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Full Text of Paper By **Imam Dr Abduljalil Sajid**, Chairman Muslim Council for Religious and Racial Harmony UK, "Islamophobia: A new word for an old fear" - [English \(PDF\)](#)

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**“Fighting intolerance and discrimination against Muslims -  
Islamophobia: facilitating integration and respecting cultural  
diversity: Islamophobia: A new word for an old fear”**

**OSCE CONFERENCE  
ON ANTI-SEMITISM AND ON OTHER FORMS OF INTOLERANCE  
Cordoba, 8 and 9 June 2005**

**Session 4: Fighting intolerance and discrimination against Muslims -  
Islamophobia: facilitating integration and respecting cultural  
diversity**

## **Islamophobia: A new word for an old fear**

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**Bismillah Hir Rahma Nir Rahim** (I begin with name of God the Most Kind the Most Merciful). I greet you with the greetings of Islam (**Assalamu Alaykum wa Rahmatullah wa Barakathu** (May God's blessing and peace be with us all.)

**"And they ill-treated them (Believers) for no other reason except that they believed in Allah" (Al-Quran 85-8)**

A PRIZE-WINNING writer specialising in Islamic affairs says Islamophobia is **“the new anti-Semitism” in Britain**. William Dalrymple, whose book *White Mughals* won awards last year for its depiction of a British-Muslim love affair in 18th-century India, said: “Just as Islam has replaced Judaism as the second religion in this country, so I believe it is becoming very clear that **Islamophobia is replacing anti-Semitism** as the principle expression of bigotry in this country.” (See: <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/newspaper/0,,175-1225486,00.html>)

I am honoured -- and deeply humbled -- to be invited to speak to you this afternoon on the very important and timely topic of **Fighting intolerance and discrimination against Muslims - Islamophobia: facilitating integration and respecting cultural diversity**

At the very outset I brought greetings of **Iqbal Sacraine Secretary General** of the Muslim Council of Britain (**MCB** the most representative body of British Muslim). MCB messages are enclosed at the last Appendix. I have brought some printed information about **MCB** - However, one can easily look at MCB website [www.mcb.org.uk](http://www.mcb.org.uk)) I have pleasure to introduce you **Mr Khalid Sofi** an official delegate from **MCB** to this conference who is chairman of MCB legal Committee.

I am very grateful to Spanish Government who invited me as their guest and to the British Government who included me as a member of their official Delegation.

It is a great honour for me to be here in the city of Cordoba – the centre of Multi-faith and multi-cultures for centuries until 1492 when peaceful co-existence was forcefully denied. It is a great symbol of hope when the representatives of 55 world countries are meeting in Cordoba for two days and talking about practical measures for **fighting intolerance and discrimination** at all levels against all sections of their communities. The fact is that **Islamophobia has replaced anti-Semitism as the new sharp end of racist issues in the world today**. Last year at OSCE I said “**Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia are two sides of the same coin**” and it is an evil plague of Europe which is full of hate and re-emerged during recent years.

After the September 11, attacks in the United States in 2001, the EU asked its then 15-member countries to compile reports on what effect the attacks had had on their Muslim communities. The European Monitoring Centre (EUMC) (2002) compiles these reports and all concluded that “**hatred against Muslims and crimes against Muslims increased tremendously**”

Last year Open Society has produced reports on the situation of Muslims in major European countries and gave shocking conclusions of rise of hate crime against Muslims.

### **Anti-Semitism**

Hatred against Jews (best known as Anti-Semitism) has been since past two thousand years however, hostility towards Islam and Muslims has been a feature of European societies since the eighth century of the Common Era. It has taken different forms, however, at different times and has fulfilled a variety of functions. For example, the hostility in Spain in the fifteenth century was not the same as the hostility that had been expressed and mobilised in the Crusades. Nor was the hostility during the time of the Ottoman Empire or that which was prevalent throughout the age of empires and colonialism.<sup>1</sup> It may be more apt to speak of ‘Islamophobias’ rather than of a single phenomenon. Each version of Islamophobia has its own features as well as similarities with, and borrowings from, other versions.

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<sup>1</sup> See for example Noorad (2002), Sardar and Davies (2002), Halliday (2002) and Said (1987).

A key factor since the 1960s is the presence of some Forty million Muslim people in European countries and they are not going anywhere. They are going to stay. Another is the increased economic leverage on the world stage of oil-rich countries, many of which are Muslim in their culture and traditions. A **third** is the abuse of human rights by repressive regimes that claim to be motivated and justified by Muslim beliefs. A **fourth** is the emergence of political movements that similarly claim to be motivated by Islam and that use terrorist tactics to achieve their aims.

**The word Islamophobia was first used in print in 1991 and was defined in the 1997 Runnymede Trust report as ‘unfounded hostility towards Islam, and therefore fear or dislike of all or most Muslims’.**

**The term Islamophobia refers to unfounded hostility and fear towards Islam.** It refers also to the practical consequences of such hostility in unfair discrimination, prejudice and less favourable treatment against Muslim individuals and communities, and to the exclusion of Muslims from mainstream political and social affairs. The word ‘Islamophobia’ has been coined because there is a new reality which needs naming – anti-Muslim prejudice has grown so considerably and so rapidly in recent years that a new item in the vocabulary is needed so that it can be identified and acted against. In other European Union countries it is customary to use the phrase ‘**racism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism**’ as a way of summarising the issues to be addressed. The phrase is cumbersome and is unlikely to be widely used in Britain.

### **Anti-Muslim racism**

Anti-Muslim racism has been a feature of European culture at least since the Crusades, but has taken different forms at different times. In modern Britain its manifestations include discrimination in recruitment and employment practices; high levels of attacks on mosques and on people wearing Muslim religious dress; widespread negative stereotypes in all sections of the press, including the broadsheets as well as the tabloids; bureaucratic obstruction or inertia in response to Muslim requests for greater cultural sensitivity in education and healthcare; and non-recognition of Muslims by the law of the land, since discrimination on grounds of religion or belief is not unlawful with exception of EU Directive of 27 Nov 2000 which has been enacted in British domestic laws since 2 December 2003 only in the area of employment. Further, many or most anti-racist organisations and campaigns appear indifferent to the distinctive features of anti-Muslim racism, and to distinctive Muslim concerns about cultural sensitivity.

Silence about anti-Muslim racism was particularly striking in relation to the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry report. ‘Where’s the Muslim,’ asked a headline in the Muslim magazine *Q News*, ‘in McPherson’s Black and White Britain?’ The magazine welcomed the report but described it as a two-edged sword: ‘As most of us are from visible minorities, we want racism to be firmly dealt with. But as victims of Islamophobia, we know that any attempts to tackle racism without also tackling Islamophobia will be futile ... Much as Muslims want to confront racism, they have become disillusioned with an antiracism movement that refuses to combat Islamophobia and which, in many instances, is as oppressive as the establishment itself.’ An editorial in *Muslim News* commented that ‘the real litmus test of whether the lessons of the Lawrence tragedy have been learnt will be if ... a Muslim youngster dies in an Islamophobic attack and his murder is not treated in the same way’.

When Islamophobia Commission issued a consultation paper, the *Independent on Sunday* (2 March 1997) ran a large headline in which we were accused of wishing to be 'Islamically correct'. In a similar way there was a time in European history when a new word, anti-Semitism, was needed and coined to highlight the growing dangers of anti-Jewish hostility. The coining of a new word, and with it the identification of a growing danger, did not in that instance avert eventual tragedy. By the same token, the mere use of the new word 'Islamophobia' will not in itself prevent tragic conflict and waste. But, I believe, it can play a valuable part in the long endeavour of correcting perceptions and improving relationships.

### **The term 'Islamophobia'**

**The term 'Islamophobia' is not, admittedly, ideal**, for it implies that one is merely talking about some sort of mental sickness or aberration. Some of the people quoted above do indeed sound as if they are mentally unstable. But the imagery, stereotypes and assumptions in their messages are widespread in western countries and are not systematically challenged by influence leaders. The writers quoted earlier, for example, are widely respected and are read with approval by millions of people. They don't use obscene language and do observe elementary conventions of spelling, punctuation and grammar. They don't propose violent removal or repatriation of Muslims; don't deploy terms such as 'subhuman freaks', 'animals', 'not people', 'vile' and 'evil'; and don't express pleasure in the thought of Muslim men, women and children being slaughtered. But their basic message, at least in the perception of many British Muslims, seems similar to the one that underlies the inarticulate rants in 'you don't belong here'.

Islamophobia inhibits the development of a just society, characterised by social inclusion and cultural diversity. For it is a constant source of threat and distress to British Muslims and implies that they do not have the same rights as other British citizens. Islamophobia increases the likelihood of serious social disorder, with consequent high costs for the economy and for the justice system. Persistent Islamophobia in the media means that young British Muslims develop a sense of cultural inferiority and lose confidence both in themselves and in their parents. They tend then to 'drop out' and may be readily influenced by extremist groups which seem to give them a strong sense of identity. Islamophobia makes it more difficult for mainstream voices and influences within Muslim communities to be expressed and heard. In consequence many Muslims are driven into the hands of extremists, and imbibe extremist opinions.

Islamophobia prevents Muslims and non-Muslims from cooperating appropriately on the joint diagnosis and solution of major shared problems, for example problems relating to urban poverty and deprivation. Further, it prevents non-Muslims from appreciating and benefiting from Islam's cultural, artistic and intellectual heritage, and from its moral teachings. Likewise it inhibits Muslim appreciation of cultural achievements in the non-Muslim world. Islamophobia means that Britain is weaker than it need be in political, economic and cultural relations with other countries and it actively damages international relations, diplomacy and trade.

Islamophobia makes it more difficult for Muslims and non-Muslims to cooperate in the solution and management of shared problems such as global political, ecological

issues and conflict situations (for example Bosnia, most notably, in the former republic of Yugoslavia). Many Muslims believe Islamophobia has played a major part in Western attitudes to events in Bosnia, and has prevented a just and lasting settlement. The term 'Islamophobia' was coined by way of analogy to 'xenophobia'. Its use involves distinguishing between unfounded ('mad') hostility to Islam on the one hand and reasoned disagreement or criticism on the other.

## Examples

In Britain as in other European countries, manifestations of anti-Muslim hostility include:

- verbal and physical attacks on Muslims in public places<sup>2</sup>
- attacks on mosques and desecration of Muslim cemeteries
- widespread and routine negative stereotypes in the media, including the broadsheets, and in the conversations and 'common sense' of non-Muslims – people talk and write about Muslims in ways that would not be acceptable if the reference were to Jewish people, for example, or to black people
- negative stereotypes and remarks in speeches by political leaders, implying that Muslims in Britain are less committed than others to democracy and the rule of law – for example the claim that Muslims more than others must choose between 'the British way' and 'the terrorist way'<sup>3</sup>
- discrimination in recruitment and employment practices, and in workplace cultures and customs
- bureaucratic delay and inertia in responding to Muslim requests for cultural sensitivity in education and healthcare and in planning applications for mosques
- lack of attention to the fact that Muslims in Britain are disproportionately affected by poverty and social exclusion
- non-recognition of Muslims in particular, and of religion in general, by the law of the land, since up until recently discrimination in employment on grounds of religion has been lawful and discrimination in the provision of services is still lawful

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<sup>2</sup> There are examples in Allen and Nielsen (2002), and on the websites of the Forum Against Islamophobia and Racism, the Islamic Human Rights Commission and *The Muslim News*.

<sup>3</sup> This particular insult was made by Denis MacShane MP, minister of state at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, in November 2003. It was compounded by the feebleness of his apology a few days later. See, for example,

- anomalies in public order legislation, such that Muslims are less protected against incitement to hatred than members of certain other religions
- Laws curtailing civil liberties that disproportionately affect Muslims.

Some of these matters are discussed later. Let us see some **contextual factors**:

Islamophobia is exacerbated by a number of **contextual factors**. One of these is the fact that a high proportion of refugees and people seeking asylum are Muslims. Demonisation of refugees by the tabloid press is therefore frequently a coded attack on Muslims, for the words ‘Muslim’, ‘asylum-seeker’, ‘refugee’ and ‘immigrant’ become synonymous and interchangeable with each other in the popular imagination. Occasionally, the connection is made entirely explicit. For example, a newspaper recycling the myth that asylum-seekers are typically given luxury space by the government in five-star accommodation added on one occasion recently that they are supplied also with ‘library, gym and even free prayer-mats’.<sup>4</sup> A member of the House of Lords wishing to evoke in a succinct phrase people who are undesirable spoke of ‘25-year-old black Lesbians and homosexual Muslim asylum-seekers’.<sup>5</sup> In 2003, when the Home Office produced a poster about alleged deceit and dishonesty amongst people seeking asylum, it chose to illustrate its concerns by focusing on someone with a Muslim name.<sup>6</sup> An end-of-year article in the *Sunday Times* magazine on ‘Inhumanity to Man’ during 2003 focused in four of its five examples on actions by Muslims.<sup>7</sup>

A **second contextual factor** is the sceptical, secular and agnostic outlook with regard to religion that is reflected implicitly, and sometimes expressed explicitly, in the media, perhaps particularly the left-liberal media.<sup>8</sup> The outlook is opposed to all religion, not to Islam only. Commenting on media treatment of the Church of England, the Archbishop of Canterbury remarked in a speech in summer 2003 that the church in the eyes of the media is a kind of soap opera: ‘Its life is about short-term conflicts, blazing rows in the pub, so to speak, mysterious plots and unfathomable motivations. It is both ridiculous and fascinating. As with soap operas, we, the public, know that real people don’t actually live like that, but we relish the drama and become fond of the regular cast of unlikely characters with, in this case, their extraordinary titles and bizarre costumes.’<sup>9</sup> At first sight, the ridiculing of religion by the media is even-

<sup>4</sup> *Daily Mail*, 5 October 2001, cited in Villate-Compton (2002). See also Yarde (2001), who writes: I groan inwardly every time I read a headline in the popular press about our asylum "crisis". I don't need to read the text, I've read the story a hundred times: same words, same message, repackaged according to the demon of the day, then regurgitated as if the use of the same tired old metaphors were something new.' The latest demon of the day, she adds, is Muslims.

<sup>5</sup> Norman Tebbit, *The Spectator*, 27 April 2002.

<sup>6</sup> *The Muslim Weekly*, 5-11 December 2003, p.11. The text on the poster read ‘Ali did not tell us his real name or his true nationality. He was arrested and sent to prison for 12 months.’ This statement was translated into five languages, all of them connected with Muslim countries. A detailed legal reference was given in small print but in fact the case that was cited had nothing to do with asylum and nationality claims.

<sup>7</sup> One of the five examples was about a legal case that was *sub judice* at the time. A British Muslim had been arrested and charged but not yet tried or convicted.

<sup>8</sup> There is further discussion in Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia Report titled *Islamophobia: a Challenge for Us All*, published in 1997. (ISBN 0 9022397-98-2).

<sup>9</sup> Presidential address at General Synod, York, 14 July 2003.

handed. But the Church of England, for example, has far more resources with which to combat malicious or ignorant media coverage than does British Islam. For British Muslims, since they have less influence and less access to public platforms, attacks are far more undermining. Debates and disagreements about religion are legitimate in modern society and indeed are to be welcomed. But they do not take place on a level playing-field.

A **third contextual factor** is UK foreign policy in relation to various conflict situations around the world. There is a widespread perception that the war on terror is in fact a war on Islam, and that the UK supports Israel against Palestinians. In other conflicts too the UK government appears to side with non-Muslims against Muslims and to collude with the view that the terms ‘Muslim’ and ‘terrorist’ are synonymous. These perceptions of UK foreign policy may or may not be accurate. The point is that they help fashion the lens through which events inside Britain are interpreted – not only by Muslims but by non-Muslims as well.

The cumulative effect of Islamophobia’s various features, exacerbated by the contextual factors mentioned above is that Muslims are made to feel that they do not truly belong here – they feel that they are not truly accepted, let alone welcomed, as full members of British society. On the contrary, they are seen as ‘an enemy within’ or ‘a fifth column’ and they feel that they are under constant siege.<sup>10</sup> This is bad for society as well as for Muslims themselves. Moreover, time-bombs are being primed that are likely to explode in the future – both Muslim and non-Muslim commentators have pointed out that a young generation of British Muslims is developing that feels increasingly disaffected, alienated and bitter. It’s in the interests of non-Muslims as well as Muslims, therefore, that Islamophobia should be rigorously challenged, reduced and removed. The time to act is now, not some time in the future.

A further negative impact of Islamophobia is that Muslim insights on ethical and social issues are not given an adequate hearing and are not seen as positive assets. ‘Groups such as Muslims in the West,’ writes an observer, ‘can be part of trans-cultural dialogues, domestic and global, that might make our societies live up to their promises of diversity and democracy. Such communities can ... facilitate communication and understanding in these fraught and destabilising times.’<sup>11</sup> But Islamophobia makes this potential all but impossible to realise.

‘The most subtle and for Muslims perilous consequence of Islamophobic actions,’ a Muslim scholar has observed, ‘is the silencing of self-criticism and the slide into defending the indefensible. Muslims decline to be openly critical of fellow Muslims, their ideas, activities and rhetoric in mixed company, lest this be seen as giving aid and comfort to the extensive forces of condemnation. Brotherhood, fellow feeling, sisterhood are genuine and authentic reflexes of Islam. But Islam is supremely a critical, reasoning and ethical framework... [It] or rather ought not to, be manipulated into “my fellow Muslim right or wrong”.’<sup>12</sup> She goes on to remark that Islamophobia provides ‘the perfect rationale for modern Muslims to become reactive, addicted to a culture of complaint and blame that serves only to increase the powerlessness, impotence and frustration of being a Muslim.’

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<sup>10</sup> The sense of being under siege is global, not confined to Britain: see Ahmed (2003).

<sup>11</sup> Modood (2002).

<sup>12</sup> Davies (2002).

## **Violent language**

On 11 September 2001 and the following days there were strong feelings of powerlessness, impotence and frustration amongst non-Muslims as well as among Muslims. When people feel powerless and frustrated they are prone to hit out with violent language. Below “You don’t Belong here” for example, shows the kind of violent language that was used in email messages to the Muslim Council of Britain immediately following 11 September, 2001. The writers were under great stress and at least one of them later apologised. Their messages were nevertheless significant, for they expressed attitudes and imaginings that are widespread amongst non-Muslims and that are recurring components of Islamophobia.

### **You don’t belong here**

#### **Email messages to the Muslim Council of Britain, September 2001 – March 2003**

You don't belong here and you never will. Go back to fornicating with your camels in the desert, and leave us alone. (11/9/01)

Are you happy now? Salman Rushdie was right; your religion is a joke. Long live Israel! The US will soon kill many Muslim women and children. You are all subhuman freaks! (11/9/01).

I really have tried not to follow my father who was a simple racist. However, I saw your people celebrating in Palestine and Libya and I was sick with despair. How on God's earth can you justify killing in this way? HOW can you celebrate? I no longer have any respect for you. None at all. I am so sorry, but I just despise you and your cruel God. You are not people. Just cold killers. May God forgive you but from now on, may the Americans find you and remove you from my country. I can no longer be civil to you. I am so angry, so hurt, just...oh, leave it, and leave it there. Just get out of the UK. Go back to your homes and leave us alone. Cowards. (11/9/01).

Have you heard the saying ‘crocodile tears’, well in my opinion your sentiments of sympathy regarding the attacks in New York and Washington are exactly that. I have never considered myself to be a racist – but I am now... Your kind knows nothing but force.... Well you've sown the seed, now reap the whirlwind, you have woken us up to what you all stand for.

It sickens me to now what a VILE EVIL race you load of Muslims are you have demonstrated this with the destruction in the USA. Get out of my country now! England is for white civilised English people.

The rest of the world will now join to smash the filthy disease infested Islam you must be removed from Britain in body bags. hope you like the bombs, payback for your satanic religion. We will kill you all if we have too stayed in the stone-age and may Islam burn under US bombs. (14/9/01)

Why do you bother to live here? you hate the English with a passion. You hate Christianity. You hate America. but all of you like taking our hospitality and money and then turning on us. If we get attacked in this country I along with thousands of normal Christians will make absolutely sure that all Muslims will suffer. the worst



thing this country did was offer refuge to animals who call themselves humans bombing places like the world trade centre is the action of scum. (13/2/03)

We know where to find you. (14/2/03)

**Source: this is just a small selection of such messages posted on the website of the Muslim Council of Britain ([www.mcb.org.uk](http://www.mcb.org.uk)). Original spellings and punctuation have been retained.**

Islamophobia is the fear and/ or hatred of Islam, Muslims or Islamic culture. Islamophobia can be characterized by the belief that all or most Muslims are religious fanatics, have violent tendencies towards non-Muslims, and reject as directly opposed to Islam such concepts as equality, tolerance, and democracy. Islamophobia is a new form of racism whereby Muslims, an ethno-religious group, not a race, are, nevertheless, constructed as a race. A set of negative assumptions are made of the entire group to the detriment of members of that group. During the 1990's many sociologists and cultural analysts observed a shift in racist ideas from ones based on skin colour to ones based on notions of cultural superiority and otherness.

The term Islamophobia is a neologism dating from the early 1990's and derives from Xenophobia. As such, it reflects the influence of such 1990s movements as multi-culturalism and identity politics.

The term Islamophobia most often appears in discourse on the condition of immigrant Muslims living as minorities in the West. In this case, the common experiences of immigrant communities of unemployment, rejection, alienation and violence has combined with Islamophobia to make integration particularly difficult. This has led, in the United Kingdom, for example, to Muslim communities suffering higher levels of unemployment, poor housing, poor health and levels of racially motivated violence than other communities.

Islamophobia, as a phenomenon, dates back at least as far as the Crusades. It has been present in Europe and the West for many centuries. It has been argued that Islamophobia exists outside the West, for example in India. This is more closely related to Communal Politics in India, although Islamophobia in India does share, with western Islamophobia, the denigration of Islamic culture and history.

It has been argued by some, most notably Edward Said, that the denigration of Islamic civilisation associated with Islamophobia is central to the concept of Western Civilisation. The ousting and marginalising of Islam marks the debut of 'Western' Civilisation and, thus, explains the depth and longevity of western Islamophobia:

"Islam was a provocation in many ways. It lay uneasily close to Christianity, geographically and culturally. It drew on the Judeo-Hellenic traditions. It borrowed creatively from Christianity - it could boast unrivalled military and political successes nor was this all. The Islamic lands sit adjacent to and even on top of the biblical lands. Moreover, the heart of the Islamic domain has always been the region closest to Europe... Arabic and Hebrew are Semitic languages, and together they dispose and re-dispose of material that is urgently important to Christianity. From the end of the 7th century to the 16th century, Islam in either, its Arab, Ottoman, North African or

Spanish form dominated or effectively threatened European Christianity. That Islam outstripped and outshone Rome cannot have been absent from the mind of any European." **Edward Said: Orientalism., Penguin Books, 2003 Edition. Page 74 .**

An alleged factor, that some argue drives Islamophobia, is the rise of anti-Western Islamist movements, which have either come to power outright in some countries (Iran, Sudan, post-Soviet-era Afghanistan), or else exerted a strong influence on government policy in others (Saudi Arabia, Pakistan). Many people mistakenly believe that most Muslims are Islamist, when in fact the Islamist movement is only a minority position. Perhaps the most important factor shaping the present wave of Islamophobia, though, is the extremely large and disproportionate media coverage given to Islamist-inspired terrorism, for example, to the September 11, 2001 Terrorist Attacks, while relatively little media coverage is given to equivalent acts of terrorism by other groups or nation-states.

