



The New Xenophobia

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New Xenophobia and Old Xenophobia

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Abstract and Keywords

This chapter examines the differences between old and new xenophobia, but also explains their areas of overlap and, in particular, illustrates how new xenophobia can draw upon older forms of xenophobia, sometimes even in opposition, for sustenance. It concludes by offering examples of new xenophobic legislation from Denmark, and linking it to similar slippages elsewhere.

Keywords: homophobia, old xenophobia of Asia and Africa, Islamic fundamentalism, culture, immigration, Danish legislation, Sweden

It is clear by now that, despite areas of overlap, the ways in which old xenophobia and new xenophobia operate differ in subtle ways. Let us take their presence in media discourse. One can argue that while stereotypes were more likely to be propagated directly as 'raw content' in media discourse—for instance, refer to any discussion of the 'Jewish Problem' in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, even in the subtle and nuanced version of the Dreyfus Affair given to us by Marcel Proust—under old xenophobia, new xenophobia is more reliant on what can be termed 'framing devices'. Stereotypes are propagated not as much by assertion as by insertion or by association.

This has been noticed in major studies such as Maxwell McCombs's *Setting the Agenda: The Mass Media and Public Opinion* (2004) and Peter Morey and Amina Yaqin's *Framing Muslims: Stereotyping and Representation after 9/11* (2011), though in slightly different terms. For instance, drawing on McCombs's study and on Edward Said's *Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World*, Morey and Yaqin note that:

In reportage [...] the things to look for, as much as raw content, are the contexts in which news stories are set; the juxtaposition of headline, **(p. 141)** narrative, and the accompanying photograph; the staging of the photograph; and the wider debates to which these elements refer. We argue that rather than being descriptive and neutral, such instances are almost always contained within a framing narrative whose parameters are defined by questions of belonging, 'Otherness', and threat.¹

Even though the 'raw content' of old xenophobia is never totally absent in society (whatever might be the case of the individual), it is obvious, if one looks at the newspaper and other reports, that new forms of xenophobia often underplay the raw ('physical' or 'material') content while employing and retaining the framing devices and the framing narratives of old xenophobia. One complex example of this has been deconstructed by Jasbir K. Puar in *Terrorist Assemblages*. The construction of homonationalism, as Puar describes it, is a good indication of one of the ways in which new xenophobia differs from old xenophobia. Old xenophobia was racist, anti-Semitic, and homophobic in largely open terms; new xenophobia tries, pretends, and sometimes perhaps is genuinely *not* homophobic or anti-Semitic, even perhaps *not* racist in the old sense of a physically determined 'race' (let alone systemic, institutionalized racism), in its self-understanding.

Noting how (legitimate) gay protests against homophobia in some countries, such as Iran (and not in other countries), are connected to global politics, *Terrorist Assemblages* explores the new connections between 'sexuality, race, gender, nation, class, and ethnicity in relation to the tactics, strategies, and logistics of war machines'.² From our perspective, it is interesting to see how a genuine element of old xenophobia, homophobia, has been taken over by new xenophobic circles in order to legitimate a new configuration of self/other and in-group/out-group that is largely 'contingent upon ever-narrowing parameters of white racial privilege' accessed not in the openly racial terms of old **(p.142)** xenophobia, but in the new terms of 'consumption capabilities, gender and kinship normality, and bodily integrity'.³

Even honestly non-xenophobic organizations can fall into this trap, as Puar demonstrates with a number of examples. For instance, the British-based queer group Outrage! displayed these placards during a rally in London at the Free Palestine rally on 21 May 2005: 'Israel: stop persecuting Palestine! Palestine: stop persecuting queers!' and 'Stop "honor" killing women and gays in Palestine.' Though informed by an honourable intention to protest against both Islamophobia and homophobia, Puar notes that this combination of placards

[...] unfortunately reaffirms the modernity of Israel and Judaism and the monstrosity of Palestine and Islam. Delineating Palestine as the site of queer oppression—oppression that is equated with the occupation of

Palestine by Israel—effaces Israeli state persecution of queer Palestinians. Israeli state persecution of queer Israelis—because Israel is hardly exempt from homophobic violence towards its own citizens regardless of religious or ethnic background—is erased in this trickle-down model of sloganeering. This dialectical analogy, whereby the persecution of Palestinians by Israel is ‘like’ Palestinian persecution of queers, does a tremendous disservice to the incommensurate predicaments at stake and refuses any possible linkages between the two, indeed refuses that one form of oppression might sustain or even create the conditions of possibility for the other.⁴

In terms of our thesis here, it is also evident how the new stranger sanctioned by new xenophobia—in this case, the Palestinian—is implicitly and explicitly portrayed as practicing a bodily located violence—‘honour’ killing, the persecution of gay men and women, etc.—while the more normative ‘ally’ (Israel) practices, at worst, a lopsided form of an abstract violence, that of and against a ‘nation’. Puar exposes the devices by which a *normalization* of queerness is both constructed and **(p.143)** used against a new xenophobic target that, in the folds of its abstraction, mystifies and obscures ‘the primary beneficiaries of this epistemological project: European subjectivities’.⁵

