

MISS WORLD

by

Willard Thurston

That a beauty pageant might serve as a pretext for murderous street riots came as a shock to many Westerners, who generally don't take the pageant that seriously — certainly not *that* seriously. Among smart liberals the event is more or less 'jejune' — the epithet Woody Allen deploys to sound both precious and insufferable. But the riot during the pageant in 2002 in Kaduna, Nigeria left 215 dead, 1300 plus injured, and over 12,000 homeless (Washington Post). The straw that ignited the conflagration seemed wildly incommensurate — a journalist's remark that Mohammed, *The* Mohammad, a chap who didn't hide the fact he liked women, might find one or two contestants congenial — possibly the former Miss World, Agbani Darego, an exceedingly pretty Nigerian. This unwary comment served as the pretext for a precipitous and horrific jihad! Which resulted in many dumfounded innocents being summarily dragged from their cars and slaughtered? The writer of the incendiary comment, Isioma Daniel, who worked at the time for This Day, fled the country for her life, facing the edict of an Imam that demanded her assassination!

But the Western hand wringers, the blame America first votaries, were soon out in force. Pronounced one much quoted British feminist, oblivious to all but the contest itself: "the contestants who went to London (where the contest was restaged) were wearing swim wear dripping with blood." And she didn't mean bikinis made of sable, the usual target where blood gets spilt — when hurled at runway models. No mention of the Nigerian woman, Amina Lawal, who had so recently been condemned to death by stoning under Sharia law for having an

out-of-wedlock baby. No, just the standard irritation with another reporter, Isioma Daniel, *who should have known better*. The first Miss Nigeria, Grace Atinuke Oyelude, who recently turned 70, was crowned in 1957, and at least found the incident 'regrettable'. Miss Turkey, Azra Akin, won in 2001 and was crowned by the 2000 winner, Agbani Darego, Miss Nigeria — thence the venue for the 2002 contest. As far as I know Ms. Darego hasn't weighed in on the subject, perhaps in hopes that she can return to her homeland some day soon.

Nigeria was and is a divided country. In the North the Fulani and Hausa peoples, in the South the once numerous Christians and Animists that Boko Haram regularly attacks and has well nigh annihilated in some communities.

Instructive in this regard are the writings of Sayyid Qutb, the intellectual father of the modern political jihad, who was hanged in Egypt in 1966 for treason. His journey towards radical Islam was sparked in part by his visceral reaction to the materialism and so-called promiscuity he witnessed in 1950s America. (Imagine if he were alive in America today.) Mr. Qutb concluded that the decadence of the West was attributable to a long tradition of separation of church and state. The result was a cacophony of values, morals and cultures. In short, pluralism equalled anarchy and chaos for him. As a rampart against materialism and secularism, Mr. Qutb advocated Islamic purity. Islam, he argued, is the total, self-contained package, which should govern all aspects of life from affairs of state to social problems. Therefore, Islam cannot compromise or co-exist with secularism. While the West reveres, or revered, freedom, Islam reveres virtue, Mr. Qutb said. Democracy is heretical because it holds that sovereignty flows from the people and not the Almighty. Human rights are inconsequential he claims; what's important is following the immutable rules. Mr. Qutb advocated purging Islam of all Western influences and incited all true Muslims to stand up

for their religion against the West and its agents. Since his death, many of his disciples have been busy implementing his utopia through violence, although Mr. Qutb himself stopped short of endorsing it in his writings. Regardless, his philosophy is a recipe for protracted war. It has inspired the Taliban and ISIS-styled terrorists, the separatists in India and other parts of Asia who want to establish Islamic states or Caliphates. The ugliness that ruined the beauty pageant in Nigeria is but a footnote compared to the coming struggle for the heart and soul of mainstream Islam.

Sadly, Western democracy no longer enshrines tolerance. The West's Social Justice Warriors — the Special Forces of the politically correct — strive for essentially intolerance of all tolerance, for tolerance means free speech which is now considered very risky if not ethnocentric and racist.