Recently there have been several efforts by non-Muslims to combat Islamophobia. In the wake of September 11, 2001 for example, a few non-Muslim women practiced hijab in a show of solidarity with their Muslim counterparts, who it was feared would be particularly vulnerable for reprisal given their distinctive dress. Non-Muslims also helped form community watches to protect mosques from attack.

### **Examples of Islamophobia**

Rep. C. [Saxby Chambliss](#) (R-GA): "Just turn (the sheriff) loose and have him arrest every Muslim that crosses the state line" (to Georgia law officers, November 2001) (<http://www.visalaw.com/03feb1/17feb103.html>)

[Ann Coulter](#): "We should invade their countries, kill their leaders and convert them to Christianity." (<http://www.nationalreview.com/coulter/coulter091301.shtml>)

[Robert Kilroy-Silk](#): "Muslims everywhere behave with equal savagery. They behead criminals, stone to death female - only female - adulteresses, throw acid in the faces of women who refuse to wear the chador, mutilate the genitals of young girls and ritually abuse animals" [http://www.fact-index.com/r/ro/robert\\_kilroy\\_silk.html](http://www.fact-index.com/r/ro/robert_kilroy_silk.html)

[Jean-Marie Le Pen](#): "These elements have a negative effect on all of public security. They are strengthened demographically both by natural reproduction and by immigration, which reinforces their stubborn ethnic segregation, their domineering nature. This is the world of Islam in all its aberrations." ([http://www.fpp.co.uk/online/02/04/Haaretz\\_LePen.html](http://www.fpp.co.uk/online/02/04/Haaretz_LePen.html))

[Jerry Vines](#): "Christianity was founded by the virgin-born Jesus Christ. Islam was founded by Mohammed, a demon-possessed paedophile who had 12 wives, and his last one was a 9-year-old girl." ([http://www.biblicalrecorder.org/content/news/2002/6\\_14\\_2002/ne140602vines.shtml](http://www.biblicalrecorder.org/content/news/2002/6_14_2002/ne140602vines.shtml))

[Little Green Footballs](#): "Refugee camp my tuchus!! Centre of terror and genocide, maybe, but no refugee camp. Is this part of the area the UN is bleating that it can't feed? I hope so. If every subhuman piece of excrement in the Rafah non refugee camp

dies slowly and painfully of starvation, I'll have a great Passover”  
(<http://www.littlegreenfootballs.com/weblog/?entry=10437>)

[Michael Savage](#): "I think these people [Arabs and Muslims] need to be forcibly converted to Christianity ... It's the only thing that can probably turn them into human beings." [05/12/03] (On his radio show [The Savage Nation](#))

## **Institutional Islamophobia**

The failure of race equality organisations and activists over many years to include Islamophobia in their programmes and campaigns appears to be an example of institutional intolerance.

**‘The concept of institutional racism,’** said the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry report, ‘... is generally accepted, even if a long trawl through the work of academics and activists produces varied words and phrases in pursuit of a definition.’ The report cited several of the submissions that it had received during its deliberations and then constructed a definition of its own. If the term ‘racism’ is replaced by the term ‘Islamophobia’ in the submissions, and if other changes or additions are made as appropriate, the statements are as follows:<sup>13</sup>

‘Institutional Islamophobia may be defined as those established laws, customs and practices which systematically reflect and produce inequalities in society between Muslims and non-Muslims. If such inequalities accrue to institutional laws, customs or practices, an institution is Islamophobic whether or not the individuals maintaining those practices have Islamophobic intentions.’

**(Adapted from a statement by the Commission for Racial Equality.)**

‘Differential treatment need be neither conscious nor intentional, and it may be practised routinely by officers whose professionalism is exemplary in all other respects. There is great danger that focusing on overt acts of personal Islamophobia by individual officers may deflect attention from the much greater institutional challenge ... of addressing the more subtle and concealed form that organisational-level Islamophobia may take. Its most important challenging feature is its predominantly hidden character and its inbuilt pervasiveness within the occupational culture.’ **(Adapted from a statement by Dr Robin Oakley)**

‘The collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to Muslims because of their religion. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and stereotyping which disadvantage Muslims.’ **(Adapted from the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry report)**

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<sup>13</sup> The idea of adapting the concept of institutional racism to Islamophobia was pioneered in training organised by the An-Nisa Society.

The impact of institutional Islamophobia is described below in examples. The An-Nisa Society, mentioned earlier in this chapter, provides a range of services for Muslim people in north-west London.

### **Institutional Islamophobia: Some Examples**

Khalida Khan, director of the An-Nisa Society, says the draining effect of institutional Islamophobia affects entire communities and has both practical and psychological consequences. 'Relentless Islamophobia directly affects the morale of Muslims themselves,' she said. 'It lowers their self esteem leading to withdrawal and stress.'

One person who sought help from An-Nisa gave a graphic example of how individuals are affected. 'Sometimes the discrimination is subtle. It starts from the time they find out your name or the way you dress. Then they keep prodding you to see how much you can take. I normally don't take much nonsense but soon you get tired. You can't spend all your life trying to educate people who have decided to be ignorant. To be honest I have neither the time nor energy.'

An-Nisa argues strongly that the failure of institutions to service Muslim communities properly can be blamed, at least in part, on the reluctance of legislators and subsequently of officials to recognise Muslims as a distinct group. 'For the last two decades Muslims have been subsumed under the category of "Asians". And even then, the term only covers people from the Indian sub-continent. Whoever coined that term wiped off Turks, Iranians, Chinese, Filipinos and others from the continent of Asia. Workers on the ground are well aware that Muslims come from many races and national origins. But by treating such diverse communities as if they are one, the organisers of services have inadvertently devised insensitive and unjust policies with serious consequences.'

If institutions evolve a corporate ethos which is prejudiced against Muslims, or which doesn't take their needs into account, how will their workers respond? Evidence compiled by An-Nisa suggests workers operating in such an atmosphere act in accordance with that ethos. Khalida Khan says one case brought to her attention proves how devastating ignorance or just lazy thinking can be. 'A social worker was sent to assess a family in connection with a child being fostered and perhaps adopted. She was told that the family prayed five times a day so she said that they were fundamentalists. The father was asked what he would do for the future and it is Allah's will and we cannot predict the future. That too led to them being regarded as fundamentalists.' **(Source: interview by Hugh Muir, summer 2003)**

### **Negative stereotyping**

The negative image of Muslims and Islam began as early as the Crusades when Christian and mercenary soldiers marched to Palestine in order to "free" Jerusalem and the Holy Land from Islamic influence and authority. Songs were sung by marching Crusaders characterizing Islam and Muslims not only negatively but Muslims as infidels and idolaters. Ever since the early Crusades, Islam and Muslims have been portrayed in a derogatory fashion. With the declaration of the Jewish state of Israel at the expense of the Palestinians in 1948, there has been a continuing, sometimes covert, oftentimes obvious and blatant effort to stereotype Arabs and

Muslims as barbaric terrorists possessing no conscience or mercy in their war against the civilized populations of the world.

Novels and encyclopaedic information either subtly and shrewdly or manifestly insert defamatory statements about Arabs and Muslims in such a way that the reader is unaware of these attacks. The film industry is even more effective in the portrayal of Arabs and Muslims in a manner that creates hate and prejudice in the hearts and minds of international viewers. Arab and Muslim groups living within the United States have struggled to combat these negative images but do not have the power, the means nor possess as effective a voice as the billions of dollars that back the entertainment industry.

A United Nations special investigator on religion, a Tunisian lawyer, Abdul Fattah Amor, said on March 17, 1999, that a pervasive Islamophobia exists in the United States and is fed by a "hate-filled" image of Muslims presented in the media. Amor, who compiled his report after a visit to the United States in January and February of 1999, argues that, "The Muslim community can certainly flourish freely in the religious sphere, but it has to be recognized that there is an Islamophobia reflecting both racial and religious intolerance." He went on to say, "This is not the fault of the authorities, but of a very harmful activity by the media in general and the popular press in particular, which consists in putting out a distorted and indeed hate-filled message treating Muslims as extremists and terrorists."

It is sad that some of the greatest enemies of Islam can be found in the dictators of Muslim countries. Examples of so-called Muslim leaders who want a secular state at the expense of the lives and welfare of their people can be found in Algeria and Turkey. They day-to-day massacres of Algerian civilians are not carried out by true Muslims, but by paid mercenaries wishing to turn the hearts of the people against Islam. There are many other leaders of Muslim countries whose prisons are full of those wishing to promote Islam and Muslim governments.

### **Essentially foreign**

#### **Some findings from research on Media and British Muslims**

A study was made of all articles on British Muslims that appeared in The Guardian /Observer and The Times/Sunday Times in the period 1993-97. There were 837 articles altogether, 504 in the Guardian/Observer and 333 in The Times/Sunday Times. In addition stories about British Muslims in 1997 were studied in the Sun and the Mail. A count was also made of stories about Muslims in the wider world. The findings of the research included:

Only one story in seven was about Islam in Britain, as distinct from the wider world. The implication was that Islam is essentially foreign. Muslims in Britain were frequently represented irrational and antiquated, threatening British liberal values and democracy.

The agenda of Muslims in Britain was seen as being dictated by Muslims outside Britain. A strong focus on extremist and fanatical Muslims marginalised the moderate and pragmatic stance of the majority of British Muslims.

Muslims in Britain were depicted as being involved in deviant activities, for example corruption and crime. The Guardian gave much more coverage to Muslim issues than other papers and was more likely to write positively and to provide alternative viewpoints. It is read by far fewer people than most other papers, however, and its secular, human rights stance means Islam is sometimes formulated as offensive to its liberal norms.

Commenting later on the findings, the author noted that Muslims are becoming a more powerful lobbying force and have made efforts to create a representative body, the **Muslim Council of Britain (MCB)**, with which the government can negotiate. She judged that lobbying by Muslims has had a positive effect on both the government and the media (Source: the research was undertaken by Dr Elizabeth Poole, University of Staffordshire. It is published in *Reporting Islam*, I.B.Tauris, 2002)

Post September 11, 2001 there was a genuine recognition among most media outlets of the need to avoid content that would inflame the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims in Britain. Led by the line from Downing Street, even *The Sun* – long saddled with a reputation as a racially intolerant and a sensationalist newspaper – issued a high profile appeal for calm. On September 13, 2001, a full-page article written by David Yelland – then the editor – proclaimed “Islam Is Not An Evil Religion”. It may have been stating the obvious. But at the time it made a valuable contribution – a fact recognised by the Commission for Racial Equality which short listed the article for a “Race in the Media Award”.

### **Whose watchdog?**

In July 2001, a month before the US terrorist atrocities, senior officials from the Muslim press and the Muslim Council of Britain met with Lord Wakeham, then the chairman of the Press Complaints Commission. Together the learned gathering discussed the ‘negative stereotyping’ of Muslims and Lord Wakeham assured those present that he understood their concerns. On the 15th of November, 2001 amid the pleas for calm and mutual tolerance and the establishment of Islam Awareness Week to promote greater understanding across the communities, the *Daily Express* published an article by columnist Carol Sarler which seemed to encapsulate all of the worries conveyed to Lord Wakeham just four months previously.

Under the headline *Why Do I have To Tolerate The Rantings of Bigots Just Because They Are Muslim*, Ms Sarler said even she, as a ‘conscientious, secular liberal’ felt unable to voice legitimate doubts about the Islamic faith and its adherents. The irony of the fact that she was doing so over an entire page of a national newspaper did not trouble her. Citing one single opinion poll which, she said, showed 70 per cent of British Muslims either support or condone Osama bin Laden, she said: ‘We are constantly told that the vast majority of Moslems in this country are moderates and hush your mouth if you even might think, oh really, so where are they then?’ She said many refer to Islam as ‘a religion of tolerance, peace and love’, adding: ‘Which is jolly splendid but goes nowhere towards explaining why every Moslem state in the world today is a cauldron of violence, corruption, oppression and dodgy democracy: the direct opponents of everything a liberal holds dear; yet at your peril do you mention it.’ The Qur’an she dismissed as ‘no more than a bloodthirsty little book.’

The equivalent insult if her target had been Christianity would have been ‘Jesus was no more than a bloodthirsty little man.’

On the day of publication, an *Express* reader submitted a complaint to the Press Complaints Commission, still led by Lord Wakeham, on the grounds that the article was discriminatory and inaccurate. But the complaint was rejected. In its adjudication, the PCC accepted the *Express*’s argument that ‘the article, headed as comment, was clearly distinguished as the opinion of the columnist, in accordance with terms of the Code.’ It noted the *Express* printed a letter of rebuttal from the Muslim Council of Britain the following week. Other complaints from the Muslim Council of Britain have been rejected on the grounds that individuals have a right to reply if inaccurate reports are printed about them, but not organisations on behalf of a religious faith.<sup>14</sup> The PCC said: ‘Clause 13 (Discrimination) relates only to named individuals and, as in the article no specific persons were subject to prejudiced or pejorative attack based upon their race or religion, did not consider that a breach of the that clause could be established.’ There are no plans to close this loophole, even when the new press regulator assumes responsibility.

What also disturbed many was the fact that the PCC seems unable or unwilling to act even when many of the comments made by the author are based on claims that are themselves open to challenge. For example, the columnist claimed that few Muslim leaders had spoken out against September 11, 2001. In point of fact the Muslim Council of Britain issued a condemnatory press release within three hours of the atrocity on 11 September and within 48 hours convened a meeting of community leaders from which emerged a joint statement denouncing the atrocities as indefensible. It is clear that the PCC is not an adequate bulwark against Islamophobia in the media. A more reliable bulwark, if it can be created, would lie in a revised code of professional ethics

## **Representation**

As the shock from September 11, 2001 subsided, however, Muslim concern about the media's tendency to elevate fringe figures to a place of mainstream importance became, once again, a live issue. For many years Muslims had complained about the prominence given to Omar Bakri Muhammed – the North London cleric with a penchant for publicity and the provocative quote. For all the good intentions, after September 11 many newspapers and broadcasters still found him a hard habit to break. But the appeal of Omar Bakri paled dramatically when set against the attractions of Abu Hamza. Here, just waiting for an unquestioning press, was a villain straight out of central casting. He has an eye patch, a hook replacing an amputated hand, a claimed association with Taliban training camps and a knack for issuing blood-curdling threats.

In an analysis of the media post September 11, the academic researcher Christopher Price noted that the *Daily Mail* printed the same photo of Abu Hamza on the 15th, 17th, 18th, 20th and 21st. The paper also printed an interview with him on the 13th September that was partially repeated on the 15th and 18th as well. Days after the

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<sup>14</sup> The website of the **Muslim Council of Britain** ([www.mcb.org.uk](http://www.mcb.org.uk)) has several examples of letters of complaint sent to national newspapers and the Press Complaints Commission, and of dismissive and unhelpful replies.

beginning of the war in Iraq, his views were sought again. The Press Association, which supplies all national and regional papers, described him as ‘one of Britain's best known Muslim preachers’. For journalists from the *Telegraph* to the Today Programme, and from the *News of The World* to Newsnight, he was a top attraction.

Of course, figures like Hamza and his associates have a right to have their views reported, as does any other citizen of this country. But too often such views are reported as representative of all Muslim communities. Moderates who sought to place them in their proper context struggled to make their voices heard. Inayat Bunglawala of the Muslim Council of Britain voiced the frustrations of many. ‘There are over 800 mosques in the UK and only one of them is run by a known radical. Yet this one mosque (Finsbury Park, London) seems to get more coverage than all the rest put together! The situation is akin to taking a member of the racist BNP and saying his views are representative of ordinary Britons.’<sup>15</sup>

**Ahmed Versi**, the editor of the *Muslim News* says that frustration remains. ‘The Muslim community is attacked for not denouncing September 11 enough, yet the newspapers and television news will give an enormous amount of space and airtime to people like Abu Hamza and not seek out moderate voices. He is a nothing figure in the Muslim community. He doesn't have a major following. Young Muslim men are not particularly attracted to his teachings. So why do newspapers continue to give him so much space? **It is Islamophobia.**’

‘Historically,’ the Archbishop of Canterbury said in his Christmas Day sermon in 2003, ‘religious faith has too often been the language of the powerful, the excuse for oppression, and the alibi for atrocity. It has appeared as itself intolerant of difference (hence the legacy of anti-Semitism), as a campaigning, aggressive force for uniformity, as a self-defensive and often corrupt set of institutions indifferent to basic human welfare. That's a legacy that dies hard, however much we might want to protest that it is far from the whole picture. And it's given new life by the threat of terror carried out in the name of a religion – even when representatives of that religion at every level roundly condemn such action as incompatible with faith.’<sup>16</sup>

### **Perceptions of Islam as a threat: Some columnists' views**

#### **“At least as dangerous”**

“Muslim fundamentalism is at least as dangerous as communism once was. Please do not underestimate this risk ... at the conclusion of this age it is a serious threat, because it represents terrorism, religious fanaticism and exploitation of social and economic justice.” (*Willi Claes, Secretary General of NATO* Television interview reported by Inter Press Service, 18 February 1995)

#### **“Chief threat to global peace”**

“Muslim fundamentalism is fast becoming the chief threat to global peace and security as well as a cause of national and local disturbance through terrorism. It is

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<sup>15</sup> On November 20, 2001,

<sup>16</sup> All major statements by the Archbishop can be downloaded from [www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/serpns-speeches](http://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/serpns-speeches).



akin to the menace posed by Nazism and fascism in the 1930s and then by communism in the 1950s.” (*Clare Hollingsworth, defence correspondent International Herald Tribune*, 9 November 1993)

### **“Different civilisation”**

“The underlying problem for the West is not Islamic fundamentalism. it is Islam, a different civilisation whose people are convinced of the superiority of their culture and are obsessed with the inferiority of their power.” (*Samuel Huntington, Harvard University The Clash of Civilisations and the Remaking of World Order*, 1996, page 217)

### **‘There will be wars’**

We do not know who primed and put the Oklahoma bomb in its place; we do know that they were, in the fullest meaning of the word, fanatics. Unlike most of us, they do not in the least mind being killed; indeed, they are delighted, because they believe that they are going to a far, far better place ... Do you realise that in perhaps half a century, not more and perhaps a good deal less, there will be wars, in which fanatical Muslims will be winning? As for Oklahoma, it will be called Khartoum-on-the-Mississippi, and woe betide anyone who calls it anything else. (*Bernard Levin, columnist The Times*, 21 April 1995)

\*(Muslims had in fact no responsibility for the Oklahoma bombing.)

### **Muslims are a threat to our way of life**

“All Muslims, like all dogs, share certain characteristics. A dog is not the same animal as a cat just because both species are comprised of different breeds. An extreme Christian believes that the Garden of Eden really existed; an extreme Muslim flies planes into buildings - there's a big difference.” (July 25, 2004)

### **Muslims are a threat to our way of life**

**Author** By Will Cummins (Telegraph Jul 25, 2004)

<http://www.sport.telegraph.co.uk/opinion/main.jhtml?xml=/opinion/2004/07/25/do2504.xml>

### **A Tory platform hostile to Islam**

Do the Tories not sense the enormous popular groundswell against Islam? Charges of "racism" would inevitably be made against the party but they would never stick. It is the black heart of Islam, not its black face, to which millions object. The Conservatives would be charged with cynicism and expediency: look who would be talking!

But unlike the "Nazi-Soviet Pact" that the feminist, pro-gay Left has forged with Britain's Muslims, a Tory platform hostile to Islam would be neither incongruous nor immoral. An anti-Islam Conservative Party would destroy the BNP as quickly as Margaret Thatcher despatched the National Front in 1979 when she warned that,

unless immigration was curbed, Britain would be "swamped" by "an alien culture". Infinitely more is at stake now.

***The Tories must confront Islam instead of kowtowing to it***, Will Cummins, *The Daily Telegraph*, 18 July 2004

### **Certain characteristics**

All Muslims, like all dogs, share certain characteristics. A dog is not the same animal as a cat just because both species are comprised of different breeds. An extreme Christian believes that the Garden of Eden really existed; an extreme Muslim flies planes into buildings - there's a big difference.

***Muslims are a threat to our way of life***, Will Cummins *The Daily Telegraph*, 25 July 2004

### **Highly indignant**

The Crusades – for which the Pope has apologised to Islam (he did so again last week), rather as an old lady might apologise to a mugger for trying to retrieve her purse – were simply an attempt by medieval Christians to get their homelands back. Spain, Sicily, and parts of the Balkans were recovered. Palestine wasn't, though the Muslim colonisers there – who are no more "native" to the Holy Land than the European Jews who removed them – were largely ejected in 1948. It goes without saying that today's Muslims – who, unlike today's Westerners, are very proud of their history of imperialism – are highly indignant at being parted from this stolen property. ***Dr Williams, beware of false prophets***, Will Cummins, *The Daily Telegraph*, 4 July 2004

### **Forced themselves on us**

A virulent hatred of Muslims can no more be racism than a virulent hatred of Marxists or Tories. Nobody is a member of a race by choice. Such groups are protected from attack because it is unfair to malign human beings for something they cannot help. However, nobody is a member of a community of belief except by choice, which is why those who have decided to enter or remain within one are never protected. Were such choices not open to the severest censure, we could no longer call our country a democracy.... A society in which one cannot revile a religion and its members is one in which there are limits to the human spirit. The Islamic world was intellectually and economically wrecked by its decision to put religion beyond the reach of invective, which is simply an extreme form of debate. By so doing, it put science and art beyond the reach of experiment, too. Now, at the behest of Muslim foreigners who have forced themselves on us, New Labour wants to import the same catastrophe into our own society. **"We must be allowed to criticise Islam"**, Will Cummins, *The Daily Telegraph*, 11 July 2004

### **Mr. Will Cummins writes distorting facts about Islam in Sunday Telegraph;**

"...three of the four schools of Islamic law enjoin faithful Muslims to murder anyone who wishes to leave the faith, thus limiting every Muslim's freedom of action", he wrote in an article published on 11th July, 2004 entitled "We must be allowed to criticise Islam." In his most recent article entitled "Muslims are a threat to our way of

life” published on **Sunday Telegraph 25th July 2004**, Mr. Will Cummins compared ‘Muslims to dogs’ and called Britain ‘Islamofascist’. His previous articles explicitly incite religious hatred, ‘All but an infinitesimal minority of our Muslims are peaceable and law abiding’ he stated in the article of **Sunday Telegraph 18th July 2004**”.

We learnt that **Sunday Telegraph** writer was in fact the Press officer of the British Council - the agency who has been working to promote Britain within Muslim World and was celebrating diversity of British culture. This fact was revealed by the Guardian last week, the author of a number of poisonous articles against Islam and Muslims which appeared in the Sunday Telegraph in recent weeks, is indeed Harry Cummins, Press Officer of the British Council. Writing under the pseudonym “Will Cummins”, Harry Cummins compared Muslims to Dogs and argued that it is Islam’s ‘dark heart’ rather than its ‘dark face’ that people should fear. For an individual with such appalling views and racist tendencies to be occupying a prominent position in the British Council, which promotes Britain and its culture to the Arab and Muslim world, is repulsive. Will Cummins, seems to relish making vitriolic statements about Muslims.

"Do the Tories not sense the enormous popular groundswell against Islam? Charges of "racism" would inevitably be made against the party but they would never stick. It is the black heart of Islam, not its black face, to which millions object." (**Sunday Telegraph July 18, 2004**)

"Now, at the behest of Muslim foreigners who have forced themselves on us, New Labour wants to import the same catastrophe into our own society." (**Sunday Telegraph July 11, 2004**)

"Christians are the original inhabitants and rightful owners of almost every Muslim land and behave with a humility quite unlike the menacing behaviour we have come to expect from the Muslims who have forced themselves on Christendom, a bullying ingratitude that culminates in a terrorist threat to their un-consulted hosts." (**Sunday Telegraph July 4, 2004**)

I believe that these sentiments are clearly designed to provoke readers of the Sunday Telegraph into hating British Muslims and their faith. This ignoble endeavour is, of course, utterly at odds with the purpose and mission of the British Council which is to encourage understanding and build ties between different peoples.

