

French President Hollande Calls for an Islam of France with himself as its Secular Pope

News:

French President Hollande said in a speech given on 8 September 2016, "What we need to succeed in together is the creation of an Islam of France", and that "The republic cannot accept a situation where a majority of imams are trained abroad and sometimes don't speak our language."

Comment:

These comments have come now in response to the wave of terror attacks that have beset France in recent months, although such comments are merely the latest in a very long series of attempts to assimilate Muslims into French secular values. President Hollande thinks that he has the right to create a whole new Islam that fits within France's racist and virulently secular republicanism, and he thinks that France can claim a moral high-ground in standing against terrorism. He is wrong on both counts, but sadly his views are widely held by French politicians of both the left and the right. An ugly colonial arrogance infects French political discourse, and it is shameless.

It is shameless because the French revolution that gave birth to the secularism that President Hollande is trying to protect also gave birth to the notion and practice of terrorism as a means of political control. The French Revolution marked the birth of what was called "The Age of Reason", but one of the first things to be invented in this "Age of Reason" was a machine called the Guillotine for beheading people, which was used in 1793-94 to chop-off the heads of 2,639 people in Paris alone. The Guillotine was intended to terrorize, and the leaders of the revolution gloried in it and sanctified terror as a democratic political concept. Maximilien Robespierre, defined terror as: "an emanation of virtue; it is less a principle in itself, than a consequence of the general principle of democracy".

The French went on to export democracy and terror to the lands they colonized. In 1830 they invaded Algiers and applied the principle of terror to their new colony. Demonstrations against the occupation were crushed in 1845 with the killing of 45,000 people in Setif, Guelma and Kherrata. French Lieutenant-Colonel Lucien de Montagnac described how "French civilization" should assert itself in a letter to a friend dated 15th March 1843: "This is how, my dear friend, we must make war against Arabs: kill all men over the age of 15, take all their women and children, load them onto naval vessels, send them to the Marquesas Islands or elsewhere. In one word, annihilate all who will not crawl beneath our feet like dogs". In the 20th century, when the Muslims of Algeria again sought independence, they were subjected to another vicious campaign of terror. Between 1954 and 1962 an estimated 1.5 million Algerians were killed in the face of brutal and indiscriminate targeting of the civilian population and the extermination of entire villages. Systematic rape, torture and beheadings brought terror to every living thing that stood and breathed in the face of the French soldiers.

Terror was also used against Muslims in Paris during this time. On October 17th, 1961, a peaceful demonstration by Algerians against the French occupation of Algeria was crushed with the death of 200 protesters. At the Grands Boulevards, the police opened fire on the crowd and charged, leading to several deaths. On the Neuilly Bridge more were shot and killed. Algerians were beaten unconscious and thrown into the river Seine to drown, and throughout the night; arrests, beatings and torture increased the death toll.

If President Hollande is serious about opposing terrorism he should take a long and hard look at the republican ideals of the French Revolution that he promotes, for they are the real gateway to terror, not Islam. In order to implement his colonial campaign for a "French Islam", Hollande wants to use the newly established "Foundation for Islam of France" that has as its head a non-Muslim: Jean-Pierre Chevènement, who defended his appointment by claiming "to know a lot about Islam" because he "visited Algiers and Cairo 40 or 50 years ago." The colonialists will never grow tired of their own hypocrisy and arrogance!

Written for the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir by

Dr. Abdullah Robin