandments similar to those in the Bible, but instead I found the spite of a god who hates' (p. 58). In these same pages, he describes how tolerant Jews and Christians are with regard to adulterous women, quoting Jesus who said: 'He that is without sin among you, let him cast the first stone' (p. 59, John 8:7). Muslims, by contrast, still stone adulterous women to this day. Now, I do not contend that in some Islamic regions women are indeed stoned. Every single woman stoned is one too many. But the stoning of adulterous women is not a general practice in the whole Islamic world. On the contrary, most Islamic countries abhor stoning. The implicit message though, that Christianity only preaches love and an absence of violence is an overstatement. True, the key message of the Bible is to love thy neighbor as thyself, but unfortunately there are many other verses in the Bible that have incited individual people, religious institutions and entire states to use violence. An example of an individual inspired by the Bible to commit atrocities is Norwegian mass murderer Anders Behring Breivik, who killed 77 people on a mission that was inspired by the words of Jesus (de Ruiter, 2011). In his 2083 *European Declaration of Independence* he states the following in his section 3.149:

'... in the New Testament, Jesus commanded His disciples to buy themselves (swords) and equip themselves.'

Luke 22:36: 'Then said he unto them, 'But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one'.

Matthew 26:52-54: 'Then said Jesus unto him, 'Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Thinkest thou that I cannot now

pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?"

If you read those verses in context they support the position of self-defense. Jesus told Peter it would be committing suicide to choose a fight in this situation, as well as undermining God's plan to allow Jesus' death on the cross and resurrection. Jesus told Peter to put his sword in its place – at his side. He didn't say 'throw it away'. After all, He had just ordered the disciples to arm themselves. The reason for the arms was obviously to protect the lives of the disciples, not the life of the Son of God. What Jesus was saying was: 'Peter, this is not the right time for a fight.' In the context of cultural conservative Europeans current war against the cultural Marxist/multiculturalist elites and the ongoing Islamic invasion through Islamic demographic warfare against Europe, every military action against our enemies is considered self-defense. There will be much suffering and destruction but eventually we will succeed and may be able to start rebuilding'.

Mr. Wilders and his party have repeatedly stated that they consider Mr. Breivik to be a lone wolf, a lunatic, a psychopath who represents only himself. Mr. Wilders denied any link with Mr. Breivik's thinking and the latter's violent interpretation of the Scriptures. Still, Mr. Breivik can be considered one of the few exceptions whose existence Mr. Wilders does not deny when he writes that there is this small minority in the West that is seduced to use violence after reading a book, in this case the Bible.

But let us leave aside deranged individuals and take a closer look at what history tells us. The Thirty Years' War (1618-1648) in Central Europe, largely characterized as a religious war between Catholics and Protestants, led to enormous losses in the population with estimates for Germany of 25 to 40 percent. The Eighty Years' War (1568-1648) between Catholic Spain and the predominantly Protestant Netherlands, apart

from being a struggle for independence, was a religious war as well. More recently we have seen the complex conflict in Northern Ireland between Protestants and Catholics taking a death toll of more than 3,000 persons.

Teachings in the Bible may lead to verbal violence and occasionally to physical harm as well. What are we to think of the Westboro Baptist Church in the United States, for example, which, basing itself on the Bible, states that God hates all homosexuals and that they will go to hell? Why do women still die as a result of illegal abortions in Catholic countries like Poland and until recently Ireland? Why do these countries deny women the right to control their own bodies and the life they carry? Is it not the strong pressure and influence of the Catholic Church that is to blame for that? And what about African Anglican Churches who condemn homosexuality as a Western invention, as a result of which African gay people risk losing their lives when they venture to come out? Or are African Anglicans perhaps not part of superior Western culture?

Christianity ordains its believers to love their brothers and sisters. But it is equally true that Islam preaches a merciful God. In 2005 I published a collection of essays in Dutch on what I called in English translation *The Statistics of Religions. Essays on the Jewish-Islamic-Christian Tradition of our Country* (de Ruiter, 2005). In it I reported on my counting the number of occurrences of certain words in the Bible and the Koran. The Koran far outnumbered the Bible, both in absolute and in relative terms, in the number of times the words 'mercy', 'forgive' and 'forgiver' were mentioned. The word 'war' occurred far more frequently in the Bible than in the Koran. The bottom line is that both holy books can be and should be interpreted as books of peace and love and mercy, but equally that both contain verses and words that are less peace-loving, and that the reality is that there are interpreters that choose to focus on the dark side of both books.

Am I showing myself to be a reprehensible cultural relativist here? Undoubtedly. But I do wish to underline that I do not want to do away with religions, Christianity or otherwise. Religions promote worthy human values and they should con-

tinue doing that. Religions, however, should also abide by the dogma that it is God who punishes or rewards, not people. Religious people should strive for a happy afterlife, while at the same time respecting those who do not believe in such ideals. Many Christians walk the path of non-violence, as do many Muslims. But history shows us that both religions have very dark pages in their histories and the challenge for them is to make violence-free religion a reality. In fact, religions have an advantage over ideologies which seek to establish paradise here on earth, and which have cost millions of lives. I will go into this matter in the next chapter. For the moment, I must conclude that the arguments that Mr. Wilders adduces for the superiority of Western culture can be countered by equally strong arguments to the contrary. As always: the truth lies somewhere in the middle.

Chapter 10 Ideology

Mr. Wilders regards Islam as an ideology: '...Islam is not just a religion, as many Americans believe, but primarily a political ideology in the guise of a religion' (p. 25). '(T)he political ideology of Islam is not moderate – it is a totalitarian cult with global ambitions' (p. 26). If Islam is an ideology, its followers cannot be said to be believers. Still Mr. Wilders never refers to Muslims as being adherents of an ideology. He does not give them a new name like 'Islam ideologists' for instance. He goes on calling them Muslims but obviously for him the term Muslim has a different meaning than it has for the average reader, who regards Muslims as adherents of a religion. The confusion only grows when we learn that Mr. Wilders makes a weird distinction between Islam on the one hand and its followers, the Muslims, on the other. He states that 'there are many moderate Muslims, but that does not change the fact that the political ideology of Islam is not moderate' (p. 26). 'We are fortunate that the majority of the world's 1.5 billion Muslims do not act according to the Koran...' (p. 26). Islam is evil; Muslims who do not fully implement Islamic ideology are not necessarily evil. Could this mean then that Muslims can be good? This is not what Mr. Wilders is saying here but it is what he is implying, either intentionally or not. In the end, making a distinction between the ideology and its followers can only lead to disaster. Because, ultimately, the followers are all potential instruments of this evil ideology and as such they are a danger to world peace. If Mr. Wilders' view of evil Islam and its potentially evil adherents were to become part of mainstream political thinking and acting, would that not create a huge risk of his followers using violence in the end? Would it not create a situation where the people, or even the authorities, convinced of the risk Muslims constitute, will act accordingly and start

oppressing and chasing them? It is for this reason that I find Mr. Wilders' artificial distinction between ideology and its followers a highly dangerous one. And in fact, reading Mr. Wilders' book, in particular chapters 5 and 6 on the history of Islam, and the last chapter where he presents his view on the (future) path to follow in respect to Islam one notices that where he speaks of 'Islam', he cannot but mean 'Muslims'. When he claims that Islam with its *jihad* (italics Wilders') caused the deaths of millions of people in India (p. 89), my question to him would be: 'Who, in your opinion, was it that killed in India? Was it Islam? Or was it Muslims?' The distinction proposed by Mr. Wilders is ultimately untenable. Ideologies do not kill. It is people who kill. His hatred is not directed at an ideology, it is directed at people, at Muslims.

