

was in part due to the efforts of the Union of the Ulema, which, along with other strands of nationalist agitation, emphasized religion as a key difference between European *Colons* settlers and the indigenous population. During the Algerian War of Independence (1954–1962), the line between socialist nationalism and religion was blurred, and members of the *Armée de Libération Nationale* (ALN; “National Liberation Army”) became known as mujahideen. The power of this moral basis of struggle against French colonial oppression was apparent even for secular Marxist Algerian nationalists. During this period, nationalists regularly referred to broader conceptions of jihad and historiographies of the Crusades, all of which created a combustible context for radicalization among Algerians.

More recently, Algeria suffered from a particularly brutal civil war, ostensibly fought between a largely secular state and Islamists who challenged the political status quo. The Algerian state had been subjected to Islamist challenges almost from the time of its establishment, in the form of *Al Qiyam* (1964, lit. “values”), which demanded a greater role for Islam in politics. During the 1980s, a militant Islamist challenge to the secular regime, in the shape of the Algerian Islamic Armed movement (led by a former ALN fighter), though small and not very popular, was a precursor to subsequent larger and popular challenges to the one party rule of the *Partie de Front de Libération Nationale* (PFLN; “Party of the National Liberation Front”). Political liberalization in the late 1980s to early 1990s saw a proliferation of Algerian political parties, with one of the most popular opposition groups coming from the *Front Islamique du Salut* (FIS; “Islamic Front for Salvation”). In the wake of the election success of FIS in 1991, the government, after army intervention, banned the party, and this led to the Algerian civil war, during which 200,000 Algerians were killed. The civil war mostly concluded in 1999 with a declaration of amnesty by President Abdelaziz Bouteflika. The role of Islam in politics remains a highly charged issue in contemporary Algeria.

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See also Islamism (Political Islam); Middle East; North Africa

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## AMSTERDAM

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Amsterdam, the capital of The Netherlands from the beginning of the 19th century onward, is renowned for its religious diversity and tolerance, which date back as far as the Eighty Years' War, the Dutch revolt against Spanish and Roman Catholic rule (1568–1648). The revolt was largely a reaction to the Counter-Reformation, the persecution of the Protestant sects that had firmly established themselves in the northern lowlands, including Amsterdam, during the Reformation. In 1588, these territories united to form the Dutch Republic and managed to liberate themselves from Spanish and Roman Catholic rule.

Although the population of the Dutch Republic was primarily Calvinist, the revolt spawned a deeply felt urge for religious tolerance. As a result, Amsterdam, in particular, soon became a safe haven for religious dissidents from all over Europe, including the French Huguenots and Sephardic Jews who had fled the Iberian Peninsula and were unwelcome virtually everywhere else in Europe. Before World War II, no less than 10% of the city's population was Jewish, but only 20% of these survived the war.

In the 1960s, Amsterdam became the center of the Dutch counterculture, and the city has retained much of the latter's secular permissiveness (as seen in its coffee shops, its red light district, its gay

scene, and its openness to leftist political activism and alternative lifestyles). The cultural changes associated with the 1960s' counterculture contributed substantially to the decline of the mainline Christian churches, but they also sparked an interest in inner spirituality. Amsterdam has remained the major hub of the Dutch holistic milieu, hosting more New Age centers than any other Dutch city. Despite the bankruptcy in 2000 of Ronald-Jan Hein's center Oibibio, an icon of Amsterdam's shift from utopian idealism and social criticism to commercialized business spirituality, neither the milieu's size and vitality nor the interest in spirituality has declined since.

The period since the 1960s has also witnessed an influx of Muslim immigrants from Turkey and particularly Morocco, which has made Islam a major player in the city's religious landscape. Christian immigrants from Southeast Asia, Latin and South America (from the former colony of Surinam), and sub-Saharan Africa have meanwhile established a wide range of so-called immigrant churches in Amsterdam. Particularly thriving are the African churches in the southeastern part of the city (the "Bijlmer"), many of them of the evangelical or Pentecostal strain.

Although strikingly secular in many respects, Amsterdam hence also boasts an immense religious and spiritual diversity. Its traditional religious and multicultural tolerance has been severely put to the test since the rise of the late populist politician Pim Fortuyn in 2002. Declining secular tolerance vis-à-vis Islam, the increased salience of (sometimes orthodox) Islamic identities, and instances of anti-Semitism and gay bashing by Islamic youngsters have culminated in the assassination of the playwright Theo van Gogh by a young Islamic militant, Mohammed Bouyeri, in 2004. In this increasingly heated climate, the city's mayor Job Cohen, Jewish like many of his predecessors, is blamed by some and admired by others for his defense of the city's age-old tradition of multicultural and religious tolerance.

*Dick Houtman and Jeroen van der Waal*

*See also* Jewish Diaspora; Netherlands; Protestant Christianity; Religious Minority-Majority Relations; Secularism; Tolerance

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## ANCESTORS

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In multiple religious traditions, living relatives call on ancestors to provide aid, guidance, and intercession. Ancestors are generally beneficent, domesticated, and deceased relatives or prominent community figures. They may also be seen to punish those who do not act properly toward them or their guidance. And the living show reciprocity for ancestors by honoring them through memorials, caring for the resting place of the ancestor, making prayers for and to ancestors, offering goods to ancestors that are needed in the afterlife, and holding feasts for ancestors.

An important consideration in understanding ancestors in various religious traditions is in clearly making the differentiation between ancestors and the dead. While ancestors have passed beyond this life, they are ancestors because they are considered to have passed on to a new and pleasant existence rather than to have simply died. As such, ancestors can still aid the living through visions, prayers, intercessions, and examples of how to live. Furthermore, ancestors are an aid to the living by virtue of becoming ancestors and not just ghosts or unhappy dead. In this respect, the living help themselves by helping ancestors. For instance, in Hindu death rites, the living descendants of the dead care for the deceased, considered a *preta* (ghost) immediately after death.