You can read some of Will Cummins writings in the Telegraphs

1.. “The Tories must confront Islam instead of kowtowing to it”  
<http://www.opinion.telegraph.co.uk/opinion/main.jhtml?xml=/opinion/2004/07/18/do1802.xml&sSheet=/opinion/2004/07/18/ixopinion.html>

2.. Will Cummins articles can be downloaded from the following links  
“Muslims are a threat to our way of life”  
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/opinion/main.jhtml;sessionid=D5P01UD5EORIDQFIQMGSGS>

M54AVCBQWJVC?xml=/opinion/2004/07/25/do2504.xml&secureRefresh=true&\_requestid=133718

3.. “We must be allowed to criticise Islam”

<http://www.opinion.telegraph.co.uk/opinion/main.jhtml?xml=/opinion/2004/07/11/do1102.xml>

4.. “Dr Williams, beware of false prophets”

<http://www.opinion.telegraph.co.uk/opinion/main.jhtml?xml=/opinion/2004/07/04/do0401.xml>

5. Sunday Telegraph Anti-Islam Columnist: A British: Council Employee

<http://www.aljazeera.info/News%20archives/2004%20News%20archives/August/1%20n/Sunday%20Telegraph%20Anti-Islam%20Columnist%20A%20British%20Council%20Employee.htm>

**An article by Anthony Browne was published in weekly Spectator (24 July 2004)  
Spectator Cover Story : The Muslims are Coming**

[www.gnXP.com/MT2/archives/002455.html?entry=2455-101k](http://www.gnXP.com/MT2/archives/002455.html?entry=2455-101k)

<http://www.virtuosityonline.org/portal/modules/news/article.php?storyid=1082>

*Spectator* magazine (UK) 24 July 2004 has a lead article by **Anthony Browne**, a well known London *Times* journalist, arguing that: **"Islam really does want to conquer the world. That's because Muslims, unlike many Christians, actually believe they are right and that their religion is the path to salvation for all"**.

We are absolutely stunned that a mainstream journalist can get away with sparking such religious hatred. Anthony Browne's cover article in the *Spectator* 24/7/04 (see below) prompted the following ignorant reaction illustrating for the umpteenth time the consequences of the unfair portrayal of Islam within the media:

“...a demonstrative, indulgent, obsessive, hateful, judgmental religion that leads by religious inspiration POLITICALLY... judicially perverse, teaching wife battery, death by a 1000 cuts, beheading, (often of innocent bystanders), demeaning of women, the hatred of Israel, and the west who stands in the way of a war with Israel. The 6th day war, the denial of Jews a homeland, suicide bombers, a prophet-leader who bedded a 9 year old girl....(Mohammad)”

The article incited this hatred by comparing Islam's teachings to Hitler's behaviour, and to add insult to injury, *Times* journalist Anthony Browne arrogantly states:

“There's no plot... Islam really does want to conquer the world. That's because Muslims, unlike many Christians, actually believe they are right, and that their religion is the path to salvation for all.”

Nobody who is in the influential spotlight of the media should be able to get away with comments that, time and again, add fuel to the fires of anti-Muslim hatred.

- Anthony Browne's ignorant and inflammatory article relies on misinformation from notorious Islamophobes such as Bernard Lewis (Spectator 24/7/04).
- If Islam is as bad as he portrays it, why would thousands of Westerners be freely choosing to convert to Islam, as he mentions?
- Anthony Browne's belief in freedom of religion was preached 1400 years ago in the Qur'an: "Let there be no compulsion in religion" (The Holy Qur'an 2.256)
- The Qur'an also teaches: "God does not love the aggressors" (The Holy Qur'an 2.190).
- It is only natural that people should want to share what they believe is beneficial with others – whether this is Christianity, Islam or Atheism. Indeed many British churches run 'Alpha courses' for this purposes, and Jehovahs Witnesses offer their message door to door.
- Anthony Browne seems unaware of the fact that Christian missionaries operate freely in many Muslim countries across Asia and Africa – Bangladesh being just one example. The restrictions imposed by tyrannical regimes such as the US- and UK-supported Saudi royal family are completely un-Islamic.
- Browne also seems unaware that the 1988 Education Act requires that Religious Education and Collective Worship in state schools must be "mainly Christian".
- Is Anthony Browne implying that because Muslims allegedly want to "take over the world" that the "persecution and mass murder" of Muslims would be justified?

### **"The hooded hordes will win"**

"You can be British without speaking English or being Christian or being white, but nevertheless Britain is basically English-speaking, Christian and white, and if one starts to think that it might become basically Urdu-speaking and Muslim and brown, one gets frightened and angry ... Because of our obstinate refusal to have enough babies, Western European civilisation will start to die at the point when it could have been revived with new blood. Then the hooded hordes will win, and the Koran will be taught, as Gibbon famously imagined, in the schools of Oxford. (*Charles Moore, editor of The Spectator* 'Time for a More Liberal and "Racist" Immigration Policy', *The Spectator*, 19 October 1991).

### **Islam wants the whole world to Submit**

Islam means "submission" (not "peace") and it is the aim of Muslims ("those who have submitted") to make the whole world submit. The teaching seems not to envisage the idea of Muslims as a minority, except as a temporary phenomenon. The best that non-Muslims - in Britain that means Sikhs and Hindus, as well as Jews and Christians - can hope for is that they be treated as "dhimmis", second-class citizens within the Islamic state.

## **Islam is not an exotic addition to the English country garden**

**By Charles Moore** (*Telegraph*: 21/08/2004)

### **A very evil, wicked religion**

Islam is, quite simply, a religion of war... [American Muslims] should be encouraged to leave. They are a fifth column in this country. **Why Islam is a Threat to America and the West by Paul Weyrich and William Lind**

We should invade their countries, kill their leaders and convert them to Christianity. We weren't punctilious about locating and punishing only Hitler and his top officials. We carpet bombed German cities, and killed civilians. That's war. And this is war.

**Columnist Ann Coulter, National Review, 13 September 2001**

Muslims pray to a different God ...Islam is a very evil and wicked religion ...

**Franklin Graham (son of Billy Graham), speech on NBC Nightly News, November 2001**

They want to coexist until they can control, dominate and then, if need be, destroy ... I think Osama bin Laden is probably a very dedicated follower of Muhammad. He's done exactly what Muhammad said to do, and we disagree with him obviously, and I'm sure many moderate Muslims do as well, but you can't say the Muslim religion is a religion of peace. It's not.

**Rev Pat Robertson, founder of Christian Coalition, CNN, February 2002**

Islam is a religion in which God requires you to send your son to die for him. Christianity is a faith in which God sends his son to die for you.

**John Ashcroft (US Attorney General), Los Angeles Times, 16 February 2002**

Muhammad was a demon-possessed paedophile...Allah is not Jehovah... Jehovah's not going to turn you into a terrorist that will try to bomb people and take the lives of thousands and thousands of people.

**Rev Jerry Vines, past president of the Southern Baptist Convention, speaking at the Convention in June 2002**

### **Noose**

Was world communism ever such a threat as militant Islam now is? If Islam were to draw a noose about the world, could it be resisted, would its political and economic consequences be worse, would its dominion last longer than the half-century of communism after the Iron Curtain dropped?

**Brian Sewell, Evening Standard**

### **Oppressive darkness**

Call me a filthy racist – go on, you know you want to – but we have reason to be suspicious of Islam and treat it differently from the other major religions ... While the history of the other religions is one of moving forward out of oppressive darkness and into tolerance, Islam is doing it the other way round. **Julie Birchill, The Guardian**

### **Treachery and deceit**

Orientalists... shrink from pitched battle, which they often deride as a sort of game, preferring ambush, surprise, treachery and deceit as the best way to overcome an enemy... This war [in Afghanistan] belongs within the much larger spectrum of a far wider conflict between settled, creative, productive Westerners and predatory, destructive Orientalists. **John Keegan, The Daily Telegraph, 8 October 2001**

### **Blind, cruel faith**

Islamist militancy is a self-confessed threat to the values not merely of the US but also of the European Enlightenment: to the preference for life over death, to peace, rationality, science and the humane treatment of our fellow men, not to mention fellow women. It is a reassertion of blind, cruel faith over reason.

**Samuel Brittan, : The Financial Times, 31 July 2002**

### **Fifth column**

We have a fifth column in our midst... Thousands of alienated young Muslims, most of them born and bred here but who regard themselves as an army within, are waiting for an opportunity to help to destroy the society that sustains them. We now stare into the abyss, aghast. **Melanie Phillips, Sunday Times, 4 November 2001**

When the Runnymede Trust Commission on Islamophobia published a consultation paper in 1997 it quoted from an article by a prominent journalist. Islam was once, he had said, 'a great civilisation worthy of being argued with'. But latterly it had degenerated into 'a primitive enemy fit only to be sensitively subjugated'. Seeing him quoted in this context, the journalist immediately published a defiant response. He entitled it 'I believe in Islamophobia' and concluded: 'To worry about contemporary Islam is not mad. It would be mad to do otherwise.' (**Peregrine Worsthorne, Sunday Telegraph, 3 February 1991**)

Information about the full report from which this extract is taken can be obtained from the Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia Report titled

**“Islamophobia: a Challenge for Us All”**, published in 1997. The report itself can be ordered through any bookshop (**ISBN 0 9022397-98-2**). A progress report entitled [“Addressing the Challenge of Islamophobia”](#), published by the Commission in late 2001

**The new report on Islamophobia entitled “Islamophobia: issues, challenges and action” was published on 21 June 2004 by Trentham Books, ISBN 1 85856 317 8, price £12.99.** This report is a successor to **“Islamophobia: a Challenge for Us All”**, published in 1997 and launched at the House of Commons by Jack Straw, then the Home Secretary. The new report, **“Islamophobia: Issues, Challenges and Action”**, says that not enough progress has been made in tackling the problem since the earlier report. Hostility towards Islam permeates every part of British society and will spark race riots unless urgent action is taken to integrate Muslim youths into society, according to this new devastating report on Islamophobia.

The Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia (**CBMI**), which is chaired by a key government adviser to the Stephen Lawrence inquiry, warns that more and more Muslims feel excluded from society and simmering tensions, especially in northern English towns, are in danger of boiling over. Members of the commission interviewed

scores of British Muslims for their report, which will be published this week and will conclude that Britain is 'institutionally Islamophobic'.

**"Muslims in Britain are now at the sharp end of race hatred and xenophobia."**

**I have heavily used both Islamophobia reports for this paper. For further information contact:**

**1) "Islamophobia: a Challenge for Us All", published in November 1997  
Uniting Britain Trust C/O The Stone Ashdown Trust, 4<sup>th</sup> floor, Barakat House,  
116-18 Finchely Road, London NW3 5HT**

**2) "Islamophobia: Issues, Challenges and Action" published on 21 June  
2004 from Trentham Books, Westview House, 734 London Road, Oakhill, Stoke  
on Trent ST4 5NP**

**Anti-Semitism in Europe is on rise**, where Christians widely believed that Jews were Christ-killers; they had betrayed Christ and so had to be punished. Crusaders against the Muslims often began their journey in Europe by slaughtering Jews. Hitler's Glaubenskrieg, the war against Jews, was the culmination, the inexorable conclusion, of a millennium of anti-Semitism. It has become the symbol of evil, and the Holocaust one of the darkest stains on human conscience.

**Let us constantly remind ourselves that anti-Semitism is far from dead in Europe. As a Muslim, I note that whenever there is Islamophobia or hatred against Muslims, the signs of anti-Semitism are not far behind.** We need to point out that the roots of prejudice among Muslims against the Jewish people are complex and originate from different sources. Prejudice can be religious, ie anti-Judaic; it can be racist, ie anti-Semitic; and it can be political, ie anti-Zionist. Prejudice may combine all three, but one prejudice does not automatically assume the other two. There may be those who oppose the political ideas of Zionism, but are not either anti-Judaic or anti-Semitic.

The success of Zionism in creating Israel complicates matters for Muslims. Loss of land for the Palestinians and the loss of Jerusalem are viewed with injustice and anger among Muslims. In the rhetoric of confrontation, many blur the distinction between anti-Judaism, anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism. Such Muslims make the mistake they accuse others of making about themselves: seeing all Jews as monolithic and threatening.

As President of the European Commission, Romano Prodi invoked Europe's Jews in exactly these terms:

"I believe we can learn a lot from the history of the Jews of Europe. In many ways they are the first, the oldest Europeans. We, the new Europeans, are just starting to learn the complex art of living with multiple allegiances – allegiance to our home town, to our own region, to our home country, and now to the European Union. The Jews have been forced to master this art since antiquity. They were both Jewish and Italian, or Jewish and French, Jewish and Spanish, Jewish and Polish, Jewish and German. Proud of their ties with Jewish communities throughout the continent and equally proud of their bonds with their own countries of origin." (Romano Prodi, "A



Union of Minorities.” **Opening Speech (as published) at the “Seminar on Europe – Against anti-Semitism, For a Union of Diversity.” Brussels, 2/19/04, p. 2.)**

**Suggested Recommendation for OSCE consideration:**

I would strongly suggest that in the final statement being prepared at the **OSCE** conference here the term **Islamophobia is explicitly used with Anti-Semitism**, as Europe has no choice but to face the reality that millions of its people are now Muslims are suffering from hostility, discrimination. **OSCE** must ask its 55 member countries to establish system to monitor or record crimes against Muslims and provide advise, support and representation to all those who become victim of Islamophobic crimes

In order to reduce the numbers of people who progress to such levels of hate and prejudice that they host Islamophobic and anti-Semitic messages in the media and the internet, **OSCE** should identify communities which have significant, if small numbers of people who send out these messages.

The majority in these communities usually are not Islamophobic or anti-Semitic, so the **OSCE** should sponsor and support governments, NGOs and individuals who seek out and meet those silent majorities, to set up programmes to educate them that Jews are people little different from themselves.

It was agreed at many Sessions of **OSCE** conferences that a major new Islamophobic and anti-Semitism come from either from ignorance or from extremists (and terrorists).

I must stress that Anti-Semitism is based on race, culture and Ethnicity not on religion. As Semites are people who speak Semitic languages and whose ancestry can be traced to Shem, Noah’s eldest son. Semites may include Jews, Christians and Muslims. As last OSCE commission o Human Rights it was resolved that Anti-Semitism is a basis of religious intolerance. This resolution has been retained by the sponsors in OP-6 of this year’s Draft resolutions.

Programmes to be supported by **OSCE** can include practical measures such as:

- Map positive contacts between local Muslims and local Jewish communities. If there are insufficient local Jews or Muslims then **OSCE** can sponsor contacts on the internet.
- Facilitate Jews and Muslims to share best practice in protecting themselves against their common enemies, including neo-fascists.
- Promote inter-faith and inter-cultural dialogue for better understanding between different faith communities.
- Joint work on university campuses when each other’s rights are under threat e.g when examinations are set on days which are religious holidays.
- Study religious texts together and sponsor visits to each other’s places of worship.
- Develop together arts programmes.
- Play football together, especially at school age.
- Set up dialogue groups, especially facilitated discussions on the Israel/Palestine problem in order to address and unpick stereotypes.

- Support the silent Muslim majorities to express their shame and horror at anti-Semitic filth from the small minority of extremists in their community.
- **Religious Freedom is in danger in Europe and OSCE must act and EU must not give FACRE as consultative (NGO status) ”**

The draft has too many words for a Recommendation. The British Foreign Office has welcomed and sponsored the positive contacts growing between British Muslims and British Jews as a practical way of drawing together the large silent majorities in both communities. If Recommendations along these lines are agreed by OSCE in principle, the British delegation, and in particular I shall be happy to work with OSCE officials to improve the wording.

## **Religious Freedom is in danger in Europe and OSCE must act**

### **FECRIS application for participatory/consultative (NGO status) with the Council of Europe**

**FECRIS (European Federation of Research and Information Centres on Sectarianism) acts as an umbrella organization for national "anti-cult" groups from different European countries.**

**The message spread by FECRIS is an alarmist one whereby they attempt to create a generalized and derogatory classification of "sect" which they categorize as ‘dangerous’.** Their actions target a wide range of minority religious groups and their intent is to lobby governments to accept this unscientific concept, establish themselves as ‘experts’ in the field, disseminate what is biased, false and misleading information and create discriminatory legislation targeting such groups.

**FECRIS have applied for participatory status** (a special non-government organisation status) **with the Council of Europe.** This would provide FECRIS with a credibility it does not deserve that would be used to forward its actions as described above - all contrary to the Council of Europe’s standards of tolerance, dialogue, pluralism and justice. FECRIS are entitled to their opinions but they are not entitled to the support and endorsement of the Council of Europe in disseminating them.

**The application is currently at the last stage – a final decision by the Committee of Ministers.** This is likely to be taken in the coming few weeks. The only reason that the application has moved so far (it passed through the Parliamentary Assembly) is because a set of arbitrary procedural rules was adopted at the beginning of the investigation which resulted in the Assembly ignoring all submissions from NGOs.

Whilst providing many examples of discrimination and intolerance caused by FECRIS members these submissions also evidenced that **in at least seven countries FECRIS groups and its members have been condemned in courts more than 20 times for offences ranging from false imprisonment and physical harm to defamation** (a list and short summary of each case, all final decisions not under appeal, follows).

**The Assembly's conclusions were even factually wrong.** For example, two of the conclusions passed by the Assembly were that *'Mr. Griess, Vice President of FECRIS...has not indulged in reprehensible verbal attacks against the Council of Europe's principles of tolerance'* and *"Neither FECRIS nor its member groups have been responsible for spreading false information with damaging consequences for innocent individuals"*.

Mr. Griess is both a Vice President of FECRIS and their webmaster and has been convicted by Austrian and German courts on 7 occasions for defamation (and offences related to this) concerning a minority Christian movement.

**The drafting of a final decision has been assigned to the Romanian Ambassador to the Council of Europe, H.E. Mr. Gheorghe Magheru** (as responsible for relations with NGOs in the Committee of Ministers). It is currently with the Directorate General for Legal Affairs for additional legal review before a final decision is made.

### **List of cases in which FECRIS members were condemned**

#### **Extracts or summaries of judgements concerning FECRIS member groups and individuals**

- 1. Friedrich Griess, Secretary General of FECRIS** Court case: 17Cg 15/96d in Vienna Commercial court in Sept. 1996. Conviction for defamation about the Christian Family Fellowship, Styrian Christian Fellowship and the Life Fellowship (Norwegian Movement) including that they enlist people by "flirty fishing", engage in incest, adultery and deceit.
- 2. Friedrich Griess, Secretary General of FECRIS** Court case: 17Cg 15/96d in Vienna Commercial court in March 1997. Conviction for defamation with regard to the Christian Family Fellowship, Styrian Christian Fellowship and the Life Fellowship (Norwegian Movement) "Norwegians".
- 3. Friedrich Griess, Secretary General of FECRIS** Court case: 37Cg 77/98x in Vienna Commercial court on Sept 1998. Conviction for defamation for alleging that the Christian Family Fellowship, Styrian Christian Fellowship and the Life Fellowship (Norwegian Movement). Fine of 60,000 Austrian shillings
- 4. Friedrich Griess, Secretary General of FECRIS** Court case: 17 O 85/98 in Stuttgart County Court in Germany – June 1998. Conviction for defamation against the "Norwegian movement"
- 5. Friedrich Griess, Secretary General of FECRIS** Court case: 37Cg 19/00y in Vienna Commercial court in March 2000. Conviction for defamation and ordered by court to publish a correction statement on his web page and establish a link to the web page of the Norwegian Movement.

**6. Friedrich Griess, Secretary General of FECRIS** Court case: GZ 8E 3407/00 w in Klosterneuburg District Court. Violation of settlement agreement. He did not pay a fine and was ordered to remove false information from his web page and from search engines.

**7. Friedrich Griess, Secretary General of FECRIS** Judgement procedure GZ 8F 2687/02 s-3 in Klosterneuburg District Court. Violation of settlement agreement and order to pay a fine.

**8. SADK, 1990** [FECRIS member group], Switzerland In 1990, two members of FECRIS member group SADK were sentenced to prison in connection with a violent deprogramming attempt on a member of the Hare Krishna movement. Mr. Rossi, who at the time was the spokesman for SADK, spoke out loudly in favour of the deprogramming (during which the victim had been subdued with tear gas) saying “We support and approve of the deed.”

**9. FRI, 1990** [FECRIS member group], Sweden Case Nr B4901-88, ref.Nr. 75636712, issued December 19, 1990. In this judgement FRI-member Eva Pehrsson (now Pohl) was sentenced for the illegal deprivation of liberty and kidnapping of Gustavsson.

**10. FAIR, 1987** [FECRIS member group], United Kingdom Cyril Vosper, at the time an executive board member of FAIR, was convicted in Germany for false imprisonment and bodily harm in December 1987.

**11. ADFI Paris** [FECRIS member group] was condemned by the Paris County Court (Tribunal de Grande Instance) for defamation regarding Mrs. Josiane Henri and Mr. Ian Combe. (Decision RP 59 656, RG 7 987/92, ASS/20.02.92, CIVIL TRIAL COURT OF GENERAL JURISDICTION OF PARIS, 1st Chamber, 1st Section) 27th May 1992.

**12. Mrs. Tavernier** [President of a FECRIS member group]. 5th January 1994. Criminal conviction for defamation. The Paris Court of Appeal confirmed the judgment regarding the culpability of libel of Mrs. Tavernier and the punishment imposed on her by the Paris County court on 22nd June 1993. Decision n° 5490/93, APPEAL COURT OF PARIS, 11th Chamber on 5th January 1994

**13. Mrs. Ovigneur-Dewynter, President of ADFI Nord** [FECRIS member group], 15th January 1997. The Douai Court of Appeal condemned Mrs. Ovigneur-Dewynter, President of ADFI Nord for defamation regarding the Cultural Association of the Jehovah’s Witnesses in France. Case N° 96/02832, Decision on January 15th, 1997, 4th Chamber, APPEAL COURT OF DOUAI

**14. Jacky Cordonnier**, [member of UNADFI, FECRIS member group]. 29th March 2002. Criminal conviction for defamation. The Marseille County Court condemned her for libel regarding the association of Jehovah’s Witnesses. Decision n° 2972/02 Number 01207964

**15. Janine Tavernier President of UNADFI** [FECRIS member group]. 5th February 2003. The Paris Court of Appeal confirmed the judgment in the civil proceedings against Janine Tavernier and UNADFI (decisions of the Paris County Court of 20 November 2001). Case N° 01/03757, Decision of February 5th, 2003, APPEAL COURT OF PARIS, 11th Chamber, section A

**16. AGPF and Sect-Info Essen** [FECRIS member groups]. The German Federal Supreme Court ruled on 27 March 1992 that it was unconstitutional for the State to provide funding for organisations such as AGPF and Sect-Info Essen, both FECRIS member groups. (The case was brought by the new religious movement, OSHO, Ref. Case Nr. 7C21-90LU66). That AGPF and Sect-Info Essen deal with new religious movements in a way that cannot be considered objective or neutral was made clear in this decision.

**17. Ms. Heide-Marie Cammans**, founder of Sect-info Essen [FECRIS member group]. In a final judgment on 19th December 2001 by the Munich State Court, Ms. Heide-Marie Cammans, founder of FECRIS member group Sect-info Essen was ordered to stop circulating falsehoods about Takar Singh (an Eastern religious group) on pain of being fined up to 500,000 DM or, if not paid, jailed for up to 6 months. Case Nr. Az: 908736/99 Munich I State court, 9 civil chamber (German: Landgericht Munchen I).

