



Bat Ye'or: "We have to educate the European, American and Israeli youth to recover their culture and values"

An interview with the heroic and pioneering scholar of dhimmitude, Bat Ye'or.

"One on One: A 'dhimmi' view of Europe," by Ruthie Blum in the *Jerusalem Post*, July 9 (thanks to Ruth King):

"I always thought I'd be writing novels," says Bat Ye'or, her wistfulness somehow adding an extra touch of class to her thick French accent. "Not such serious work."

Given the gravity of her subject matter, and what some might consider her alarmist way with words, this is hard to believe. But then, so is the historian's life story, which is the stuff that sagas are made of.

Hers began in Egypt during World War II. The daughter of a middle-class Jewish family named Orebi, Bat Ye'or (her trademark pseudonym, which in Hebrew means "daughter of the Nile") fled with her parents to England in 1957 - after suffering the brunt of the anti-Semitism she claims characterized the entire Arab world.

In 1959, she married a Briton - also a historian - whom she prefers not to name, to protect his and her privacy. The couple then moved to and settled in Switzerland in 1960, where they raised their children and continue to reside.

She is the author of eight books, including *The Dhimmi: Jews and Christians under Islam* (1985); *The Decline of Eastern Christianity: From Jihad to Dhimmitude* (1996); *Islam and Dhimmitude: Where Civilizations Collide* (2001); and - the one which captured international attention and catapulted her into the center of controversy - *Eurabia: The Euro-Arab Axis* (2005). Saying that Europe is basically finished, due to its kissing up to the Arabs, will do that.

Here recently to promote the release of her best-selling "cautionary tale" in Hebrew (*EuroArabia*, Schocken Publishers; translation by Arie Hashavia), Bat Ye'or explains why she believes the West in general, and Europe in particular, is in state of denial at best, and dhimmitude at worst. To make matters more complicated, she asserts, though the citizens of European countries long to preserve their individual and collective cultures of freedom and democracy - which they have been exhibiting at the polls - the European Union, influenced by the UN-backed Islamic leadership, advocates appeasement and passivism.

In an hour-long interview on the terrace of her Mishkenot Sha'ananim digs overlooking the Old City of Jerusalem, Bat Ye'or expounds on her bleak prognosis in an articulate tirade, raising her voice now and then for emphasis, pausing occasionally to laugh. What she has to say about the state of the world, however, is more likely to make one cry.

Why do you use a pseudonym?

For many reasons. First of all, when I left Egypt and started living in Europe, I found that I had changed - that I was no longer the person I had been before.

Secondly, I have always preferred to keep my personal and professional lives separate. I have always wanted my social standing to be distinct from my being the wife of my husband, the daughter of my parents and the mother of my children. It is a matter of independence.

Why did your family leave Egypt?

We left as part of the big exodus of Jews from Arab-Muslim countries. Jews suffered from severe anti-Semitism, especially in Egypt. There was a powerful Nazi community, established by [then Egyptian president Gamal Abdel] Nasser. There were many anti-Jewish laws. There was a general feeling of insecurity. There was open hatred expressed by the Muslim Brotherhood, especially in relation to the Palestine issue. As early as World War II - particularly after the November 1945 pogroms in Egypt - Jews began leaving the country. Many went to Israel. At that time there was a Zionist underground. Zionism was made a criminal offense for which you could be jailed or even tortured. So, many young people left. For the old people, of course, it was difficult, because many were members of the bourgeoisie, and it was forbidden for Jews to take any money or assets out of the country when they left. My parents' assets were confiscated, for example, which created economic problems for our family.

Are you saying that as World War II ended, and in Europe Nazism became taboo, it was gaining strength in the Arab world?

Yes, but even before and throughout the war, both Nazism and fascism were strong in the Arab world. Hitler and Mussolini were heroes. The whole Middle East was in turmoil because the Arab-Muslim populations were all favorable to Nazism and anti-Semitic policies.

How much of what was going on in the death camps in Europe were you and other Jews in Egypt aware of at the time?

We knew everything. I remember my parents listening very carefully to the radio. And it was also in the newspaper. But also, my mother's family was in France, and they were forced to wear the yellow star. So we knew.

