

Johan Galtung: **ISLAM AND THE WEST: ROADS TOWARD PEACE** 14-09-2015

Alfaz, International Center for Conflict Solution, Seminar 11-13/9:

The prospects are dim. Both focus on the worst in the Other, not on the best. Islam justifies terrorist violence--bombs, decapitation--as revenge with moderation; West justifies state terrorist violence--bombing, droning, sharp-shooting all over--as preventive violence. Killing ratio: like 1:99. Both are escalating in a violence race.

West is Christian-secular with secularisms--humanism, liberalism, marxism--sharing with Islam and Christianity occidental singularism and universalism, the only truth, valid for all, at all times. A miracle that we have had only the terrible Crusades 1095-1291.

One reason was geographical, in space: Islam in deserts and on islands, Christianity in the temperate zone; today both are all over. Another reason was historical, in time: Christianity in Antiquity, Islam in the Middle Ages, Christianity-secularism-colonialism-West in Modernity. Enters post-Modernity: Islam's turn to be predominant.

Empty cathedrals and churches in Western societies with much loneliness and alienation; in Islam overfilled mosques with intense togetherness and direct sharing. The contradiction is bridged by massive conversion to Islam, more so the more loneliness; and by turning against one's country if it joins USA killing Muslims.

The predictable emergence of an Islamic State, resurrecting the caliphate, undoing the Western colonies, both by the Sykes-Picot 1915-16 root of evils, epitomizes the situation. For peace use military to defend exposed minorities and memorials, and negotiate a modest June '67 Israel, and acknowledge responsibility for the past, in dialogues.

For positive peace cooperation with equity is essential. It has to be built on compatible--sometimes common, shared--values-interests:

* thus, the West has a utopia: world government, one state, the world, one nation, humanity; in practice regions-EU-CELAC-AU-SAARC-ASEAN-OIC.

And Islam has a utopia: the ummah, local communities with mosques and courts, guided by the imam--opening for non-Muslim communities. The two utopias are compatible, and are now emerging with Muslim and non-Muslim ever more autonomous communities inside EU France and England.

* Western humanism and Muslim positive shariah have a shared value: basic needs for all, food-water, clothing-housing, health-education, recognize this shared base and cooperate for its realization. Muslims feel at home in social-democratic Nordic countries and enter politics.

* Continue the move so many places from intolerance to tolerance to dialogue based on respect and curiosity onward to mutual learning: the West learning from Islam banking, not Judeo-Christian interest profit but entering the economy sharing risks and benefits, how to lower the crime rates; Islam learning from West about freedom of expression and impression and diversity, as Protestantisms and inside Catholicism. The West could fill empty churches with lonely people in search of a place to meet and share their narratives, maybe with some food; Islam need reforms, with diversity in interpretations enriching Islam.

* Gender, celebrating advances for women toward parity with the decline of the patriarchic family and equal access to education; noting the pioneering move to equality by Bourguiba and his wife on Tunisian independence in 1956 from France ahead of many Western states and in today's Muslim Malaysia. Drop the focus on textiles covering heads and bodies; Women Decide, from bourka to nudity on the beach.

* Democracy, rule with consent of the ruled; in Europe in 4-nation Switzerland: referenda in 2,300 communities--also foreign affairs--a goal for Muslim 8-nation Afghanistan with 25,000 jirga communities?

* Empathy with Other, Islam knowing the West better than vice versa, a pedagogy making Islam's and West's positives better known is needed. The condition for cooperation focused on the positives, not being mesmerized by the negatives into conflict and violence.

But, the negatives are real--violences and their justifications, the anomie (deculturation) and atomie (destruction) in the West, too loose, and maybe the opposite in Islam, unitarian, too tight?

The theory is that positive cooperation will make the negatives wither away, with violence-war yielding to solutions. Like the end of the Cold War in Europe and of hot war in Northern Ireland; learning that nobody should declare themselves a winner (USA), and not to forget to pay attention to the traumas of the past ("Bloody Sunday").

That brings us to negative peace, removing unconciled traumas and unsolved conflicts as root causes of wars; like Sykes-Picot, Israel-Palestine by 1-2-6-20. Major trauma: the Crusades? The West missed 900 years after the 27 November 1095 declaration--but never too late.

Major conflict: not Israel vs Palestine but Israel-USA vs the Muslim world. The unfortunate "Judeo-Christianity" formula excludes the third Abrahamic religion, Islam. USA and Israel came into being as chosen by their gods with promised land inhabited by Others. Full autonomy and dignity for the dispossessed are minimum requirements.

Migrants should be received by those who caused the problem; for Syria-Iraq above all USA, for Africa above all the colonial powers.

This seminar takes place in Spain; how about Spain-Islam?

The Spanish Golden Age was the Andaluz convivencia with dialogues between Jews, Christians and Muslims, ending in 1492 with Christian Monarch brutality: total religious intolerance, massacre, inquisition.

A part of the co-existence is architectonic: the mosque-cathedral in Córdoba. Use it for Muslim services on Friday afternoon, Christian services on Sunday morning, and on Saturdays revive the dialogues, enriched by secularisms and needed reform movements inside Islam!

And, extend the 11 June 2015 law giving Spanish citizenship to Sephardic Jews also to Muslims with Spanish origin, under the same (strict) conditions. Not US Judeo-Christianity; but Iberian all 3!