

international agenda of Osama Bin Laden simply had no appeal in Afghanistan. He probably did not expect the sudden collapse of his Taliban allies or the thirst for revenge of the non-Pashuns (ethnic issues were always logically downplayed by Bin Laden, who renounced his ethnic and national backgrounds to fight for a universal cause). Second, he overestimated the reaction of the Arab in the street. Osama Bin Laden did not grasp that the genuine anti-Americanism of the 'average' Arab had never led to a sustainable political mobilisation, and that if such mobilisation ever did happen it would be over Palestine and Iraq—that is, over Arab and not Islamic issues.

In this sense Al Qaeda terrorism is totally different from that of the 'usual' terrorists in the Middle East and elsewhere. Iran-sponsored terrorism in the 1980s, as well as attacks by the Irish Republican Army (IRA) or Tamil Tigers, fitted into a political strategy: Iran wanted to bring about the end of Western support for Iraq and the departure of Western forces from Lebanon, while the IRA and Tamil Tigers wanted to achieve independence (which was also the aim of the Jewish underground movement Irgun Zvai Leumi in Palestine in the 1940s). Palestinian suicide bombers want an end to the Israeli occupation of Gaza and the West Bank (although some would also like to see the end of Israel, which is another issue). Whatever the means, there is room for negotiation. The IRA, the PLO, the Tamil Tigers and even the Basque separatist group ETA are seen as legitimate political actors to the extent they will potentially cease terrorist actions. But with Bin Laden there is no room for negotiation. His aim is simply to destroy Babylon.

In this sense the historical continuity of which Osama Bin Laden is part has nothing to do with the Islamic tradition of *jihad*. Notwithstanding the debate on what the word really means, it is clear that *jihad*, as an armed struggle, has always been instrumentalised for political and strategic purposes, by state actors or would-be state actors. Bin Laden's *jihad* has more to do with the ethos of a modern Western terrorist, as we have seen above. For the sake and pleasure of Allah (*rezza*), for the sake of self-achievement (in death), for escaping a

corrupt world... There is a strange mix of deep personal pessimism and collective millenarianist optimism among this type of terrorists: they do not trust the people they are fighting for (they are also indifferent to killing Muslims), they are sure to die, and as political scientist Farhad Khosrokhavar pointed out in the case of the Iranian martyrs of the Iran–Iraq War, they know that, even if they succeed, in the future society will not match the ideals for which they are fighting.¹ It is reminiscent of the Russian socialist revolutionaries of the end of the nineteenth century, and the idea that a spectacular attack at the heart of the power will suddenly show the alienated masses that their time has come and they will rise up. As Lenin put it, this is a childish view. Osama Bin Laden has lived in a pre-Leninist world.

But what are the repercussions of these facts? First, there is no basis for negotiation with Osama Bin Laden: his fight, as we have seen, is not directly linked to the various conflicts in the Middle East. These conflicts will certainly provide Al Qaeda with new volunteers, and solving them will not necessarily dry up the pool from which Al Qaeda recruits, because this pool has more to do with the West than with the Middle East. The second consequence is that Al Qaeda is not a strategic threat but a security problem. The war on terrorism is a metaphor, not a real policy.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why does Roy suggest that Osama Bin Laden "has no strategy"?
2. According to Roy, what makes Bin Laden's terrorism different from the terrorism of what he refers to as the "usual terrorists in the Middle East and elsewhere"?
3. What conclusions does Roy draw from his analysis of Bin Laden's goals?

¹ Farhad Khosrokhavar, *L'islamisme et la mort. Le martyre révolutionnaire en Iran*, Paris: Hachette, 1995.

The Greek Debt Crisis

In 2009, shortly after the global financial crisis of 2008, the Greek government announced that its debts were much greater than previously reported. Banks responded by charging the Greek government much higher interest to borrow the money it needed for normal operating expenses, and by 2010 Greece was nearly bankrupt. The Greek economy went into a free fall; in July 2015 unemployment was 28%.

Under such conditions, governments sometimes choose to devalue their currency, because inflation can give a short-term boost to the economy. Since Greece was a member of the Eurozone, however, this option was not available to them. Greece shares its currency, the euro, with 18 other European nations. The European Union faced a choice—either reduce Greek debt by making their creditors take a "haircut," or arrange for a bailout with funds from other European countries. The only other option was "Grexit"—a Greek exit from the Eurozone. No country that had joined the Eurozone had ever left, and the consequences of such a step were uncertain. Some feared that it might be catastrophic for Europe as a whole.