Following Mr. Wilders' view that Islam is an ideology we are not surprised to find that he considers it an ideology like communism or fascism. Islam should therefore not be treated 'more leniently' than the other two, 'just because it claims to be a religion' (p. 26). At the end of his second chapter, he refers to methods to 'stop the Islamization of Western civilization' (p. 27). In my chapter 11, called *Solution*, I go into the details of the proposed methods. In the present chapter, I continue by giving an overview of how Mr. Wilders sees Islam and its history as an ideology that seeks to conquer the world.

Mr. Wilders' Party for Freedom is not known in the Netherlands as a party that cherishes the values of multiculturalism or the multicultural society. Party-ideologue Mr. Bosma states in his book that in multicultural societies neighbors no longer care for each other, while monocultural societies are characterized by social stability (p. 187-189; see as well chapter 5 of this book). In fact, 'monoculturalism has given mankind the best it has ever had' and in this regard Mr. Bosma specifies the values that characterize it, such as hard work, discipline, honesty and efficiency (p. 187). In his view, multiculturalism is a whip that Leftist parties have lashed our society with, and the cause of many conflicts and social problems in the Netherlands today. Is it not remarkable then, to say the least, to learn that Mr. Wilders looks very favorably on another multicultural society: that

of the Arab cities of Mecca and Yathrib, later called Medina, in the period just before Islam was born. When he talks about the birth of Islam he describes the Meccans as 'multiculturalists *avant la lettre*' (Mr. Wilders' italics). They were pluralistic and tolerant, willing to accommodate new religious groups' (p.34), and 'peace-loving' (p. 38). In 622, the prophet Mohammed left for Yathrib (Medina), 'that was just as tolerant as Mecca' (p. 36). 'Yathrib was a tolerant, pluralist, multicultural oasis where Jewish, Christian, and pagan tribes lived together peacefully' (p. 165). Then both cities regrettably came under the tyranny of the prophet and his followers. Their inhabitants thought that by accommodating the Muslims, they would be able to integrate them into their pluralistic societies: it did not work out that way. They lost their freedom forever. The message is that this will happen to us as well if we do not stop the Islamization of the world.

Islam subsequently spread over the world in an area stretching from Spain to the borders of China. All of the conquered peoples became the victims of the aggressive ideology of Islam and its destructive influence. Mr. Wilders also refers to the fall of Alexandria in 640 AD. 'Islam had little consideration for science' and thus 'the Arabs ... deliberately burned down its 900-year-old library' (p. 55). Mr. Wilders here quotes the Arab leader, Caliph Omar who would have said: 'They (the books) will either contradict the Koran, in which case they are heresy, or they will agree with it, so they are superfluous' (p. 55). There are some interesting observations to be made with regard to the example of the book burning in Alexandria. Mr. Wilders starts by saying that 'Islam had little consideration for science', but he subsequently uses the word 'Arabs', i.e., Muslims, to refer to the persons who executed the actual burning, instead of opting for a passive construction like 'and the [...] library was deliberately burned down'. Here we once again encounter the consequences of the artificial distinction Mr. Wilders makes between Islam and Muslims. Islam is evil, Muslims not necessarily, but in fact it was Muslims that spread the evil ideology of Islam and it was Muslims that apparently burned the books in the library, not Islam as Islam is not a living person. If

you are out to find blame, it is impossible to blame Islam and not blame the bearers of Islam, the Muslims. Even though not all of them act in accordance with the 'aggressive' Koran, they can, if they want to. Does it not therefore make more sense to be outspoken and to point not to Islam, but to its adherents, the Muslims? Do not get me wrong here. I am not in favor of blaming all Muslims for all the crimes that have been committed by Muslims. On the contrary. But what Mr. Wilders is doing here is blatantly hypocritical. He fabricates this confusing distinction between Islam and Muslims, while, basically, what he really wants to say is that in the end all Muslims are evil. Why not simply do away with this artificial barricade and speak out on the issue? In the last chapter of his book he puts a definite end to this embarrassing charade when he says, that, in the end, all Muslims, both the extreme ones and, surprisingly enough but perhaps not so surprising after all, the moderate ones as well, should renounce their Islamic identity. If that were realized, the whole 'Islam-Muslim' distinction dissolves and will have become pointless, but only after having fulfilled a very useful purpose in the path toward it.

Having established the anti-intellectual nature of Muslims while dealing with the burning of the Library of Alexandria, Mr. Wilders continues by presenting his views on the contribution of Islam to history. Historical studies show that Muslim scholars passed on —parts of— the classical Greek Byzantine heritage to Western Europe. After Islam came to Egypt, Syria and Iraq, scholars set out to translate the works of Greek scientists and philosophers into Arabic, which later on were translated into Latin in cities like Toledo in Spain, and in Italy. But Mr. Wilders' version of what happened is quite different. He states that 'comprehensive translations of Aristotle, and other ancient Greek philosophers were made at the Mont Saint-Michel monastery in Normandy half a century before Arabic versions of the same texts appeared in Islam-occupied Moorish Spain' (p. 56). In his opinion, the only science that Islam actually contributed to was that of astronomy. This would have had everything to do with the importance of the establishment of time and place because of the Islamic requirement to perform prayers

and fasting at particular times and 'for determining the *Qibla*, the direction toward the *Kaaba* shrine in Mecca, which Muslims must face when they pray' (p. 57). As an example of Western voices claiming that it was Muslims that passed on the Greek Byzantine intellectual heritage, Mr. Wilders chooses to single out the name of Nazi scientist Sigrid Hunke, member of the SS think tank, the *Germanistischer Wissenschaftseinsatz* (German Science Service), who claimed that 'the West owes its development to a "pioneering, civilizing Islam" that supposedly transmitted Greek philosophy back to Europe' (p. 56). Mr. Wilders does not fail to mention either that Mrs. Hunke was made an honorary member of the *Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs* at Cairo's Al-Azhar University, although he does not supply us with the source of this information. He is not surprised that Mrs. Hunke expressed these views, given her Nazi background. Mrs. Hunke wrote a book called *Allahs Sonne über dem Abendland* (*Allah's sun over the Occident*) and Nazis, so Mr. Wilders maintains, were fascinated by Islam (see below as well). He therefore 'regrets' the fact that Mrs. Hunke's 'flawed thesis has become widely accepted by Western leaders anxious to pander to Islam's grandiose pretensions' (p. 57). Here Mr. Wilders is discrediting an important aspect of Islamic-Western relations. To him, the classical Greek Byzantine heritage was passed on to us by Christian monks and not by Muslim scholars and translators. The only people defending the latter interpretation of history were Nazi 'intellectuals' and later on contemporary Western leaders apparently followed the Nazi interpretation of history.