This brings us to one of the most prominent problems faced by anti-xenophobia and anti-racism groups today: the *difference* between old racist/xenophobic parties and many new Rightist parties; what Roger Griffin aptly terms ‘fascism’s new facelessness’.⁶ With equivalent versions existing in countries as varied as Switzerland, Holland, Denmark, and Norway, this is best illustrated with the example of the English Defence League (EDL). As Arun Kundnani shows in an excellent paper, EDL—like similar new Rightist groups and leaders elsewhere (such as the Flemish nationalist Vlaams Belang party or Pim Fortuyn in Holland)—often goes to great lengths to distance itself from old forms of racism, homophobia, and anti-Semitism, all of which were staples of the old Right (and of Nazism). They even, as is also the case with mainstream Rightist parties like the nationalist Danish People’s Party, distance themselves from neo-Nazism, at least in some public pronouncements. While there are obvious elements of relapse and overlap—such as the tendency to visit the sins of some ‘Muslim’ terrorists on all Muslims, nationalist references to secular ‘crusades’, and the existence of a commonality of supporters with old Rightist and old xenophobic (including Nazi) sympathies—it would be a mistake to consider these new Rightist groups as simply masquerading and pretending, of throwing dust into the public eye while basically recycling neo-Nazi ideologies. Kundnani is correct in stating that ‘it would be wrong to see the EDL as simply a mask for more familiar forms of far-Right, racist politics. Equally, it would be a mistake to think that the EDL’s distinction between moderate and extremist Muslims, even when properly upheld, does not involve it in a politics of race.’⁷

(p.144) Kundnani notes that most discussions of the EDL consider whether it is another right-wing and extremist organization, which opportunistically employs popular concern over Islamist radicalism 'to mask an old-fashioned racist and violent politics, or whether it represents, at least for some supporters, a legitimate attempt to oppose totalitarian Islamism'.⁸ He adds,

[i]n a report for the liberal think-tank *Demos*, for example, Jamie Bartlett and Mark Littler conclude that, though some EDL supporters use opposition to militant Islam as 'a cover for more sinister or intolerant views,' many are genuine anti-extremists who carefully distinguish between moderate and extremist Muslims. [...] Labour party advisor Maurice Glasman seems to agree with this position, saying in an interview with *Progress* magazine in April 2011 that we should listen to the supporters of the EDL.⁹

From the perspective of this study, the complexity of such new Rightist ideological moorings is useful; it helps to place these new Rightist groups in the interface between old xenophobia and new xenophobia. This interface is best illustrated by pointing out how their rhetoric slips into old forms of a body-centred xenophobia and also, sincerely, employs elements of new xenophobia, that feature the feared stranger who is guilty of excesses of physical differentiation and bodily violence. I will illustrate both with examples from texts by EDL, by italicizing and underlining the crucial words:

A. Traces of Old Xenophobia:

In the last 66 years we as a *nation*, as a *race* have had our *national identity* stolen from us by politicians who have forced us to accept *multiculturalism*. They have and still are practicing *cultural genocide* on their own people, despite warnings that we will not accept it. They have forced us to accept the dilution of our heritage and **(p.145)** history by the implementation of laws which will stop us from rising up, even if that's just to voice an opinion. Any action which has the aim or effect of depriving us of our *integrity as distinct peoples*, or of our *cultural values* or *ethnic identities*. Any form of *population transfer* which has the aim or effect of violating or undermining any of the rights of the *native or indigenous people*. Any form of *assimilation or integration by other cultures or ways of life* imposed on us by legislative, administrative or other measures is *cultural genocide*.¹⁰ (Italics and stresses mine)

B. Traces of New Xenophobia:

'Muslim Bombers Off Our Streets.' 'Extremist Muslims Go to Hell.'
'British Voters Say No to Sharia Law.' 'Long Live the Free.'¹¹

What is interesting about these two selections is how, in A, the EDL slips into old forms of a body-centred xenophobia, with its stress on blood, inheritance, heredity, genetics, etc., while constantly struggling to sublimate these factors

into the realm of culture. If one looks at the words put in *italics*, one detects a slippage into old Rightist/racist/xenophobic understandings of inherited and body-based elements; 'nation' slips into 'race', and 'ethnic identities' and terms like 'native' and 'indigenous' return the discourse to an understanding of biologically inherited differences. Along with these we have words and phrases, the ones underlined and *italicized*, that show a degree of vacillation, often trying to reframe, and sometimes reframing, old xenophobic grievances in new sublimated (mostly 'cultural') terms. The term 'cultural genocide', with its coupling of an idealist construction with physical death, is significant in this context. Finally, the words or phrases that have been only underlined above show how the EDL positions **(p.146)** itself as a party of sublimated protest—abstractly 'voicing an opinion'—that is physically 'forced' by the legislative, administrative, and other measures of pro-multiculturalism politicians into marginalization. To understand this final element, it is important to see it in the light of the 'Muslims' that EDL claims to be opposing. In B, for instance, the EDL pointedly refers to Muslims as practitioners of a bodily impacted extremism positioned or juxtaposed against the ideal, abstract values, such as 'freedom', of the English.

What we witness is a complex interweaving of old xenophobic elements with new xenophobic ones. The threat of a physical difference—a tribal, genetic identity that can be inherited, not cultivated—lurks in the background, but is often expressed, and sometimes realized, in more sublimated terms. Here the notion of culture, a word whose etymology is revealing, is particularly useful because while it is widely understood as not necessarily biological, it still retains vestiges of its meaning in phrases like 'preparing a physical culture'. But this attempted freeing of the body from marks of differences—which is, as argued, perfectly in keeping with the increasing abstraction of capital in First World spaces—is posited against the captivity of the body in those 'other' spaces that have to be opposed. Hence, new xenophobia does not oppose physical difference; it opposes any manifestation of physical difference. Jews do not have to wear a Star of David, but Muslims cannot build minarets or dress in certain kinds of clothes in public spaces.

Government policies in almost all rich countries reflect this kind of xenophobia; immigrants are discriminated against, openly, not on the basis of their appearances, but on the basis of their 'qualifications'. Again, this is done in increasingly abstract terms, as Roemer, Lee, and van der Straeten point out: 'law and order', architectural heritage, democracy, etc.