Between 2010 and 2015, the so-called troika—the International Monetary Fund, the European Central Bank, and the European Commission—negotiated with successive Greek governments to establish the terms for three international bailouts. In each case, the troika demanded a strict "austerity" policy before the bailout funds could be dispersed: deep cuts in government spending, tax reforms, and international oversight. This position was popular among Europe's wealthier countries, especially Germany.

The latest such negotiations culminated in July 2015, when a Greek government headed by the left-wing Syriza party negotiated once more for a third bailout. Syriza argued that the austerity package of spending cuts doomed Greece to years of hardship, and a loss of national sovereignty. Germans, led by Chancellor Angela Merkel and finance minister Wolfgang Schäuble, felt that debt forgiveness would be rewarding the Greek government for its improvident spending and refusal to reform.

These two documents describe the positions on both sides of the debate. The *Thessaloniki Program* is a manifesto from the Greek Coalition of the Radical Left (SYRIZA) from 2014, before they took power from the previous government headed by Antonis Samaras in January 2015. It points out that Germany benefited from debt reduction after World War II, and it recalls the forced loan that the Nazi government imposed on Greece after invading in 1941. The second is an editorial by Alan Posener, a British-German journalist who examines the German perspective on the crisis, and German resentment at being compared to Nazis.

Syriza: The Thessaloniki Programme

THE CONTEXT OF NEGOTIATION

We demand immediate parliamentary elections and a strong negotiation mandate with the goal to:

Write-off the greater part of public debt's nominal value so that it becomes sustainable in the context of a European Debt Conference. It happened for Germany in 1953. It can also happen for the South of Europe and Greece.

Include a "growth clause" in the repayment of the remaining part so that it is growth-financed and not budget-financed.

Include a significant grace period ("moratorium") in debt servicing to save funds for growth.

Exclude public investment from the restrictions of the Stability and Growth Pact.

A European New Deal of public investment financed by the European Investment Bank.

Quantitative easing by the European Central Bank with direct purchases of sovereign bonds.

Finally, we declare once again that the issue of the Nazi Occupation forced loan from the Bank of Greece is open for us. Our partners know it. It will become the country's official position from our first days in power.

On the basis of this plan, we will fight and secure a socially viable solution to Greece's debt problem so that our country is able to pay off the remaining debt from the creation of new wealth and not from primary surpluses, which deprive society of income.

With that plan, we will lead with security the country to recovery and productive reconstruction by:

Immediately increasing public investment by at least €4 billion.

Gradually reversing all the Memorandum injustices.

Gradually restoring salaries and pensions so as to increase consumption and demand.

From "The Thessaloniki Programme," *Syriza* (Sept. 2014).

Providing small and medium-sized enterprises with incentives for employment, and subsidizing the energy cost of industry in exchange for an employment and environmental clause.

Investing in knowledge, research, and new technology in order to have young scientists, who have been massively emigrating over the last years, back home.

Rebuilding the welfare state, restoring the rule of law and creating a meritocratic state.

We are ready to negotiate and we are working towards building the broadest possible alliances in Europe.

The present Samaras government is once again ready to accept the decisions of the creditors. The only alliance which it cares to build is with the German government.

This is our difference and this is, at the end, the dilemma:

European negotiation by a SYRIZA government, or acceptance of the creditors' terms on Greece by the Samaras government.

* * *

The Bailout Crisis: Germany's View of How Greece Fell From Grace

ALAN POSNER

Did he or didn't he? Last week, the biggest media story in Germany was whether or not Yanis Varoufakis had flipped us the finger. After a video of the Greek finance minister "showing the stinkfinger" (as Germans put it) was screened on a talk show, a satirist claimed he had doctored the video and that the finger-flip was a fake. A day later he recanted.

Experts pored over the "Varoufakis" video like JFK conspiracy buffs over the Zapruder footage. No matter that the video dates from 2013 and has no bearing on today's politics—the "Varoufakis" story

eclipsed riots in Frankfurt and terrorism in Tunis. For Germany, Greece is more than a pesky problem on the periphery of Europe. It's an obsession.

One can understand the Greeks' obsession with Germany, which the Syriza government blames for austerity policies that have brought the country to its knees. But Germany has built a firewall round its banks to protect them from the fallout from a "Grexit".

Its position—that Greece must honour the terms of its bailout—has the backing of most other EU members and EU institutions. It could regard the antics of an inexperienced government faced with the harsh realities of life in the eurozone with equanimity. This is, in fact, the attitude that Germany's finance minister, Wolfgang Schäuble, has maintained.