One of Mr. Wilders' favorite cards obviously is the Nazi one. In the arguments concerning our classical heritage, Mr. Wilders links Islam as well as 'Western leaders' to National Socialism. He does not specify who these leaders are or were and to what political affiliation they belong(ed), but one can imagine that he is aiming in particular at leaders with a leftist political background, Mr. Wilders generally being very critical of the Left, which, in his perception, has opened our borders to Islam and to 'mass immigration'. Nazism and Islam to him are thus closely related and in his view present-day socialism is deeply

influenced by both. These are important lines of thinking both with Mr. Bosma, the Party for Freedom's ideologue, and with Mr. Wilders. Connecting Islam and socialism with Nazism is a strategic move to discredit both and to add substance to their claim that we are heading for an 'Islamization of the world' (see as well chapter 4 of this book). How did they (manage to) link all this together?

In his chapter three, called *Islamofascism*, Mr. Wilders claims that the Nazis recognized in Islam 'a kindred soul' (p. 42). Albert Speer, Nazi Germany's Minister of Armament, and Hitler's 'Reichsarchitect' supposedly wrote in his diaries that Hitler regretted that the prophet Mohammed had not come to the Germans and he quoted Adolf Hitler as saying: 'It's been our misfortune to have the wrong religion. Why did it have to be Christianity with its meekness and flabbiness?' (Speer, 1969, p. 42; translation by Mr. Wilders; (p. 42) see as well chapter 1). It is true, that Adolf Hitler in his inner circle condemned Christianity for its meekness. In his politics, however, he did not go so far as to ban Christianity from society. He himself never formally renounced Catholicism, the religion of his ancestors. In his book, Mr. Bosma, the Party for Freedom-ideologue, also refers to the Hitler quote on Christianity (p. 251). Mr. Wilders refers to Speer's diary in general terms. He uses what he needs to use to make his point, and the point has been made: the link between Islam and Nazism. In the next few pages, Mr. Wilders continues in the same vein. The message is clear: Islam and Nazism are natural friends. Nazism has been beaten, Islam not yet.

The relationship between Islam and leftist parties today is of a different nature than the one between Islam and Nazism. While describing the fall of the city of Yathrib (later Medina) to the prophet Mohammed and his followers in 622, Mr. Wilders refers to the so-called *Ansar*, the (Arabic word for) helpers, Yathribians, who became allies of Islam. 'Today, Islam finds its *ansar* in Western leftist and other fellow travelers who ferociously attack Islam's critics and other defenders of Western civilization' (p. 176). In Mr. Wilders' eyes, the Western Left has been subdued by Islam and is being used as its instrument to Islamize the world. This view is expressed in Mr. Bosma's book

as well (see chapter 4). To top it all off, Mr. Bosma claims that the present Left is the actual heir of Hitler's' political party, the NSDAP (National Socialist German Worker's Party). Consequently, a modern political party like the Dutch Labour Party, led between April 2010 and February 2012 by Jewish ex-mayor of Amsterdam, Job Cohen, stands in the same line as Hitler's NSDAP. For those who can hardly believe that this is seriously being asserted, I refer to the Party for Freedom Election Program of 2010, which says that each year on the fourth of May the Netherlands commemorate 'the liberation of the (national) socialist occupation' (1940-1945). The site puts the word *national* in parentheses, implying that the Netherlands suffered from five years of *socialist* occupation and terror. It is remarkable that Mr. Wilders does not explicitly mention this particular line of thought in his book, but this can easily be explained. Surely, if modern Western labour parties and thus Western labor governments as well, are to be considered Hitler's heirs, this would imply that the Israeli Labor governments from the late forties to the seventies and Mr. Tony Blair's' British Labour administration should be seen as Hitler's soul mates, which not only is a ridiculous thought but also quite a risky claim to put in a book published in the United States, especially when it concerns the relationships with the state of Israel.

Once he has established that Islam is a reprehensible ideology and closely allied to Nazism we are not surprised to find that Mr. Wilders elaborately discusses its violent past and present. I would like to present here a number of instructive examples. In his fifth chapter, called *The Yoke of Ishmael*, Mr. Wilders enumerates the multiple genocides 'Islam' has committed in the course of its history. He claims that, based on the calculations in Indian historian Lal's (1973) work, 'the population of India dropped from 200 million in 1000 AD to 170 million in 1500, with 60 to 80 million Indians dying as a direct result of jihad' (p. 89). Mr. Wilders gives a vivid description of all of the massacres that took place during the jihad in India and subsequently adds cynically that 'Islam still burns with indignation over the Crusaders' attacks' (p. 89), the idea being that Islam does not regret the millions it killed but is still whining over the relatively

insignificant events that took place during the Crusader raids in the Middle East. Note that the subject of the sentence quoted is once again *Islam*, an ideology that apparently manages to experience and show the human feeling of indignation. Of course, what we should really read here instead is another grammatical subject: Muslims, flesh-and-blood humans, for only humans can burn with indignation.

In his treatment of what happened in India, Mr. Wilders refers to the Crusades. In doing so, he tackles a thorny issue. After all, the Crusades were an initiative of the Christians, and one that cannot exactly be characterized as being a conquest through the word and the pen. On the contrary. But of course Mr. Wilders knows he can expect comments like the following: Aren't the Crusaders guilty of killing and plundering as well? Well yes, they are indeed, Mr. Wilders concedes when he writes: 'While Islam committed innumerable massacres as it swept through Asia and the Middle East, it should be noted that the Crusaders committed their own excesses in Palestine' (p. 90-91). But, he hastens to add, there is a difference though: 'Christians did not find sanction for their atrocities in Christian scripture; neither the Bible nor the example of Christ's life command Christians to kill unbelievers. The Koran and the example of Muhammad's life, however, do' (p. 91). Mr. Wilders is realistic enough to acknowledge that 'most people today, even most Christians, will acknowledge that many Christians throughout history committed terrible crimes in the name of Christ' (p. 19), but the line of thought is that Christians know that this 'violates Christian doctrine' (p. 19). 'A Christian who proclaims hatred to any group of people violates Christian principles. Not so with the Muslims' (p. 20). In short: Muslims (not: Islam) kill because their ideology tells them to; Christians kill too, but they are not instructed to do so by their religion. What a relief!