(p.147) This brings us back to a major and elided contradiction running through the entire process, which I have to return to repeatedly in this part of the book: globalization has left capital more free to traverse the globe than ever before, but this has not—and indeed *cannot*, if welfare and prosperity are to be maintained at the currently high levels in the gated First World countries of the

world—left labour with an equivalent, or even vaguely comparable, mobility across borders that matter. This basic contradiction—that the prosperity of the First World depends on the freedom of ‘global’ capital while its privileges depend on the control of global labour—has translated into new xenophobia that legitimates the miniscule minority from the Third World with access to global capital and legislates abstractly to deny access to the vast majority. The rationale for this discrimination is perforce abstract (partly in reaction to old xenophobia, which can also conveniently provide a rationale for the construction of the odious stranger now), even though it often overlaps with old targets of xenophobia for historical and ‘cultural’ reasons.

Under new xenophobia, the stranger—always constructed by every kind of xenophobia—is not just the ‘outsider’. If the feared and detested stranger in ancient Greek city states was by definition the non-urban outsider, the feared and detested stranger in our stock-market-linked cities is the man or woman whose body intrudes into and disrupts the smooth circulation of the abstract power of capital. The stranger is constructed increasingly as a bodily being whose physical tyranny runs against the idealist nature of our commerce and its self-claimed values: freedom, democracy, equality, etc. Hence, the stranger to be feared is, as even Pinker’s reading of violence unwittingly suggests, the person who imposes bodily constraints on himself and others, either in the shape of dress, dietary practices, **(p.148)** ritual-related behaviour, or even architectural elements. In this sense, the old xenophobic revulsion from Jews as ‘circumcised’ is not necessarily the same as the new xenophobic distaste of Muslims as people who *circumcise* their children.

The Old Xenophobia of Asia and Africa

We have seen that new xenophobia can draw upon old xenophobia in complex ways, as indicated earlier in the case of homophobia. It does not just overlap with and differ from old xenophobia, but it also draws upon forms of old xenophobia by using the ‘other’ as justification. One way to examine the dialectical complexity of this reaction is to turn away from Europe and America, and look at the so-called Muslim world.

It is in this context that we have to return to political Islam today, remembering well that the capitalist modes of production are un(der)developed in most Muslim countries. These countries (with the partial exception of a country like Malaysia, which was held up as such a good ‘Muslim’ example during the Afghanistan war) also have a very small bourgeoisie in general; the Muslim bourgeoisie in India might well exceed those of all the Arab countries combined. The affluence of some Arab countries is misleading, as these nations benefit from the accident of the extraction of a raw commodity and its developed exploitation by global/Western capitalists: crude oil. Such countries lack wide and significant embourgeoisment, both in material and cultural terms.

This lack of developed capitalist modes of production has ‘local’, ‘national’, and ‘global’ reasons, of which the most important might well be the nature of capitalism itself. As Samir Amin notes in *Capitalism in the Age of Globalization*, **(p.149)** favourable conditions, like the massive accumulation of capital permitted by conquest and/or colonization as well as Europe’s ability to get rid of its surplus population in a crucial period, have not been available to the rest of the world. In the present, too, as Amin notes, most of the immense amounts of floating capital in the world seeks investment by roaming from one financial metropolis to another, hardly ever paying a visit to the Third World, and that too mostly as short-term investment.

But it is not my thesis here that the ‘reactionary’ and at times old xenophobic tendencies in many Muslim societies today are the reflection of their pre-capitalist or quasi-capitalist status. Such a thesis would falsely return us to the past as providing a simple and direct explanation of the present. Moreover, such an explanation would also obscure the ‘globalizing’ nature of capitalism today. Capitalism touches almost everyone in the world today, though, of course, it does not touch everyone in the same way or to the same extent.

What I wish to highlight is the fact that Muslim countries, along with other ‘Third World’ and ‘Fourth World’ countries, have undeveloped or underdeveloped modes of capitalist production. This, combined with the lack of historically favourable conditions for the development of Europe-style capitalism, leaves these countries with a small and insecure bourgeoisie, which does not have the success or wealth to incorporate or force the other classes to accept its hegemony. In these countries, the local bourgeoisie has failed to achieve the building of a modern self-reliant economy. This local/national bourgeoisie lacks the courage and the wealth to really compete with the international bourgeoisie in economic terms, and is thus confined to only one half of its role as a *national* bourgeoisie: collaboration with the *international* bourgeoisie. However, in keeping with the nation-state-based political **(p.150)** structure of the post-war international community and its own self-definition, this local bourgeoisie can only exist as a national bourgeoisie if the nation state continues to exist—and to exist simultaneously with it. For that, the national bourgeoisie needs both the resources that it can obtain from the international bourgeoisie—by trading, trafficking, or begging—and, above all, it needs to keep on differentiating itself *symbolically* from the international bourgeoisie. This differentiation can only be made in the symbolic sphere because its inability to compete with the international bourgeoisie deprives the national bourgeoisie of both hegemony in the nation state and a plausible appearance of material or economic differentiation.

It is here that ‘Islam’ steps into the picture in many Muslim countries. Its appeal to sections of the immigrant population is consolidated by the fact that religious identity, unlike national identity, exceeds geographical borders—hence, religion

becomes doubly attractive to many immigrants in the West, who are caught outside or between national borders. This, however, is not just a 'Muslim' characteristic. 'Hinduism' is being used in similar ways in India, a usage altered slightly by the fact that India has a relatively large bourgeoisie, and historical Hinduism has a different history and genesis from historical Islam.

The game that has been played in most Muslim countries is a double-edged one. On the one hand, the bourgeoisie and the traditional elite seek and often obtain many of the benefits of capitalism. On the other hand, the people live under conditions of un(der)developed modes of capitalism. This quasi-capitalist state of economic activity to which most of the population is confined, due to the failures of the national bourgeoisie *and* the structure of (global) capitalism, necessitates a corresponding 'quasi-capitalist' symbolic world, which is largely achieved with the help of a reductive reading of Islam. For reasons of **(p.151)** prestige (borrowed from the 'past') and availability, this 'quasi-capitalist' symbolic world has to rely heavily on certain 'pre-capitalist' tendencies that appear most opposed to the capitalist symbolic world; of these, a body-centred nexus of power is the core.