**18. CIC** [FECRIS member group]. **Ian Haworth is a FECRIS founding member and runs the UK group Cult Information Centre (CIC)**. He has a court decision against him on 24 Oct 1989, when the Supreme Court of Ontario (Canada) ordered he pay \$10,000 in libel damages to a philosophical group. At the time Mr. Haworth was involved in a similar group to CIC in Canada. On the 17 April 1996 there is also a UK High Court decision against him for non-payment of the damages award

**19. Siren (FECRIS correspondent group)** 27 March 1997. 2 members of the group were convicted of kidnapping in The Netherlands.

**20. AIS/PRO Juventud** [FECRIS member group] (Canals case 1995) Spain which states that:

*"That the group AIS had intervened in all breaches of fundamental rights which the accused has suffered of. That neither the President nor her group had any consent at all to carry out any 'therapeutic work' on him. That this group did not have any kind of judicial authorization to replace the lack of 'consent' of the supposedly ill person. That in consequence, in a State of Rights, it is not possible to tolerate the degradation, whatever the purpose may be, of a citizen that has proven his mental integrity."*

**21. AIS/PRO Juventud** [FECRIS member group] (Riera Blume case, 1999) European Court of Human Rights which states that "In the light of the foregoing, the Court considers that the national authorities at all times acquiesced in the applicants' loss of liberty. While it is true that it was the applicants' families and the Pro Juventud association that bore the direct and immediate responsibility for the supervision of the applicants during their ten days' loss of liberty, it is equally true that without the

active cooperation of the Catalan authorities the deprivation of liberty could not have taken place.”

### **Suggestion for Spanish authorities regarding Cordoba Masjid :**

We are here meeting in beautiful surroundings next to famous **Cordoba Masjid** (Mosque). In the spirit of tolerance and accepting Muslims in our midst, I ask as a European Muslim **a)** to allow Muslim to pray in **Cordoba Masjid** (Mosque) **b)** give ownership rights back to Muslims. I hope and pray that my suggestion will be given some serious and favourable considerations

### **The Necessity of Dialogue and honest conversation:**

In my faith tradition the Holy Qur'an commands believers for interfaith co-operation "to come to common grounds" (The Holy Qur'an 3:64). As a Muslim I have been ordered to build good relations with all people of the world (The Holy Qur'an 49:13 & (16:40); work for peace everywhere and whenever possible with others (2:208) & 8:61); cooperate with others in furthering virtue and God-consciousness (5:2); seek and secure human welfare, promote justice and peace (The Holy Qur'an 4:114); do good to others (The Holy Qur'an 28:77) and not to break promises made to others (The Holy Qur'an 16:91). The Holy Qur'an tells believers that those who do good deeds and help others are the best creation (The Holy Qur'an 98:6). The Holy Prophet of Islam made it clear that "Religion is man's treatment of other fellow-beings" (Bukhari & Muslim); and "the best among you is he who does good deeds in serving other people" (Ahmad & Tabrani).

The Prophet of Islam (May the peace of God be upon him) practiced this ideal for interfaith dialogue himself while talking to Jews, Christians and other faith traditions, as well as people with no faith on issues concerning life, death and relevant matters. The Prophet of Islam confirmed this in writing explicitly in the Charter of Medina in 622 CE. The Holy Qur'an not only recognized religious pluralism as accepting other groups as legitimate socio-religious communities but also accepting their spirituality. The preservation of the sanctity of the places of worship of other faiths is paramount in Islamic tradition (The Holy Qur'an 22:40). The Holy Qur'an is full of many examples but time does not permit me to dwell on this.

### **The Role of Religion and Belief:**

Religion brings joy and hope to millions of people in the world. Religion is a social force that can be harnessed to build bridges or manipulated to erect walls. Living and working together in today's multicultural, multi-religious and multi faith society is not always easy. Faith communities have huge human and financial resources. Religion motivates its followers for doing good deeds such as raising funds for good causes, helping elderly and needy people in our communities and motivating their followers to tackle many social issues in our society. Religion harnesses deep emotions, which can sometimes take destructive forms. Where this happens, we must draw on our faith to bring about reconciliation and understanding. The truest fruits of our faith are healing the wounds of the past and being positive to construct trust and fellowship between different people. We have a great deal to learn from one another, which

enriches us without undermining our own identities. Together, listening and responding with openness and respect, we can move forward to work in ways that acknowledge genuine differences but build on shared hopes and values.

### **The need of Inter-religious Dialogue and honest conversation:**

The famous German theologian Prof Hans Kung once said, “No peace among nations without peace among religions, and no peace among religions without dialogue between the religions”. In the document the Caux 2002 Dialogue: An honest conversation among concerned Muslims and non-Muslims on Peace, Justice and Faith I added, “No peace without justice and no justice without forgiveness and compassion”. Among many prerequisites of meaningful dialogue are active listening, honest conversation, accepting the other’s vision whether agreeing or disagreeing, and acknowledging the other’s pain. In today’s world there is a dire need of inter-religious dialogue. There are common values that human beings share irrespective of religion, nationality or ethnicity. These values include the sanctity of life, freedom, equality, respect for human rights, international humanitarian law, commitment to cultural and religious diversity, human dignity, human development, democracy, the rule of law, and equitable access to the earth’s resources and equitable distribution of power.

### **Diversity recognised, appreciated and celebrated:**

Islam presents the concept that all human beings are equal and we are equal because we are all creatures of God with no distinctions of colour, race or country, or tribe or clan or anything else. One would find that fanaticism is generated in the last analysis either from any of these false prejudices, when you try to group humanity into certain watertight compartments. One cannot change the colour of his skin; one cannot change his place of birth. If one believes in any of these standards, then rational fusion of the human race is not possible and you become intolerant towards others. In Islam, the rational fusion is possible for whatever tribe, you come from, from whatever race you come, whatever colour you may have, whatever territory You might be born in, whatever language you speak, you are one, you can be one. You belong to one race the human race, the one family the human family. You belong to one brotherhood. Diversity among fellow human beings must be recognised, appreciated and valued in all aspects of life. The majority community is always judged by the way it treats its minority community

### **Ends cannot justify means:**

Another point is that Islam is very unique and firm in asserting that the ends cannot justify the means. The source from where fanaticism and intolerance have most often come from is the mistaken belief that the ends justify the means. This means that to achieve even good ends you can resort to evil means. The principle that Islam has enunciated is that "Good and bad are not equal. Replace evil by good". (The Holy Qur'an 41:34)

## **Good Practices within the United Kingdom**

**Three faiths Forum** [www.threefaithsforum.org.uk](http://www.threefaithsforum.org.uk)

## **Building Good Relations with People of Different Faiths and Beliefs**

In Britain today, people of many different faiths and beliefs live side by side. The opportunity lies before us to work together to build a society rooted in the values we treasure. But this society can only be built on a sure foundation of mutual respect, openness and trust. This means finding ways to live our lives of faith with integrity, and allowing others to do so too. Our different religious traditions offer us many resources for this and teach us the importance of good relationships characterised by honesty, compassion and generosity of spirit. The Inter Faith Network offers the following code of conduct for encouraging and strengthening these relationships.

As members of the human family, we should show each other respect and courtesy. In our dealings with people of other faiths and beliefs this means exercising good will and:

- Respecting other people's freedom within the law to express their beliefs and convictions
- Learning to understand what others actually believe and value, and letting them express this in their own terms
- Respecting the convictions of others about food, dress and social etiquette and not behaving in ways which cause needless offence
- Recognising that all of us at times fall short of the ideals of our own traditions and never comparing our own ideals with other people's practices
- Working to prevent disagreement from leading to conflict
- Always seeking to avoid violence in our relationships

When we talk about matters of faith with one another, we need to do so with sensitivity, honesty and straightforwardness. This means:

- Recognising that listening as well as speaking is necessary for a genuine conversation
- Being honest about our beliefs and religious allegiances
- Not misrepresenting or disparaging other people's beliefs and practices
- Correcting misunderstanding or misrepresentations not only of our own but also of other faiths whenever we come across them
- Being straightforward about our intentions
- Accepting that in formal inter faith meetings there is a particular responsibility to ensure that the religious commitment of all those who are present will be respected.

All of us want others to understand and respect our views. Some people will also want to persuade others to join their faith. In a multi faith society where this is permitted, the attempt should always be characterised by self-restraint and a concern for the other's freedom and dignity. This means:

- Respecting another person's expressed wish to be left alone
- Avoiding imposing ourselves and our views on individuals or communities who are in vulnerable situations in ways which exploit these
- Being sensitive and courteous



- Avoiding violent action or language, threats, manipulation, improper inducements, or the misuse of any kind of power
- Respecting the right of others to disagree with us

Living and working together is not always easy. Religion harnesses deep emotions which can sometimes take destructive forms. Where this happens, we must draw on our faith to bring about reconciliation and understanding. The truest fruits of religion are healing and positive. We have a great deal to learn from one another which can enrich us without undermining our own identities. Together, listening and responding with openness and respect, we can move forward to work in ways that acknowledge genuine differences but build on shared hopes and values.

Inter Faith Network for the UK 1993, 2004 [www.interfaith.org.uk](http://www.interfaith.org.uk)

### **British Government, Statutory agencies and voluntary Sector bodies working together to address the issue of Islamophobia, Anti-Semitism and Intolerance.**

As you may already I have been in contact with, and attended many meetings with Faith Unit of the Home Office, Faith Unit of the Foreign Commonwealth Office (FCO), office of the Deputy Prime Minister, Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and regional Faith bodies including inter-governmental agencies on Inter-Faith matters. Various Governmental departments have produced many consultative documents just to mention a few such as:

**1: Local Government Associations' document "Partnership for the common Good: Interfaith Structures and Local Government Good Practice Guidelines"** -

issued in October 2003. The full text can be found at [www.lga.gov.uk](http://www.lga.gov.uk) and [www.interfaith.org.uk](http://www.interfaith.org.uk).

**2: Local Government Associations' document entitled "Faith and Community: A Good Practice Guide for local authorities."** What action has been taken in our City?

Full document can be seen at [www.lga.gov.uk](http://www.lga.gov.uk) and [www.interfaith.org.uk](http://www.interfaith.org.uk).

**3: Home Office's consultative document issued to all Local Authorities titled "Working Together: Cooperation between Government and Faith Communities"**

dated Feb 2004 and published on 29 March 2004. The full Document can be found at

**[http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/docs3/workingtog\\_faith040329.pdf](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/docs3/workingtog_faith040329.pdf)**

Home Office Press Release can be found at

**[http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/n\\_story.asp?item\\_id=895](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/n_story.asp?item_id=895)**

**4: ACAS published its draft on "Religion or Belief and the workplace: putting the employment Regulations 2003 into practice"** and asked interfaith bodies to make suggestions for its improvement. Now the final document has been issued which can be seen at [www.acas.org.uk](http://www.acas.org.uk). MCB has produced its own guidance for Muslims which can be seen at <http://www.mcb.org.uk/>

**5: Local Government Associations' document entitled "Guidance on Community Cohesion"**. What actions have been taken? Full document can be seen at

[www.lga.gov.uk](http://www.lga.gov.uk) and [www.interfaith.org.uk](http://www.interfaith.org.uk).

**6: Local Government Associations' document entitled "Community Cohesion - An Action Guide"**, dated 19 November 2004. Full document can be seen at

[www.lga.gov.uk](http://www.lga.gov.uk) and [www.interfaith.org.uk](http://www.interfaith.org.uk).

7: Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) consultation on document on was published in 12 May 2004 in response to a consultation document named “Making “Fairness for all” it happen”. Final comments were published by DTI on 24 November 2004; copies are available at [www.womenandequalityunit.dti.gov.uk](http://www.womenandequalityunit.dti.gov.uk)

8. Local Government Association in association with Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, Home Office Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) and The Interfaith network UK produced “Faith in Community Cohesion” guidelines on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2004 This guidance is designed to assist all local authorities (from the largest counties to the smallest districts) and their partners in strengthening and building community cohesion. Further joint guidance is being developed to assist authorities and local strategic partnerships to assess (and measure) cohesion. In addition, examples of existing and emerging good practice in policy development and service provision will be posted on the LGA and Community Cohesion websites: [www.lga.gov.uk](http://www.lga.gov.uk) and [www.communitycohesion.gov.uk](http://www.communitycohesion.gov.uk).

9. We do know that some of the local authorities (district and city Councils) have appointed officers which have been given explicit responsibility for faith issues as part of their jobs descriptions (although I think LB Camden and LB Lewisham are the only authorities that currently have someone with the explicit role known as of faith officer). Authorities which have officers who have been playing a significant role on the faith or inter faith fronts include as follows without any order:

- 9.1. LB Camden (**Nina Rahel**, Senior Policy Officer, Faith Communities)
- 9.2. LB Kensington and Chelsea (**Rumman Ahmed**, Community Relations Adviser)
- 9.3. LB Barnet (**Chris Henshaw**, Principal Equalities Adviser)
- 9.4. Blackburn with Darwen (although **Fawad Bhatti** recently moved from his post as Interfaith Development Officer)
- 9.5. Birmingham City Council (**Deepak Naik**, Policy Implementation Officer)
- 9.6. Bristol City Council (**Robin Kidson**, Cabinet Services Manager)
- 9.7. Calderdale Council (**Sail Suleman**, Racial Harassment Officer)
- 9.8. Cambridge City Council has appointed a part-time faith officer;
- 9.9. LB Croydon (**Dr Tariq Shabeer** - though more faith involvement in social enterprise than inter faith work per se as his title indicates: Economic Programme Manager (Social Enterprises Business Adviser)
- 9.10. LB Islington (**Clive Clarke**, Community Development Officer. **Joe Ahmed Dobson** working as a part-tome Faith adviser who is carrying out a mapping exercise for the authority at the moment)
- 9.11. Royal Borough of Kingston Upon Thames (**Andrew Bessant**, Head of Dem Services and Partnership);
- 9.12. Leicester City Council (**Paul Winstone**, Policy Officer);
- 9.13. North Lincolnshire Council (**Linda Smithson** in the Chief Exec's office);
- 9.14. London Borough of Southwark (**Joe Ahmed Dobson**, **Multi-Faith officer** and Co-ordinator. His post, however, is not directly authority funded, but he is based in the council's offices.
- 9.15. Suffolk County Council (**Andy Yacoub**, Diversity Officer)
- 9.16. City of Westminster (**Bill Murray**, Policy Manager);
- 9.17. Wolverhampton City Council (**Harun Rashid**, Senior Policy Adviser, Chief Exec's Office)

10. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) in a number of documents mentions the importance of faith groups in promoting community cohesion and better

understanding of faith issues. The ODPM encourages Local Authorities be more aware of the needs and concerns of local faith communities, to recognise their contribution to quality of life and urges them to involve faith communities in consultation and decision making in their areas. For example the guidance on community cohesion published in 2002 states:

“ Faith can be a powerful factor in personal and community identity.....Policies for the promotion of diversity are incomplete if they fail to recognise that multi-cultural communities are also often multi-faith communities.....At community level it is important to foster understanding and respect between different faith traditions as well as between different cultural and ethnic groups. All major faiths promote equality and respect for others as a fundamental value.....

.....The development of effective local faith structures bringing together representatives of different faith communities in a local authority area can provide a valuable framework both for promoting mutual understanding and co-operation between them and as a mechanism for consultation by the local authority and other public sector bodies.”

**11.** The contribution that the Brighton and Hove Inter-Faith Contact Group (**IFCG**) makes in our Brighton and Hove city was acknowledged by Ken Bodfish the B & H Council Leader, David Lepper MP and the Mayor Jeanne Lepper at the Brighton and Hove Inter-Faith Contact Group AGM. IFCG's role is to be an umbrella and representative body to facilitate forums for discussion, dialogue groups meetings and be a resource and promote better understanding among ourselves and seek for common good as explained in IFCG Draft Introduction leaflet. We strictly follow Code of conduct as devised by national Interfaith Network UK a summary of which is reproduced in IFCG Introduction. Full copy can be seen at

[www.interfaith.org.uk](http://www.interfaith.org.uk)

There are around 190 local Inter-faith groups throughout the United Kingdom

## **12. What do other areas do?**

**12.1.** For example Wandsworth forum's links with their District Borough.Council

Their aims are:

- To update and inform representatives about important developments
- To develop the groups links to the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) and hence provide a voice for faith communities into the LSP
- To explain the various consultation exercises planned where faith input would be helpful
- To discuss any issues of mutual interest
- To provide an opportunity to resolve potential concerns or tensions quickly and effectively

**12.2 Bristol City Council's aims in setting up a faith group are:**

To respond to policy issues at local authority and sub regional level and through which faiths might actively encourage faith community action on social issues.

**12.3.** Leeds focuses on:

Regeneration and faith based social action, addressing social exclusion and religious discrimination.

### **13. Issues to consider locally**

- Some of the reasons for engagement with faith groups are set out above
- What do we think will best apply in our local situation?
- What are the best mechanisms to achieve this engagement?
- How do we want to communicate?
- How will such engagement be supported?
- How do we want to proceed?

### **14. Community cohesion and faith communities Central Government's Agenda:**

On 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2005 "Cohesion and Faiths Unit" at Home Office will be moving to the first floor, Seacole Building, 2 Marsham Street, SW1P 4DF. Maqsood Ahmed, Fahmia Hoda and Tony Heal, who will be leading on overarching faith responsibilities as Deputy Head of the new Cohesion and Faiths Unit. The new Head of Unit is Judith Lempriere

### **Common, Core, Shared Human Values:**

Plurality is a fact of today's global village. People from many different faiths and belief or no faith live side by side. But society can only be built on mutual respect, openness and trust. This means living our lives with integrity, and allowing others to do so too. Our different religious traditions teach us the importance of good relationships characterized by honesty, truth, love, unselfishness, compassion and generosity of care for resolving conflicts by peaceful means. Better understanding of others require us to share our desire for peace-building based on reverence of life, freedom, and justice, the eradication of poverty, dissolution of all forms of discrimination and protection of the environment for future generations. We should show each other respect and courtesy.

Honesty and sincerity, love and compassion, dignity and mutual respect, modesty and humility, moderation and restraint in our actions, sacrifice and unselfishness, kindness and courtesy, a sense of justice and a sense of fairness, a sense of balance and a sense of propriety, seeking forgiveness and asking for apology for past mistakes – these are values which all religions cherish. All of us want others to understand and respect our personal views. Some people will also want to persuade others to join their faith. In a multi faith society where this is permitted, the attempt should always be characterized by self-restraint and concern for the other's freedom and dignity.

Since September 11, 2001 a concerted effort has been underway in some quarters to bring about a 'clash of civilisations' between Islam and the West. Part of this is through inflammatory articles and speeches some of which can be clearly and justly labelled as anti-Semitic or Islamophobic, (though little of which could be characterised as racist against Westerners). On the other side of the spectrum are efforts to bring about a dialogue of civilisations. In bringing about such dialogue we cannot start by pointing fingers and casting blame. Instead, we must recognise the areas of agreement and build on them.

Muslims stand clearly against all forms of racism. Islamic teachings insets on establishing justice between people, and through justice, peace. Islam protects the

universal, God-given rights of humankind, while recognising that people have differing paths in religion which they are free to follow and which confer differing social and economic rights among people such as in marriage, divorce and inheritance. This freedom is at the heart of the tolerance of Islam.

In this world there are many injustices, among these are the rise of anti-Semitism especially that manifested in unjust attacks on innocent Jews, the rise of Islamophobia, the attacks on innocent Muslims and the numerous other cases where human rights are violated across the world. In seeking to heal the world of these problems, we need to identify the good actions of those being criticised, as well as identifying their bad actions, and we need to avoid intending retribution by our criticism by forgiving those who have injured us or at least clearly being prepared to do so, should they ask for it. If it is done right, this will help to create, not inflamed argument, but sincere dialogue. **We need a dialogue of civilisations, not a monologue and not a clash of civilisations.**

Together we will share our lives and resources that God has given us to make our earth a trusting community of hope, security and opportunity for all. Let us pray, **“Let there be respect for the earth, peace for its people, love in our lives, delight in the good, forgiveness for our past wrongs and from now on a new start”**. Amen



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**9 June 2005**

## **Appendix One**

# Islamophobia Problems and Challenges for Muslims in Britain in 2004

By Dr. Jeremy Henzell-Thomas

[http://theamericanmuslim.org/2004oct\\_comments.php?id=527\\_0\\_37\\_0\\_C](http://theamericanmuslim.org/2004oct_comments.php?id=527_0_37_0_C)

Problems and Challenges for Muslims in Britain in 2004

Dr. Jeremy Henzell-Thomas

**This paper is a response to some questions sent to members of the All-Parliamentary Group, Friends of Islam, which includes 125 members of the British Parliament, as part of the review of their role and activities.**

I would be particularly interested in comments from American Muslims on any perceived similarities or differences between the situation in the UK and that in the USA.

Specific problems facing the community include:

1. Prejudice, fuelled by unbalanced media representation, in the following areas:

- The association of Islam and Muslims in general, explicitly or implicitly, with fundamentalism, terrorism, and intolerance. Disproportionate emphasis in institutionally Islamophobic media[i] on unrepresentative extremists, arrests of suspected “terrorists”, etc. The use of biased language to stigmatise Islam and Muslims.[ii]
- The reduction of the richness of Islamic tradition to a few simplistic clichés around controversial issues which tend to stigmatise Islam as ‘backward’ or oppressive – e.g. hijab, jihad, madrasa-style education,[iii] ritual slaughter.
- The misleading association of Islam with specific cultural identities and practices, especially Asian and African, e.g. female circumcision, forced marriage, honour killings.
- Blatant and unchecked dehumanisation of Muslims, including abuse and incitement .[iv]

It should be noted that these misleading associations and stereotypes, all of which underlie the widespread existence of Islamophobia in British society, are motivated not only by ignorant prejudice but also by deliberate design in certain quarters so as to sustain the pernicious doctrine of a clash of civilisations between Islam and the West. The deliberate cultivation and dissemination of such prejudices by unscrupulous ideologues sustains the false notion of the Islamic “bogey” which justifies in the popular mind the demonisation of all Muslims.

It must also be admitted that such prejudices are also aggravated by disproportionate emphasis placed by some Muslims themselves on those very issues which ignite inter-cultural and inter-religious tensions, and also by the occasionally hostile and exclusivist manner in which such Muslims convey their own beliefs to others. However, the existence of such minority elements is common to all communities, whether religious or secular. No community should be universally stigmatised on the basis of unrepresentative attitudes, beliefs and opinions held by a vocal minority.

With regard to Islamophobia, the Muslim community needs to avoid the confusion between valid and constructive criticism and self-criticism on the one hand, and unwarranted Islamophobia on the other. It does not serve the community to use “Islamophobia” as a label to repel all criticism, especially when elements of the community many have phobias of their own against other communities and openly express them.

2. Persecution, as a result of a) and in direct contravention of the best traditions of British fairness. Muslims feel under suspicion, and feel unjustly targeted as a community. In such a climate, they feel vulnerable to false accusations based on unsubstantiated assumptions about their supposed level of “radicalism”, “extremism” or “fundamentalism”, and these fears are confirmed by the draconian measures which they see applied to those Muslims who have been harassed, arrested, abused, humiliated, released without charge and even detained without charge.[v]

Given the way in which Muslims feel targeted, it is fundamentally unjust to blame them for isolating, segregating and turning in on themselves when such a reaction is itself one of the understandable consequences of persecution.[vi]

3. Discrimination

Muslims still experience discrimination as a result of inadequate legislation,[vii] as well as institutional discrimination[viii] and indirect discrimination.[ix]

#### 4. Unease with (and hostility to) religion in dominantly secular Britain.

A recent survey has identified Britain as the most secular country in the world on the basis of the number of people claiming an active religious affiliation.[x] However, religion is so central to Muslims and so interwoven into their daily lives that exclusion of religion from public life and the absence of a public discourse for religion inevitably results in the exclusion of Muslims.