An interesting turning point in the description of the violent history and nature of Islam is the following. While discussing the upcoming European supremacy over the world in the seventeenth century and after, with Islamic countries falling into the hands of Russia, Britain, France, Italy, Spain and the Netherlands, Mr. Wilders comes up with the following insights: 'when

all seemed lost... Allah saved Islam, orchestrating what in Islamic eyes must look like two miraculous events: the outbreak of the French Revolution and the West's development of an unquenchable thirst for oil' (p. 112). Allah paradoxically was the driving force behind the French Revolution. It was this Revolution that destroyed confessional structures in France and elsewhere in Europe. It was Maximilien Robespierre who replaced the Catholic faith and God by a metaphysical deism. In Mr. Wilders' words, this is the same Revolution that 'revamped Islam at a crucial moment when its resources were diminishing due to its lack of innovation, the decline of its dhimmi population, (i.e. Jews and Christians), and dwindling influxes of new slaves' (p. 113). Mr. Wilders' line of reasoning is that Islam by itself does not stimulate development and creativeness. It relies on *dhimmis* and slaves to live and survive. Now that at the end of the eighteenth-century *dhimmis* and slaves had been exploited to the bone, Islam needed new resources and innovations: the French Revolution supplied them. One of the alleged dogmas of the French revolutionaries was the complete submission of all the people to the all-powerful state. The French showed the Muslims how they had been capable of submitting their own people and virtually all the European nations on the Continent to the principles of their ideology. It rang a bell and stimulated the Muslims to once again become aware of their glorious past, or in Mr. Wilders' words: 'In a sense, Islam encountered a 'kindred soul' in Western totalitarian revolutionary thinking' (p. 113). The line of reasoning is complex. Mr. Wilders is convinced of the aggressive nature of Islam. Islam had somehow, paradoxically, and against its nature, fallen asleep in the ages preceding the French Revolution. God saved Islam by, paradoxically again, allowing the anti-religious French Revolution to take place. The French, coming to Egypt in 1798, made the lethargic Muslims recall their glorious past. They felt newly inspired and rose in order to try to restore their once so magnificent empire.

Mr. Wilders rejects the French Revolution. He reproaches French Revolution-inspired and Enlightenment thinking elsewhere in his book for its totalitarian character. The French Revolution may have given birth to the *Declaration of the Rights*

of *Man and of the Citizen*, the basis of the present Charter of the United Nations, Mr. Wilders still condemns it for its totalitarian character, which resulted in terror. He calls Revolutionary France an 'ideocratic state' and groups it together with other 'ideocratic' states: '... such states – whether revolutionary France, the Soviet Union or Nazi Germany – exterminated their perceived enemies with guillotines, gulags and gas chambers' (p. 32). Not a word in his book on the United Nations' *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, or the principle of the equality of man, which were fruits of this revolution as well.

The French Revolution was nothing but evil and it is this evil that woke up that other sleeping evil. 'Islam began from the nineteenth century onward parroting Western revolutionary jargon, adopting Western technological and scientific innovations, and embracing the belated industrial revolution that Western colonial administration was bringing to the Islamic world – all with the goal of advancing jihad and world domination' (p. 114). This sounds like a paradox again for a religion that for the first 1200 years developed itself quite independently, but apparently that situation had changed. The key issue for Mr. Wilders is that 'exposure to Islam is ultimately fatal to us, but for Islam, contact with the West is a vital lifeline. Without the West, Islam cannot survive' (p. 116). This last element gives the West an unexpected dominant position over Islam. All it needs to do is cut its ties with Islamic countries and Muslims in general and Islam will not survive. But then again, one may wonder what 'West' exactly Mr. Wilders is talking about. Is it the secular, liberal West, the West as it developed itself from the principles of the French revolution, and thus in Mr. Wilders' terms, the despicable West? Or is it the West as created by the Jewish-Christian tradition, so dearly cherished by the author? But can the secular West and the Jewish-Christian West be regarded as two separate entities? More on this in the next chapter of this book.

Chapter 11 Solution

The title of Mr. Wilders' last chapter speaks for itself: *How to turn the tide*. Having established in the twelve preceding chapters the evil character of the so-called religion of Islam, its devastating effects on the history of the world and the threat it poses to world peace today, it is now time to come up with a solution. The seventeen pages of this final chapter give us Wilders' view on how to turn this tide and of the different parts of the solution, I find the following the most telling: 'Muslims must defeat Islam' (p. 212). This sounds a bit strange and not really feasible, but from Mr. Wilders' perspective it is quite logical. Islam is not a religion; it is, under all circumstances, an aggressive ideology that seeks to conquer the world. People who follow this ideology are Muslims. But a real Muslim, in Mr. Wilders' eyes, is one that follows the tenets of Islam and complies with what this 'ideology' requires him to do in the full devastating sense of the word. Those who do not strictly and fully follow them are in fact no longer Muslims in the true sense of the word. This then is the answer to the question why Mr. Wilders did not assign a new term to Muslims who are not fully 'observant'. He makes a distinction between Islam and Muslims and now we understand what it is he wants to say. A real Muslim is the one who acts in full compliance with the aggressive ideology of Islam. Those who do not do so are in fact not Muslims or are so no longer. In Mr. Wilders' own words: 'People who reject Islam's violent, intolerant, and misogynistic commandments may be moderates, but they are not practicing 'moderate Islam' – they are not practicing Islam at all' (p. 212). Having read this quote, my question is why Mr. Wilders a problem has with what he calls moderate Muslims, if they are in fact, as he says himself, no longer Muslims. If they are not Muslims, they fall outside the scope of Islam, and as such

no longer constitute a danger. Naturally, Mr. Wilders does not go into this implication of his logic. We will see below that Mr. Wilders wants all Muslims, moderate or not, to 'defeat Islam'.

We might ask ourselves what would be the impact if 'Muslims' were to actually 'defeat' Islam? Mr. Wilders has the answer: 'If they (Muslims) could liberate themselves from the yoke of Islam, if they would stop taking Muhammad as a role model, and if they got rid of the hateful Koran, they would be able to achieve amazing things' (p. 212). Earlier in the book he states: 'If only they could liberate themselves from Islam, they, too, could become prosperous and free nations' (p. 65). Take some time as a reader to consider the full impact of these words. Imagine for a minute that the same advice was given to Christians: 'If they (Christians) could liberate themselves from the yoke of Christianity, if they would stop taking Jesus Christ as a role model, and if they got rid of the hateful Bible, they would be able to achieve amazing things'. This is in fact what Mr. Wilders is asking Muslims to do. Renouncing the Koran and renouncing following the example of the prophet Mohammed, two key elements in Islam. But if you take away the Koran, and do away with the prophet, what would Muslims be left with? To what can they cling in order to live their lives, as they believe they should if there is no longer a Holy Book and no Holy Prophet? Would they really be inclined to do so just because Mr. Wilders says that '(I) in liberating themselves from Islam, they will ensure a happier life for themselves and their children, and a safer, more peaceful world for the rest of us' (p. 212)? Now we can also understand the impossibility of answering the question formulated above why moderate Muslims, who are in fact not Muslims at all, should 'defeat Islam.' Mr. Wilders' 'solution' of renouncing the Koran and the Prophet cannot but apply to all Muslims as for all Muslims the Koran and the Prophet are essential. Here Mr. Wilders takes off his veil. His distinction between moderate and extreme Muslims is made only to ultimately 'lure' all Muslims into accepting his solution.