If democracy eclipsed Nazism and Communism, the countries of the Middle East were not impressed, apparently. Of the countries in the Middle East, how many are democracies? And what contemporary achievements other than capital accumulation can they really boast? Why is the one functional democracy there singled out for exclusive blame by so many Western progressives? What is the land mass of the Middle East compared to Israel, the population compared to Israel? Why is the wealth in the Middle East lavished on so few — who will supply token money for terrorists and their families, but only paltry allotments to say Palestinian civilian projects? The cost of but a few the palaces in Saudi Arabia alone would have provided many if not most Palestinians a start to a good life. But no, the Palestinians are left in wretched settlements by their caring Moslem brothers — who, when push comes to shove, don't want anything to do with them. The PLO were kicked out of Lebanon (by the then formidable Syrians) and Jordan by the moderate King Hussein. The PLO backed every loser in the

Middle East since Nasser, including Saddam. And turned down a peace offer brokered by Bill Clinton that surprised many of its own adherents.

So the progressive peculiarities abound. Swim wear on fetching females being a late entry it seems. Perhaps Yasser Arafat could be crowned Miss World posthumously, to show there's no hard feeling nor sexual/ethnic discrimination. It might help. The many body guards who had to sleep with him may finally get a bit of shut eye.

Beauty pageants have a life of their own of course — seemingly immune from their erstwhile critics. Yet the mother of all beauty pageants, the Miss World contest, became a deadly serious affair in 2002. It's not too often you see murderous mobs rioting in the streets, chanting 'Down with beauty.' By hosting the event, the Nigerian government had hoped to advertise its modernity. Instead, the ensuing fiasco became a showcase for a shrill species of misogyny. The wisdom of parading 92 beauty queens around in a country where half the population is Muslim during the holy month of Ramadan was maybe a bit optimistic. But offending Muslim sensibilities is only the half of it. The other half is the relentless march of Islamic fundamentalism worldwide and its disrespect for diversity — for the folkways and mores of other cultures. Of the Muslims who have fully integrated, syndicated columnist Fareed Zakari for instance, said recently on his own program GPS (the Global Public Square) that he no longer attends a mosque. He didn't say if he'd be on the barricades protesting an imminent Caliphate-Sharia inspired region in America. Are the adherents to the Religion of Peace likely to resist such a prospect — were their own basic faith newly triumphant? Evidence of this was not just in the beauty pageant riots, but also in the fact the reporter whose facile words served as the pretext for the violence had to flee for her life.

There was a time when ordering such a hit on a writer — and by extension, on the principle of freedom of speech — would have shocked

the Western world. But no longer. The experience of the Indian-born British author Salman Rushdie is all too familiar. His best-selling novel, *The Satanic Verses*, stood accused of insulting Islam, and earned the ire of Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini in 1989. The Iranian Revolution in 1979 and the Rushdie affair 10 years later were wakeup calls to the West that a virulent new strain of Islam had been loosed upon the world. Shiite radicals like Khomeini were soon matched by Sunnis like Osama bin Laden. Since Sept. 11, 2001, the West has a clearer appreciation of the menace such fanatics pose, but the West's philosophical underpinnings remain obscured by progressives who find the legacy of Christianity the real unforgivable *bête noir* — the very creed that would forgive the perpetrators of 9/11 and the acts of the current bloody jihadists. Is that it — Christianity seen as witless, corrupt, weak, insipid, nebbish, spineless, airy-fairy? Once the animus and thus spectre of the crusades, colonialism, capitalism. It's interesting to note that if Vienna had fallen in 1682 to the expanding Ottoman Empire we might all be living in a Muslim caliphate. But we aren't — yet. Vide Andreas Serrano's contemptuous 'Piss Christ' (an ornate crucifix stuck upside down in a gallon of his own urine) — considered a work of art in the West. Imagine if he created today such an installation work using an Islamic Crescent or the Quran instead! You can say what you like about Christianity or Judaism because you're perfectly safe doing it. It's the many dead cartoonists, in Scandinavia and France, who are now judged to have been too assertive, too reckless, too self-important. Their impish adolescent scribbles the provocation for deadly primal terror. Humor is essentially haram for all fanatics. Anybody here know some bawdy or derogatory Islamic jokes? Monty Python's Flying Circus skewered most Western shiboliths that I know of. And they fondly entertained a lot of people world wide. Are they now one more modern anachronism?...