Furthermore, gross misunderstandings about the role of religion in fomenting violent conflict are endemic in popular and even academic secular discourse.[xi] These misunderstandings exacerbate prevailing unjust associations between Muslims and violence.

Recent debates about the desirability or otherwise of increasing the number of faith schools in Britain have revealed extreme prejudices by secularists, atheists and others opposed to religious education which often seem to reflect the prevailing ideological perspective in Britain today.[xii] "Secular schools as opposed to religious schools are not ideologically free zones. Secularism has its own ideological assumptions about the human person, the ideal society, the ideal system of schooling and the meaning of human existence. While these assumptions may not be formally codified into a curriculum subject designated 'secular education' as an alternative to 'religious education' they characteristically permeate the ethos and culture of state-provided secular schools and form a crucial part of the 'hidden curriculum'".[xiii]

The marginalisation of religion and religious discourse is also reflected in the fact that when it comes to the analysis of the concerns and needs of ethnic minorities, "religion is subsumed in the race construct even when it plays a more visible role than race." However, "policy provisions, legislation and action flowing from such analyses do not include religion, and thus often exclude Muslims". [xiv]

#### 5. Low participation and under-representation in key areas of British public life, including Politics and Policy Making[xv], Public Authorities, Media and Popular Culture

6. Endemic ignorance of the finest elements of the Islamic intellectual, cultural and spiritual tradition, not only amongst non-Muslims, but also amongst many Muslims themselves. Concomitant with this is the over-emphasis by the Muslim community on social and political issues, at the expense of a deeper understanding of their religion and its spiritual values. However, this disproportionate emphasis can in part be justified by the exclusion experienced by Muslims in British society which has understandably led them to focus on such issues and demand greater inclusion and an end to discrimination.

It also has to be said that the Muslim community needs to do much more to advance intelligent understanding of authentic Islam amongst mainstream British society. The Muslim community needs more ambassadors who can build inter-cultural and inter-faith bridges, connect with mainstream Britain, and present universally applicable Islamic values to non-Muslims in a friendly and open manner. A glance at the bookshelves on Islam in mainstream British bookshops (as opposed to Islamic bookshops serving Muslim communities) reveals disproportionate space given to books, often by Western authors, which identify problematic aspects of Islam in the contemporary context. The reason for this is that Islamic publishers have often failed to break into mainstream distribution and are unrepresented as a counterbalance to this unsympathetic literature. Behind this is the failure to develop more widespread distribution channels but also the failure to develop appropriate aesthetics in book design which would make many Islamic publications more attractive to non-Muslim readers.

#### 7. Low educational achievement[xvi], especially of young men. This can be attributed to various factors:

- . social exclusion which has led to disaffection
- . prejudice by poorly trained and uninformed non-Muslim teachers lacking understanding of non-Western cultures in general, or even with active antipathy to certain cultural or religious identities, notably Islamophobia[xvii], despite the requirement to actively promote such understanding and respect under the statutory diversity strand of the new National Curriculum Citizenship programme (DfEE/QCA 2001).[xviii] This lack of understanding also extends to the underestimation by teachers of the abilities of bilingual and multilingual children, despite evidence that these children often do better at school than monolingual children.[xix]
- . poor proficiency in English in some Muslim communities[xx]
- . inadequate educational aspiration amongst some Muslim communities
- . inadequacies in curriculum and teaching methodology in some Muslim schools.

However, as I have written elsewhere,[xxi] "it would be a great pity if faith schools, including Muslim schools, in their desire for recognition and their anxiety to be seen to subscribe to the performance



culture of “success”, simply reproduce the innate flaws in the worst of the state secular education system.” Similarly, the first statement in the Executive Summary of Muslims on Education: A Position Paper (2004) [xxii] states that “Qualitative aspects such as spirituality and independence of thought are as important as quantitative aspects such as key stage assessments and examination grades in setting a vision for education”. The Muslim community is faced with a challenge to maintain those qualitative aspects in the face of a narrowly defined utilitarian and functional secular curriculum, as are all schools which seek to offer a truly holistic education fostering full human potential, rather than mere schooling for the work place in the service of the “economic health” of the country. Significantly, the latter is the first priority of the educational system according to the government.[xxiii] Our young people are not to be fully formed human beings but units of production.

#### 8. Socio-Economic Disadvantage and Deprivation

In addition to educational under-achievement, Muslims experience disadvantage and deprivation in Employment and Income,[xxiv] Housing[xxv] and Health[xxvi].

#### 9. Fear of Assimilation into mainstream culture and erosion of the Islamic faith and heritage

Many Muslim parents are concerned that the assimilationist model is a long term attack on the survival of their faith, identity and heritage.[xxvii] Given evidence of widespread social, environmental, moral and spiritual decline in Britain,[xxviii] which some have characterised as a crisis reflecting terminal civilisational decay, if not total civilisational collapse, it is hardly surprising that concerned parents should wish to protect the higher civilisational values represented by their faith and cultural heritage.

The justifiable fears of such parents are not allayed by proposals for tests on knowledge of British history, culture and way of life to be administered to immigrants seeking British citizenship, especially in view of the fact that pilot studies have revealed that many white British citizens lack the requisite knowledge to pass the tests. Decline in historical knowledge amongst British schoolchildren of all cultural backgrounds is pervasive, and it seems prejudicial to expect people of other cultural and ethnic backgrounds to give evidence to a high degree of knowledge of which the majority of the population may be ignorant.[xxix]

Many Muslims feel that the dominant concept of what it is to be British is often not truly inclusive and does not reflect the multi-cultural nature of British society. They feel that pressure should not be put on the minority to adapt to the majority and to conform with majority values, but that the ideal relationship should be one of mutual accommodation in which different communities share in developing a common set of values and norms, so that all communities feel at ease and at home with a larger community of communities.

Unfortunately, an increasingly jingoistic climate fostered by certain sections of the media which exploit xenophobia in the name of patriotism does nothing to facilitate such a mutual accommodation of values.

#### 10. The challenge to contribute to wider British society

What can Muslims offer as a contribution to a better society at large? The challenge for the Muslim community is to find ways in which the finest elements of their own faith and way of life, including all those elements which engendered a great world civilisation, can begin to exert a positive influence on Britain and play a part in arresting the evident decline in British society.

Muslims and other people of faith have a major contribution to make as the guardians of many civilisational values, including principled standards of behaviour, both public and private, in which there is accelerating decline. But such a contribution needs to be orchestrated by people who are able to demonstrate and articulate in fresh language how the Islamic vision of the fine human being is accessible to everyone, and how in its primordial essence it is in harmony with the core identity of all human beings. A problem, or rather, a challenge, for the Muslim community is that their ability to make such a contribution to the whole of society, and thereby to benefit not just Muslims, but all mankind, (as they are enjoined to do by the Prophet Muhammad) necessitates a concerted effort by the most visionary and articulate members of the community to renew and animate the message of Islam in ways which will strike a chord amongst a much wider cross-section of the community as a whole (i.e. the community of communities which make up British society).

In such a way, bridges will be built and common ground found between the best of Islam and the best of the British way of life. In such a way, also, will Muslims cease to regard themselves as a victimised minority and play a larger role in the reclamation of civilisation for the British people. In such a way too they can play a positive, proactive role in actively addressing and pre-empting prejudices which cause Islamophobia instead of relying heavily on a reactive stance concerned predominantly with correcting misrepresentations and countering attacks.



## 11. Narrow focus on a few high-status professions as a mark of success

The positive contributory effort highlighted above needs people with many skills, but especially those with well-developed interpersonal and communications skills and inter-cultural knowledge and sensitivity. This represents a barrier for the Muslim community if such emphasis continues to be placed on a narrow band of conventionally high-status or high-earning professions as a mark of success, i.e. law, medicine, accountancy, academic research, engineering, science, technology.

If the Muslim community is to communicate the full depth of its heritage as a means of reclaiming civilisational values for the society as a whole, it needs to educate people in the humanities as well as the sciences; it needs journalists, media professionals (presenters, editors, producers, directors), writers and teachers able to articulate Islamic principles in universal ways which inspire non-Muslims as well as Muslims; it needs ecologists, environmentalists and horticulturalists who can reclaim the Qur'anic vision of the sanctity of Nature in an age when Nature has been desacralised; it needs people of spiritual insight (not merely conventional religiosity or intellectuality wedded to academic rationalism) who can restore to mankind the original, primordial conception of the human Intellect as a spark of the divine; it needs historians, anthropologists, archaeologists, psychologists and counsellors who have studied the human condition; it needs well-read people well-versed in breadth and depth in their own tradition and familiar with the essential elements of other traditions too; it needs translators who can translate into many languages the rich heritage represented by the huge corpus of Islamic literature still buried in libraries and never brought to light; it needs librarians who know about books of all cultures; it needs artists and designers who can reclaim beauty of form for Islam in publications which are attractive to the eye, but who have sufficient substance in themselves never to overrate style over substance. The list is a long one and I have only begun to explore it here.

## 12. Achieving unity of purpose

A further challenge for the Muslim community will be the need to find a common purpose and work together to achieve it. There are many disparate strands in the Muslim community. Rivalry and disputation between groups and organisations (whether doctrinal or national) fragment the community and deprive it of the power it needs to advance itself and exert a positive influence on the wider society.

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**August 2004**  
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[i] In *Understanding British Muslim Alienation and Exclusion: Exploring the Challenges and Developing Working Solutions* (2004, unpublished draft document), Mohammed Abdul Aziz identifies the bitterness felt by Muslims at how they are portrayed in the media and the perception that "some parts of the media industry are institutionally Islamophobic." Furthermore, this appears to be "acceptable to those in power and a large section of the British public in general". This document is referred to as UBMAE henceforth.

[ii] See my paper "The Language of Islamophobia" presented at the Exploring Islamophobia conference at the Diplomatic Academy, University of Westminster, 29 September, 2001, now available on numerous websites.

[iii] See *Muslims on Education: A Position Paper*, The Association of Muslim Social Scientists (AMSS), Richmond, 2004, section 4.2.2, which points out that "the reality of Muslim education is far less threatening than some media commentators have suggested. It is not entirely flippant to remind ourselves that non of the Asians arrested following the Oldham disturbances attended Muslim schools nor indeed did those British Muslims held captive at Guantanamo Bay." Ken Livingstone, while serving as an MP, famously declared on visiting Islamia Primary School in London that he had expected to find "trainee ayatollahs" but departed having seen a happy and ordinary school with an Islamic ethos". Section 4.2.1 also points out the inconsistency in some of the criticisms of Muslim schools in media discussion and political discourse, which tend to denounce Muslim schools as "separate" while rarely using the word "separate" negatively to describe Christian or Jewish schools.

[iv] An article in *The Times* of 12 August 2004 by Inayat Bunglawala, Media Secretary of the Muslim Council of Britain diagnoses a critical situation in which "Muslims in Britain are being tuned into pariahs". He refers to "a series of four incendiary anti-Muslim comment pieces published in the *Sunday Telegraph* in July under the pseudonym Will Cummins. Apart from comparing Muslims to dogs (25 July) and ridiculing the Conservative candidate in the recent Leicester South by-election because he had dared to listen to Muslim concerns (18 July), Mr. Cummins offered us the following historical lesson: 'Christians are the original inhabitants and rightful owners of almost every Muslim land and behave with a humility quite unlike the menacing behaviour from the Muslims...'" Mr. Bunglawala expresses his

justifiable outrage that the editor of a national newspaper which had permitted such a barrage of abuse and incitement should still be in his job and concludes that "these articles are indicative of a rising Islamophobia and the systematic dehumanising of British Muslims".

[v] The Observer of 8 August 2004 reports that "high-profile arrests of young men are beginning to alienate a whole community" ("How fear preys on British Muslims" by Tariq Panja) and how these arrests "create false impressions in the hearts and minds of the wider public". This perceived repression is undoubtedly exacerbating the disaffection of young Muslim men which already exists because of "overt and covert discrimination". The article maintains that "among some British Muslims, these arrests are merely another example of what they perceive as police victimisation and an attack on Islam", and "some even spoke about the threat of a possible reaction from young local Muslims in response to what they describe as a growing schism created by anti-terror legislation and its indiscriminate use by the security authorities." Official figures reveal that between 11 September 2001 and the end of March 2004 562 arrests have been made under terrorism legislation, and 97 people were charged with terrorist offences, of whom only 14 have been convicted. This leaves Muslims feeling "disenfranchised by a system that regularly picks up people in an ad hoc manner only to release them without charge, but with their reputation in tatters". Parallels with the perceived victimisation of Afro-Caribbean men by an institutionally racist Metropolitan police force are inescapable. Inayat Bunglawala's article in The Times, referred to in note 3 above, upgrades the number of arrests at that time (12 August 2004) to 609 and diagnoses a critical situation in which "Muslims in Britain are being tuned into pariahs". He relates the distressing case of Babar Ahmad, who claims that when he was arrested at his home in Tooting in early December 2003 he was forced to kneel with his face to the ground – in the style of Islamic prostration during prayer – while being taunted with cries of "Where is your God now?"

[vi] Trevor Hemmings, deputy director of the human rights group Statewatch says that he is amazed that "people sit there and talk about how the Muslim community has isolated itself in a de facto segregation. The problem is the Muslim community has never asked to be where they are, they've been forced there". He also makes the telling point that by "forcing people to the margins the police will lose their most vital sources of intelligence" in combating terrorism. (Observer, 8 August, article referred to above).

[vii] Muslims are not covered by legislation which was originally intended to protect ethnic minority communities, even though the vast majority of British Muslims originate from one or another ethnic minority. As a result, "Muslims are still not covered by anti-discrimination legislation on incitement to hatred, delivery of goods and services, law enforcement, regulatory and control functions, and the positive duty to eliminate discrimination and promote equality. Muslims also have no access to institutional support to assist with advice and enforcement when faced with discrimination." (UBMAE (see note 1))

[viii] See note 5 illustrating the growing concern about treatment of Muslims by law-enforcement agencies. UBMAE (see note 1) identifies a number of related issues, amongst which are the following: "Muslims are more likely to be arrested rather than summoned; more likely to suffer disproportionately higher levels of charging by the Police and the Crown Prosecution Service; more likely to suffer disproportionately harsher treatment from the Courts – e.g. more likely to be remanded in custody than bailed and given higher levels of sentencing than others for similar acts. The net result of this sequence of discriminatory treatment...is that contributes to a disproportionately higher presence of Muslims in prisons. Muslim inmates are more likely to receive harsher treatment in prison due to institutionalised Islamophobia and less likely to receive satisfactory services from the Probation Service".

[ix] UBMAE (see note 1) refers to the "growing concern about how apparently neutral legislation may be disproportionately affecting British Muslims, particularly in the areas of anti-terrorism and immigration.

[x] It is clearly difficult to evaluate such a survey without knowing how it arrived at such a conclusion. Surveys of this kind are, of course, generally blunt instruments which fail to encompass the increasing numbers of seekers who follow a spiritual path but who are disenchanted with institutional religious authorities and forms of worship. A more recent survey in Time Magazine ("O Father, Where Art Thou?", June 16 2003) reports the surprising statistic that 83.4% of people questioned in "Great Britain" (excluding Northern Ireland) said they belonged to a religious denomination, although only 18.9% attended religious services at least once a month. On the basis of these criteria, other European countries are more secular than Britain. In France, for example, only 57.5% of people reported that they belonged to a religious denomination, and only 12% attended religious services once a month or more (Surprisingly, these figures are broadly comparable with Russia, where the figures are 50.5% and 9.1%). In Estonia, the figures are 24.9% and 1.2%, which makes Estonia by far the most secular country according to the criteria used by the Time Magazine survey. The most extreme gap between claimed membership of a religious denomination and actual attendance at religious services is in Finland, with figures of 88.1% and 14% respectively. However such figures are interpreted the truth is, as Time magazine reports, that Christianity is becoming a minority faith in Europe, and the lack of any mention of religious faith in the proposed new European constitution is a clear sign of pervasive secularisation.

[xi] For example, the commonly held belief that religion is the cause of most wars and human conflicts can easily be shown by basic research to be totally unfounded. In fact, of the ten worst wars, atrocities and massacres in human history, in which it is estimated that about 250 million people have been killed, less than 3% can be attributed to religious causes. In the 20th century, the most violent in human history, accounting for more than 70% of those deaths, the percentage attributed to religious beliefs is actually negligible.

[xii] In a discussion on the BBC radio 4 “Moral Maze” series about the advantages and disadvantages of faith schools, a well-known atheist philosopher said that he thought teaching religion in schools was “intellectual abuse”. Muslims, on the contrary, would uphold, in common with other faith communities, that the real abuse is to deny to young people the spiritual dimension in their lives and give them no means of activating and developing their highest spiritual capacities. We only have to look around ourselves to see the consequences of this deprivation in our contemporary culture. The assertion of the atheist is also contradicted by new research by the Professional Council for Religious Education (Blaylock, L. (ed.) (2001) *Listening to Young People in Secondary Religious Education*. Professional Council for Religious Education (PCfRE) Report). This showed that among secondary school students aged 11 to 18, those who enjoy religious education (RE) and see positive benefits for their own lives from studying religion outnumber those who are negative about RE by four to one. The report also gives examples of statements by students which show that many students also like RE because of the opportunities it gives for expressing opinions, improving communication skills, acquiring knowledge of other faiths, developing inter-cultural awareness and sensitivity, developing the skills of philosophical enquiry and reflection, and pondering the meaning and purpose of life. From this, it appears that it is generally the adults in our society who openly mock and vilify religion, or equate religion with indoctrination, not the young.

[xiii] G.G. Grace, *Catholic Schools: Mission, Markets and Morality*, London: Routledge-Falmer, 2002,

p.14, quoted in “Faith Schools – A Review of the Debate”, a paper presented by Ron Best to a seminar at the Centre for Research in Religious Education and Development, University of Surrey Roehampton, February, 2003).

[xiv] UBMAE (see note 1)

[xv] UBMAE (see note 1) points out that only 0.03% of MPs are Muslims, despite the fact that Muslims make up 3+% of the British population, and that there is an equally drastic “absence of Muslims in senior Civil Service and similar policy impacting positions elsewhere”. The result is that “Muslim concerns and viewpoints scarcely profile in mainstream politics and policy circles. When they do, they usually receive very negative and unsympathetic treatment” as in “the recent treatment of such issues as extremism and terrorism, immigration and asylum, law and disorder, and family related matters”.

[xvi] Educational achievement by Muslims is lower than other pupils at all stages of compulsory education. Fewer Muslim 16-year-olds are in education, training or employment than any other group of the same age, and Muslim students need an extra 2 years to obtain the same qualifications as their White counterparts. They are also less likely to obtain a first or upper second class degree. (source: UBMAE, see note 1)

[xvii] See *Muslims on Education: A Position Paper*, The Association of Muslim Social Scientists (AMSS), Richmond, 2004, section 2.7.3, page 23, which refers to the fact that “many educationalists, such as Robin Richardson, are highlighting the effect that Islamophobia plays in the underachievement of Muslim pupils.” (Inclusive Schools, Inclusive Society, Richardson and Wood, Trentham Books, 2000). The Executive Summary of the AMSS report includes the statement that “The education system should aim to produce individuals who can survive in and relate to a society of diverse faiths without a need to compromise their own faith.”

[xviii] A recent radio 4 series on the Sikh community included a program in which a young Sikh woman talked about the prejudice she had experienced in secondary school from teachers and examiners who had devalued and even openly scorned her artwork because its traditional form and content did not conform to their Eurocentric modernist assumptions about what constituted “creative” work. In this example, the diversity strand of the Citizenship program of the National Curriculum is actively flouted, although it may well be that this strand will more typically be simply given lip service in a curriculum overloaded with examinable content and delivered by teachers inadequately trained in inter-cultural knowledge and skills.

[xix] Recent research by the University of London Institute of Education, which brings together a number of studies on bilingual and trilingual children, shows that children who speak at least two languages do better at school than those who speak only one. In the light of this, Caroline Haydon in an article in *The Independent* newspaper (9 October 2003) asks why it is that so many teachers still see multilingualism as a problem rather than an asset? She describes how a group of six-year-olds in a

school in Hackney, London, proudly told her about their language skills. “And they were quite astonishing”, she says. “They speak Gujarati (and a little Urdu) to grandparents, they speak English and Gujarati to their (second generation parents), and a great deal more English to their siblings. And from age five they spend two hours a night studying religious texts in Urdu and the Koran in Arabic in the local mosque.” Dr. Raymonde Sneddon of the School of Education and Community Studies at the University of East London has shown that, far from being confused by different languages, the trilingual children she studied were accomplished speakers of English and performed better on a test of reading comprehension than children who spoke only English. Despite these findings, Sneddon’s study also showed that even where schools had positive attitudes about multilingualism, some teachers often persisted in underestimating the skills of multilingual children and wrongly believed that even bilingualism (let alone trilingualism) was a problem rather than an asset. Dr. Charmian Kenner, who researched six-year-olds growing up in London and learning to write Chinese, Arabic or Spanish as well as English, concludes: “The price of ignoring children’s bilingualism is educational failure and social exclusion.” In this regard note the final statement in the Executive Summary of Muslims on Education: A Position Paper (op. cit.): “Opportunities to study community languages such as Arabic, Bengali, Hindi or Urdu would better reflect the linguistically diverse nature of our communities”. (See also the Contemporary Issues in Education interactive forum on the website of The Book Foundation, [www.TheBook.org](http://www.TheBook.org), which regularly presents research-based topics such as this).

[xx] See Muslims on Education: A Position Paper (2004), op. cit. section 2.7, page 23. This paper refers to specific language issues contributing to under-achievement, although it also states that “underachievement cannot be explained by language factors alone” since a much higher percentage of Indian and Chinese pupils achieved educational benchmarks (section 2.7.3). However, section 2.7.5 highlights “poor proficiency in English” as “another barrier to progress in some Muslim communities”, and points out that “Gaps in the understanding of the English language among bilingual children in particular have been identified by OFSTED.” However, see note 6 above for evidence that highlights the educational advantages conferred by bilingualism.

[xxi] “Excellence in Islamic Education”, available on the website of The Book Foundation, [www.TheBook.org](http://www.TheBook.org)

[xxii] op. cit.

[xxiii] White paper, Schools Achieving Success DfEE (2001), London: HMSO. The following statement occurs in the first paragraph of the Introduction to this document (Section 1.1, p. 5): “The success of our children at school is crucial to the economic health and social cohesion of the country, as well as to their own life and personal fulfilment” (my italics; note the order in which these priorities are set out, which leaves little doubt that economic considerations come first).

[xxiv] Muslim men in general experience a significantly higher rate of unemployment than counterparts in all other groups. Muslim graduates are more likely to be unemployed than their white counterparts. More than 80% of Muslims live in households with an income below the national average compared to 20-25% of White households. (source: UBMAE, see note 1)

[xxv] More than half of Muslim households live in the 10% of the most deprived wards in England. Around one third of Muslim households live in unfit properties in the private sector. Around a quarter of Muslim households are overcrowded. (source: UBMAE, see note 1)

[xxvi] Muslims are one and a half times more likely to suffer ill health than their white counterparts. They are more than 5 times more likely to be diagnosed with diabetes, and 50% more likely to be diagnosed with coronary heart disease than Whites. (source: UBMAE, see note 1)

[xxvii] See Muslims on Education: A Position Paper (2004), *ibid.*, section 4.2.1, page 31.