When you heard about the peace treaty that Israeli prime minister Menachem Begin signed with Egyptian president Anwar Sadat in 1979, how did you feel?

I wasn't following it that carefully, due to family problems. Nor was I familiar with Israeli politics at the time. But I trusted Begin to do the best thing for Israel. So, I did have hope. Still, what you have to understand is that the problem is much larger than Egypt. The whole Muslim world is becoming more and more radicalized - more rooted in Shari'a, and less open to anything outside the religion. This is due to the policies of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), with 57 Islamic member states and a permanent delegation to the UN. At its last summit in December 2005, it decided upon a 10-year plan, one of whose resolutions was to root the Islamic *uma* - the world Muslim community - in the Koran and the [oral tradition of the] Hadith, which, of course, means Wahabbism. They also resolved to make the Palestinian issue the central issue of international politics. This is why we see relentless pressure on Israel from different countries. Because the OIC is an extremely powerful body, demographically, politically and economically.

The OIC is an Islamic body. How has it managed to turn the Palestinian issue into a Western focus? And to what do you attribute the political and cultural success of its ideology in Europe and the United States?

First of all, a distinction has to be made here between Europe and America, which have chosen opposite paths in relation to the Middle East.

As for OIC influence on Europe: It is visible in immigration policy toward Muslims, and in the Muslims' refusal to integrate into European societies.

The OIC considers nationalist-European movements, European history, European culture, European religions and European languages as Islamophobic. Why? Because Europeans have begun to feel that they are losing their own identity, due to their efforts to welcome immigrants who don't want to integrate. As a result, they have adopted measures to stop illegal immigration, to control legal immigration and to curb terrorism. Europeans fear losing their historical and cultural assets - particularly those of democracy and human rights - to Shari'a law. They want one law for everybody - and it's not Shari'a, which involves things like honor killings. It is thus that in all international forums, the OIC attacks Europe and demands that it apply multiculturalism.

Now, Europeans do not want multiculturalism. But this is a problem, because European governments - and especially the European Union - do not want to fight the OIC, and so they collaborate with it. Therefore, what we have inside Europe is a clash of interests between the European citizens and their governments.

A similar claim is often made about Muslim-Arab citizens and their governments - that a majority of the former is moderate, while the latter is extremist. Do you agree with this assessment?

No, I don't agree with it at all. In fact, the opposite is the case. In the Arab world, it is the governments - as we see so well in Egypt - that are at the mercy of the radicalized, Islamized, anti-Western, anti-American and anti-Israel masses who are in a dynamic of jihad. Certainly the majority of Muslims follow the ideology of conquest; it is in the Koran and the Hadith! And every time they go to the mosque, they hear it. I mean, the first shura, that is recited five times a day, is anti-Christian and anti-Jewish. So they cannot escape from it.

Unfortunately, the Muslims who are against this trend don't have the courage to make the effort to change it. And those who do have the courage are threatened with losing their jobs and having harm done to them and their families. So Islamism is the natural culture of the Arab-Muslim world. Even in Turkey an Islamist government has taken over. So, how can we deny the reality? And anyway, if the moderates were in the majority, they would be making protests and issuing manifestos against Osama bin Laden, instead of against America and Israel.

The environment is one of jihad on the one hand and of dhimmitude [the state of being a non-Muslim subject living in a country governed by Shari'a law] on the other. European countries are becoming dhimmi countries, and people don't realize it, because they don't know what jihad and dhimmitude are, so they don't recognize what condition they're in. When you have an illness, but are unfamiliar with its symptoms, you don't know that you are sick. You feel sick, but you don't know what you've got. You therefore can't make a diagnosis or embark upon a method of treatment to cure yourself. This is the current condition of Western civilization right now.

How, then, do you explain the electoral victories of France's Nicolas Sarkozy, Germany's Angela Merkel, Italy's Silvio Berlusconi and London's replacement of mayor Ken Livingstone by Boris Johnson? Wouldn't you consider this phenomenon as indicative that Europeans are making a diagnosis of and seeking a cure to the illness you say they suffer from?

