

Are ISIS and ISIL Based on Religion or Ideology?
Posted On: January 01, 1970

When we hear the word ISIS, we usually think of the great Egyptian goddess of antiquity. Today's ISIS is not a goddess, but is a resentful Islamic military cult that has no clue of what it wants, only what it doesn't want. It does not want western civilization, except for its weapons and medicines for their warriors and elderly leaders. Its only policies involve slaughter, amputating the limbs of thieves, and total enslavement of women. They love public whipping and executions, which their PR people consider promotions.

ISIS stands for Islamic State in Iraq and Syria. Islamic it is, despite all the protestations of the politically correct who do not want to tar Islam with such an offspring. But it is indeed Islam's baby. ISIL is a cousin cult, one with a more grandiose ideology: that they can become an Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, their colorful way of saying that they have designs on the entire Levant, which would include Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and (most imaginatively) Israel.

Both are the violent spawn of the already violent, but much reduced, Al Qaeda, the Islamist cult that carried out the attacks on the US, UK, and Spain. There are alarming reports that these poisonous cults are spreading like cancers in Africa, with comparable growth in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and even Indonesia. These are all part of the Al Qaeda franchise, with wanabes even in the United States and Canada. Do they have a future?

There is an old Greek saying that Those Whom the Gods Would Destroy, They First Make Mad. Clearly, these franchises are like a fever that is on the threshold of crisis and self-destruction. These groups look more dangerous than they are because they lack the most important elements of ideological cults, reality. Like most cults, they have a very illusory vision of the brave new world that they think they will create.

It is much easier for cults to destroy than to create, which ultimately destroys them. Anarchists, the oldest of political cults, have always dimly imagined a brave new world, but considered their most important work the destruction of the existing order first. Their visions of the future are extremely thin.

The Nazis, for example, imagined a world run by themselves, enslaving the \223inferior races\224 to serve them, and slaughtering various groups whose talents either challenged them (Jews) or people who did not conform to Nazi notions of superiority (defective, old, and feeble). They imagined a thousand-year reign, and were short only by 988 years.

The Soviets, who also began as destroyers of the old order, had a vague vision of a perfect world in which government would melt away and people would wisely rule themselves. However, they found it necessary to step in with their superior wisdom and wisely rule \223the people\224 with no end in sight. Their great vision of a Soviet world also fell apart, lasting only about 60 years.

Pol Pot's Cambodian fantasy was that his brave new world could only begin if he slaughtered the one-third of the population that was middle class. Peasants were his imagined good citizens. That cult collapsed after less than a decade.

What is the ideology of Western civilization, our own global culture? It appears to be one of certain guaranteed rights: participatory government, free press, private property, religious freedom (within the scope of mutual tolerance), and acceptance of gender equality under the law. Of course none of these values is being practiced perfectly, but they have had an enormous influence on a world in which life is better today than it would have been otherwise.

More people have been lifted from poverty thanks to this civilization and more people have autonomy to pursue happiness than any of these above cults have ever managed to provide.

Islam once created a respectable civilization before it closed its doors a millennium ago on thought, self-correction, and a reformation in which religion loses its upper hand in dictating culture. Islam will either reform or burn out, just as Islam's ugly spawn, ISIS and ISIL will.

676 words

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