



## How the West Was Won—And How It Will Be Lost

On October 22, 2002, Oriana Fallaci addressed an audience at the American Enterprise Institute. Following are short excerpts from her talk. Ms. Fallaci, a native of Florence, Italy and a life-long journalist, caused turmoil across Europe with the publication of her book *The Rage and the Pride*, calling the West to stand up to the Islamic world.

I don't hide. I never have. I stay at home because I like to stay at home, and at home I work. I have not appeared in public for at least ten years. No interviews, no TV.

Why am I here, then? Because, since September 11, we are at war. Because the front line of that war is here, in America. Because when I was a war correspondent, I liked to be on the front line. And this time, in this war, I do not feel as a war correspondent. I feel as a soldier. The duty of a soldier is to fight. And to fight this war, I deploy a personal weapon. It is not a gun. It's a small book, *The Rage and The Pride*.

My soldier weapon is the weapon of truth. The truth that begins with the truth I maintain in these pages:

"From Afghanistan to Sudan, from Palestine to Pakistan, from Malaysia to Iran, from Egypt to Iraq, from Algeria to Senegal, from Syria to Kenya, from Libya to Chad, from Lebanon to Morocco, from Indonesia to Yemen, from Saudi Arabia to Somalia, the hate for the West swells like a fire fed by the wind. And the followers of Islamic fundamentalism multiply like a protozoa of a cell which splits to become two cells then four then eight then sixteen then thirty-two to infinity. Those who are not aware of it only have to look at

the images that the TV brings us every day. The multitudes that impregnate the streets of Islamabad, the squares of Nairobi, the mosques of Tehran. The ferocious faces, the threatening fists. The fires that burn the American flag and the photos of Bush."

"The clash between us and them is not a military clash. Oh, no. It is a cultural one, a religious one. And our military victories do not solve the offensive of Islamic terrorism. On the contrary, they encourage it. They exacerbate it, they multiply it. The worst is still to come."

President Bush has said, "We refuse to live in fear."

Beautiful sentence, very beautiful. I loved it! But inexact, Mr. President, because the West does live in fear. People are afraid to speak against the Islamic world. Afraid to offend, and to be punished for offending, the sons of Allah. You can insult the Christians, the Buddhists, the Hindus, the Jews. You can slander the Catholics, you can spit on the Madonna and Jesus Christ. But, woe betide the citizen who pronounces a word against the Islamic religion.

My small book is not tender with Islam. In certain passages, it is even ferocious. But it is much more ferocious with us: with us Italians, us Europeans, us Americans.

I call my book a sermon—addressed to the Italians, to the Europeans, the Westerners. And along with the rage, this sermon unchains the pride for their culture, my culture. That culture that in spite of its mistakes, its faults, even monstrosities, has given so much to the world. It has moved us from the

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tents of the deserts and the huts of the woods to the dignity of civilization. It has given us the concept of beauty, of morals, of freedom, of equality. It has made the unique conquest in the social field, in the realm of science. It has wiped out diseases. It has invented all the tools that make life easier and more intelligent, those tools that our enemy can also use, for instance, to kill us. It has brought us to the moon and to Mars, and this cannot be said of the other culture. A culture, which has produced and produces only religion, which in every sense imprisons women inside the *burkah* or the *chador*, which is never accompanied by a drop of freedom, a drop of democracy, which subjugates its people under theocratical, oppressive regimes.

Socrates and Aristotle and Heraclitus were not mullahs. Jesus Christ, neither. Leonardo da Vinci and Michaelangelo, and Galileo, and Copernicus, and Newton and Pasteur and Einstein, the same.

My book is also a *j'accuse*. To accuse us of cowardice, hypocrisy, demagoguery, laziness, moral misery, and of all that comes with that. The stupidity of the unbearable fad of political correctness, for instance. The paucity of our schools, our universities, our young people, people who often don't even know the story of their country, the names Jefferson, Franklin, Robespierre, Napoleon, Garibaldi. And no understanding that freedom cannot exist without discipline, self-discipline.

**I** accuse ourselves also of another crime: the loss of passion. Haven't you understood what drives our enemies? What permits them to fight this war against us? The passion! They have passion! They have so much passion that they can die for it!

Their leaders, too, of course. I met Khomeini. I discussed with him for more than six hours in calm, and I tell you that that man was a man of passion. I never met bin Laden. But I have well observed his eyes. I have well listened to his voice. And I tell you that that man is a man of passion. We have lost passion.

Well, *I* have not. I boil with passion. I, too, am ready to die for passion. But around me, I see no passion. Even those who hate me and attack me and insult me do this without passion. They are mollusks, not men and women. And a civilization, a culture, cannot survive without passion, cannot be saved without passion. If the West does not wake up, if we do not refind passion, we are lost.

To quote from my book:

"The problem is that the solution does not depend upon the death of Osama bin Laden. Because the Osama bin Ladens are too many, by now: as cloned as the sheep of our research laboratories.... In fact, the best trained and the more intelligent do not stay in the Muslim countries... They stay in our own countries, in our cities, our universities, our business companies. They have excellent bonds with our churches, our banks, our televisions, our radios, our newspapers, our

publishers, our academic organizations, our unions, our political parties.... Worse, they live in the heart of a society that hosts them without questioning their differences, without checking their bad intentions, without penalizing their sullen fanaticism."

"[I]f we continue to stay inert, they will become always more and more. They will demand always more and more, they will vex and boss us always more and more. 'Til the point of subduing us. Therefore, dealing with them is impossible. Attempting a dialogue, unthinkable. Showing indulgence, suicidal. And he or she who believes the contrary is a fool."

**T**his is what I write about Europe: "Identical [are our] faults, the cowardices, the hypocrisies. Identical the blindness, the deafness, the lack of wisdom, the masochism.... Identical the ignorance and the lack of leadership that favors the Muslim invasion. Identical the fad of the Politically Correct that encourages it. To believe me, you only have to observe the financial club you proudly call European Union. A club that only serves to impose the rhetorical nonsense called common currency...to pay fabulous and undeserved salaries (tax free) to the members of its inept and useless Parliament....

"A club that shelters more than 15 million sons of Allah and God knows how many of their terrorists... A club that fornicates like a whore with the Arab countries and fills its pockets with their filthy petrodollars. The same petrodollars with which the Saudi Uncle Scrooges buy our ancient palaces, our banks, our commercial and industrial firms. A club, moreover, that dares to speak of cultural similarities with the Middle East.... [Y]ou chatterers, you mentally retarded[!] Where the hell is the cultural similarity with the Middle East, you cretins, you silly clowns?!? At Mecca? At Bethlehem, at Gaza, at Damascus, at Beirut?!? At Cairo, at Tripoli, at Nairobi, at Tehran, at Baghdad, at Kabul?!?"

"When I was very young, about 17 or so, I longed so much for a united Europe! I came from a war in which the [Europeans] had pitilessly slaughtered each other: remember? The damned Second World War. Plunged up to his neck in the brand-new struggle, my father preached the European Federalism.... He held rallies, he spoke to the crowds, he chanted: 'Europe! Europe! We must make Europe!'"

"But this frustrating and disappointing and insignificant Financial Club... [with] its sons of Allah who want to erase my civilization, this European Union, which chatters of Cultural-Similarities-with-the-Middle-East and meanwhile ignores my beautiful language, meanwhile sacrifices my national identity, is not the Europe I dreamed of when my father chanted, Europe-Europe. It is not Europe. It is the suicide of Europe."





