Chapter 17
Perceptions of Muslims in the twenty-first century


Islamophobia


Several websites are dedicated to tracing Islamophobia in the media; http://www.islamophobia-watch.com/ describes itself as follows:

Islamophobia Watch was initiated in January 2005 as a non-profitmaking project to document material in the public domain which advocates a fear and hatred of the Muslim peoples of the world and Islam as a religion.

Islamophobia Watch has been founded with a determination not to allow the racist ideology of Western Imperialism to gain common currency in its demonisation of Islam.

Islamophobia, as a racist tool of Western Imperialism, is strongly advocated by the political right but has also found an echo in the left, particularly sections of the left in France and the countries that make up the United Kingdom.
Islamophobia Watch will regularly report opinion columns and news items which match the editorial brief of the website, both articles that we believe advocate Islamophobia and those writers and organisations taking a stand against Islamophobia.

Another site, www.loonwatch.com/, describes itself this way:

Loonwatch.com is a blogzine run by a motley group of hate-allergic bloggers to monitor and expose the web’s plethora of anti-Muslim loons, wackos, and conspiracy theorists.

While we find the sheer stupidity and outrageousness of the loons to be a source of invaluable comedy, we also recognize the seriousness of the danger they represent as dedicated hatemongers. And so, while our style reflects our bemusement, our content is fact checked and our sources well vetted making sure loonwatch.com is a reliable educational—if entertaining—resource on the rambunctious underworld of Muslim-bashing.

On the notion of “Eurabia” see the review of a series of books on the topic, Justin Vaïsse, “Eurabian Follies: The Shoddy and Just Plain Wrong Genre that Refuses to Die,” Foreign Policy, 177 (January/February 2010), pp. 86–8.


Thomas S. Kidd, American Christians and Islam: Evangelical Culture and Muslims from the Colonial Period to the Age of Terrorism, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2009,
suggests that the roots of anti-Muslim sentiment go back to the earliest days of America and argues that to emphasize the pivot point of September 11, 2001, would be to miss the depth of the phenomenon.

 Islomophobia as “hate speech”


The inclusion of the Internet under section 13 has resulted in a recent case relating to mainstream media — Canadian Islamic Congress (CIC) v. Rogers Communications. The CIC filed a complaint alleging that an article written by Mark Steyn, and which appeared in the online edition of Maclean’s magazine, exposed members of the Muslim community to hatred and contempt pursuant to section 13. The Commission dealt with the case as required by law and determined that, although some aspects of the article in question were strongly worded, polemical, colourful and calculated to excite discussion, they did not meet the threshold of hate and contempt as determined by the Supreme Court in Taylor. The Commission dismissed the complaint and concluded that a hearing by the Tribunal was not warranted.

The 2008 reprint edition of Steyn’s book provides an expansion of the original Preface with a “prologue” entitled “Soon to be banned in Canada” which contains his reflections on the Human Rights hearings.
The fear of *shari'a*


Rex Ahdar, Nicholas Aroney (eds), *Shari'a in the West*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2010, picks up on the debates that followed the Archbishop of Canterbury's 2008 stated opinion that certain aspects of *shari'a* would become a part of British law.

**Fear and suspicion**


Tariq Ramadan’s *Radical Reform: Islamic Ethics and Liberation*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2009, is especially good at pursuing the modern basis of law in light of what he conceives of as the fundamental principles of Islam.
The Muslim conception of Islam