Oh yes, they are extremely important developments which prove what I am saying about European citizens having had enough of this attempt to merge - culturally, religiously and demographically - the Arab and European sides of the Mediterranean. But the pressure exerted

by the OIC on European governments is very strong. In addition, there is the pressure of terrorism inside and out of Europe, and that of the oil. So the task of these new governments you refer to will not be easy, to say the least. I don't doubt their good intentions. But I don't know if they will succeed in bringing about the change their citizens want.

Furthermore, unlike President Bush - who recognizes that Israel has a legitimate right to exist as a normal nation in its homeland - the Europeans think that Israel's legitimacy should be granted by the Palestinians and the Arab states. In other words, Europe is putting Israel into a position of dhimmitude, whereby it will be recognized by Muslims if it abides by certain rules and duties.

This is in keeping with its own mentality. When the European community, in December 1973, published its document on European identity in the Copenhagen Declaration, they themselves were adopting a dhimmi mentality toward the Arab League countries. After World War II, Europeans decided that they didn't want any more wars. Then, when they suffered aggression, such as the oil boycott and Palestinian terrorism that emerged in Europe in the late 1960s, instead of fighting, they joined their aggressors. This was their concept of multilateralism - thinking that by joining those who attacked them, they would be protected. This is when a tremendous Muslim immigration into Europe began.

You keep referring to immigration. Isn't childbirth also a demographic factor, particularly since Muslims tend to have many children, while some European countries suffer from zero or minus population growth? Is it possible that by virtue of their numbers, Muslims in Europe are influencing policy - and that it is not just due to the power of the OIC?

Yes, but you have to understand that those who plan policy are Europeans. In other words, Muslim politics are conducted in Europe by Europeans themselves, based on the interests of Muslim lobbyists.

Isn't Eastern Europe different from Western Europe in this respect?

Yes, and Eastern Europe is more pro-American than Western Europe - which is what the Muslims want. It is easier to take over the West as a whole when it's divided.

How has this affected European academia?

European universities - like those in America - are totally controlled by the Arab-Islamic lobby, as are the schools. A teacher who attempts to teach according to the European view of history is thrown out. Indeed, the freedom of expression and thought that has been so crucial for European democracy has disappeared.

Many Israeli academics bemoan a similar situation in Israel. Do you see the mind frame you're describing infiltrating the Jewish state?

Yes, because the EU is spending a lot of money on Israeli NGOs in order to promote policies which will lead to the destruction of Israel. The EU considers Israel to be an accident of history that has to disappear. It thinks that if Israel disappears, relations between Europe and the Arab world will be much better. Now, the EU doesn't come out and actually say this, but all its policies, statements and actions are indicative of its aims. These aims could be developed in Israel and in America - especially when there is a new president.

Speaking of which, there is a concern among many Jews and Israelis that if Barack Obama becomes president, he will lean toward the kind of alliance with the Arab world that the EU promotes.

Yes, because he has a kind of "Third Worldism" - you know, the view that we all have to get together and appease the enemy. I'm no specialist on Obama. But I think that Bush has been a great politician, and that history will show he was right. Aside from everything else, he has woken up Europe to the calamity of global terrorism - and this is what brought about the coming to power of Merkel, Sarkozy and Berlusconi. And Europe can no longer be as anti-American.

That's ironic, isn't it, considering that most Americans now hate Bush?

That's because they don't understand what is really going on.

Given your bleak view of Europe, how is it that you didn't end up living in Israel or the US?

I love Europe. It is part of my family history and my culture. I can criticize it because I love it and want to help it. Look what Europe has given to the world: democracy and human rights, the love of peace. Look at its achievements in the field of literature, music, law, architecture. There is a tremendous richness. But we have to fight for all those values and accomplishments. Otherwise, we will be living as dhimmis in barbarity.

Finally, how do you envision Western civilization 10 years from now?

The Mishna says, "You are not required to finish the task, but neither are you free to desist from it."

Well, I feel that though I may not have done enough, I have tried the best I could.

As for the future, it is difficult to say, but we must have hope. We have to educate the European, American and Israeli youth to recover their culture and values, since it is they who will have to

continue the efforts to preserve freedom and democracy - and they who will have to fight to defend them.

Posted by [Robert](#) on July 10, 2008 6:33 AM