[xxviii] A recent survey has discovered that 30% of Britons would like to leave the country and live elsewhere if they could. Reasons most often cited were social, moral and environmental decline.

[xxix] In a recent BBC poll reported in The Independent newspaper of 5 August 2004, 15 per cent of 16- to 24-year-olds thought that the Orange marches celebrating the Battle of the Boyne in 1690 actually celebrated the victory at Helm’s Deep at the end of The Two Towers, the second book of Tolkien’s Trilogy, The Lord of the Rings, and perhaps even more worryingly one in 20 thought it was Gandalf, the wizard, not Francis Drake, who led the British fleet to victory against the Spanish Armada in 1588, while one in five thought it was Columbus. Given the decline in historical knowledge, it is hardly surprising that History at A level is regarded as such a narrow and impoverished historical education that Cambridge University no longer requires undergraduate historians to have it (as reported in the Times Educational Supplement of 28 June 2002). See the Contemporary Issues in Education interactive forum on the website of the Book Foundation ([www.TheBook.org](http://www.TheBook.org)) for a recent article I have posted about this decline.

## Appendix Two

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## Appendix Three

### OSCE Berlin Conference on Anti-Semitism in Berlin 28-29 April 2004

Proposal for a Recommendation from Dr Richard Stone, delegate of Great Britain.

Session 4 asks "How best to avoid anti-semitic messages in the media and the internet?"

## Security summit urges unity against rising anti-Semitism

Reuters in Berlin  
Thursday April 29, 2004  
[The Guardian](#)

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/israel/Story/0,2763,1205549,00.html>

Anti-Semitism is on the rise and to defeat it will take coordinated action by many countries, speakers told an international conference on the subject yesterday.

"It is not good that a conference on this theme has to take place in 2004, and that it should deal with current problems, not historical questions," President Johannes Rau of Germany told the Berlin anti-Semitism conference of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

"Nobody should close their eyes to racism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism," he urged around 500 delegates.

The US secretary of state, Colin Powell, told the delegates: "It is not anti-Semitic to criticise the policies of the state of Israel, but the line is crossed when Israel or its leaders are demonised, for example, by the use of Nazi symbols and racist caricatures."

The two-day meeting of representatives from north America, Europe and central Asia aims to agree measures to counter anti-Jewish violence and propaganda.

"We share the burden of fighting anti-Semitism in our states. That is the most important message of this conference," the German foreign minister, Joschka Fischer, said.

Jewish groups have complained that European governments have been late to respond to a revival in anti-Semitism in the past few years, which has coincided with rising Middle East violence.

**A recent EU report showed that attacks on Jews increased in several member states in 2002, compared with 2001. The biggest rise was in France, where they increased sixfold.**

Mr Rau told the conference that racists had seized on the Middle East conflict and the policies of Israel's government.

"Everyone knows that massive anti-Semitism is behind some of the criticism of the Israeli government's politics in the last decades," he said.

However, Brian Cowen, the foreign minister of Ireland, which holds the EU's rotating presidency, warned that criticism of Israeli government policy should not automatically be labelled anti-Semitic.

"The exploitation of race for political purposes by any government or any politician, be it an offensive weapon or as a shield to fend off criticism, is quite simply unacceptable.



## ***Alif-Aleph UK***

***British Muslims – British Jews***

**Co-Chairs: Maqsood Ahmad and Dr Richard Stone**

# **A report of research mapping ‘Positive Contacts between**

**British Muslims and British Jews’**

**By**

**Mohammed Nisar and Fiona Hurst (First stage)**

**Urmee Khan and Claire Berliner (Second stage)**

**Supervised by Dr Keith Kahn-Harris and Dilwar Hussain**

**Edited by Rebecca Sharkey**

**Commissioned by The Uniting Britain Trust, and published July 2005**

***“Dialogue, understanding and co-operation are the only alternative to hostility”***

**- Prof Ismail Raji Al-Farouqi**

***“What the world needs is Harmonisers, not Polarisers”***

**- Rabbi Hugo Gryn**

[www.aauk.org.uk](http://www.aauk.org.uk)

*Alif-Aleph UK is a project of the Uniting Britain Trust (registered charity number 1063484)*

## **What is *Alif-Aleph UK*?**

Alif and Aleph are the first letters of the Arabic and Hebrew alphabets, the languages of the Qur’an and the Torah, the holy Books of Muslims and Jews.

*Alif-Aleph UK* is best described in the first pages of our Manifesto:

**We are British Muslims and British Jews who aim together to build creative partnerships in the UK.**

**We live here.** We belong here. We are not going away.

**We have** every reason to work creatively together to the benefit of our own communities, and to spread the example of joint working to the other communities who inhabit these islands.

**We wish** to build on the positive contributions both of our communities have already made to British society, culture and business.

**We find** ourselves living side by side in a country where we are both minorities, and both significant contributors to society. This provides new opportunities for us to draw on our positive histories together to contribute to social cohesion in Britain.

**We have** a common experience of having to address hostilities that derive from mistaken stereotypes of our religions and our cultures, leading to Islamophobia and Antisemitism. The reality that confounds these mistaken stereotypes is that our religions have more in common with each other than with other religions. Our cultural traditions are similar. We both come from traditions of the Book, traditions that are literate, inquiring and remarkably tolerant of differing and minority views when debating and analysing our Texts.

**We regret** the divisive effects of the Israel-Palestine conflict spilling over from abroad. *Alif-Aleph UK* aims to build on mutual understandings of the natural sympathies we each have in that conflict, and then to move beyond that discussion working jointly for mutual benefit in this country.

**We recognise** that those who wish to find reasons for our two communities not to meet are driven to import from abroad their reasons for division and hostility. Even those external negative reasons are undermined by the amazing number of projects in the Middle East where Jews and Palestinians are maintaining and developing joint activities in the face of political drives toward division and separation.

**We sign** this Manifesto to demonstrate our commitment to the ideas in it and encourage others to join us.

**We welcome** people who are neither Muslims nor Jews to sign the Manifesto to be Associates, as a token of their support for what we are doing, and also for the help that they can give us.

**We anticipate** that this Manifesto can be adapted as a responsible basis of a later Manifesto not just for British Muslims and British Jews, but also inclusive of all communities and individuals who live in the UK.

## Executive Summary

1. **This report explodes a commonly held assumption** that Muslims and Jews in Britain have no contact with each other, know little about each other and fear or even hate each other.

**Part 1 of the report describes five types of contact:** religious/theological, pragmatic, political, cultural/social and multi-faith.

**Part 2 explores dramatically how scepticism and extremism have been dealt with.**

- 2. Positive contacts have been maintained by some people for decades.**
- 3. Israel-Palestine is a topic which divides many people in our communities.**
- 4. The rise in joint activities especially among younger people in recent years** comes partly out of a sense of urgent need to counter the negative impact of the Israel-Palestine conflict. It is on university campuses where some of the most distressing Islamophobia and Antisemitism is played out. It may be for this reason that it is also among students that positive contacts are being developed with the greatest success.
- 5. By those who refuse to be divided, Israel-Palestine is seen as the tool** of those who exploit an issue 2,500 miles away for their own separatist political agenda. On the other hand, many of the positive contacts here are as 'Friends' of projects in Israel-Palestine where Arabs and Jews live and/or work together.
- 6. Britain is reported to be a particularly fertile ground for positive contacts.**  
Maybe it is because both our communities are now established and settled. Some suggest that it the result of the rich history of multiculturalism here. It is likely that the predominance of Muslims whose families originate in the Indian Sub-continent results in less entrenched hostility than is seen in other European countries. Where Muslim family links are with countries close to Israel, tensions run higher; and Arabic is not just the language of the Qur'an but the living language in which much hate of Jews is expressed.
- 7. Mutual respect can develop quickly when Muslims and Jews come together** to address common issues. Most of the research of the second phase of this project focused on local communities and younger people: communicating as neighbours or **as work colleagues**; through dialogue groups that meet on a regular basis to explore each other's religions and culture; through performance, visual arts or even cooking recipes.
- 8. Difficulties come from both within and between our communities.** Fear and prejudice among friends and family can make participants lose heart. Fear of extremism is common, as is overcoming scepticism. The researchers were told how people learned to listen; how they kept up the momentum when key members of a group move on. A variety of ways of tackling emotive and potentially divisive issues were described, as were problems of imbalances between the two communities, and the benefits and problems of formal versus informal structures.
- 9. Muslims tend to have a more reserved attitude towards dialogue.** As a result, many initiatives tend to be Jewish-led and locating Muslims can be harder.
- 10. The arts (drama, music, art, comedy and sport) lend themselves particularly well** to successful positive contact. Using culture is very effective in bringing the communities together in a neutral and fun way.
- 11. There is a lack of information on disability and dialogue, and whether existing** dialogue groups can offer facilities and are open to members with disabilities.

**We make six recommendations for best practice:**

**1. EDUCATION** - Schools and colleges need to be more proactive with interfaith activities and education. The seeds of dialogue need to be sown as early as possible: schools, youth groups and universities need to be assisted in developing and maintaining initiatives.

**2. SAFE SPACE** - It is important to create safe spaces in which dialogue can take place. Some of the requirements for a safe space are: informality, facilitation especially for ‘uncomfortable’ topics, staying small, equal representation, sensitivity, and agreed ground rules.

**3. COMMON GROUND** – When Muslims and Jews meet, they should look first for what they have in common and build on that. Once trust and respect have developed, it may be possible to deal with divisions direct or help can be sought from other more experienced Muslims and Jews or people from outside the communities.

**4. ISLAMOPHOBIA AND ANTISEMITISM** – these are major issues which we have in common. An attack on one community is always best considered as an attack on all communities. It is for this reason that Alif-Aleph UK has commissioned Royal Holloway College to run a lecture series on the histories of these two prejudices in Europe and especially in the UK.

**5. THE ROLE OF LEADERS** – It is important for community leaders to set a good example of positive contact, and to encourage cross-communal links.

**6. FACILITATING BETTER RELATIONS ON CAMPUS** – **National** student organisations need help to avoid divisive tactics. Mentoring is needed for students and university groups by sympathetic permanent academics, local communal leaders and local residents.

### **Where next for *Alif Aleph UK*?**

**This has report has identified three key roles for *Alif-Aleph UK*:**

1. **Providing a central point of contact:** *Alif-Aleph UK* is already developing a confidential database in accordance with the Data Protection Act
2. **Providing mentoring for *local* individuals or groups** when they come under strain
3. **Providing mentoring to support continuity at colleges and universities** when the initiators of dialogue move on and fear their group will collapse without them.

## **Appendix Four**

**The Summit for Muslim World Leaders  
Islam and a Future World of Peace  
Jakarta, Indonesia — December 21 - 23, 2001**

**In the name of Allah, Most Beneficent, Most Merciful**

**Jakarta Declaration 1422 H/2001**

**Preamble**

We begin by invoking the blessings of Allah on this effort and with salutations on the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him)

We, the participants and guests of the Summit of World Muslim Leaders gathered to reaffirm the teachings of the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), under the theme Islam and a Future World of Peace, on 6 - 8 Shawwal, 1422 (20 - 23 December, 2001) in Jakarta, Indonesia.

**We affirm that:**

Islam is a religion of peace and justice. From its core values emanate respect for life and human dignity, affecting all ideals and actions that guide the day to day life of the Muslim.

Our understanding of religion and spirituality grows from the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). These resources provide the basis for resolving all challenges of this and every age, as well as all social circumstances.

The universality of the teachings of Islam affirms the sanctity of humankind, and thus enjoins on us an enduring dialogue of faiths and civilizations.

Deliberations proceeded along three lines of inquiry: Religion and Spirituality, Civic Responsibility in Political Society, and Interfaith, Intercultural, and International Relations.

**1. Religion and Spirituality**

**We affirm that:**

The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was sent as mercy for all humankind. The message he delivered aims to produce peace and prosperity, promote love, compassion and forgiveness, and create a humane society. It is an important source of guidance in a changing and shrinking world and must be recognized as such.

To fulfil the ideals of the Prophet (PBUH) Muslims must recognize these teachings and his example as a guiding principle of their moral and spiritual development.

Islam rejects violence in any form against the innocent. In fact, it promotes justice and exhorts Muslims to be just even if it be against their own selves, their parents, or kinfolk. Thus implementation of justice for and by the Muslims will be the single most important factor in the elimination of violence and terrorism.

To be just is the spiritual obligation of all faiths and nations.

Muslim leaders and scholars are responsible for, and have a moral obligation to teach and promote knowledge about the fundamental ethics of Islam, thus providing the foundation for peace and peaceful coexistence and harmony in the world.

## **2. Civic Responsibility in Political Society**

**We affirm that:**

Muslim nations must devote their energies toward education of their masses, and improvement of economic opportunities for their people. They must enhance their interaction with other Muslim countries in joint projects for the welfare of their populations.

All nations of the world must apply their energies to conflict resolution globally, and be consistent at both home and abroad in their concern for justice, freedom and human rights.

In any system of government, the protection of the freedoms and rights of the citizens is paramount.

## **3. Interfaith, Intercultural, and International Relations**

**We affirm that:**

Dialogue toward harmony and understanding is a Muslim religious responsibility. As a consequence, Muslims encourage people of all faiths to acknowledge, accept, promote, respect and appreciate the diversity among their different faiths and cultures.

Interfaith dialogue for the purposes of removing fear of the unknown, generating good will, and establishing mutual trust, should occur at all levels including at the level of individuals, faith groups, larger communities, and globally.

Intellectual and spiritual leaders are obliged to establish enduring structures of dialogue to prevent conflict among people of differing religious commitments and opinions. These leaders of all faith must convince their constituencies to work harmoniously with other groups and influence their elected or appointed leaders to promote peace and justice as the cornerstone of their agenda, policies, and practice.

May Allah bless this effort and forgive our shortcomings.

**Jakarta**

**23 December 2001**



# Appendix Five

## Increase in Islamophobic attacks in EU

<http://www.muslimnews.co.uk/paper/index.php?article=1973>

By Saajida Mehrali

Whereas there is no doubt that attacks on Jews and Muslims have increased in the EU over the past few years, there is controversy surrounding who is committing them. The National Consultative Commission on Human Rights lays the brunt of the blame of anti-Semitic attacks with people 'of Arab-Muslim origin' but the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) disagrees.

In a recently published report, the EUMC claims, "the largest group of the perpetrators of anti-Semitic activities appears to be young, disaffected, white Europeans." The mention of "young Muslims of North African or Asian extraction" appears rather as an after-thought, in the Report's summary.

Amir Zaidan, Director of the Islamic Religious Studies Institute in Vienna, is pleased that the Report is, as he sees it, eradicating evil towards Muslims. He said, "It is very important to have such reports produced. Muslims are just as much the victims of racism as Jews."

However, Jewish leaders have accused the EU of veiling the true extent of anti-Semitic attacks that are carried out by young Muslims. They claim that the Report has "astounded experts" by asserting that neo-Nazi and racist groups are responsible for the majority of Jewish persecution over the last two years.

They also say that the headline findings are not the same as those detailed in the body of the Report, where many of the 193 attacks on Jewish buildings in France in 2002, are "ascribed to youth from neighbourhoods sensitive to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, principally of North African descent."

Attacks on Muslims have also increased in the EU and especially in France, where the police have been accused, by a new report released by Amnesty International, of mistreating Muslims.

Director of Amnesty International UK, Kate Allen, said, "People have been racially abused, beaten and even killed by the police in France. Yet the French judicial system is failing to investigate and punish human rights abuses by police officers." Both reports suggest that enough is not being done to monitor and control the Islamophobic and anti-Semitic attacks and call for a more rigorous approach in order to "bring those responsible to justice".

Annual Report 2004 - National Consultative Commission on Human Rights  
Anti-Semitism Report - European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) France: New Report Reveals Racist Abuse With Impunity By French Police, Amnesty International

## **Attacks on Jews and Muslims soar in France**

The Muslim Weekly London Issue No: 072 Date: 25 - 31 March 2005

The number of racist, anti-Semitic and xenophobic attacks in France soared by nearly 90% last year, according to a report presented to the government on Monday, reaching the highest level so far recorded.

The National Consultative Commission on Human Rights said in its annual study that 1,565 threats and acts of violence against mainly Jewish and Muslim victims were registered in 2004, compared with 833 the previous year.

The report said anti-Semitic acts represented more than 60% of all the incidents recorded: 970 compared with 601 in 2003, mostly committed by people "of Arab-Muslim origin". But threats and attacks against Muslims, mostly committed by far-right supporters, also more than doubled to 595 last year, compared with 232 in 2003. The report also noted that the incidents appeared to be getting increasingly violent: 369 "major acts" - causing actual physical harm to people or property - were reported, an 83% increase on 2003. The number of attacks on Jewish and Muslim cemeteries and places of worship rose from 46 to 65, and racist and anti-Semitic violence in schools rose by 20%.

<http://www.themuslimweekly.com/newspaper/viewfullstory.aspx?NewsID=TW00002302>

## **Appendix Six**

### **European Religious Population**

Country	Population	Catholic	Protestant/ Anglicans	Orthodox	Muslim	Hindu	Jewish	Buddhist	Other	None or Atheist		
Albania	3,401,126	340,113		680,225	2,380,788							
Andorra	67,673	66,996							677			
Belarus	10,390,697	1,870,325		8,312,558					207,814			
Belgium	10,185,894	8,250,574	1,935,320									
Bosnia Herzegovina	3,591,618	538,743	143,665	1,113,402	1,436,647				359,162			
Bulgaria	8,155,828			6,932,454	1,060,258				163,117			
Croatia	4,681,015	3,580,976	18,724	519,593	56,172				505,550			
Czech Republic	10,283,762	4,010,667	473,053	308,513					1,378,024	4,113,505		
Denmark	5,374,554		4,729,608	53,746					591,201			
Estonia	1,398,140						2,000					
Finland	5,164,825		4,596,694	51,648						464,834		
France	59,128,187	47,893,831	1,182,564		2,956,409		591,282			6,504,101		
Germany	82,081,365	27,907,664	28,728,478		1,641,627				23,803,596			
Greece	10,750,705			10,535,691	139,759				75,255			
Hungary	10,167,182	6,405,325	508,359						1,220,062			
Iceland	274,142	5,483	268,659									
Ireland	3,647,348	3,392,034	109,420,44						145,894			
Italy	56,678,568	55,544,997							1,133,571			
Latvia	2,326,689											
Liechtenstein	32,410	28,521	2,593						648	648		
Lithuania	3,571,552						11,000					
Luxembourg	432,577	419,600							12,977			
Malta	383,285	356,455							26,830			
Moldova	4,466,758			4,399,757			67,001					
Monaco	32,231	30,619							1,612			
Netherlands	15,878,304	5,398,623	3,969,576		476,349				317,566	5,716,189		
Norway	4,455,707	89,114	3,831,908						445,571			
Poland	38,644,184	36,711,975		1,159,326					772,884			
Portugal	9,902,147	9,308,018	297,064						297,064			
Romania	22,291,200	1,114,560	1,337,472	19,393,344					445,824			
Russia	145,904,542			118,182,679	16,049,500		440,000					
San Marino	25,215	24,963							252			
Slovak Rep	5,401,134	3,256,884	453,695	221,446					945,198	523,910		
Slovenia	1,970,056	1,635,146			19,701				315,209			
Spain	39,208,236	38,031,989							1,176,247			
Sweden	8,938,559	134,078	8,402,245						402,235			
Switzerland	7,288,715	3,352,809	2,915,486						1,020,420			
Turkey	66,620,120				65,953,919				666,201			
Ukraine	49,506,779						300,000					
UK & N Ireland	59,247,439	9,479,590	27,846,296,33		1,184,949		200,000		2,369,898	18,366,706		
Vatican	850											
Yugoslavia	11,206,039	448,242	112,060	6,947,744	1,905,027				1,792,966			
<b>TOTAL number</b>	<b>783,157,357</b>	<b>269,628,915</b>	<b>91,862,940</b>	<b>178,812,124</b>	<b>95,261,105</b>	<b>1,800,000</b>	<b>1,609,283</b>	<b>1,563,000</b>	<b>40,593,524</b>	<b>35,689,893</b>		
<b>Percent of total Population</b>		<b>34.43%</b>	<b>11.73%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>12.16%</b>	<b>0.23%</b>	<b>0.21%</b>	<b>0.20%</b>	<b>5.18%</b>	<b>4.56%</b>		
<b>Other world religions in Europe</b>												
Baha'i	126000	NOTES: Information collect from various sources including the faith communities.										
Jain	16000	Sources include										
Sikh	236000	World Almanac and Book of Facts 2000. Mahwah, NJ: PRIMEDIA Reference Inc. 1999 Encyc. Britannica Book of the Year										
Zoroastrian	12000	Hutchinson Encyclopaedia										
		Encyclopaedia Britannica										

World Conference on Religions prepared the above chart of European Religious Population for peace (**WCRP**) Europe in connection with the inauguration of WCRP EU Religious Leaders Council on December 2002 see [www.religionsforpeace.org](http://www.religionsforpeace.org).

For British Religious official Census please see [www.statistics.gov.uk](http://www.statistics.gov.uk)

## Appendix Seven

### Some information about Muslims in Europe

OSCE Says Dutch Muslims Live in Fear 21 May 2005

<http://www.islamonline.net/English/News/2005-05/21/article03.shtml>

### OSCE Says Dutch Muslims Live in Fear

<http://www.islamonline.net/English/News/2005-05/21/article03.shtml>

AMSTERDAM, May 21, 2005 (IslamOnline.net & News Agencies) – Europe's main rights and democracy watchdog, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), expressed concern at increasing Dutch intolerance towards Muslims and the "climate of fear" under which the minority was living.



"There is a problem in Holland as far as tolerance and non-discrimination is concerned," Orhun said. (OSCE).

"Holland was reputed to be a country of tolerance where integration, as compared to other European countries, had been achieved acceptably. But recent events have shown there is a problem," said Omur Orhun, OSCE Chair's Personal Representative on Combating Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims.

"Especially from representatives of some civil society organizations there were repeatedly feelings of fear expressed. Not claims of physical attacks or abuse, but a climate of fear," Reuters quoted Orhun as telling a news conference Friday, May 20, ending a three-day visit to the Netherlands.

Orhun, who met Dutch politicians as well as Turkish, Moroccan and Surinamese migrant groups and human rights organizations, said the fact the government had invited him to visit the country showed it wanted to tackle the situation.

"There is a problem in Holland as far as tolerance and non-discrimination is concerned," he said. "But the situation is not tragic and the problem can be solved with common sense and trying to build bridges."

Home to almost one million Muslims or six percent of the population, the country's reputation for tolerance and social harmony was shattered by the murder last November of filmmaker Theo van Gogh for his anti-Islam documentary and its violent aftermath.

A Dutch-Moroccan man was charged with the killing. Dozens of mosques, and Muslim schools were attacked in apparent retaliation.

Representatives of the Muslim minority in the Netherlands swiftly condemned the killing of the controversial filmmaker.

The xenophobia and extremism cancer further prompted Queen Beatrix to dedicate her annual address to the nation on December 25 to national unity and the importance of tolerance and moderation for the welfare of Dutch society.

### **"Growing Fault Line"**

Orhun further said tension was on the rise in many Western countries over Muslim immigrants and said he hoped to visit the United States, Germany, France and Britain soon.

"There is mistrust and stigmatization of Muslims and a growing fault line between the Muslim communities and the host societies," said the Turkish diplomat.

Orhun recommended that Islam should not be politicized by countries that are home to Muslim



A file photo of an attack on a mosque in the Netherlands.

immigrants or by the immigrants themselves, who must also do more to distance themselves from radicalism and condemn violence committed in Islam's name.