Apart from the logic of its evocation, this also enables the elite to profit from its complicity in global capitalism while keeping the people not only alienated from the partly democratic tendencies of capitalism (fetishized into the 'West' in, at times, old xenophobic terms in many Muslim countries),¹² but also singularly unable to comprehend the real structures of their oppression. Instead of partly competing and partly collaborating with the global capitalist (as it would have if it had been a full and vigorous national bourgeoisie), the Muslim national elite in most Muslim countries simply collaborates with the global capitalist in material terms while appearing to provide an alternative to the people in symbolic terms. Saudi Arabia is the most extreme example of this. This suits *all* the elites and the bourgeoisie concerned most of the time, for the fully abstract nature of capital today makes it more strategic for the global capitalist to keep away from territorial entanglement (which, by the way, also helps us understand the kinds of wars grudgingly waged by the USA in recent years).

Islamic fundamentalist parties are a spin-off from this game, a game that (it must be stressed) suits dominant business and political interests in the 'West'. Even when they end up challenging the legitimacy of the government of a Muslim country, fundamentalist parties do not really upset the capitalist apple cart. Reacting to the abstract structures of power under capitalism, the leaders of these fundamentalist parties try to 'restore' what they consider Islamic, inevitably stressing the structures of power that impact directly on the **(p.152)** body under pre- or quasi-capitalist conditions. (The Taliban was but the expression of this oppositional logic taken to its limit; Saudi Arabia continues to be its institutionalized face.) The valid attempt to resist the abstract structures of power under capitalism leads to not a (revolutionary) re-evocation of the body

under changed conditions, but rather to a defensive/conservative/reactionary attempt to preserve the body under old pre-capitalism-like structures of power. From a radical perspective, the main problem with this oppositional formulation is its inability to fight the real structures of power under global capitalism. It can only indulge in pointless physical/material violence, like the bombing of the World Trade Center (WTC) building in New York City, violence that, if anything, enables capitalist ideologues to consolidate their hold on abstract power.

Here I should spell out the hitherto implicit fact that I am *not* indulging in the vulgar Marxist tendency of blaming exploitation simply on the 'exploitative nature' of an evil elite. The bourgeoisie or the elite in Muslim (and Third World) countries is partly forced by the very logic of global capitalism, including capitalism's imbrication and its tensions with the nation state, to seek to establish its hegemony over the other classes by means of the only thing it can press into service: the evocation of a past that, in its pre-capitalist tendencies, might serve as an (ineffective) critique of capitalism (or, more exactly, the capitalist 'West'). Had the Muslim or Third World bourgeoisie been successful in capitalist terms (something precluded by the very mechanism of historical capitalism), this would not have been necessary to the same extent. And had revolutionary critiques, such as radical socialism or Marxism, been allowed to flourish in these countries, there might have been other alternatives to this recourse to an Islam defined (**p.153**) by and 'refined' into its most body-impacted, pre-capitalist elements.

The point to note, however, is that the 'past' that comes into being due to the nexus of these interests and forces has been created very much in the present. This is underlined by the technical and vocational education of many supporters of Islamic (and Hindu) fundamentalism, the highly political character of much of Islamic (and Hindu) fundamentalism, as well as the fact that Islamists are not really interested in writing exegeses of the Quran, and Hindu fundamentalists tend to turn the Ramayana into a pulp television serial rather than study the original in Sanskrit. Features of old xenophobia (even largely borrowed ones, such as anti-Semitism in recognizably early twentieth-century European terms in the case of Islamism) come with this reworking of the past in a contemporary context, a context in which Muslim countries are largely still embedded in forms of classical or production-based capitalism even when, at times, their elites share and indulge in global high capitalism.

Islamists and their critics in the 'West' use terms of definition that play out this contrast between capitalist and pre-capitalist structures of power, which is often translated into the resistance of the body to abstract capital, if you are anti-capitalist or anti-West;¹³ and the freedom of the body from the tyranny of society/religion, which is the dominant view in the capitalist 'West'. The intense 'Muslim' suspicion of the 'West' is not just due to the lack of self-criticism in the Muslim world that Salman Rushdie has castigated in a recent article in the

Guardian. Actually, from at least the day in 1099 when Abu Sa'ad al-Harawi burst into the diwan of al-Mustazhir Billah decrying Muslim decadence and weakness in the face of the advancing Crusaders, Muslim communities have indulged **(p.154)** in as much (reactionary or revolutionary) self-criticism as any other community. The Muslim suspicion of the 'West' is due to a garbled realization by the average Muslim of the structures of power under global capitalism, structures that touch him very differently from how they touch Rushdie or an Arab sheikh, or even a humble white clerk in London.

This is a mutual failure. While the capitalist 'West' and many members of the bourgeoisie elsewhere often perceive the bodily structures of power that are made to dominate 'traditional Islam' with great repulsion, they also fail to address their own abstract structures of power. A minor proof of the latter is the fact that the debt of the peripheral economies grew from US\$ 900 billion in 1982 to US\$ 1,500 trillion in the late 1990s, of which half was expended on interest. One indication of the imbrications of these mutual failures is the sustenance that new xenophobic tendencies in the 'free' West derive from the cultivation (and, in the case of rising anti-Semitism and extreme homophobia, partly plagiarism) of old xenophobic tendencies elsewhere. However, what I have said of dominant aspects of Islamism also applies to many non-Muslim reactionary groups elsewhere: for instance, regardless of what we may think of the ideas of the Tea Party in USA, its ground support is built on the perception, not entirely wrong in the financial context of 'globalization', that 'Washington and Wall Street are in bed together'.¹⁴

