

Particularities of islamophobia in France

It doesn't matter that the UN and Europe recognize Islamophobia as a form of racism. It doesn't matter that the term was already used in the 1910-1920s in the French press. The term was supposedly created in the 1980s by Iranian mullahs to stigmatize any criticism of the Islamic religion, as defended by official Islamologists, as well as by philosophers with moral authority, who do not hesitate to proclaim themselves "Islamophobes".

In fact, Islamophobia thus understood hides another, which applies to Muslims as a social group.

The main argument of Islamophobes is that in law, criticism, or even hatred of a thought or a religion, and therefore of Islam, is lawful as an expression of freedom of opinion, but that, on the other hand, hatred of a population, of a particular ethnic group, is punishable by law.

So, according to them, the term Islamophobia would cause confusion: while it should apply exclusively to Islam as a religion, it means for those who denounce it, "hatred of Muslims", whereas in this case, it is the term anti-Muslim racism that should be used.

This semantic quibble poorly conceals the fact that official statistics isolate offenses against religion, and ignore most racist behavior affecting Arabs, Blacks and Muslims in housing, hiring and police checks, which serves to show that anti-Muslim offenses are less than anti-Jewish and even anti-Christian offenses.

Although displaying a fussy linguistic purism, Islamophobes lie by pretending to ignore the definition of the term *Islam* which includes, in all dictionaries:

1. the Islamic religion; but also
2. The believers of this religion; and
3. Islamic civilization.

Even the courts apply this definition. Example: a supremacist organization titling a leaflet "To avoid genocide, Muslims must be expelled" is convicted in a Paris court in 2017 for "inciting hatred against Muslims." Believing it could escape this accusation, it swaps its slogan for "Islam out, Islam assassin!" But the judges

were not fooled: in 2019, they reiterated their condemnation against the new form of a statement they considered to have the same content. For them, religious Islamophobia effectively conceals racial Islamophobia.

This is fueled by colonial memory, and in particular by the occupation of Algeria, where a special relationship existed with Muslims: although French by nationality, the latter were not legally citizens but subjects: they formed a separate category of population, without any political rights and subject by the *Code de l'Indigénat* (Code of native affairs) of 1881, then extended to all colonies, to specific repressive rules applied by the administrative authorities, not judicial but administratives.

To the point that even a convert to Christianity remained a Muslim by law and therefore discriminated against as such. Hence this conflation of Islamophobia and Arabophobia. The French imagination still feels the social inertia of this situation, which leads not only to a simple intellectual hatred of the Islamic religion but also to social Islamophobia, a systemic racism based on the idea that Arabs, Blacks, and Muslims are inferior French people, in other words, "bad French people."

A recent episode, the murder of young Aboubakar Cissé in a mosque. When the Prime Minister dares to speak of Islamophobia, it provokes a real outcry, including within his government. Even if he only means an antireligious act, rather than an act against a social group, the simple use of this word is enough to unleash pious indignation.

Several of his ministers are relentless to divert legitimate condemnations against organizations preaching anti-Muslim hatred onto a party accused of exploiting, out of so-called *Islamist-leftist* complacency and electoral calculations, what should have remained, according to them, only an unfortunate "miscellaneous news item" by calling for a fight against Islamophobia.

As they kept hammering home that *Islam = Islamism*, and that anti-Semitism is no longer so much the work of those nostalgic for the Pétainist past, as of the extreme left denouncing the genocide perpetrated in Gaza, the minister responsible for the so-called Fight against Discrimination chooses this precise moment for a campaign not against Islamophobia, which is nevertheless dictated by current events, but to toughen up the legislation punishing anti-Semitism, of

which anti-Zionism, in the very words of President Emmanuel Macron, is the current form.

Under the pretext of fighting against *Islamism* and the supposed formation of a counter-society, an *anti-separatist* legislation was drafted in 2021, placing the social activities of Muslims under administrative control. The result: 25,000 police interventions in two years and the closure of 700 establishments since then. This is no longer enough. The government, which sees now the Muslim Brotherhood everywhere, despite its decline, accuses it of infiltrating our institutions by practicing *taqiya* in order to subvert them. With this delusional pretext, it created a special administrative prosecutor's office against what it calls *Islamic entryism*, thus reviving the *Code de l'indigénat*, that masterpiece of colonial Islamophobia.