



In Islam, the first two adjectival "most beautiful names" of God are al-Rahman al-Rahim, the All-Merciful, the All-Compassionate. (Or, in Michael Sells' translation, "the Compassionate, the Caring.") The Arabic root of both words derives from "womb" and connotes the kind of outrageously generous love and compassion a mother feels for her children.

These days, the Western discourse on Islam "especially political Islam" is not exactly overflowing with compassion and generosity. As the French-Algerian Jew Albert Memmi wrote in *The Coloniser and the Colonized*, colonizers typically take a very ungenerous view of the people they are attacking, occupying, brutalizing and exploiting. If they admitted the humanity of their victims, they would look in the mirror and see a brutish criminal. So to avoid facing the truth, they project their own criminal brutality on the colonized victim.

Memmi notes that Western colonizers typically refuse to acknowledge the positive traits of colonized Muslims. Even an admirable virtue such as generosity "a notable feature of Islamic cultures" is made into a vice: "Those crazy Muslims don't know the value of money; accept their hospitality, and they'll feed you a meal that costs a month of their salary, and offer you a gift worth ten times that. They're just not frugal!"

Today, all over the world, Muslims are generously risking and sacrificing their lives in what any objective observer would recognize as a justified and noble struggle against the murderous, arguably genocidal imperialism of the West and its even more genocidal Zionist surrogate. (As British scholar Nafeez Ahmed's article headline reads, "Western wars have killed four million Muslims since 1990.") Yet unlike such non-Muslim freedom fighters as Che Guevara and Nelson Mandela, their Muslim equivalents get little Western sympathy, even from the supposedly peace-loving "progressive" intelligentsia.

Even Muslim intellectuals are often ungenerous in their estimations of Islamic freedom fighters, especially those from a different school of thought. Iran's Islamic revolutionaries, for example, are without question the most advanced and successful

Muslim freedom fighters to date; yet they are viewed with an incomprehensible lack of generosity by many Sunni and especially Salafi observers. Likewise, Iranian observers often take a dim view of any Sunni Islamist movements that include a Salafi element, even such relatively peaceful and non-sectarian ones as the Muslim Brotherhood. (To their credit, though, Iranians are reasonable enough to work with people from diverse backgrounds and outlooks; whereas the Salafi extremists of the so-called Islamic State, as well as less noxious Sunni/Salafi movements such as the Taliban, tend to be far more bigoted and sectarian.)

This near-universal lack of empathy, tainted by a million shades of purblind partisanship, is most unfortunate. But fortunately, Eric Walberg, an international journalist and Canadian convert to Islam, has stepped outside of the whole maze of prejudices and produced a holistically generous and compassionate account of Islamic resistance. His new book *Islamic Resistance to Imperialism*, published by Clarity Press, combines geopolitical erudition with pan-Islamic sympathies, filling what until now had been a gaping void in the literature of the phony "war on terror."

Walberg, a long-time Cairo-based foreign correspondent, is especially sympathetic and knowledgeable regarding the Muslim Brotherhood, the oldest and best-organized Islamic movement seeking to reform Muslim society through peaceful democratic means. But he recognizes that the Brotherhood's efforts suffered a massive setback just when they seemed about to succeed:

"By 2012, Egypt and Iran had caught up with each other: the political see-saw that these countries experienced in the past half century was finally coming into sync. Both were following an Islamic path in defiance of the US, though the MB had only taken the first tentative steps in exercising actual power. This synchronization of Egyptian and Iranian politics represented a potential coming together of Sunni and Shia political dynamics, which was the wish of Islamist reformists Afghani and Abduh more than a century ago, and has been happening gradually since the Iranian revolution, despite the opposition of the Saudi and Gulf monarchies."

Tragically, Walberg notes, the fascist dictator al-Sisi strangled Egypt's experiment in Islamic democracy in its cradle and murdered thousands of non-violent political opponents. Since then, al-Sisi's Saudi and Israeli sponsors have succeeded in spreading the poison of anti-Shia, anti-Iran sectarianism designed to obscure and thwart the pan-Islamic agenda of the Islamic Revolution launched by the Ayatollah Khomeini.

Walberg's analysis follows the school of thought of Kalim Siddiqui, founder of the Muslim Parliament in London: "an important precedent for the Muslim ummah, the creation of peaceful, constructive non-state institutions to reflect the views and advocate on behalf of Muslims locally and around the world, a democratic alternative to the seriously compromised OIC-type official international organizations sponsored by existing largely dictatorial Muslim states." Siddiqui saw Iran's Islamic Revolution as the harbinger of an Islamic awakening that would transcend sectarianism and stimulate a renaissance of Islamic civilization; his work is now being carried on by Zafar Bangash and colleagues at

Toronto-based Crescent International magazine.

While approving of the rational, strategic approaches exemplified by the Muslim Brotherhood and the Iranian Islamic Revolution, Walberg offers a mixed verdict on the "al-Qaeda types" he labels "neo-Kharajites." (The original Kharajites were puritans who split off from the rest of the Muslim community and attacked their fellow Muslims for not being purist enough.) Such leaders as Osama Bin Laden "a major public face of Islamic resistance, for better or worse" may have pursued strategically counterproductive courses, and violated Islamic morality by targeting civilians (albeit vastly fewer of them than the West targets) but as a human being he was quite admirable:

"According to Michael Scheuer, former CIA Chief of the Bin Laden Issue Station (1996--1999), Bin Laden was 'pious, brave, generous, intelligent, charismatic, patient, visionary, stubborn, egalitarian, and, most of all, realistic ... wars are only won by killing.'"

To turn people like Bin Laden into bogeymen, the Empire has launched a massive campaign of calumny, disinformation, and false flag terror. Walberg writes: "The personal probity and integrity of Muslim leaders who become enemies of the empire is ignored, dismissed or worse. To discredit such jihadists, the secular Algerian leaders, as an instance, were willing to resort to creating a state of terror by infiltrating the so-called Armed Islamic Groups in the 1990s and perpetrating mass false flag terror both to turn the locals against the Islamists and to frighten the West into unconditionally supporting the coup makers. A similar scenario is taking shape in Egypt following the 2011 uprising and 2013 coup overthrowing the elected Islamist government, where most of the violence has been perpetrated by the security forces." (Unfortunately, Walberg does not go far enough in recognizing the vast scope and extent of the wave of "Gladio B" false flag terror launched by anti-Islam forces, which includes all of the most spectacular attacks attributed to radical Muslims at least since the 9/11 neocon coup d'etat; he takes an open-minded but ultimately agnostic attitude toward the question of who was really behind 9/11, which is unsatisfying to those of us who have carefully investigated and largely solved that imperial crime.)

Walberg's generous take on Islamic resistance leaders extends even to such flawed figures as al-Zawahiri and al-Baghdadi, both of whom, Walberg recognizes, have damaged the Islamic awakening by encouraging anti-Shia sectarianism and unfocused brutality. Unwilling to simply condemn -- "there are plenty already who do that" -- he seeks to understand.

Most Westerners have probably never encountered a sympathetic analysis of Islamic resistance movements by an author who shares many of the general goals, though not all the methods, of his subjects. Even if you currently feel no sympathy whatsoever for any of the many Islamic resistance figures covered in Islamic Resistance to Imperialism, you owe it to yourself to consider the other side of the story, if only to understand the motivations of Muslims who sympathize with, or participate in, the many-faceted Islamic resistance movement.

## TruthJihad review: Eric Walberg, Islamic Resistance to Imperialism

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