Returning to coloured immigrants, it needs to be conceded that *some* conservative migrants do bring with them their own baggage of old xenophobic perceptions, determined by ingrained theories of blood, descent, race, lineage, etc., which have not been fully abstracted by liberal capitalism and its ethos. But not all immigrant attempts at 'strong identity politics' should be reduced to just this element. Charles Taylor talks about the **(p.155)** fact that while migrants still want to assimilate into their new countries, they increasingly want to do so on their own terms:

The earlier sense of unalloyed gratitude toward the new countries of refuge and opportunity, which seemed to make any demand to recognize difference quite unjustified and out of place, has been replaced by something harder to define. One is almost tempted to say, by something resembling the old doctrine which is central to many religions, that the earth has been given to the human species in common. A given space doesn't just unqualifiedly belong to the people born in it, so it isn't simply theirs to give.¹⁵

If Taylor is right and there is this return, then it needs to be added that this is partly different from the old religious conceptions. I would argue that this new feeling, if it exists, is a contorted understanding of the obscured relationship between labour and capital. The fact that 'your' capital can penetrate 'my' world with relative impunity gives 'me' the right to bring 'my' labour past your border checkpoints; it is in the physical enactment of my labouring body that 'I' can, symbolically, resist the power of 'your' abstract capital that forces 'me' to be where 'I' am and/or denies 'me' the options of mobility that 'you' have. Just as this physical enactment becomes an aspect of oppositional politics in the abstract power networks of high capitalism, those who have deeply internalized these abstract networks also tend to construct violence as solely a *physical* irruption.

This can also happen in spaces where one has an extreme intermingling of high capitalism and pre-capitalist or quasi-capitalist lifestyles. Centralist Turkey has, at times, indulged in a similar framing of Kurds. In India, for instance, the often upper-caste and always upper/middle-class distaste of Maoist and related revolutionary politics by the lower castes and classes and aboriginal peoples is often constructed along a **(p.156)** similar divide; globally capitalized Indians contrast themselves favourably against the physical violence of these other Indians, violence that, in extreme versions, 'delegitimizes' their grievances. The Indian case is a reminder of the fact that what we are dealing with is a reflection of the changing nature of capitalism, and not just cultural factors, such as Eurocentricism.

The New Legislation of New Xenophobia

Old xenophobia framed laws that discriminated on the basis of visible differences, even as it sought abstract justification for such uneven structures of power. Hence, Social Darwinism; hence, racism; hence, the ethnic/linguistic fervour of nationalisms. If differences were not visible, or readily visible, old xenophobia legislated to make them visible. The Nuremberg Laws (1935) of the Nazis serve as the easiest illustration of this legislative trend of old xenophobia. Enacted largely to define Jewishness more than it had been possible in the past, and as a follow-up to an existing Nazi boycott of Jewish business, these laws were clearly focused on making difference visible by assuming a fraudulent, naturalized biologism. Fuzzy border/contact areas were excised, as in the definition that a German was someone with four German (or 'kindred') grandparents, while a Jew was someone with three or four Jewish grandparents; a person with one or two Jewish grandparents was a 'Mischling' or cross-breed, and the Nazis made extensive efforts to weed out such 'race bastards' too. This enforced visibility of the stranger under the Nuremberg Laws extended from a ban on German-Jewish marriages and sexual relations to an insistence that Jews could not use German national colours and had to be identified by their own 'national' colours.

(p.157) Most anti-xenophobic laws today are designed to cope with this old xenophobic trend of segregating and tagging strangers. And, to the credit of past legislators, some of it has had positive consequences. But, as seen above, the nature of the New Right has changed in keeping with the structure of high capitalism. Hence, as ECRI puts it in its annual report of 2005, '[t]oday, the idea of "culture" appears to increasingly replace the idea of race'. Or, as Kundnani further stresses the matter, in recent years the concept of racism has been turned on its head: 'It was no longer a question of the ways in which society systematically excluded particular groups and thus set in train a process of ghettoization. It was supposed, instead, that non-white groups themselves refused to integrate and thus made themselves strange to whites, some of whom then became hostile.'¹⁶

While I have not attempted to deny the existence of xenophobia—in old or new xenophobic shapes—among non-white individuals and in non-First World countries, Kundnani is right in noting and critiquing this change, which (to underline an obvious point) again illustrates the differences between enactments of old and new xenophobia.

At the root of such a perception of 'new immigrants' and the perversion of racism (which is turned from an institutional and systemic matter, as illustrated in an earlier chapter, into a personal prejudice) lie some very old structures of occlusion and confusion. For instance, scholars like the historian Walter Laqueur try to explain the seemingly greater prevalence of xenophobia in Western Europe today by adducing a relative paucity of xenophobia when immigrants came to Europe in the nineteenth century too. Laqueur presents three broad arguments for this perceived difference (between a nineteenth-century Europe that was purportedly not anti-migrant and a twentieth-century Europe that became increasingly anti-migrant):

- (p.158)** 1. '[T]he scale of immigration. Only tens of thousands came to Western Europe 100 years ago, not millions.'
2. 'They made great efforts to integrate socially and culturally. Above all, they wanted to give their children a good secular education at almost any price. The rate of intermarriage was high within one generation, and even higher within two.'
3. 'No one helped them: There were no social workers or advisors, no one gave them housing at low or no rent, and programs such as Sure Start (a British equivalent of Head Start) and "positive discrimination" had not yet been invented. There were no free health-service or unemployment benefits.'¹⁷

But, advertently or inadvertently, such arguments are based on large areas of evasion, ideological blind-spots, and faulty contextualization. Some of these can be listed as below:

