

“Civilizational Jihad” at the Urth Caffé

by Hugh Fitzgerald

On April 22, at the Urth Caffé in Laguna Beach, California, seated at one of the most desirable tables – that is, those on the outside patio, in the very front, with the unobstructed view of the beach – seven Muslim women, all wearing hijabs, talked and dallied. On their table, as on all the tables at the café, was a placard on which, prominently displayed, was the announcement that at peak times, patrons might be required to vacate the highest-in-demand tables after 45 minutes. At 8 p.m., 45 minutes after the women had had their order taken (and somewhat longer since they had entered), the manager, seeing they were giving no signs of leaving, and having other patrons waiting for those desirable tables – it was a very busy Friday night – came over to remind the women of the 45-minute rule. He also suggested that they might, if they wished, in lieu of leaving the café, simply move to another (but less desirable) table. The women balked at the suggestion. He went away, but returned at 8:15 to repeat his request and remind them of the café’s policy. They continued to refuse to move, and finally the management found it necessary to call the police, who arrived at 8:40, and escorted the women out.

The seven Muslim women were quick to get a lawyer, and to bring suit against the café for what they described as anti-Muslim “discrimination” against them. Their argument was that they were singled out for being asked to leave because they were Muslims wearing hijabs. The café’s owners pointed out that much of the café’s clientele consisted of Muslims; that among those patrons were women in hijabs who were routinely served, and, indeed, that very night, other hijab-wearing women were in the café and served without incident; that far

from having an anti-Muslim policy, the café welcomed Muslim patrons, who were particularly attracted to the Urth Caffé by its ban on alcohol; that up to 90% of the patrons on Friday nights were Muslims, and it would have made no sense for the café's owners to enforce an "anti-Muslim" policy which would be devastating to their business; and finally, that one of the café's co-owners, Jilla Berkman, was herself a Muslim. The 45-minute policy for high-demand tables was hardly applied precipitously or unfairly, for they were allowed to stay after the 45-minute time limit was up – but when they still refused to move after the second warning, Berkman finally found it necessary to call the police.

Threatened with a lawsuit, the café's owners contacted David Yerushalmi of the American Freedom Law Center, who has specialized in defending victims of the legal jihad being waged through suits, or threats of suits, by Muslims in this country who have shown themselves determined to press even the flimsiest of claims of "discrimination" by non-Muslims. Yerushalmi said the plaintiffs had been asked "only to abide by the cafe's policy to give up their high-demand outside patio table after 45 minutes to allow other customers, including those wearing hijabs, to enjoy the experience." He said the cafe's security video showed long lines outside the restaurant door the night of the alleged incident. And in a move that must have filled the Muslim plaintiffs with chagrin and alarm, Yerushalmi – as he had promised he would – countersued: "This lawsuit claiming religious discrimination is a fraud and a hoax on the courts and the media," Yerushalmi told LawNewz in a statement. "It is nothing short of an abuse of process to extort public apologies and other accommodations from my client, Urth Caffé."

Judging by all of these facts, in attempting to claim "discrimination" against Muslims where there was none, it is likely that these women will come to regret that they made such a Muslim mountain out of a molehill, that they had

started flinging the charge of “discrimination” without investigating the application of the 45-minute rule for those tables most in demand, that they hadn’t realized a co-owner of the café was herself Muslim, that they overlooked all the other Muslim patrons, including hijabbed women, ready to testify that they had never had problems at the Urth Caffé where, on Friday nights, up to 90% of the clientele is Muslim. They will live to regret it because they are bound to lose not only their own suit, but the countersuit as well. Yerushalmi is not going to let them get away with what he has correctly called “civilizational jihad.” He noted in a court document filed on June 22, 2016 that there was “an underlying agenda for this litigation that has nothing to do with justice,” LawNewz reported, adding that Yerushalmi characterized Sara Farsakh (the ringleader and spokesman of the Muslim women, and a pro-Palestinian activist) as a college-aged agitator for this “civilizational jihad.”

What is “civilizational jihad”? It’s an attempt, effective in its stillicidal and quiet way, to promote changes to even minor aspects of Western life to fit Islamic requirements. Little by little, sometimes less and sometimes more, non-Muslims in the West find themselves changing their ways in order to meet Muslim demands. “Civilizational jihad” is not the jihad of suicide bombers or traditional combat (*qitaal*). It is, rather, the sum of all the attempts by Muslims in the West to turn every perceived slight, real or imaginary, which Muslims claim to suffer, and every refusal by non-Muslims to modify their own laws, customs, and mores, as an attack on Muslims, or on Islam.