I think I am not exaggerating if I claim that the solution Mr. Wilders offers is ridiculous and belongs to the world of fairies. It is dangerous even. What Mr. Wilders is doing here is to strip

the Muslims' of their very identity. He robs them of their essential self and offers nothing in return except the vague promise of a happier life for themselves and their children. How are they supposed to accomplish this? On what are they to subsequently base their values? Is the hidden message that they should convert to Christianity? Mr. Wilders does not make this suggestion.

Suppose we gave Mr. Wilders' solution a shot, how should it be implemented? How are we going to convince the Muslims to denounce the essence of their faith? Mr. Wilders offers us a number of suggestions in his 13th chapter and in other parts of the book. His solution is centered around four points (pp. 213-215). 'First, we must defend freedom of speech'. 'Second, we must reject all forms of cultural relativism'. 'Third, we must stop the Islamization of the West'. 'Fourth, we must cherish our national identity'. The consequences if these four criteria were to be realized are evident. Mr. Wilders describes them in clear terms. Immigrants in the West must assimilate to Western societies, adapt to their values, and abide by their laws. Or in Mr. Wilders' words: 'If you subscribe to our laws and values, you are welcome to stay and enjoy all the rights our society guarantees' (p. 214). But he also presents the consequences if you do not adapt and abide by these laws: 'If you commit crimes, act against our laws, or wage jihad, you will be expelled' (p. 214). Mind that Mr. Wilders does not say that such people are to be jailed and/or fined. No, they are to be expelled, whereas normally in a democratic state no one is expelled for breaking the national law. Apparently there are two different judicial systems operating here, one for 'us' and one for 'them'.

Let us take a look at some more consequences. Islamic schools must be closed down, 'for they are totalitarian institutions where young children are indoctrinated into an ideology of violence and hatred' (p. 214). At present, there are around 50 Islamic elementary schools in the Netherlands. They all fall under the control of the Ministry of Education and whereas some of them were doing badly some years ago, teaching and output numbers have improved over the last few years. Furthermore, the construction of new mosques, 'which Islam

regards as symbols of its triumphs' must be forbidden (p. 214). 'A free society should not grant freedom to those who want to destroy it', and consequently 'every *halal* shop, every mosque, every Islamic school and every *burka*' constitutes a threat (p. 214). On an international level, Mr. Wilders suggests that 'Western nations should refuse to make any financial contributions to the UN' (p. 215). The point here is that Islamic nations have their own version of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the so-called Cairo Declaration, which formulates Human Rights in accordance with the sharia, Islamic law. The Islamic states that support this Cairo Declaration must be expelled from the UN and until the time this is effectuated Western nations should stop their financial contributions to this organization. The chapter describes in abundant detail the solution Mr. Wilders has to offer for the Islam problem in the Netherlands and the world.

If I were a Muslim seeking full integration in the West, in Europe, in the Netherlands, I would be utterly discouraged taking notice of these words. I am asked to renounce my Islamic identity, however meager that eventually may be, and I have to face the disappearance of Islam from the public and private space. I could only live a life in the West if I accommodated fully to that same West. Mr. Wilders blames Muslims for wanting to Islamize the world; he himself is doing the same thing by obliging Muslims to westernize fully. Mohammed and Fatima have to change into John and Mary, not only in name, but also inside.

The key question, also tackled in the preceding chapter, is what exactly this Western culture looks like that Mr. Wilders cherishes so highly? An answer to this question is presented below. But before we go into this, let us first take a look at how Mr. Wilders' political party has been trying to implement its program in the Netherlands.

Party for Freedom MPs are known for expressing their opinions clearly, in many cases in abusive and insulting language. A strong example is the so-called 'kopvoddentax' (literally 'head rags' tax) Mr. Wilders proposed (covered earlier in chapter 6). He never seriously meant to impose such a tax, for which there would never be a parliamentary majority anyway. He

just meant to insult wearers of the scarf and to intimidate them. Mr. Wilders' proposal in 2007 to shoot young Moroccan gang members in the city of Gouda in the kneecaps should be interpreted in the same way. Gouda, an old Dutch city (in the deep polders of the country) famous for its cheese, has a sizable Moroccan community, some of whose younger members were causing trouble and harassing people. In 2008, the Party for Freedom suggested sending in the army to tackle the problem. Not the pen or the word to solve this problem, which Mr. Wilders preaches as the proper way of the West, but the use of the weapon instead. There are far more instances of aggressive discourse than these, another one being Mrs. Laurence Stassen, Party for Freedom representative in the province of Limburg, calling mosques 'palaces of hate'.

In early August 2025, Mr. Geert Wilders posted an image (see next page) on X, which consists of two half-faces: on the left, a young blonde woman, and on the right, a stern, wrinkled woman wearing a headscarf. "The choice is yours on 29/10," the caption reads. With this, the party leader refers to the date of the Dutch parliamentary elections on October 29, 2025. Below the blonde woman, the letters PVV (Party for Freedom) are displayed, while beside the woman with the headscarf, it says PvdA (Labour Party). The image sparked enormous controversy across the country and led to a large number of reports to anti-discrimination centres. One such centre stated that: "By placing these two images of women opposite each other, an us-versus-them narrative is being told that stands in stark contrast to the inclusive society we strive for in the Netherlands. Such imagery can reinforce prejudices and widen the gap between groups." However, the greatest outrage was, of course, due to the resemblance of the image to Nazi propaganda, in which (so-called) good Aryans were contrasted with (allegedly bad) Jews in similar visuals. A party like the PVV, which rejects any association with Hitler's Nazism and considers socialist political parties to be the descendants of Hitler (see chapter 4), uses the same Nazi propaganda and thereby embarrasses itself—especially since Mr. Wilders and Mr. Bosma boast about noble Jewish-Christian values that they claim to uphold.



What is more important is the question to what extent Mr. Wilders and his party influence Dutch politics, and Dutch society. In the public debate in the Netherlands I stressed that maybe we were not only facing this perceived Islamization of the country, but a 'Party for Freedom-ization' as well. In the numerous meetings and debates I have taken part in, I could and still can sense the influence of the Party for Freedom's racist ideology. Muslims no longer feel welcome in the Netherlands. They hide. They keep their heads down. Some assimilate so completely that they have become more Dutch than I am, at the same time realizing, now more than ever, that they are ultimately not accepted in our society. Numerous other books and publications on the rise of the Party for Freedom have seen the light. NEXUS director and public intellectual Rob Riesen does not mince words. In a publication (2010) he makes it quite clear that he considers the Party for Freedom a contemporary form of fascism. This provoked an enormous row and Mr. Riesen was criticized heavily for saying it but he maintained his point of view and his pamphlet (in translation)

The Eternal Comeback of Fascism (2010) sold very well. My Bachelor student of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Henk Bovekerk, wrote his BA thesis (2011) on the question whether the Party for Freedom should be considered as fascist in the terms of Robert Paxton's book on fascism (2004). In his own words: 'The Party for Freedom does not use physical violence, but its rhetoric is at times highly combative. It carries the same message as early twentieth century fascist violence: that only the Party for Freedom is tough enough to save the nation from hostile threats. Such militant rhetoric can give its supporters the idea that violence is justified, and regrettably it has done so in the recent past'. Bovekerk concluded that the Party for Freedom can be placed in what Paxton refers to as the third stage of fascism. His thesis was never meant for publication, but in January 2012 the media got wind of it and Mr. Bovekerk and myself and my colleague professor Jan Blommaert as his supervisors were met with sneers and threats. It goes without saying that the Party for Freedom wants to avoid any comparison with the fascist parties of the thirties like Adolf Hitler's NSDAP. That is why they claim it is not them but the present Left-wing parties that are the true heirs of this fascist, or (national) socialist tradition, a point that I dealt with in more detail above.