With reference to point 1: The nineteenth century, as well as centuries just previous to it, were also periods of emigration in Europe; millions of Europeans left Europe or were shipped out (as prisoners, etc.) to populate other continents.¹⁸ The peoples of these other continents were not consulted on this, and were often significantly marginalized in the process, permanently in America and Australia.¹⁹ The fact that Europeans resented immigrants ‘less’—if it is true (which is doubtful given the rich history of internal conflicts in Europe, which, despite a period of relative peace, led to the so-called World War I)—surely had to do something with the fact that they were also emigrating on largely their own terms in the same period. Moreover, the claim that fewer numbers of immigrants were entering Europe is misleading; the population of Europe in 1850 was 200 million and the world population was around 1,200 million, while the **(p.159)** current population of Europe is about 750 million and the world population is around 7,000 million. Surely, the way to talk about immigration, then and now, is to consider the ratio of immigrants to native populations, and not to compare the number of immigrants in 1850 to the number in 2010. In other words, the equivalent of one immigrant in Europe in 1850 would be almost four immigrants today in terms of European population growth, and it would be higher in terms of world population growth. An exact indicator would need to factor in both of these indexes.

With reference to point 2: The supposed integration of nineteenth-century immigrants is misleading, even if it were true internally (which is doubtful); it might well be the effect of hindsight (these nineteenth-century immigrants appear to have integrated better today because we are looking at them from across a century, by which time their descendants have obviously integrated) and distance (the further away we move, the less we can see the smaller differences and conflicts). Moreover, it does not include slaves, their descendants, and coloured immigrants, who seldom ‘intermarried’ into Europe in any significant numbers. Laqueur turns a stone phrase to the racism implicit in his remark about intermarriage. He also does not take into account that as late as the nineteenth century different individuals married or did not marry on the basis of indicators other than those of nationality: for instance, Protestants from (incipient) nations or cultures would be more likely to intermarry one another than to marry a Roman Catholic, and an upper-class American was more likely to marry an upper-class English person than a coal miner or a washerwoman. Even regarding racism, there is a good argument (at least with respect to India and Indians in Great Britain) that the late eighteenth century was less racist and hence slightly **(p.160)** more open than the nineteenth century.²⁰ Hence, Laqueur’s remark is blind to certain kinds of immigration and quite dishonestly eludes ethnic, racial, and similar prejudices of the time. Similarly, the claim that immigrants in the nineteenth century wanted to give their children a ‘good secular education’ is strangely blind to the fact that in nineteenth-century

Europe all good—including so-called secular—education had a heavily Christian character.²¹

But the most remarkable occlusions, and the ones most pertinent to my thesis, are found in **point 3**. Obviously, what Laqueur is talking about is a First World welfare state. By definition, this is a European state whose welfare structures are based on previous centuries of colonial affluence and current decades of capitalist dominance. The point of such welfare states has been to provide a safety net to national labour, while enabling national capital to profit internationally. Evidently, this happens in a 'free' capitalist world, where goods, labour, and capital are supposed to move without hindrances. So, actually, what Laqueur and others are objecting to is the penetration of labour from *elsewhere* into such artificially protected social welfare states, whose affluence continues to depend on their dominance as states and on their being the preferred locations of capitalists under 'global' high capitalism. (I will omit commenting on the obvious liberal ideological bias of point 3; it need only be read in conjunction with a speech by a hardcore Republican in the USA for its ideological underpinnings to become clear.)

Evidently, such arguments serve basically as justification of or as incentive for new xenophobic laws, while sometimes genuinely opposing forms of old xenophobia (among whites or non-whites, Europeans or non-Europeans). The problem with these laws is that, unlike the laws of old xenophobia, they work **(p. 161)** in the abstract. They presuppose some abstract, 'universal', and ideal causes, justified in themselves, that perform two kinds of occlusion (quite similar to the occlusions of Laqueur's kind of argumentation): (a) they occlude the fact that they afflict some people (undesirable strangers) more than other people; and (b) they are based on old xenophobic assumptions about these undesirable strangers, which are not even enunciated or recognized consciously.

Take, for instance, these recent rules passed in Denmark to regulate marriages:

1. The 24-Year Rule: 'In order to qualify for family reunification, both the spouse living in Denmark and the foreign spouse must normally be older than 24. However, an application for family reunification can be submitted when the younger spouse is 23½ years old.'²²

2. The Self-Support Requirement: 'Normally, it is a requirement that your spouse/partner in Denmark is able to support him/herself.

This means that your spouse/partner in Denmark may not have received public assistance under the terms of the Active Social Policy Act (lov om aktiv socialpolitik) or the Integration Act (integrationsloven) for the past three years prior to your application for family reunification being processed by the Immigration Service.

It makes no difference how long a person has received public assistance if it was received in the past three years. Even short periods on social

benefits ('kontanthjælp') may result in your application for family reunification being turned down.'²³

3. The Immigration Test: 'Applicants for family reunification who submit their applications after 15 May 2012 are not **(p.162)** required to pass an immigration test (*indvandringsprøven*). Instead, applicants must pass Danish as a second language test. Read more about the Danish test. You must normally pass the immigration test in order to be granted a residence permit on the grounds of family reunification with your spouse/partner in Denmark. In certain situations, you can be exempted from taking the immigration test. Furthermore, citizens of Australia, Canada, Israel, Japan, New Zealand, Switzerland, South Korea and the USA are exempt from taking the immigration test.'²⁴

4. The Attachment Requirement: 'The connection requirement will be waived if the spouse living in Denmark has had **Danish citizenship for more than 26 years**.

The same applies if the spouse living in Denmark was born and raised in Denmark or arrived in Denmark as a young child and **has resided in Denmark legally for more than 26 years**.