“Civilizational jihad” is often, but not always, conducted through the courts, where Muslims (or CAIR, as their self-appointed representative) press every possible point of legal advantage by raising every conceivable charge of discrimination. It’s designed to keep non-Muslims off balance, to make them afraid not to exempt Muslims from rules that are

meant to apply to all, and to suggest that “religious discrimination” is involved even in the most implausible situations, and to do so knowing that even if the charge is unlikely to stick, merely making it can scare many non-Muslims, who don’t want the bad publicity (of being described as “Islamophobic” or “racist”), and who then would rather yield to Muslim demands. In the case of the Urth Caffé, what these seven Muslim women were seeking was a public apology from the café’s owners – an admission of “discrimination” against Muslims – and possibly more, including whatever sum of money might compensate them for their feelings (as their ringleader Sara Farsakh put it) of “embarrassment and humiliation.”

And that is how, little by little, non-Muslims in the West, in order to avoid the headaches of bad publicity, or lawsuits, so often give in to Muslim demands. It’s Jihad at the capillary level. For example, there are the changes in institutional food offerings, such as the [banning of pork products in federal prisons](#), which elicited a comment from a satisfied Ibrahim Hooper of CAIR: “In general we welcome the change because it’s facilitating the accommodation of Muslim inmates.” The Obama Administration seems determined to back up, through threats of a loss of federal funding, Muslim dietary requirements imposed on Muslim and non-Muslim alike: “In another publicized case [in Kent, Washington], when all pork products were banned from a school’s menu, an angry parent, Tom Brabo, spoke with that school’s Director of Nutritional Services, who informed him that “he was well aware of the issues (and the slippery slope) with the changes to menu options due to Muslim religious beliefs, but he said lots of Muslims had complained and threatened the school by reporting them to the U.S. Department of Education.” Mr. Brabo was told that if the school system doesn’t “accommodate the Muslim dietary needs that their federal and state funding would be cut or pulled.”

Still another example is the attempt by CAIR and Muslim parents to have Islam introduced as part of the required curriculum in public schools. School administrators and teachers may monitor the faculty and textbooks for statements deemed anti-Muslim, with the faculty warned to watch what they say, and the textbook publishers reminded of the need to cover Islamic civilization in all its "splendor," as in Islamic Spain, with all the bad parts left out. Some of these efforts have failed, some succeeded, but the attempts keep coming and will not stop. Of course when Islam is introduced into the school curriculum, Muslims want to make sure that their guidance as to what will be taught is taken, and they monitor both teachers and textbooks for the content they convey. Anything upsetting in Islam, such as the more than one hundred "jihad verses" of the Qur'an, will be left out. The goal is to introduce non-Muslim students to a sanitized and soothing version of Islam. No mention of little Aisha, the Khaybar Oasis, the Battle of the Trench, Asma bint Marwan, Abu Afak. But plenty about Qur'an 2:256 and 5:32, and the folkloristic-and-family aspects of Ramadan. Students are to be made comfortable with, accepting of, even entranced by the exoticism of, Muslim practices.

The "Wear A Hijab Day" is one such effort. Another is the attempt to make sure that the social studies textbooks do not dwell, ideally do not even mention, the ideology of Jihad – unless Jihad is defined as "an inner spiritual struggle." The students, young, gullible, and uncritical, come out believing the propaganda to which they have been subjected, but now they consider themselves enlightened as to the "real nature of Islam." We all know the absurdity of those charges – "Islamophobia" and "racism" – but they continue to have a potent effect in inhibiting criticism of Islam in the classroom; even the few teachers who may know something about Islam will have no desire to share it with the students, or to take issue with texts that have received CAIR's sinister imprimatur. Why make trouble for themselves? Is it worth it?

Who will back them up? The local politicians? The Obama Administration? And what about relying on disinterested scholarship? Should that student go to buy a book on Islam so as to “find out for himself” what it’s all about, the “authoritative” book most likely to be recommended by a store clerk will surely be a farrago of Islamic apologetics by – you guessed it – the omnipresent Karen Armstrong.

Municipal pools start setting aside hours for Muslim women only. At Ramadan this year, some high schools held their graduation parties late, so that Muslim students would not be troubled by any interference with the Ramadan fast. Then there are the changes made in medical services because of the Muslim husbands who insist that their wives can be seen only by female doctors (a demand that, of course, cannot always be met), or who demand to be present for all examinations of their womenfolk, or sometimes even demand to serve as the interpreter and interface between the Muslim female patient and Western medical personnel.

This can wreak havoc with a hospital’s schedule for medical personnel, but instead of simply but firmly explaining that Western hospitals will not change their ways given the burden such changes impose, great attempts are made to satisfy Muslim needs as to segregation by sex. Giving in to these demands is to replace Western views of the relationship of women to men with the Muslim view. And it need not be the result of a specific request. It is enough for officials to know that such requests have somewhere been made, to anticipate trouble and head it off by proleptically yielding to a Muslim demand that has not yet been made and is merely a plausible possibility, and sometimes when it is even less than that.

