

Jonathan Power and the “Expressio Unius...”

Jonathan Power, a well-known foreign-affairs columnist for the past 30 years, whose work now appears in 40 papers, has latterly become a prominent Defender of the Faith (that faith being Islam), and has just produced one more of those bizarre defenses of Islam that we long-suffering Infidels keep receiving, world without end.

In his latest piece, Power asks rhetorically “Is Islam Violent?” and attempts to convince readers that the only conceivable answer, in a world reeling from Muslim violence everywhere you turn, is the counterintuitive “No.”

In his very first paragraph, Power offers what is clearly meant to demonstrate that he recognizes that some examples of Muslim violence can be found, and he lists a few for us. It’s not a list, however, intended to suggest that “this is only a small sample” of Muslim violence, but rather, a disingenuous attempt to disarm potential critics. It’s what he leaves out that’s important.

Here’s that first paragraph:

Is Islam violent? ISIS in Syria and Iraq. In Pakistan, there is the Lashkar-e-Taiba, and the attempted murderer of the schoolgirl, Malala Yousafzai. Immigrant Moroccan men roughly pushing women and fondling them in the crowd in Cologne. Murderous bombs in Paris.

Let’s take those sentences and incomplete sentences, one by one.

“ISIS In Syria And Iraq”

This paragraph’s greatly abridged list of current examples of

Muslim violence gives the false impression that only here and there – very much here and there – have Muslims engaged in violence. Given the Latest News, Power can hardly avoid mentioning ISIS. But why does he mention “ISIS In Syria and Iraq” and nowhere else? Why not do it full justice, and list as well its branch offices in Libya (centered on the city of Sirte), Nigeria (Boko Haram), the Philippines (where the Abu Sayyaf group has just pledged allegiance to the Islamic State), and many other groups in a dozen countries where Islamic State admirers have raised the Black Flag of Islam and sworn fealty to the Caliphate? And why does Power pass over in silence all the many horrific acts by ISIS, such as the mass beheadings (Shiites, Alawites, Christian Ethiopians). No details are given; Power simply presses fast forward in his attempt to rush through, paying no never mind to the scope, the size, the nature of the hyper-violent Islamic State and its archipelago of affiliates.

And Power fails to mention any of the Muslim terror groups other than the Islamic State, especially the most formidable of all, Al Qaeda. Its centers of operation are no longer located in distant Afghanistan and Pakistan, but with AQAP (Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, headquartered in Yemen) and AQIM (Al Qaeda in the Maghreb, which covers all of North Africa). These are active affiliates, training and sending out suicide bombers. Al Qaeda’s tentacles are indeed everywhere: Jabhat Nusra, or the Nusra Front, is the fighting unit of Al Qaeda in Syria, while other Al-Qaeda branches were responsible for the bombings in Mali last November, and for killing 30 people this January in Burkina Faso.

And it’s not only Al Qaeda and all of those who have willingly become part of its network, including the aforementioned Al-Shebaab in sub-Saharan Africa and a half-dozen groups in North Africa, Ansar Beit Al-Maqdis in Egypt, the Armed Islamic Group in Algeria, the Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group and its offshoot, the Salafia Jehadia, in Morocco, that he has failed

to mention. He also fails to mention still other Muslim groups known mainly for their violence – the Ikhwan or Muslim Brotherhood (which even the United Arab Emirates now recognizes as a terrorist group), Hezbollah, and Hamas – are nowhere to be seen. Jonathan Power, in an article purporting to persuade us that Islam is *not* violent, simply leave out all mention of *every one* of the many dozens of Muslim terrorist groups other than the Islamic State. Does he expect us, his readers, to collaborate in this blatant exercise in willful forgetfulness?

In summing up the menace of Muslim terror groups and groupuscules, do those five words – “IS in Syria and Iraq” – constitute in your mind a sufficient summary of the deeds of Muslim terrorists, from the London Underground to Luzon, or from San Bernardino to Bali? Or do they deliberately diminish the threat?

The whole seething world of violence that is central to Islam, stemming directly from passages in the Qur’an (Power, later in his piece, claims that in the entire Qur’an, only Qur’an 9:29 encourages violence!) and from the example of that central figure, Muhammad the Perfect Man (*al-insan al-kamil*) and Model of Conduct (*uswa hasana*), has its outlet in attacks throughout the world, in both Dar al-Islam and Dar al-Harb, by ordinary (i.e., not members of terrorist groups) Muslims against Christians, Jews, Hindus, Buddhists and, in Muslim lands, against Shi’a who are regarded by not a few Sunnis as no different from other Infidels. None of this is recognized in his summary. But his aim is to pooh-pooh the claim that violence is an important part of Islam. So he presents IS as limited to its original territory in Syria and Iraq.

“Immigrant Moroccan men roughly pushing women and fondling them in the crowd in Cologne.”

Why does Jonathan Power insist that the Cologne attacks – sexual assaults, including rape, and theft (not just “roughly

pushing and fondling” women) – were being committed by “immigrant Moroccan men”? One can find online the information that 58 men were arrested for the Cologne crimes and that “the majority of the suspects were of Algerian (25 people), Tunisian (3) or Moroccan (21) origin and three were German citizens, according to Cologne public prosecutor Ulrich Bremer” (in an interview with *Die Welt* on February 6). Another three were “refugees” from Iraq (1) and Syria (2). So why does Power call them all “immigrant Moroccan men” in an article published on March 6? Oh, that’s because nearly two months *before* he wrote his article, *and not repeated since*, there appeared a grand total of two articles in the British press – checked – reporting some initial, tentative *speculation* that perhaps these criminals in Cologne were “a gang of Moroccans” trying to pass as Syrians:

The migrant rapists who sexually assaulted hundreds of women in Cologne were a gang of Moroccans who entered Germany illegally by posing as Syrian refugees, it has been claimed.

Now what kind of columnist relies on a phrase like “it has been claimed” and turns it into a guarantee of unassailable truth? What kind of columnist relies on a nearly two-month-old story (from January 13) to serve as the basis for a story he publishes on March 6 about the Cologne criminals, without having done any checking of his own, so that he never learned of the statement of the German prosecutor apportioning guilt among Muslims from several different countries? Why, the kind of columnist that Jonathan Power has become, or perhaps – for all I know – the kind that Jonathan Power has always been. All he had to do was google “Cologne Muslim criminals” just before writing *Is Islam Violent?*, and he would have been set straight. He had six weeks to do so. But he just couldn’t be bothered. And most importantly, charging “Moroccans” rather than “Muslims from a half-dozen different countries” fit Power’s desire to de-emphasize Islam as the possible prompt for such violent behavior.

“In Pakistan there is Lashkar-e-Taiba, and the attempted murderer of the schoolgirl, Malala Yousafzai.”

Yes, there is indeed Lashkar-e-Taiba in Pakistan. But why does Jonathan Power not deign to mention a single one of the many other Muslim groups located in Pakistan that are as violent, or even more so? No mention even of the much-publicized Sipah-e-sahaba, the Sunni fanatics who specialize in assassinating Shi'a professionals, and of whom Jonathan Power can scarcely be unaware. Or what about such groups as Tehreek-e-Taliban, Lashkar eJhangvi, Jamaat ul-Fuqra, Harkat-ul-Muhajideen, Jihad-al-Alami, Harkat-ul-Ansar, Lahkar e-Jhabvar – and dozens of others you can find [Jihad Watch](#).