Rejecting any form of violence, Mr. Wilders tells us that the weapons with which Islam ideology should be combated are the word and the pen. Fighting what you believe to be wrong using the word and the pen is a noble goal and nobody will contend it. But nevertheless *words* can cause severe psychological damage. Will Muslims not feel insulted to the bone when their scarves are referred to as 'kopvodden', *head rags*? The term is in fact more offensive than can be brought out in an English translation, since the use of the Dutch word 'kop' (rather than 'hoofd', 'head') is offensive as well, as it is normally reserved to refer to the heads of animals. Another instance of offensive use of language, and like the previous one uttered by Mr. Wilders himself in the Dutch Parliament, is his reference to Muslim Labour Party voters as *Islamic voting cattle*. One could argue that Parliament is the place *par excellence* of free speech and that every MP has the right to state anything he or

she wants. But here is a party whose leader claims in his *Marked for Death* that the pen and the word, and Christian Western values in general should be the guideline for our thoughts and actions, and whose Party ideologue Mr. Bosma writes in his book that values such as modesty, respect and discipline are highly valued by the party and should be the criteria to act upon (p. 187; see as well chapter 1 of this book). The sad truth is that there is no party in Parliament so rude and insulting as Mr. Wilders' party, blatantly contradicting the principles expressed in their own books. In this context, it should not come as a surprise that Mr. Wilders and the other MPs of his party hardly ever participate in public debates. They have been and still are invited by virtually all societal organizations, NGOs, universities and TV talk shows, but the number of times they have actually participated in an open debate with the public, with intellectuals, can be counted on the fingers of one hand. I myself have tried over and over again to come into contact with Mr. Bosma. It never happened. He never ever responded. On April 17, 2012, I was on national television in *Pauw & Witteman*, a very popular late-night talk show in the Netherlands at the time, and I invited him then and there on camera to finally accept my invitation to enter into a debate with me: he has remained silent to this day. The party clearly is not interested in taking part in public debates and the reason for this is plain. They simply cannot afford to, for fear of losing voters. Their claims are too easily refuted. They would lose such debates. The party's policy is thus to remain in its own secure world, spread its message to the public from there in a most insulting way, and thus trying to achieve the solution formulated by Mr. Wilders in his book. Now that the party is the largest political party in the Schoof coalition government its chances to spread its ideology are bigger than ever.

In the following and final chapter of this book, the Party for Freedom doctrine, as expressed in the books of Mr. Bosma and Mr. Wilders is placed in the ideological context of Christianity, Islam and the principles of the French Revolution.

Epilogue

Mr. Wilders and Mr. Bosma are very outspoken on Christianity, Islam and the ideas that fueled the French Revolution. They praise the first and consider the second and third to be evil in nature. Still, the three of them have more in common than both men want us to believe. In what follows I would like to draw a concise comparison between the three, formulating their respective goals, and subsequently discussing the ways in which the three aim to realize these goals. The discussion I present is in no way exhaustive.

Christianity is characterized by a strong sense of millenarianism. Christ clearly stated in his teachings that his kingdom is not of this earth. It is in heaven and Christians should live their lives in such a way that they deserve to get to heaven in the afterlife. To attain heaven they will have to adhere to the principles of Christianity, which basically entails no more than behaving in accordance with the commandment to love your neighbor as yourself and do unto others as you would be done by. Love, one could say is the basic tenet of Christianity. Today there are over 2 billion Christians in the world.

Islam likewise cherishes an afterlife, maybe even more so than Christianity. In Islam, the basic tenet is solidarity. All Muslims are equal in the face of Allah and Muslims must take care of each other. They form one big family and the poor and the needy are to be taken care of. In the afterlife, Muslims too are judged on their behavior and accomplishments here on earth and God himself decides who can enter paradise and who cannot. Today there are around 2 billion Muslims in the world.

The principles of the French Revolution are threefold: liberty, equality and fraternity. Politicians came up with the idea of 'the equality of all people'. The philosophy of the Revolution, as expressed in particular in Jean-Jacques Rousseau's work, for-

ulated this principle of the equality of all people. With liberty of conscience and choice, and with fraternity and equality, mankind would be able to create a paradise on earth. It was a tempting and alluring perspective for mankind. A non-religious way of thinking (I am avoiding the word ideology) was presented to people and unlike religions it promised heaven on earth. The principles of the French revolution have resulted in present day liberalism and (Labour) socialism, which have the sympathy of billions of people in the world and which form the basis of many governments, especially in the West. It goes without saying that people can be Christians or Muslims and at the same time have liberal or socialist political views.

Taking them at face value, an innocent reader learning of these three views of the world would undoubtedly greet them with enthusiasm. Who would oppose such laudable ideals and not want to follow (one of) them? Unfortunately, their histories are not quite as uplifting. When we take a look at the history of Christianity, Islam and the French Revolution, we discover that all three of them are marked by very dark chapters indeed.

Many are the Christians that were inspired by the words of the last book of the New Testament, the Book of Revelation. Revelation contains a very outspoken millenarist view of the end of times, when the earth will suffer enormous waves of violence and blood will flow knee-high. This book has in the past and present been an inspiration to many Christians aiming to establish paradise on earth or to help God speed up the realization of paradise in the afterlife. The result of this was that minor and major Christian movements and sects have resorted to violence aimed at the opponents of Christianity. The world had to be purified, cleansed of the elements of evil, and in this vein the Catholic Church, considering itself sacrosanct, in the Middle Ages set up the Inquisition, persecuting infidels like the Cathars and 'crypto' Jews. Influenced by Protestant orthodoxy, city courts burnt or hanged witches and homosexuals in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Western Europe. Modern Christian movements, in particular those in the United States, stood and still stand up against the Federal Government, considering it the Antichrist, and even revert to violence, as evi-

denced by the Waco massacre in 1993. Numerous are the groups that cherish violence to this day in order to realize a pure, Christian United States of America. The Anglican Church is bitterly divided on its position with regard to homosexuality. In particular in African countries like Uganda, the anti-homosexuality discourse is very strong indeed and gay people there face serious consequences, even death, if they dare to come out. And it goes without saying that the numerous child abuse scandals in the Catholic Church are outrageous.