If the applicants are required to meet the connection requirement, family reunification can initially only be granted if *their combined connection to Denmark is greater than their combined connection to another country*.'²⁵ (Bold in original; italics mine)

Such 'new' legislation presents a number of fascinating aspects that underline my argument about new xenophobia. They are worded in an abstract manner ('universal'), though their implementation has far more *particular* aspects or effects than the wording or theory suggests. Rule 1 discriminates between nationals and foreigners; obviously, you do not need to wait for marriage until you are 24 if both you and your partner are Danish. This is in keeping with a certain return of old xenophobic sentiments in abstract forms; for instance, **(p. 163)** the belief that somehow the citizen is entitled to preferential treatment despite the rhetoric of human rights, either in the name of entitlement or of protection. It is a belief that was once very common. Given the fact that only a small percentage of marriages to foreigners run the risk of being forced or even arranged marriages, this discriminatory law reminds one, at a diluted level, of the logic behind Nazi concentration camps: 'Better to put ten innocents behind barbed wire than to let one real enemy escape.'²⁶ Similarly, the privileging of one's own citizens in matters of human rights is reminiscent of a similar, though stronger, claim of ingrained privilege made for various races, nationalities, and *volk* in the early twentieth century. But these are matters that relate rule 1 to the history of what I have termed old xenophobia; they are based on an obvious difference being made between nationals and foreigners (though, bear in mind, that 'nationals' and 'foreigners' are highly abstract terms). This rule is revealed as an aspect of new xenophobia only when you look at what is not being said.

Given the fact that European Union legislation, as well as dual agreements with (and in recognition of the economic status of) First World countries like the USA, Canada, Australia, and even Japan, allow their citizens to move, work, and settle with relative freedom in Denmark, rule 1 is basically applicable to Third World countries, whose citizens have less chance to enter Denmark or work there. Of course, these targets overlap with the past targets of old xenophobia: the old 'coloureds' from Africa, Asia, and South America. But not only has this been put in highly abstract terms, some avenues are made relatively open to highly trained people from the globalized minorities of these debarred labouring spaces, such as doctors from India or Brazil. Rule 3 operates with a similar logic; it just 'happens to' apply more to people from the Third World and to coloured **(p.164)** people than to people from the EU, who can work and stay in Denmark for long periods without needing to emigrate or to take immigration tests. In this case, the globalized abstract-capital logic of the law is made obvious by attaching a seemingly arbitrary list of countries whose citizens do not have to take an immigration test that, some Danish journalists have claimed, many ethnic Danes would have trouble passing: 'Australia, Canada, Israel, Japan, New Zealand, Switzerland, South Korea, and the USA.' Seemingly arbitrary, I wrote, but this is not really so if you keep my larger argument in mind, and think of the trajectory of new xenophobia: Israel, South Korea, and Japan are arguably *the* non-white nations most deeply entrenched in high capitalism.

That we have moved into a new realm of abstract economic xenophobia is illustrated by rule 2, where *impoverished Danes* are discriminated against. There is something endearingly genuine about the double-speak on race and colour in the laws of new xenophobia; this is a *genuine* dislike of those who do not belong or contribute to the realms of high capital, even when they share one's own race or nationality. Interestingly, the New Right, such as the Danish People's Party, despite its pseudo-socialist discourse of championing marginalized Danes, is not concerned about such discrimination.

Rule 4 is even more interesting. It posits a 26-year residence in Denmark, which means that it basically privileges people born in Denmark, at least as far as their first marriage or partnership is concerned. The vast majority of young people enter their first significant relationship in their early or mid-twenties. This rule obviously privileges ethnic Danes. One can take the argument further and say that this is a rule biased against women; even in Denmark most women are a bit younger than their male spouses. This means that if you are **(p.165)** a man, you have a statistically better chance of bringing your partner into the country than vice versa. This is undergirded by the rider that 'their combined connection to Denmark should be greater than their combined connection to another country'. This rider also abstractly discriminates against Danish citizens of non-Danish 'ethnic' origin, as these people, even if born in Denmark, might have spent some years in other countries, the countries of one or both of their parents. (It need

hardly be pointed out that this rule, too, is easier to overcome in practice if your spouse/partner belongs to an EU nation than if s/he belongs to Nigeria or India.)

The Øresund Bridge, a century-long dream for Swedes and Danes achieved in the twenty-first century, is a 16-km-long motorway and railway link that spans the strait, uniting the tip of Sweden and the most commercial island of Denmark into a large commercial and cultural region. It now takes about half an hour by train to travel from Copenhagen to the next major town in Sweden, Malmö. Among the people who commute both ways are some young men and women. You can see them, at times, commuting as couples. Indeed, these are couples, and only one of them is Danish. The other one is usually not Swedish either. In most cases, it is a non-European or an East European. The reason why they live in Malmö is simple; the above-mentioned and similar ‘marriage laws’ in Denmark make it very difficult for poor Danes to get their partners to join them. These laws also make it difficult for affluent Danes to get their partners to join them, particularly if the partner is not from a developed Western country. These rules are not discriminatory in an old xenophobic sense, but they affect some strangers more than they affect other strangers. Many of the strangers affected by these rules would have been affected by the prejudices of old xenophobia, too, except that most such **(p.166)** prejudices—overt racism, for instance—are illegal in Denmark, and Danes believe that they have been largely overcome.

That such rules²⁷ are xenophobic is illustrated not just by the fact that they are a superimposition over some extant (but now rendered invisible) prejudices and/or victims of old xenophobia—for instance, such rules would automatically affect and forbid marriage with Asians and Africans more than marriage with Europeans—but also by the fact that, implicitly, they create two classes of human beings. A Dane, for instance, can marry another Dane even if both of them are under the age of 24 years and neither of them passes the ‘self-support’ requirement. Such rules also allow effective ways out to citizens of First World nations (mostly, but not only, white). This is explicitly laid down in the ‘immigration test’ rule, but it is even more effective in an implicit manner, for instance, the fact that EU citizens, or even US citizens, can move and stay and work more freely in Denmark, by virtue of mutual visa arrangements and other understandings, than Indian or Nigerian citizens can. So, in effect, two classes of human beings are created—as they were by racism—and to some extent these classes overlap with the old demarcations of racism, except that now this has been made almost invisible.