Western governments could also do more to counter stigmatizing of Muslim youths, he said.

"The sense of being accepted would tend to decrease this radicalization. Equal opportunities would also create lesser possibilities, lesser chances of radicalization," noted Orhun.

[A recent report](#) released by the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights (IHF) said that Muslim minorities across Europe have been experiencing growing distrust, hostility and discrimination since the 9/11 attacks.

In April, The United Nations Commission on Human Rights adopted a resolution calling for combating defamation campaigns against Islam and Muslims in the West.

## Appendix Eight

More on Islam and Muslims in Holland at:

<http://www.islamawareness.net/Europe/Netherland/>

### 2004 "Tough Year" for Dutch Muslims

<http://islamonline.net/English/News/2004-12/29/article06.shtml>

*By Khaled Shawkat, IOL Correspondent*

THE HAGUE, December 29 2004 (IslamOnline.net) – The best way to sum up the dying year of 2004 for Dutch Muslims is to speak about religious discrimination, xenophobes, bigotry, last but not least, racist attacks on their places of worship.

Even before the November killing of anti-Islam filmmaker Theo Van Gogh, following his insulting documentary about Islam, Dutch Muslims have been targeted by the extremist agenda of the influential right-wing parties.



A file photo for a mosque in the Netherlands that suffered an arson attack.

The xenophobia and extremism cancer prompted Queen Beatrix to dedicate her annual address to the nation Saturday, December 25, to national unity and the importance of tolerance and moderation for the welfare of Dutch society.

"We must make sure that there is no room in our society for bigotry, racism, killing, violence and [religious] hatred to face up to the daunting challenges ahead," the Queen said. "All Dutch people should work for the common good."



The Queen felt that her people were in danger of descending into a deadly civil war especially after 20 mosques and Islamic schools had come under arson attacks linked to the murder of Van Gogh by a Dutchman of Moroccan origin.

The Muslim community was indeed quick to condemn the killing of the filmmaker.

"I abhor his views on Islam and find them hurtful for the Islamic community, but there is no motive that can justify a murder," Ayhan Tonca, of the Dutch organ for contact between Muslims and government, had said in an earlier interview.

### **Right-wingers**

Observers said some one million Dutch Muslims felt really hard done-by because of their religion, holding the right-wing and media accountable.

What added insult to injury is that extremist right-wing politician Pim Fortuyn, who was killed in May 2002, was declared the greatest Dutchman of all times in a recent nationwide survey.

"The anti-Muslim agenda of the ruling coalition of right-wing parties has, in effect, given rise to Muslim extremists and is a breeding ground for recruiting frustrated young Muslims," Ali Kurkamaz, a Dutch political analyst told IslamOnline.net Wednesday, December 29.



Observers say right-wingers like Fortuyn are to blame for feelings of frustrations among the Muslim community.

"This extremist agenda has given minority communities a real hard time."

The right-wing government is now mulling imposing new restrictions on Muslims, including monitoring mosques and curbing their number, censoring sermons, editing Islamic curricula, placing Islamic charities under close scrutiny and constricting visas for imams and Muslim immigrants.

In November, the right-wing Leefbaar Rotterdam (Livable Rotterdam) party submitted a petition to Rotterdam's Local Council, asking it to deny the Muslim community in the city (around 100,000 people) licenses to build more mosques.

It was also pressing for keeping minarets below 35 meters and censoring sermons and religious classes in the city's 25 mosques.

There are more than 300 mosques in the Netherlands, 1000 Islamic cultural centers, two Islamic universities and 42 preparatory schools.

Dutch Immigration Minister Rita Verdonk faced a heated discussion over her new plans in parliament on December 12, though a decision is not expected for several weeks.

The Netherlands already makes integration classes mandatory for newcomers as laws have been changed to oblige all new immigrants and accepted asylum seekers to take classes in Dutch language and culture.

Integrating immigrants has been the subject of much debate in the Netherlands since the emergence of right-wing politicians such as Fortuyn.

### **Xenophobic Media**

Aref Yaksir, an official with the largest Turkish Dianat organization in the Netherlands, heaped blame on Dutch media for its xenophobic approach.

He told IOL that some media portrayed Islam as a nightmare and a serious threat to the country.

"It seems [through media coverage] as if the country was abounding with Muslim extremists and inundated by terrorist operations," he said.

Mohammad Sharif, a journalist of Kurdish origin, gave Muslims some good advice for 2005.

"Refuse to be provoked. Let the right wingers miss the golden opportunity of enacting fresh anti-immigrants laws and justifying unfair measures."

**You May Also Read:**

- [British Muslims a Success Story in 2004](#)
- [2004 "Year of Islam" in France](#)
- [Italian Muslims Survive "Hate Fits" in 2004](#)

## Appendix nine

### Skinheads Threaten Dutch Security

<http://islamonline.net/English/News/2005-04/05/article05.shtml>

*By Nasreddine Djebbi, IOL Correspondent*

THE HAGUE, April, 5, 2005 (IslamOnline.net) – At a time the racist attacks against Dutch Muslims and Islamic places are on the rise, a government report warned that the scale of racism and extremism are worryingly increasing among right-wing "skinhead" youth, posing major threats to Dutch national security.

"The rate of racism and extremism have been worryingly on the rise among Dutch youth during the past few years," said a report of the Utrecht state information service, published by NRC *Handelsblad* Monday, April 4.

The report warned that such radical right-wing youth groups pose grave dangers to Dutch society even more than what it termed as "Islamic extremism", calling on Dutch security bodies and local authorities to examine how powerful are these groups in the country.

"Skinheads" are groups of students who have racist inclinations but without being members of any political party.

Researchers said the "skinhead" youth are often hailing to families suffering from social and psychological problems. They are also drug and narcotics' addicts.



Skinheads are believed to be behind racist attacks against Dutch Muslims and Islamic places.

Those young people are usually marked with a special uniform having a racist slogan, exposing their rightist extreme inclinations.

Skinhead groups are believed to be behind the racist attacks against the Muslim minority and Islamic places in the Netherlands, according to a research conducted by the Leden University.

Since the murder of the Dutch filmmaker Theo Van Gogh, anti-Muslim attacks have been picking up speed and intensity in the country, reaching 106 assaults, a quarter of which were known to be carried out by skinheads, the research said.

Van Gogh was widely known for his criticism of Islam and recently caused an uproar with his short film "*Submission*" about Islam and women.

Dutch Muslims and human rights activists had expressed their deep disgust and outrage at the hatred-inciting 11-minute clip, saying they found it "extremely insulting".

Van Gogh made his film in collaboration with a controversial politician of Somali descent, [Ayaan Hirsi Ali](#), who is a vocal critic of women's treatment in Islamic countries and who was also under police protection after receiving death threats.

The Muslim minority in the Netherlands swiftly condemned the killing of the filmmaker.

### **Skinhead Attack**

The latest episode of racist attacks by skinheads against the Islamic places, meanwhile, fell on Saturday, April 2, when a group of youth threw wine bottles at a mosque in the city of Veneray.

Following the attack, clashes erupted between skinhead attackers and the Muslim faithful but the Dutch security forces and mosque staff members intervened to contain the situation.

Eyewitnesses said that a group of tipsy skinheads were roaming city streets before attending a concert organized by a youth center in the area.

While attending the concert, skinheads caused major uproars, forcing the center owner to wrap up the concert prematurely, the witnesses added.

Immediately, the apparently drunk skinheads left the center for the mosque in the area to throw beer bottles they had at the Islamic place.

### **On the Rise**

J. Van Donselaar, a Dutch researcher told NRC *Handelsblad* that there was no exact statistics on the number of racist attacks carried out by skinheads.

"However, the number of the attacks goes beyond all expectations and are continually on the rise."

A similar assessment was echoed by W. Van Amerongen, head of the Venlo police department.

"Skinheads are posing major threats, especially in the current circumstances," he told the daily.



Researchers believe that the neighborhoods of Arnhem, Eindhoven and Roermond are the most likely hotbeds of skinheads, according to researchers.

They are also believed to be responsible for the arson attack against the Badr Islamic school in the central town of Uden on March 28.

Unidentified attackers had thrown Molotov cocktails on the Islamic school, the second attack of its kind in just few months, causing minor damages at the building.

Muslims make up one million of the Netherlands's 16 million population. Turks represent 80 percent of the Muslim minority.

There are some 450 mosques in the Netherlands, 1,000 Islamic cultural centers, two Islamic universities and 42 preparatory schools, according to recent estimates.

Press reports have underlined that Dutch Muslims were subjected to religious discrimination and racist attacks on their places of worship in 2004.

## **Appendix Ten**

### **Islam in Holland**

**<http://www.islamawareness.net/Europe/Netherland/holland.html>**

Amsterdam, Shawwal 10/January 16 2005 (IINA) - Out of Holland's population of 15.6 million, Muslims make up half a million, which is ten-fold what it was in 1971. Now the Islamic atmosphere in Holland has become common feature, with mosques and Islamic schools in existence in various parts of the country.

The Dutch government does not interfere in the religious affairs of any community, and seeks to integrate the various minorities in the country into the Dutch society, so that they can participate in the democratic practices of the country and do away with racial inclinations.

Holland itself was inhabited by very few Muslims since the last half century or so, though the majority of those that were encompassed by the Dutch Empire were Muslims, because, up to 1949, its borders included Muslim Indonesia. In Surinam also there is a sizeable Muslim community, of Indian descent.

In the sixties there was a shortage of manpower in Holland and the country had to look for foreign labour outside its borders, so that its economy could be activated, and for this reason there was a movement of people from such Mediterranean countries as Turkey and Morocco. Though in 1974 Holland put a stop to the importation of foreign labour, it did not stop the current of immigration from such countries, and many of the resident workers started to bring in their families. There was also a wave of immigration from Surinam, before its independence in 1975, and most of the immigrants were Muslims.

Muslims now comprise four percent of the Dutch population, with the ethnic Turks

being the majority in the Muslim community, in that they number about 270,000. This is followed by the Moroccan ethnic community, numbering 225,000, while the Surinamese community comes third, numbering 50,000 in all. Additionally, there are Muslims who came to Holland as refugees, from such countries as Iran, Iraq, Somalia, Ethiopia, Egypt, Afghanistan, the former Soviet Union, and Bosnia.

In 1971, Muslims in Holland numbered 54,000, in 1975 the figure went up to 108,000, in 1980 it was 225,000, and in 1997 it reached the 573,000 mark.

Clause No. 1 of the Dutch Constitution stipulates that all the residents of Holland shall enjoy equal rights, and the constitution also forbids any form of discrimination on grounds of religion, faith, politics, sex, or ethnic origin. This means that the Muslims also enjoy equal rights as those enjoyed by the Christians. But coupled with these rights, there are also responsibilities that go hand in hand with them, such as the payment of taxes, as well as compulsory education. This means that up to the age of 16, every child must go to school, including the children of residents.

Those who have taken up Dutch citizenship also enjoy equal rights as their Dutch-born counterparts, including the rights to vote or stand for election on the national level, while at the local level even residents enjoy such rights. It is reported that over 100 Muslims hold elective offices at the local level.

There is complete religious freedom in Holland, on both the level of the individual and at the communal level, and religion is separated from the state. This means that the government does not interfere in the affairs of religious bodies, while at the same time such bodies do not interfere in affairs of the state.

At the moment there are about 200 mosques scattered in various parts of Holland, that were built by each of the various ethnic groups, while Muslim cemeteries also can be found in dozens of towns and cities. In fact, right up to the eighties, the Dutch Government used to give subventions for the construction of mosques and churches, but this came to an end after it was decided that this was contrary to the idea of separating religion from the state. So now the onus of building mosques has been left to the Islamic organisations.

Muslims enjoy a measure of freedom, such as flexible hours during the fasting month of Ramadan, while some enterprises allocate special prayer areas for their Muslim workers. Circumcision is practiced in many of the hospitals in Holland, while the wearing of the Hijab by Muslim women has become a common sight at schools and at university campuses. But at some of the private schools the practice is somewhat discouraged, and there is nothing that the government could do about it, since they enjoy a large measure of freedom to run their affairs.

As far as slaughterhouses are concerned, and in keeping with the practice in other European Union countries, the government of Holland has set aside special abattoirs for slaughtering animals according to the Islamic Sharia. Thus there are more than 500 Islamic slaughterhouses, out of a total number of 4,500.

But the government of Holland's policy is that of social integration, regardless of religious affiliation, though some of the ethnic minorities suffer from a number of

drawbacks, such as the linguistic barrier and other stumbling blocks.

The rate of unemployment among the ethnic minorities is around 20 percent, though this segment forms only five percent of the labour force.

The government is therefore working toward improving the lot of this segment of the society in Holland, and integrating them within the Dutch society as a whole, not only by providing employment opportunities for them, but also by teaching them skills and the Dutch language. The government of Holland is now in the process of initiating the appointment of Muslim chaplains in prisons and asylums, and for this purpose will form an Advisory Commission, for purposes of reference. Thus, in order to take care of the spiritual life of the inmates of prisons, the government in Holland would shoulder the responsibility of paying the salaries and other emoluments of such appointees, provided the appointees can carry out their duties using the Dutch language.

There are denominational schools in Holland, such as those of the Catholics and the Protestants, but the Muslims also have about 30 such schools. But the secular curriculum applies to all, while education is compulsory for all, so that no segment of the society can be left behind as far as education is concerned.

Public schools are free to introduce religious education, and in this connection both Islamic and Christian studies are taught in many such schools. The students at such schools are free to choose either Arabic or Turkish as a second language. A Muslim secondary school has been established in Rotterdam in the year 2000.

Islam and Islamic studies, including Arabic and other Muslims languages, are also given their due importance at the higher level of education, and there are several lecturers who lecture on such subjects at the university level. AT the University of Amsterdam there is a Chair for Islamic Studies and it is funded by private organisations.

In 1998, the Dutch Institute for Islamic Studies in the Contemporary World was opened in Leiden, and, as the name implies, it focuses mainly on Islamic studies. The government is also funding the training of Imams, as it does with other religious denominations. At the moment, about 50 Imams are drawn from Turkey and Morocco every year, and the first year of their residence is used by the government to induct them in Dutch society, and this includes the learning of the Dutch language. Such induction courses are followed by examinations not only in the language, but also to assess the ability of the fresh waves of Imams.

Dutch mosque damaged in arson attack

15 Jun 2005 07:48:41 GMT

Source: Reuters

<http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/L15350221.htm>

AMSTERDAM, June 15, 2005 (Reuters) - A mosque in the Dutch city of Rotterdam was damaged by arson and daubed with racist graffiti early on Wednesday, the latest of several such attacks since the murder last year of a filmmaker critical of Islam.

The Shaan-e-Islam mosque, frequented by Rotterdam's Surinamese community, was extensively damaged by fire and racist slogans were painted on its walls, a spokesman for Rotterdam police said. No one was hurt in the attack.

Dutch mosques have been hit by a string of arson attacks since outspoken filmmaker Theo van Gogh was shot and stabbed in Amsterdam last November. A Dutch-Moroccan man was charged with the murder, which raised racial and religious tensions in a country that was once a byword for tolerance.

Dutch television showed pictures of the fire-damaged mosque in Rotterdam's Old West district, its walls covered with phrases such as "Theo R.I.P." – an apparent reference to Van Gogh, who outraged many Muslims with his views on Islam.

On Monday a Dutch court sentenced a man to a year in jail, six months of which were suspended, for starting a fire near another Rotterdam mosque in apparent revenge for Van Gogh's murder.

## Appendix Eleven

### Muslims in Europe Told How to Succeed

<http://islamonline.net/English/News/2005-04/05/article01.shtml>

*By Ahmed Al-Matboli, IOL Correspondent*

VIENNA, April 5, 2005 (IslamOnline.net) – A prominent Arab human rights activist in Vienna has shared his "ingredients" for success in the West, offering the Muslim minorities there a "recipe" of three main components.

"Civil work, political representation and active media campaigning; that's my recipe for success," **Turfa Bagaghathi**, Deputy Chairman of the European Network Against Racism ([ENAR](#)), told IslamOnline.net Monday, April 4.



"We often write in newspapers to express our opinion on world events, in general, and Muslim issues, in particular," said Bagaghathi.

Syrian-born Bagaghathi said Muslims in Europe should not sit on the fence, but engage heavily in the political, economic and social landscapes of their new societies.

"Success stories of Muslims in Europe occur, thanks to this three-component recipe," he said. "It won't work if you lack one of the three."

Bagaghathi further said Muslims in Austria are juggling between the three roles.

"Take Mr. Omar Al-Rawi; who is a Member of Parliament, the Islamic Authority; which frequently make headlines, and I myself in my capacity as ENAR's deputy chairman and an official with the Islamic Initiative Society, which caters for Muslims, not only in Austria but across Europe," he said.

Established in November 1999, the Initiative is focusing now on the second generation as it tries to cement its bonds with Islam, he added.

"Through the Initiative, we explain to the younger generations Islam's stance on the cons of the western societies, address some thorny issues considered by the West as Muslims's weak points and educate them on how to face the daunting challenges ahead."

Language classes, he added, are also given due attention, noting that Muslims should be fully aware that German is their sharpest weapon in their dialogue with the other.

### **Reaching Out**

Bagaghati said the Initiative, realizing the great effect of media, is marketing its ideas and agenda through leading newspapers.

"We often write in newspapers to express our opinion on world events, in general, and Muslim issues, in particular," he said.

The rights activist further explained that his society has made friends with different political and religious currents in Europe, and is working in tandem with rights organizations and NGOs.

"We feel for their issues the way we want them to feel for ours," he said.

"Immediately after the Initiative had been launched, we received an invitation from ENAR to attend a Brussels meeting in which I made sure that we, as minorities, didn't want to clash but rather to act in unison to reach common grounds."

On his hopes as ENAR's deputy chairman, Bagaghati said he hopes that the Network will play a political role in coordinating with EU parliaments and the European Union.

"We have been pressing for 'positive discrimination' in favor of minorities like hijab-clad women and people with dark complexion," he said.

"They must be represented in the ministries, police and government entities."

Bagaghati also said despite the domino effect produced by the 9/11 attacks and the killing of Dutch filmmaker Theo Van Gogh, they; nevertheless, have some pluses.

"Lay people in Europe have become curious to figure out how Muslims think and what Islam is all about," he said.

The Muslim minority in Austria [fared well](#) in 2004, showing great ability to integrate smoothly into society.

A law issued in 1867, which guaranteed respect for all religions, gave Muslims the right to establish mosques and practice their religion in Austria.

## **Appendix Twelve**

### **Austrian Muslims Score Big in 2004**

<http://www.islamonline.net/English/News/2005-01/04/article04.shtml>

*By Tamer Abul Einein & Ahmed Al-Matboli, IOL Correspondents*

VIENNA, January 4 (IslamOnline.net) – The Muslim community in Austria shined in 2004, showing great ability to integrate smoothly into the Austrian society, making use of the official recognition of Islam as a the second state religion, allowing Muslims to defend their rights, in addition to being staunch supporters of Arab and Islamic causes.



Fischer joined Muslims in celebrating the silver Jubilee of the Islamic Religious Authority in Austria.

The year 2004 started on a promising note for Austrian Muslims, with official estimates showing their number had doubled to hit 300,000, making up 4% of the 8 million population.

In 1991, the Austrian Muslim community made only 2% of the total population.

The 2004 statistics showed Muslims highly concentrated in the western Austrian city of Freiburg, making up 8.4% of the total population in the area. The capital Vienna came second, with Muslims making up to 7.8% of its population.

Islam, which was officially acknowledged in Austria in 1912, is considered the second religion in the country after Catholicism.

### **Good Relations**

The year 2004 also ended on two good notes for the Muslim community in Austria, manifested in two meetings with the Austrian President Heinz Fischer that highlighted the privileges Austrian Muslims enjoy, compared to other Muslim communities in Europe.

Since he was elected President in 2004, Fischer has taken several good gestures toward the Muslim community in Austria.

He invited representatives of the Muslim community to an *iftar* banquet in the presidential palace during the holy fasting month of Ramadan.

Fischer also joined the Austrian Muslims in celebrating the 25th anniversary of the Islamic Religious Authority (IRA) in Austria. The celebrations were also attended by a cohort of senior government officials.

Addressing the ceremony, the Austrian leader greeted the Austrian Muslims by saying "Viva the Muslim community in Austria", the first such greeting by any an EU leader.

Established in 1979, the IRA functions as the religious and spiritual representative of Muslims in Austria.

Vienna mayor Michael Haupl also hailed the successful Muslim integration into the Austrian society, stressing Muslims are part and parcel of Austria's social fabric.

### **Staunch Supporter**

In addition to being an example of social integration, the Austrian Muslim community was no less active in the support of Arab and Islamic issues, primarily the Palestinian and Iraqi causes.

In this respect, several peaceful marches were organized by the Muslim community to highlight support for the two Arab nations under occupation.

On March 20, thousands of Austrians took part in a rally in central Vienna to condemn the “imperialistic campaigns” in Palestine and Iraq, calling for establishing peace around the globe.

The Muslim community in Austria also condemned the Israeli [assassination](#) of Hamas spiritual leader Sheikh Ahmed Yassin.

### **Condemnation**

The general atmosphere of peaceful integration manifested itself in how the Austrian community dealt with the wave of Islamophobia ripping through other EU countries.

Austrian Muslims and imams have been loudly criticizing of any resorting to violence in solving disputes. That was clear in their condemnation of the killing of anti-Islam Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh.

That kind of attitude was extremely hailed by the Austrian press.

The Austrian *Der Standard* applauded a Friday sermon by the Muslim imam Sheikh Adnan Ibrahim who highlighted the fact that Austria provided Muslims with safety and good living conditions, requiring Muslims to answer with gratitude.

The Austrian Muslims have also been strongly present as far as international crises were concerned, especially the quake-triggered tsunamis which hit Asian countries.

Responding to the crisis, the IRA opened a banking account to receive donations to help the tsunami-hit peoples.

Muslim imams also urged all Muslim people to do their utmost efforts to bring help to the Asian peoples, regardless of their faiths.

### **Women**

Credit for a successful and a fruitful year does not only go to Muslim men in Austria. Muslim women have, in fact, weighed heavily in that regard.

Joining men in drawing a bright picture of the Muslim community in Austria, women also held meetings with senior officials to discuss issues of concern to the Muslim community in the European country.

A female Muslim delegation met senior government officials last year.

The delegation stressed that Islam enshrined inalienable rights for women and cleared stereotypes circulated by right-wing media.

### **Racist Practices**

The picture was not all that rosy though. The Muslim community did face incidents of racist practices from rightist parties in the country, chiefly Austrian bishop Kurt Koenig who accused Muslims with brutality and terrorism, warning against flooding Europe with Muslim immigrants.

Responding to the remarks, the IRA urged the Austrian bishop to respect the Vatican decisions on good relations with Islam and Muslims.

The Catholic church in Austria actually was swift in rejecting Koenig's claims, adding it was unacceptable to associate Islam with brutality.



Copying an anti-hijab drive in some European countries, a school in the Austrian city of Leinz banned Muslim students from wearing hijab.

In response, the IRA urged the Austrian education minister to guarantee the right of Muslim students to wear hijab at schools.

France has triggered a controversy by adopting a bill banning hijab and religious insignia in public schools.

The US-based Human Rights Watch (HRW) dismissed the French move as "discriminatory".

## Appendix Thirteen

### Austrian Muslims "Officially" Enjoy Ramadan

<http://islamonline.net/English/News/2004-11/03/article04.shtml>

*By Tamer Abul Einein, IOL Correspondent*

VIENNA, November 3 (IslamOnline.net) - The Muslim community in Austria may be limited in number, but it is sure more lucky than counterparts in other European countries. This is clearer during the holy fasting month of Ramadan.