Islam in its turn from its very beginning failed to stick to the principles of solidarity and mercy as preached in the Koran. The coming of the prophet Mohammed to the oasis of Yathrib, later Medina, was first followed by the expulsion of a Jewish tribe living in the oasis, and later by that of another tribe, after which the male members of the last remaining tribe were killed and their women and children were turned into slaves. When Islam had settled in the Middle East and North Africa and later in the Balkans, Jews and Christians were treated as second rate citizens, dhimmis. They had to pay extra taxes, were forced to wear certain clothing, were limited in their choice of professions, were hardly accepted in government positions and became the victims of Islamic rage in times of economic crisis. Today we are witnessing intensifying threats and terror aimed at Christians by Muslims in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Palestine. It is not an exaggeration to say that a veritable ethnic cleansing is going on in these countries. In theocratic Iran, gay young men are hanged, often under the pretext of ordinary crimes like theft. The Al Qaeda movement killed nearly 3,000 people in the September 11 attacks and many, many more in Islamic countries. The custom of marrying off really young girls and the sexual abuse of boys in a country like Afghanistan is as outrageous as the child abuse by Catholic clergymen. The crimes committed by the Islamic State demonstrate extreme ruthlessness and brutality. The Islamic State interpretation of what Islam should be reflects an extreme duality, where enemies of Islamic State - of which there are many - can typically expect nothing less than the death penalty. Islamic State was also the movement responsible for the attacks in Paris (2015),

Brussels (2016), and Manchester (2017), to name just a few. With its bloody and cruel interpretation of Islam, the Islamic State has tarnished the name of Islam, leading to a significant increase in Muslim hatred, particularly in the West, and contributing to the rise of populist parties that were already rife with aversion to Islam.

More than once Mr. Wilders refers in his book to quotes from various American presidents on Christianity and Islam, one of them being Thomas Jefferson, who 'waged war against the Islamic Barbary states of North Africa in order to stop the pillaging of ships and the enslavement of more than a million Christians' (p. 16). President Jefferson is quoted several times by Mr. Wilders, stressing the former American president's perceived anti-Islamic points of view and his support for the Christian cause. The problem with quotes is that in most cases they can be countered by other quotes by the same person. It was also Thomas Jefferson who said:

'Millions of innocent men, women, and children, since the introduction of Christianity, have been burnt, tortured, fined, imprisoned; yet we have not advanced one inch towards uniformity. What has been the effect of coercion? To make one half the world fools, and the other half hypocrites. To support roguery and error all over the earth. Let us reflect that it is inhabited by a thousand millions of people. That these profess probably a thousand different systems of religion. That ours is but one of that thousand. That if there be but one right, and ours that one, we should wish to see the 999 wandering sects gathered into the fold of truth. But against such a majority we cannot effect this by force' (Jefferson, 1954, p. 160).

Mr. Jefferson clearly shows an attitude of cultural relativism, the very same cultural relativism that Mr. Wilders abhors so much. The quote does not need further elaboration. Mr. Jefferson knew how to judge the world's diversity of religions, knew about their dark sides and the impossibility of wiping them out and replacing them by only one. Mr. Jefferson was a wise man whom Mr. Wilders could have taken as an example to follow.

It did not take long before the French revolution, which began so full of hope for a better future, resulted in terror. The revolutionary council that governed France under the leadership of Maximilien Robespierre in the period 1793-1794 had more than 40,000 people killed. Ideology turned into nightmare and left Napoleon Bonaparte later with nothing but loathing for the term and its disastrous consequences. The principles of the French revolution led to liberalism and peace-loving social democracy, but they led to Marxism and communism as well. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels were inspired by its principles of equality and fraternity when they developed their views on world history and the ultimate realization of a workers' paradise. Stalin's communist terror led to the deaths of at least a million Soviet citizens. Today we can still see the gruesome effects of communism in Cuba, and in North Korea in particular.

How can we explain all these aberrations? Why all this violence? What is it that turns people into such fanatics that they are willing to sacrifice everything and everybody to reach their goals? This book is not the proper place to answer this question; it would require a lot more paper. For the moment, it suffices to conclude that apparently there is something in man's nature that is inclined to fanaticism to realize certain goals, to secure heaven in the afterlife or create it here on earth. Any good religion or ideology should take this vile human inclination into account. But do they? Do Christianity, Islam and the French Revolution include (enough) safeguarding elements to promote an approach without violence? Regrettably, the historical records of all three show many instances of followers being incited implicitly or explicitly to use violence or lines of approach that can be interpreted as such. I would say that a good religion or ideology will always be unambiguous in its commandments to its followers. Any spoken or written text that could be interpreted as allowing violence should never be part of a religion or ideology.

The instances in the Bible, the Koran and the revolutionary writings that incite people to violence or that can be explained as allowing their followers to resort to violence in order to

reach their goals are numerous. Reading in Exodus about the people of Israel travelling from Egypt to the Promised Land, one is stunned by the violence they are allowed to use against the peoples they encounter. Rock bottom is the killing of the Midianites. After a day of slaughtering people by the thousands, Moses is angry at the Israelites for not having killed adulterous Midianite women too, as he had ordered (Numbers 31:17). Earlier we saw that a modern killer like Anders Breivik interpreted the words of Jesus in such a way that he considered them a license to kill. Koran verse 5 from Sura 9 incites Muslims to kill infidels: 'Kill the polytheists (or infidels or unbelievers) wherever you find them' (9:5). Many Muslims, to this day, have taken these words literally and acted on them, believing they are following a divine command. Finally, the words of Enlightenment philosopher Jean Jacques Rousseau were equally disastrous when he wrote in his *Contrat Social* (1762) that the citizen, who does not want to bow to the will of the people or the community, has a serious problem and will have to be killed:

'Again, every malefactor, by attacking social rights, becomes on forfeit a rebel and a traitor to his country; by violating its laws he ceases to be a member of it; he even makes war upon it. In such a case the preservation of the State is inconsistent with his own, and one or the other must perish; in putting the guilty to death, we slay not so much the citizen as an enemy'.

This onerous concept of the will of the people, which Robespierre used as justification for the Terror; and which was later adopted by communism and fascism, has led to the deaths of millions.

One may pose the question if there are no differences in intensity and frequency with which the adherents of the three religions and ideologies used and still use violence. If we conducted a historical study, a possible conclusion might be that Islam records the lowest number of victims fallen at the hands of its followers, followed by Christianity, followed in turn by French-Revolution spin-offs like communism. This might be

one of the findings. Are we then going to judge the French Revolution and similarly inspired movements as being the most evil, followed by either Christianity or Islam? But what would be the point of such an exercise? The three will not cease to exist. We can, of course, establish the fact that some -isms are absolutely evil - fascism and National Socialism come to mind, having brought nothing but evil to the world. This, incidentally, is also why I have left these two ideologies out of my comparisons. They have brought nothing good. And my personal judgment of Stalinist communism is also clear: I condemn both of them. Present-day social democracy, on the other hand, has a strong peaceful tradition. I would certainly not condemn this branch of French Revolution-inspired thinking. By the same token, I would not reject liberalism either. This argument leads me to another consideration. We established the fact that French Revolution-inspired thinking also laid the foundations for non-violent movements like the ones I mentioned earlier. There are people and movements that seek to realize the paradise of the Enlightenment through peaceful means, without taking recourse to force or violence. Apparently, we cannot condemn the whole heritage of the Revolution. And what about Christianity and Islam? Do we not observe the same peace-loving convictions there as well? Are there not numerous Christians and Muslims that seek to realize their dreamed society in a peaceful manner? Are there not countless Christians and Muslims that independently and united in brotherhood seek the best interest of all people? Christianity is said to have gone through an Enlightenment stage, as a result of which most Christians no longer take the violence in the Bible literally. There are Muslims who have likewise reconsidered the contents and message of their Koran even though Islam as a whole still has a long way to go in this respect. What happened to Christianity can also happen to Islam.