Finally, the empowerment of high capital, which is basically what these rules buttress and protect, is totally obscured. Any attempt to highlight that such occlusion has xenophobic aspects becomes an exercise in differentialist politics, and is then seen as closer to the racism of old xenophobia, so that at times it is the *victim* who comes across as xenophobic and even racist, as almost all Right-leaning European politicians stress these days. This is not to say that versions of

xenophobia do not exist among, say, coloured immigrants; but this remains a matter different from the structure of new xenophobia, which is not **(p.167)** faced up to, and which is even privileged as the correct and fair state of political being. Hidden behind all of this, it need hardly be said, lies the unfaced problem of the free circulation of high capital, and its role in sustaining wealth and social standards in rich countries, and the progressively constrained circulation of labour in a system in which, in theory, capital, labour, and goods are 'free' to circulate.

Notes:

- (1.) Morey and Yaqin, *Framing Muslims*, p. 21.
- (2.) Jasbir K. Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2007), p. xi.
- (3.) Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages*, p. xii.
- (4.) Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages*, p. 17.
- (5.) Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages*, p. 25.
- (6.) Mathew Feldman (ed.), *A Fascist Century: Essays by Roger Griffin* (Houndmills and New York: Palgrave, 2008), pp. 181–202.
- (7.) Arun Kundnani, 'Twenty-First-Century Crusaders', in Ziauddin Sardar and Robin Yassin-Kassab (eds), *Critical Muslim 03: Fear and Loathing* (London: Hurst, 2012), p. 47.
- (8.) Kundnani, 'Twenty-First-Century Crusaders', p. 44.
- (9.) Kundnani, 'Twenty-First-Century Crusaders', p. 44.
- (10.) Quoted by Kundnani in 'Twenty-First-Century Crusaders', p. 45, from an official Facebook message posted by EDL on its page on 16 November 2011.
- (11.) Slogans from early EDL protests, quoted by Kundnani in 'Twenty-First-Century Crusaders', pp. 41–2.
- (12.) The anti-Semitism and homophobia of many Islamists are apt illustrations: both were far less pronounced (historians have argued that the terms cannot even be applied mostly) in many, if not all, Muslim societies of the past. But the old xenophobic forms of this new political Islam are also revealed in, say, the 'statements' of Osama bin Laden, with their vacillating reiteration of a hostile, devious 'infidel' other who can only be combated and countered. Despite the political elements of such statements, they are also based on a xenophobic levelling of a diverse people under a single 'repulsive' category: 'Jew', 'American', or 'infidel'. (See Bruce Lawrence [ed.], *Messages to the World: The*

Statements of Osama bin Laden [London and New York: Verso, 2005].)

Incidentally, despite the 'universalist' aspirations of the original message of Islam to which Islamists want to 'return', the depiction and narration of this hostile 'infidel' other by many Islamists is full of physical and material tropes that we have also identified in forms of old xenophobia in the so-called 'Western' context: hence, the insistence by Islamists on physically located difference and the visibility of this difference.

(13.) At times this can become a version of old xenophobia in Islamist circles.

(14.) Michael Crowley, 'Triumph: Here to Stay', *Time*, 15 August 2011, p. 19.

(15.) Taylor, *Dilemma and Connections*, p. 137.

(16.) Arun Kundnani, *The End of Tolerance: Racism in 21st Century Britain* (London: Pluto Press, 2007), p. 131.

(17.) Walter Laqueur, 'So Much for the New European Century', *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 1 May, in *The Last Days of Europe: Epitaph for an Old Continent* (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2007), B7.

(18.) Refer, for instance, to Castles and Miller's *The Age of Migration*, Chris Bayly's *The Birth of the Modern World*, or M. Dummett's *On Immigration and Refugees*.

(19.) See, for instance, Young, *Postcolonialism*, Lindqvist, "Exterminate All the Brutes", and Curtin, *The Image of Africa*.

(20.) William Dalrymple, *White Mughals: Love and Betrayal in Eighteenth-Century India* (London: HarperCollins, 2002).

(21.) See David Nash, *Secularism, Art and Freedom* (Leicester and New York: Leicester University Press, 1992). Also see Tabish Khair, 'The Truth about Secularism', in Ranjan Ghosh (ed.), *Making Sense of the Secular: Critical Perspectives from Europe to Asia* (New York and London: Routledge, 2013), pp. 101-10.

(22.) Taken from the official source, https://www.nyidanmark.dk/en-us/coming_to_dk/familyreunification/spouses/the_24_year_rule.htm, accessed on 23 March 2013.

(23.) Taken from the official source, https://www.nyidanmark.dk/en-us/coming_to_dk/familyreunification/spouses/self-support-requirement.htm, accessed on 23 March 2013.

(24.) Taken from official source, https://www.nyidanmark.dk/en-us/coming_to_dk/familyreunification/spouses/immigration_test/the-immigration-test.htm, accessed on 23 March 2013.

(25.) Taken from the official source, https://www.nyidanmark.dk/en-us/coming_to_dk/familyreunification/spouses/attachment-requirement/attachment_requirement.htm, accessed on 23 March 2013.

(26.) Kogon, *The Theory and Practice of Hell*, p. 20.

(27.) A recent anthology edited by Baumgartl and Favell documents, almost incidentally, how similar legislation, targeting 'non-nationals', has come into existence from the 1980s onwards in France, Austria, and Great Britain, among other countries. See Bernd Baumgartl and Adrian Favell (eds), *New Xenophobia in Europe* (London and The Hague: Kluwer Law International, 1995).

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