Germans admire Schäuble for keeping his cool. Greek caricatures portraying him as a Nazi have caused outrage. Germans also resent Greek demands for reparations for the brutal occupation in the second world war, and hints that they might confiscate German property to enforce payment. The Greeks do have a point, and Germany is willing to negotiate. But using Germany's past to blackmail Angela Merkel's government in totally unrelated negotiations is not a good idea. For decades, Germany's bad conscience has been exploited by its European friends. But there is a growing—and dangerous—feeling here that enough is enough.

Ironically, back in the 1990s, Helmut Kohl gave up the *deutschemark* and accepted the euro in order to reassure the French that Germany would not become Europe's hegemon. In return, members of the euro club were supposed to abide by strict rules, to ensure the common currency did not become like, well, the franc, lira or drachma. And how to have the past dredged up and flung in Germany's face by a country that lied its way into the eurozone, refused to reform while it was rolling in cheap money courtesy of the common currency, can't or won't collect taxes properly, has been bailed out repeatedly and still doesn't accept the rules—this could well be the final straw. The Greeks can congratulate themselves on a self-fulfilling prophecy the oracle at Delphi

would have been proud of: nationalism is rearing its ugly head in Germany again.

Indeed, the rise of populism at home is a main reason Merkel cannot climb down. On the right, the anti-euro, anti-immigrant and vaguely anti-American party *Alternative für Deutschland* will probably get into the Bundestag in 2017. On the left, a campaign against the free trade agreement between the EU and the US is gaining momentum. On the streets, people have demonstrated in Dresden against "Islamisation" and the "lying press" and rioted in Frankfurt against the European Central Bank and capitalism in general. Squeezed by radicals on left and right, the pro-Europe centre may not hold.

The situation in the rest of Europe is even worse. Cave in to the Greeks, government officials mutter, and the next thing you know the Spanish will elect the populists of Podemos, the Irish will go for Sinn Féin and both will demand handouts, to be paid for by you-know-who. France's Marine Le Pen will have more arguments for leaving the eurozone or even the EU. And let's not even mention Britain. Meanwhile, Vladimir Putin tears up treaties, tramples on his neighbours' sovereignty and threatens the EU's eastern flank, and Islamic State kills people just across the Mediterranean.

When Athens threatens to turn to Russia, open its borders and let immigrants from Syria into Europe, or even wave Isis fighters through, it is not only behaving irrationally—you don't threaten the people you want money from, unless you're a gangster. It is destroying the glue that holds Europe together: trust.

Germans' attitudes toward politics are informed by their history and based on Kantian ethics: ends never justify means. Rules, therefore, must never be broken, even if they are self-defeating. This is alien to Anglo-Saxon policymakers, who follow the utilitarian precepts of Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill. And it is alien, of course, to southern European politicians, for whom political expediency will always trump principles. In the euro crisis, Germany has repeatedly seen the rules bent, broken, changed and broken again. The EU needs to understand that this is intensely worrying to most Germans.

From "The bailout crisis: Germany's view of how Greece fell from grace," by Alan Posner, *The Guardian* (21 March 2015).

At the deepest level, however, German exasperation with the Greeks is rooted in fear. At the end of this century, Germany will have fewer than 60 million inhabitants, 25 million fewer than today. By 2050 the demographic great powers of Europe will be Turkey, France and Britain (in that order).

Germany, a country with an ageing, shrinking, underqualified and poorly paid workforce, a country fixated on hammering metal rather than tapping touch-screens and addicted to unsustainably high exports, could find itself in an economic crisis sooner rather than later.

For the German elite at least, European integration is the answer. Germany feels that it needs to establish an economically stable, rule-based and politically united Europe while it still has the power to do so. Greece's antics thus awaken the angst that dares not speak its name.

What to do? The Greeks have made their point. Many Germans inside and outside the government realise that austerity must be eased. They accept that Germany has benefited from the same set of euro rules that drove Greece into bankruptcy, and that Greece needs help.

What the Greeks ought to do now is to help Germany help them by going short on the rhe-

toric... and producing realistic plans for reform. Their politicians are no longer playing primarily to a Greek audience. Europe is watching.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. The Syriza manifesto is aimed at the Greek electorate prior to the elections of January 2015. How does it explain what it will do in the next round of negotiations with European leaders? What charges does it make against the Samaras government?
2. Posener also describes the Greek debt crisis as a question that has implications for German electoral politics. What are the pressures that Angela Merkel and Wolfgang Schäuble feel from their own voters as they negotiate with Greece about a bailout?
3. What does this clash of interests and electoral politics say about the prospects of European integration? Do people in Greece and Germany still think of themselves as primarily Greek and German, before they think of themselves as Europeans?

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