We cannot change the fact that there are different religions and ideologies in this world. Trying to wipe them out by force or through persuasion is impossible as American President Thomas Jefferson rightly observed. And we do not need to either. We can very well live with a peaceful Christianity, a peace-

ful Islam and peaceful French Revolution-inspired movements. This will demand from each and every one of us a tolerant and open attitude, first of all from the believers and supporters of the religions and ideologies themselves. They have a special responsibility to respect other people's views, opinions and lifestyles. We will, obviously, never realize a paradise on earth. This at least is what history teaches us. The only option open to people therefore is to strive for it in a peaceful way, respecting each other's love (Christian), solidarity (Islam) and equality (French Revolution) commandments. In short, I would promote tolerance in the building of societies and I would expect the same from religious authorities, politicians and governments. I realize that this is another ideal than that of creating a heaven on earth, but it is quite a bit easier to accomplish than millenarist views of an earthly or heavenly paradise.

It goes without saying that the views expressed by Mr. Wilders and Mr. Bosma in their books on Muslims and Islam form an ideology in themselves. In following both' analyses of Islam and their evaluation of religions and ideologies, we have repeatedly been confronted with the question what the Party for Freedom ideal society would actually look like. In his last chapter, Mr. Wilders tells us that he highly values the heritage of 'Rome, Athens and Jerusalem' (p. 216). This gives us a clue. Rome and Athens stand for the classical heritage and Jerusalem for Judaism and Christianity. For obvious reasons he does not mention Paris. In a sense this is strange or at least surprising, when we realize that Mr. Wilders (and for that matter Mr. Bosma as well) grew up as politicians in a free and open democracy, which is, after all, built on the principles of the French Revolution. He mentions the word 'democratic' in relation to the West in the following quote, which I already cited earlier: 'When you compare the West to any other culture that exists today, it becomes clear that we are the most pluralistic, humane, democratic, and charitable culture on earth (p. 31).' But he labels this Western culture Judeo-Christian (p. 31) and rejects the accomplishments of the French Revolution, one of which is the establishment of modern day democracy. Where then, does democracy come from, according to the Party for Free-

dom leader? Does not the very mentioning of the word imply that secretly he acknowledges its vital value for the West? Is democracy part of his dreamed society? I would really like to know if Mr. Wilders and Mr. Bosma are striving for a Christian society, a Liberal society, or a mix of both. It is important in this respect to stress (once again) that one of the things that he considers absolutely vital and which he mentions in his last chapter is the freedom of speech. It is this freedom in particular that is a basic part of the heritage of the French Revolution. Regrettably, we are forced to conclude that both men do not paint a clear picture of what their dreamed society looks like in detail and this should not come as a surprise to us either. Theirs is basically a one-issue party, their one and only mission is to rid the world of 'the evil of Islam', to bring about a society, a world, without Islam, or one where Muslims have denounced their religion.

Mr. Wilders pretends to be presenting a peaceful solution to the 'problem of Islam and Muslims'. But how can this be brought about peacefully? Are the nearly 2 billion Muslims on earth going to listen to his 'compelling' advice and renounce the Koran, the Prophet and thus Islam? It is at all possible to imagine that, if the Party for Freedom program were to be carried out, this would not lead to resistance, violence, terror and bloodshed? Why should it be impossible for Muslims to work on a peaceful interpretation of the Koran? Why does Mr. Wilders not mention this option? Does history not show us in the examples of the diverse forms of Christianity and French Revolution spin-offs like social democracy and liberalism that this is a viable scenario?

The solution Mr. Wilders presents involves a high risk of invoking violence, even if he states repeatedly that his program should be realized by the word and the pen. Who will give us the assurance that this would indeed be the case? Who can guarantee us that there will not be people who, like so many Christians, Muslims and French revolutionaries, will take up the sword and 'help' to realize their goals that way? Mr. Wilders' and Mr. Bosma's books are completely counter-productive. Their message is not like that of religions and of some ideolo-

gies, which not only have a negative but also a positive side. It is exclusively negative. They focus on the shortcomings of the other; they accuse the other of being violent in nature, and they use words that can easily be interpreted as allowing violence to fight the enemy. They act in exactly the same way as they perceive their opponent does. They see the speck in their brother's eye but fail to see the log in their own.

Note

Verses I quote from the Bible are from the Revised Standard Version (RSV). It is the authorized revision (1946) of the American Standard Version (1901), which in turn was a revision of the King James Version, published in 1611. Verses from the Koran are from <http://www.clearquran.com/>. The Bible and Koran quotes of Mr. Wilders and the Bible quotes of Breivik stem from other translations.

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The Dutch Party for Freedom (in Dutch: Partij voor de Vrijheid, PVV) revolves around its founder and leader, Mr. Geert Wilders. The party has only one human member, Mr. Wilders himself; it does not have an official office, a scientific institute, or a youth division. It has achieved significant electoral success, becoming the largest party in the 2023 elections and the leading force in the coalition government headed by Mr. Dick Schoof from July 2024 to June 2025. Since its establishment in 2006, the party has produced minimal written materials beyond sometimes very brief election programs. Nonetheless, both party leader Geert Wilders and his first deputy, Mr. Martin Bosma, have authored books outlining their ideological views. This current book analyses the works of these two politicians around recurring themes, including the party's perspectives on Christianity, Judaism, Israel, left-wing parties, Enlightenment ideas, and particularly Islam and Muslims. It is Mr. Wilders who suggests in his writings that Muslims might be better off abandoning their faith to become part of what he claims is the world's superior culture: Western civilization. This book explores how both authors arrived at these viewpoints and issues a warning about the potential consequences if such ideas were to be implemented.

Jan Jaap de Ruiter (1959) addresses the ideology of the Party for Freedom in this book. De Ruiter studied Arabic language and culture, he has had a long academic career as an Arabist in Tilburg university (the Netherlands) and he has many publications in Dutch, English, French, and Arabic to his name concerning the various forms of Arabic, as well as about Islam and Muslims in Europe and about populism. For years, he has been an active participant in the public debate in the Netherlands and beyond on issues such as multiculturalism, Islam and Muslims, and the populist discourse of a party like the PVV, particularly regarding the party's stance on Muslims. Additionally, De Ruiter has translated several Arabic literary works into Dutch. For more information, visit www.janjaapderuiter.eu.



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