This is what constitutes “civilizational jihad” by Muslims: to push, to prod, to seek every weak spot where non-Muslims can be bullied or scared into changing their rules so as to meet perceived Muslim requirements, or to yield to demands for special treatment. Nor is this craven surrender limited to one

state or one country. In Germany, cafes and schools have been banning pork products, including bratwurst sausages that, protesters rightly noted, are “intrinsic to German culture.” Nonetheless, an increasing number of public canteens, child daycare centers and schools have stopped serving sausages, bacon and ham over religious considerations. And so Muslim dietary laws are essentially made mandatory for everyone.

There is some fighting back:

Now members of Chancellor Angela Merkel’s CDU party are fighting to keep pork on the menu, insisting the consumption of pork is part of German culture.

Daniel Günther, party representative, claimed that pork products were being taken off the menu in schools, nurseries and canteens across the country.

He said: “The protection of minorities – including for religious reasons – must not mean that the majority is overruled in their free decision by ill-conceived consideration.’

But whether or not pork products are brought back where they’ve been banned, isn’t it already a fantastic situation when pork products of all kinds have been banned in some *German* schools and prisons, in that country whose cuisine’s alpha and omega is pork? Note that in some cases, the banning of pork products came not in response to a Muslim demand, but was imposed *in anticipation* of such a demand being made: that is, non-Muslims are now yielding to what they think Muslims will want, or to what they assume must be done to “make Muslims feel comfortable” even if it limits the freedoms of the native non-Muslims. It is this craven surrender in advance to the “civilizational jihad” that most disturbs. Even a country like Sweden, that has long prided itself on gender equality, has now instituted women-only swimming hours. And many cities and towns all over the Western world have done the

same, and for the same reasons: to enforce Muslim demands for segregation by sex, whatever the harm done to non-Muslims and their ideal of gender equality.

Another example of “civilizational jihad” is the attempt to offer *nunc-pro-tunc* backdating of Islam, as part of Western – and American – history. Consider the fabulous claims made that Christopher Columbus included Muslims in his crew. Not only is there not a shred of evidence to support this, but Columbus was a deeply devout Christian; he wanted to discover an alternate route for Europeans to the East precisely because Muslims had, with the conquest of Constantinople in 1453, managed to seal off entirely from Christian Europe the old route to the East. Columbus would never have taken on members of the enemy – Islamic – camp for his crew. But so effective has this Muslim rewriting of history been that, in 2004, a State Department employee put out a claim about Columbus’s Muslim crew members: in a press release entitled “Islamic Influence Runs Deep in American Culture,” Phyllis McIntosh of the State Department’s Washington File claimed: “Islamic influences may date back to the very beginning of American history. It is likely that Christopher Columbus, who discovered America in 1492, charted his way across the Atlantic Ocean with the help of an Arab navigator.”

There is no evidence for this, so why did McIntosh make this absurd claim that was surely authorized by higher-ups (even though “may date back” and “it is likely that” are weasel words providing deniability)? She, and her Department, either felt there was no harm in trying to curry favor with Muslims (history is silly putty to some; they shape it as they will), or were under pressure to rewrite history as part of a feelgood-outreach campaign to American Muslims. Whichever it was, the rewriting of history in such fashion can certainly be considered part of a “civilizational jihad.” And the same could be said for Barack Obama’s repeated never-ceases-to-amaze mantra of “Islam has always been part of America,” and

for his attempt to suggest that the fact that Jefferson owned a Qur'an signified sympathy for Islam (all it did is signify his interest, as a curious and cultivated man, in finding out something about Islam), or claiming that he held an "Iftar" dinner for a Muslim envoy when all Jefferson did was move forward by a few hours a state dinner, when requested by that envoy, because for him – but *not* for Jefferson – it was Ramadan.

These offensive rewritings of history, these diminishment to our institutional cuisine, these careful censorings of our textbooks and course syllabi, these changes to medical services, are all different aspects of the steadfast many-pronged campaign of "civilizational jihad." And those seven hijabbed women refusing to vacate the most in-demand table at a café, in direct violation of clearly-displayed rules about the need to do so during peak hours, and claiming that being subject to that general rule constituted "discrimination," can be understood, as David Yerushalmi observed, as part of that "civilizational jihad." Yerushalmi has taken the right approach, to be just as aggressive as the Muslim practitioners of lawfare, and to countersue those seven women, in order to teach a lesson that will not be forgotten. But there is a need for hundreds of others, akin to David Yerushalmi, who are aggressive litigators, well-versed in American civil rights law and in the Sharia, and are determined defenders of a West that has been under stealthy assault but which is now giving signs, both here and in Europe, of shaking its locks and rousing itself to this hydra-headed Muslim threat. At long last, and not a moment too soon.

First published at