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EMBRACING THE INFIDEL

Stories of Muslim Migrants on the Journey West

By Behzad Yaghmaian

“An *El Norte* or *Grapes of Wrath* for the Muslim world – affecting, immediate and well written.” -- *Kirkus*, starred review

(Mahwah) – From the slums of Istanbul to the streets of Athens to the safe houses of the United Kingdom, thousands of men and women from Iraq, Sudan, Afghanistan, Iran and other countries are living clandestinely, in the midst of a desperate journey to escape oppression in their homelands and find freedom and legal residency in the West. Now, in ***EMBRACING THE INFIDEL: Stories of Muslim Migrants on the Journey West***, Behzad Yaghmaian—a professor of economics at Ramapo College of New Jersey and an Iranian-American who has fifteen years of experience in studying, teaching and writing about political economy, globalization, and the Middle East—takes readers on an astounding trip along a modern day underground railroad that stretches from the Middle East and Africa to Western Europe and the United States, introducing readers to the Muslim immigrants who share their extraordinary stories of hope for a new life.

EMBRACING THE INFIDEL will be published as a Delacorte Press Hardcover on December 6, 2005.

From 2002 through 2004, Yaghmaian lived among Muslim immigrants in ghettos, transition camps and safe houses and recorded their experiences. The

people he meet have suffered hardships that are unimaginable to those of us who take freedom for granted: many have survived war, brutal imprisonment, and political and social persecution. In most cases the journeys themselves have been no less arduous— these men and women have crossed snow-covered mountains, navigated rough seas on small floats and boats, fallen prey to thieves and even been beaten by vicious border guards.

In the aftermath of September 11, the situation for Muslim migrants is increasingly tenuous and for many the quest carries no promise of a better life. All of the people the author profiles are desperate to escape a state of limbo where they live unwanted and illegally in western nations, but are unable to return safely to the countries that they once called home.

At a time when immigrants are too often reduced to statistics or demonized, ***EMBRACING THE INFIDEL*** is a vital book that puts human faces on these marginalized people who simply want to live freely.

“Yaghmaian tells these unforgettable stories with terse drama, combining his sympathetic commentary with the immediacy of rich, diverse voices.”

-- *Booklist*

“Yaghmaian offers the reader vivid descriptions of the waterfront street bazaars in Istanbul, the migrant ghettos of Athens, and the creepy underworld of human smugglers... Journalists like myself should be doing more work like this.”

-- Ivan Watson, National Public Radio

“An immensely remarkable book; a clear humane and startling account of the perils, sufferings and anxiety which both forced and economic migrants have to go through in order to reach the West.”

-- Jose Fischel de Andrade, Center of International Studies, University of Cambridge

“A riveting account of the hardships and survival strategies of Muslim migrants who are trying to make their way to the West. ***EMBRACING THE INFIDEL*** adds an entirely new and human dimension to our understanding of migration and asylum issues.”

-- Dr. Jeff Crisp, Director of Policy and Research, Global
Commission on International Migration.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Behzad Yaghmaian is an Iranian-born U.S. national who has over fifteen years of experience in studying, teaching and writing about issues of international political economy, globalization and the Middle East. He has worked closely with migrant communities in New York City, Europe and the Middle East. A professor at Ramapo College of New Jersey, he is the author of *Social Changes in Iran*. He lives in New York City.

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