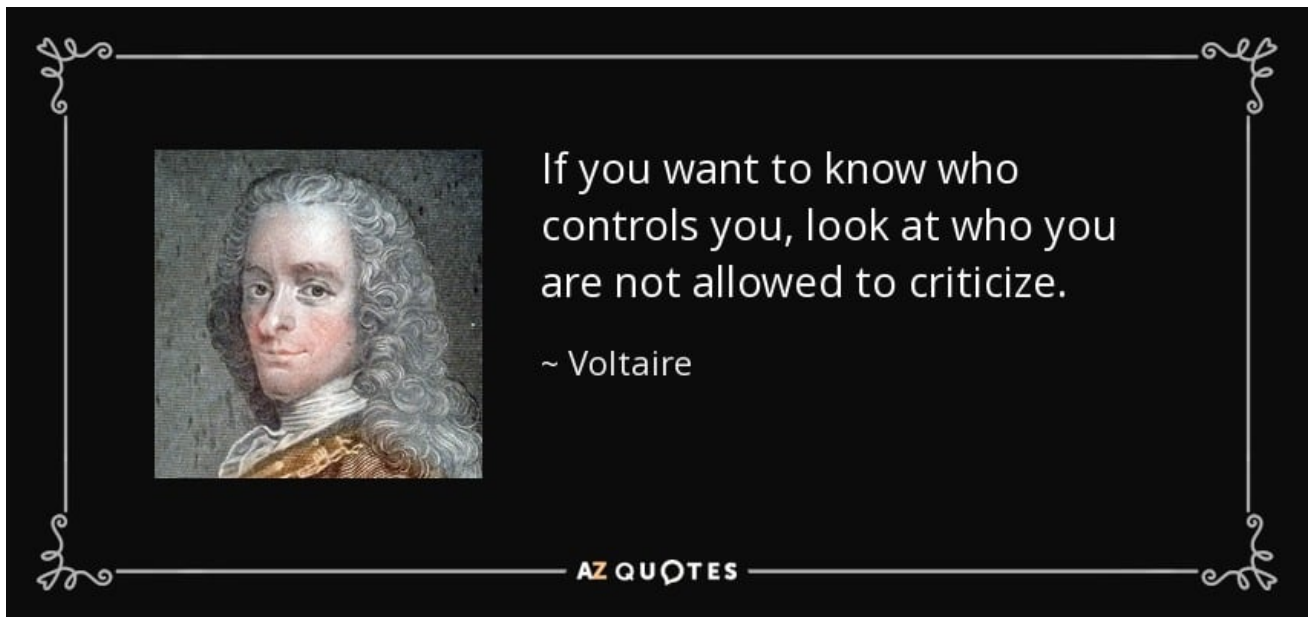


Standing Up in France

by Ibn Warraq



On Friday, March 23, while he screamed “Allahu Akbar,” Redouan Lakdim killed three people in a supermarket in Southwestern France, where he had just taken hostages. First known to the police as a drug dealer, more recently Lakdim became known as a jihadi, an Islamic militant who proclaimed his allegiance to ISIS. He had demanded the release of Salah Abdeslam, the prime surviving suspect in the Islamic State attacks that killed 130 people in Paris in 2015. Yet he was allowed to circulate freely. Why?

All too often, the first reaction to such acts of Islamic terrorism is not horror at the barbaric acts and compassion for the victims, but an obsessive fear that “Islamophobia” will increase. In France, editorials in liberal outlets will once again warn against “conflation” (in French, the expression is “pas d’amalgam”), by which is meant that there should be no automatic identification of acts of terrorism with Islam. Islam is a religion of peace, we are instructed, and terrorists know nothing about true Islam. Liberal publications deny the evidence of the Koranic texts, Islamic

principles, and the 1,400- year history of jihadi terrorism, which began with the Prophet Muhammad himself. They also ignore the writings of “modern” jihadists such as Sayyid Qutb, Abdullah Azzam, Ayman al-Zawahiri, and the Ayatollah Khomeini, which provide ample justification for holding Islam itself responsible for acts of terror.

Unfortunately, “Islamophobia” has now entered the dictionaries of all modern languages. It is at once a way to deflect any criticism or critical examination of Islam, on the one hand, and, on the other, a means for apologists to play victim. It is also no less than an attempt to stifle the fundamental principles of democracy and one of the glories of Western civilization—freedom of thought and expression. By demanding separate and privileged treatment, Islamists undermine another fundamental Western achievement—the concept of equality before the law, irrespective of race, gender, or religion. Islamists argue that they have been humiliated and victimized by French secularism; thus, their demand that we accept their Islamic laws, which they claim comes from God himself, but which reduce women and non-Muslims to an inferior status. If they prevail, the Islamists will undermine the principle that, more than any other, has resulted in unprecedented peace and prosperity in the West: the separation of state and religion, state and church, or state and mosque.

This brings us to the recent [*City Journal*](#).

Ibn Warraq is the author, most recently, of