The Muslim community, almost 350,000, finds it a piece of cake to live the religious atmosphere of Ramadan, especially when Islam is recognized as an official religion in Austria.



Austrian Muslims have iftar

That has led to the official acknowledgement of Muslims' rights and duties in the European country, enhancing Muslims' integration into the Austrian society.

"There are elements that helped the Muslim community easily integrate, on of which is the enactment of the Islam Law. That Law organizes the living conditions of Muslims, helps enhance positive communication between Muslims, on one hand, and the state and civic society organizations, on the other.

"As a result, Austrian Muslims could integrate in the society, while preserving their identity, adding positively to the ethnic and cultural variety of the society," Anas Bin Hassan Al-Shakfa, chairman of the official Muslim Religious Body in Austria told IslamOnline.net Tuesday, November 2.

The Muslim community enjoys many privileges and rights, especially during the dawn-to-dusk fasting month, he added.

"Austrian Muslim soldiers have the right to fast and meals are served to them in accordance with times of *Iftar* and *Sahur*. This shows how authorities respect Muslims and their religious obligations."

#### Foreign Scholars



The Muslim community in Austria, moreover, faces no problem in inviting Muslim scholars from Arab and Muslim countries to mark the dawn-to-dusk fasting month, IslamOnline.net correspondent said.

A case in point, 20 Muslim scholars from Turkey, Egypt and Jordan have already come to Austria to mark the holy month, contrary to other European countries that slap rigid restrictions on scholars' access, he added.



Hassan Al-Shakfa

In a practical demonstration of the government respect to its Muslim community, Austrian President Heinz Fischer extended invitations to 60 figures of the Muslim community to attend a collective *iftar* banquet on Ramadan 26 (November 9).

The banquet will be attended by senior government officials, a step seen as a sign of Muslims' integration in the Austrian society and respect for the minorities' rights.

Of Austria's nearly eight million population, Muslims make the second largest religious community after the dominant Catholics.

### Facilities

Even Muslims behind bars in Austria get special Ramadan treatment in Austrian jails, as authorities provide them with many facilities during the month of fasting.

Muslims prisoner are allowed to perform *Tarawih* Prayers, other regular prayers in Jama'ah (congregation), have their meals at *iftar* times, and provide them with halal meat; that is to say animals are slaughtered in accordance with Islamic Shari'ah.

"Muslims held behind bars outnumber available potentials offered for their care, however, the voluntary work undertakers spare no effort in offering help

to as many of Muslims held in Austrian jails, as possible," a member of the Muslim Youth Organization told IOL.

He attributed respect of the Austrian reform institutions and understanding of Islamic rituals to the continuous dialogue among the two sides.

He also underlined the need to have Muslims benefit from the privileges granted by the Austrian law, stressing that such privileges yield positive results to Muslim prisoners and encourage the authorities to enhance cooperation with volunteers to offer more care for the Muslim prisoners.

### Young Generations



Female Muslims in Austria encounter no hijab

Younger Muslim generations in the country <sup>problem</sup> feel even more integrated into the Austrian society, enjoying the Ramadan atmosphere on their own way with programs they themselves prepare.

IOL correspondent said young Muslims, hailing from Muslim countries, such as Turkey, Egypt, Syria or Bosnia, live their lives as Austrian citizens, while exchanging Ramadan traditions and habits of their homelands.

"The second and third generations of Austrian Muslims don't face problems that their peers in other European countries such as France encounter," Sara Hafez of the Muslim Youth Organization told IOL.

She added hijab forms no problem for the Austrian Muslims as it is considered as a normal tradition.

Austrian Muslims, however, carefully insist on getting their rights granted by law while, at the same time, realizing their duties as Austrian citizens, she maintained.

France has triggered a controversy by adopting a bill banning hijab and religious insignia in public schools.

The US-based Human Rights Watch (HRW) dismissed the French move as "discriminatory".

### Seminars

Seminars on Noble Qur'an studies, *hadith* (peace be upon him) and interpretation of Qur'an in German are also held by the Muslim Youth Organization during Islam holiest month.

Such seminars are held with individual efforts of members of the Muslim community in the country.

They are held in mosques and prayer halls all over the Austrian capital to enhance communication among one another during the holy fasting month.

## Appendix Fourteen

### British Muslims a Success Story in 2004

<http://www.islamonline.net/English/News/2004-12/28/article06.shtml>

*By Hani Mohammad, IOL Correspondent*

LONDON, December 28 2004 (IslamOnline.net) – If a Muslim community in Europe was to be awarded first prize in integration and remarkable achievements, the British would be definitely singled out, and deservedly so.

Standing up strongly to xenophobic ideologues and the Zionist lobby, proving that they are really a heavyweight community and earning the respect of government officials and MPs are



A library photo of Muslims leaving East London Mosque, which is Europe's biggest Muslim community center

success stories very rare to hear of in the West in the wake of the 9/11 attacks, which, in effect, created a new world order.

The terrorist attacks cut both ways as they unleashed an unprecedented ferocious campaign against Islam and Muslims in the West, on the one hand, and made a large number of people in Europe to read about this religion and discover that it only preached about the need for forgiveness, love and mercy.

The year 2004 witnessed an increasing number of Britons accepting Islam. In February, the Sunday Times reported that some of the country's top landowners and celebrities have embraced the Muslim faith.

Jonathan Birt, the son of Lord Birt; and Emma Clark, the granddaughter of former liberal prime minister Herbert Asquith; are only two of 14,000 who reverted to Islam in Britain.

"A better understanding of Islam and of Muslims will show that the differences are nowhere near as great as some would like to suggest," London Mayor Ken Livingstone had said.

Britain's Muslims are estimated to be some 2.5 million out of the 60 million population.

### Heavyweight

British Muslims have, as a point of fact, made their voices heard and become lobby-minded.

They act acted in unison under respectable umbrella organizations like the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB), the Muslim Association of Britain (MAB) and the Islamic Society of Britain (ISB).

The stop-and-search arrests and religious discrimination they suffered at the hands of hardliners have never dampened their enthusiasm or sense of patriotism.

After the Muslim support for their traditional Labour party [had halved](#) and the free fall of the party's ratings in the local and European Parliament elections, the government has come to realize the fact that the Muslim vote does really count and planned to win the hearts and minds of the Muslim citizens.

The Home Office has already unveiled plans to put forward a legislation criminalizing incitement of religious hatred.

"Such Muslim campaigns have actually paid off and scared away the Zionist lobby and the extremist right-wing," Mohammad Sawalah, the deputy head of the Muslim League in Britain, told IslamOnline.net Monday, December 27.

Senior British parliamentarians admitted anti-terrorism laws are being used "disproportionately" against Muslims.

In a severe blow to Prime Minister Tony Blair's "anti-terror" measures, the House of Lords ruled on December 16 that detention of foreign "terror suspects" without trial was illegal.

### Political Success



Tikriti was one of the prominent British activists in 2004

Muslims also stood as candidates representing various political parties in the country's elections and also contested in the European parliamentary election.

Muslim activist Anas Al-Tikriti, who stood for the European Parliament elections under Respect party, must be proud that 40 percent of the Muslim voters, who traditionally vote Labour, cast their ballots in favor of his nascent party.

Tikriti hailed his party's performance in the elections, especially for a party that did not exist just 20 weeks ago before the election.

"To put it in comparison, the 30-year-old Greens party has captured a meager two seats," in the 732-seat European legislature, he had told IOL.

Earlier in the month, Ken Livingstone appointed a Muslim woman as his new human rights advisor.

Yasmin Qureshi, a barrister whose experience includes heading the Criminal Legal Section of the UN Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and the Department of Judicial Administration in Kosovo, will replace Graham Tope.

Furthermore, the Foreign Office has released a CD, reminding the Muslim community that their contribution "is not just a matter of history, but a [reality in every walk of life](#)".

### **Countering Xenophobes**

British Muslims, additionally, have stood up strongly to xenophobic ideologues, who thought that their anti-Islam rants would go unpunished.

British police arrested earlier in the month the leader of the extremist British National Party (BNP), Nick Griffin, for describing Islam as "wicked, vicious faith has expanded through a handful of cranky lunatics about 1,300 years ago until it's now sweeping country after country."

Last July, Barclays, Britain's third-biggest bank, closed the BNP's accounts thanks to growing influence of the Muslim community.

In January, the MCB lodged a complaint with the Press Complaints Commission (PCC) and the BBC, urging robust disciplinary action against columnist and presenter Robert Kilroy-Silk.

Thanks to an immediate Muslim action, the BBC suspended the presenter's morning show pending an investigation, while Kilroy-Silk offered an apology over describing Arabs as "suicide bombers, limb amputators, and women repressors."

According to experts, the vile campaign of the Zionist lobby in Britain against the July visit of prominent Muslim scholar Sheikh Yusuf Al-Qaradawi has backfired and cemented the position of British Muslims in society.

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) concluded that there was no legal ground to prosecute Sheikh Qaradawi as requested by Henry Grunwald QC, president of the Board of Deputies of British Jews.



London Mayor Ken Livingstone (R) picked Muslim Yasmin Qureshi as his human rights advisor

The mayor of London has further apologized on behalf of the people of London for the fuss that overshadowed Qaradawi's visit and invited the prominent Muslim scholar back to the United Kingdom in October 2005.

### **Islam Awareness**

One of the outstanding Muslim events in 2004 is the tenth Islam Awareness Week.

Shakespeare's Globe Theatre played host last month to the national event organized by the ISB under the title "Your Muslim Neighbor."

The one-week gala highlighted the valuable contributions made by British Muslims to everyday life in Britain.

In view of the mounting racist attacks targeting British Muslims, a new pocket guide saw the light in September 25 to educate the community about their basic rights and responsibilities in a bid to allay their fears.

'Know Your Rights & Responsibilities' is the title of the 16-page guide, which was published by the MCB.

Moreover, Europe's biggest Muslim community center [opened](#) in London on June 11.

The six storey center can accommodate 10,000 worshippers, as it has a library, crèche, conference rooms, a gym and classrooms.

### **Also Read:**

- [2004 "Year of Islam" in France](#)
- [Italian Muslims Survive "Hate Fits" in 2004](#)

## **Appendix Fifteen**

### **Hate against Muslims**

**Tuesday January 11, 2005**

[The Guardian](#)

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/letters/story/0,,1387271,00.html>

Kenan Malik (What Hate? G2, January 7) makes the not uncommon mistake of equating Islam with race. They are not the same. A recent Open Society Institute report found that "Muslims in the UK are more likely to face discrimination based on religion rather than race". The BNP has in recent years switched its strategy for fear of being prosecuted under our incitement to race hate laws from targeting racial groupings to explicitly targeting British Muslims as a faith group. Malik omitted any mention of the riots of 2001 and the key role the BNP's Muslim-baiting played in them, and his C4 documentary criticises the government's proposals to close this loophole in our legislation and prohibit incitement to religious hatred.

Islamophobia is not confined to the far right. Last summer, the BBC conducted a survey in which fictitious applications were made for jobs using applicants with the same qualifications and work experience, but different names. A quarter of the applications by the candidates with traditionally English sounding names were successful in securing an interview, but only 9% of applicants with Muslim names. The mainstream media have also played a key role in

fomenting this prejudice against Muslims. Islamophobia is a myth only if you choose to look the other way.

**Inayat Bunglawala**  
Muslim Council of Britain

## **'Flames of hate' correction, by Inayat Bunglawala**

<http://www.mcb.org.uk/letter101.html>

The Editor  
Evening Standard

21st May 2005

Dear Sir,

Your provocative front page story "Flames of Hate" (Evening Standard, 20th May 2005) incorrectly stated that the demonstration last Friday outside the US Embassy in Grosvenor Square was organised by the Muslim Council of Britain. We hope you will correct this at the earliest opportunity and give the correction a similarly high profile placing as your original story.

The Muslim Council of Britain has since received numerous hate messages via email from people who have evidently misled by the Evening Standard story. There are also some incendiary internet discussions going on about the MCB which were kicked off by your inaccurate story. See the following link as an example:

[http://www.pardonmyenglish.com/archives/2005/05/the\\_irrational.html](http://www.pardonmyenglish.com/archives/2005/05/the_irrational.html)

We, once again, urge the Evening Standard to take extra care when reporting such incidents and ensure that they do not serve to demonise the mainstream Muslim community.

The Muslim Council of Britain shall be raising this incident with the Commission for Racial Equality and the Mayor of London to discuss the implications of the Evening Standard's often sensationalist coverage of Muslim affairs for community relations in London.

Yours faithfully,

Inayat Bunglawala,  
Secretary,  
Media Committee,  
The Muslim Council of Britain

Boardman House,  
64 Broadway,  
Stratford,  
London E15 1NT

<http://www.mcb.org.uk/letter103.html#sample>



## **MCB letter to London Mayor Ken Livingstone**

<http://www.mcb.org.uk/letter103.html>

Ken Livingstone,  
Mayor of London,  
Greater London Authority,  
City Hall,  
The Queen's Walk  
London SE1 2AA

Dear Mayor,

The Muslim Council of Britain has for some time now been seriously concerned by the often provocative and sensationalist style of reporting of Muslim affairs in the London paper, Evening Standard, and, more importantly, the effect their reporting is having on community relations in our capital city and in shaping attitudes towards Islam and British Muslims.

On Friday 20th May 2005, in its final edition, the Evening Standard ran an incendiary front-page story 'Flames of Hate' about a demonstration outside the US Embassy that day in Grosvenor Square in protest at the reported desecration of the Holy Qur'an by US soldiers in Guantanamo Bay. The story was accompanied by a large photograph of some youths - presumably Muslim - burning the US flag. We understand that the peaceful demonstration was apparently hijacked some hooligan-type elements who proceeded to chant offensively violent slogans and burn the US flag and an effigy of the US President George Bush. The Evening Standard story - written by Luke David - incorrectly stated on its front page that the demonstration was organised by the Muslim Council of Britain. This was categorically not the case. In addition, the story gave the readers of the Evening Standard no indication at all as to how many people were involved in demonstration and made no effort whatsoever to make any distinction between the rabble-rousing elements and the mainstream Muslim community who were understandably deeply hurt by the reports about the desecration of the Holy Qur'an by US soldiers. The Evening Standard apparently also made no attempt to contact representative Muslim organisations and incorporate their quotes criticising the offensive sloganeering and flag-burning in order to help add some balance to their story. In any case, we are quite disturbed that the Evening Standard printed this minor (and quite inaccurate) story on its front-page - where it could be guaranteed to help stir yet more anti-Muslim reaction.

The Muslim Council of Britain has since received numerous threatening and hate messages via email and telephone from people who have evidently read the misleading and, we believe, inciteful Evening Standard story. We enclose a [sample of the emails](#) we have received at the end of this letter.

As you know, there is already a very unhealthy anti-Muslim climate in this country spurred on by irresponsible reporting in some sections of the media as well as by far right elements. We sent the attached letter of correction to the Evening Standard on early on Sunday afternoon urging them to print a swift and prominent correction. Regrettably, the Evening Standard did not publish it until Thursday 26th May 2005 and even then it was a very small item on their letters page - it certainly could not be

compared with the effect that its front page story would have had on the Standard's readers.

Since the Evening Standard story was published, other anti-Muslim individuals and groups have repeated the incorrect allegation that the MCB organised the demonstration outside the US Embassy on Friday 20th May. For an example see the following from the official website of Melanie Phillips, the well-known right-wing columnist and Islamophobe:

<http://www.melaniephillips.com/diary/archives/001222.html>

"Two further points stand out. Taking part in this display of treasonous incitement were people who had been detained in Guantanamo and are now at large. And among the organisers of this revealing hate-fest were the Muslim Council of Britain and the Muslim Parliamentary Association of the UK -- organisations which we are told represent 'moderation' and, in the case of the MCB at least, vilifies anyone who dares talk about 'Islamist violence'. Now we can see what this actually means -- and how the police, government and prosecuting authorities have decided to respond to this declaration of war on our society by looking the other way."

We urge you, as the Mayor of London, to take this matter up with urgency to help ensure that community relations are not harmed by this kind of confrontational reporting. You have an admirable record of working for better relations between the many different communities that make up our capital city and we hope you will help us to ensure that no one is allowed to endanger the harmony we enjoy in London.

For your information the Muslim Council of Britain shall also be raising this matter with the police, the Press Complaints Commission and the Commission for Racial Equality.

Yours sincerely,

Inayat Bunglawala,  
Secretary,  
Media Committee,  
The Muslim Council of Britain

Boardman House,  
64 Broadway,  
Stratford,  
London E15 1NT

<http://www.mcb.org.uk/letter103.html#sample>

May 20, 2005

**Moderate Muslims: A Figment of Your Imagination**



[http://www.pardonmyenglish.com/archives/2005/05/the\\_irrational.html](http://www.pardonmyenglish.com/archives/2005/05/the_irrational.html)

Outside the United States Embassy in London today a protest rally organized by the supposedly moderate Muslim Council for Britain and the Muslim Parliamentary Association of the UK featured chants of, "kill George Bush" and "George Bush you will pay with your blood - you will pay with your head."

**This is London.com** reports that the crowd burned an effigy of Tony Blair on a crucifix and then set fire to the Union Jack and Stars and Stripes flags.

One wonders if some of the pathetic apologists for Muslim / Islamic terrorists and terror who frequent the comments section of this site would care to enlighten us once again about how "moderate Muslims" would never condone this sort of depraved behaviour.

Once again, it is quite clear that these supposed "moderate Muslims" are exceedingly few and far between. In fact, I would suggest that one is more likely to discover Santa Claus riding a unicorn through a magical forest in Israel with flowing streams of milk and honey before a real live "moderate Muslim" could ever be found.

Led by a man on a megaphone, they chanted, "USA watch your back, Osama is coming back" and "Kill, kill USA, kill, kill George Bush". A small detail of police watched as they shouted: "Bomb, bomb New York" and "George Bush, you will pay, with your blood, with your head."

Demonstrators in Grosvenor Square, some with their faces covered with scarves, waved placards which included the message: "Desecrate today and see another 9/11 tomorrow."

It would really be nice to see these reprobates come to New York City and try to stage a "hate rally" like this. They would find out very quickly why the NYPD is called New York's Finest. "Hate Rallies" like the aforementioned are tolerated in some European countries because these vile miscreants know there will be no sanction levied against them. They smell weakness like a mouse smells cheese.

One of the protesters called for the release of radical Muslim cleric Abu Hamza. He shouted: "Your so-called democracy will fall under the sword of Allah. The day of judgment is coming."

The demonstration coincided with protests across the world. On the West Bank 2,500 Palestinians streamed out of mosques shouting "Death to America". In Calcutta, India, protesters burned, spat and urinated on the US flag. And in Somalia thousands chanted anti-US slogans.

How nice. Once again, would someone please explain the reason we do anything for these wonderful people.

Let us wait patiently for the "moderate Muslims" to step up and condemn this despicable display. This, just as they did in condemning the terrorist attacks of 9/11. Oh wait, they never did. My mistake.

As Voltaire wrote; Fanaticism is to superstition what delirium is to fever and rage to anger....the man who supports his madness with murder is a fanatic....Once fanaticism has corrupted a mind, the malady is almost incurable....I have seen some whose eyes got inflamed, their limbs trembled, madness disfigured their faces and they would have killed anyone who contradicted them....Even the law is impotent against these attacks of rage; it is like reading a court decree to a raving maniac....They are certain that the spirit with which they are filled is above the law, that their enthusiasm is the only law they must obey....What can we say to a man who tells you that he would rather obey God than men, and that he is sure to go to heaven for butchering you?

Indeed, what can one say?

Posted by **William** at May 20, 2005 07:15 PM

### **Moderate Muslims: A Figment of Your Imagination:**

#### ***Comments***

OK it's absurdly late here so I'll make this short.

The event was organised by the Muslim Council of Britain, but that doesn't mean the approved of everyone who turned up. Some people turn up and hijack a demonstration sometimes – fact of life. If the BNP (our local racists) go to Euro Disney and start shouting racist comments this doesn't mean Disney is a British racist organisation.

I've done a very quick look around the web and the only people I could find describing the MCB as moderate were other right wing American blog sites. It was a very quick look around so I hope someone else can find a source for this which knows this organisation a little better.

As I say it was a very quick look but I did go to the MCB website you can find it [here](#). If you have a look at the library section and check out the entry under Tue 11 Sep 2001 you will find this statement by the MCB.

#### **MCB expresses total condemnation of terrorist attacks**

The MCB stands shoulder to shoulder with remarks made by our Prime Minister Tony Blair. Our thoughts and prayers are with all the innocent victims, their families and communities.

We convey our deepest sympathies to President Bush and the people of America. No cause can justify this carnage. We hope those responsible will swiftly be brought to justice for their unconscionable deeds.

As the British Muslims come to the full realisation of these most awful events, which they condemn wholeheartedly, they too are beginning to feel a huge sense of fear. Terror makes victims of us all, it is beyond reason. Terror on this scale must not be compounded by knee-jerk reactions that would make victims of other innocent peoples of the world. This would only add to the devastation caused.

So when you say Let us wait patiently for the "moderate Muslims" to step up and condemn this despicable display. This, just as they did in condemning the terrorist attacks of 9/11. Oh wait, they never did. My mistake.

Your mistake was to not bother doing even minimal research. I found this within 10 minutes of reading this post. I don't know if the MCB is moderate or not, but if they aren't moderate then even the extremists were condemning 9/11 on this occasion.

Oh and a week later you'll find this in the library

On 18th September a delegation of British Muslim community leaders met the US Ambassador William S. Farish to express their horror and sympathy for the innocent victims of last week's terrorist outrages in New York and Washington. -

British Muslim Leaders Visit US Embassy -

"No cause can justify this carnage. We hope those responsible will swiftly be brought to justice for their unconscionable deeds. As British Muslims come to the full realisation of these most awful events, which they condemn wholeheartedly, they too are beginning to feel a huge sense of fear. Terror makes victims of us all, it is beyond reason," said MCB Secretary-General, Mr Yousuf Bhailok.

Posted by wandering\_brit 🇬🇧 at May 20, 2005 10:51 PM

The MCB did not organise the event, it was mistakenly named as an organiser by the Evening Standard who are to issue a retraction.

Posted by **MCB Media Officer** at May 23, 2005 09:35 AM

Actually this protest was not organised by the MCB as you have incorrectly stated, the protest was organised by a legitimate Muslim group but was hijacked by a miniscule vocal group who have clashed with the majority Muslim community in the UK especially over the recent elections, so there is an important distinction. I also disagree with your reference to 'moderate Muslims' im afraid in Islam there is no such thing either you are a Muslim or your not you cant pick and choose we believe the Holy Qur'an is the literal word of God, and if you are a Muslim you must accept it all, but Islam also warns us against extremism. In the UK Muslims account for 3% of the population yet more Muslims attend Friday prayer than do Christians on Sunday, you have changed your bible beyond recognition unlike the Holy Qur'an which is in its original state, we do not compromise the word of God unlike you who chop and change to suit mans desires and lusts. In Islam it is forbidden to harm the holy scriptures of other religions simply because we believe some aspects to be true e.g. the story of the lives of the prophets Moses, Josep, Abraham, etc, etc. We respect your books but you do not respect ours which we will not tolerate. Muslims do not hate Americans but we are against your double standards in international affairs e.g. supporting tyrants in the Middle East and illegal occupations in Israel, your governments hatred for Islam and Muslims is unfortunate. However you must be aware that you cannot do anything about it we fear no one we fear nothing except God. If you can understand that one man with nothing except faith who lives in a cave can bring you (so called super power) to your knees then you will understand the power of

the word of God which is the Holy Qur'an, which millions of Muslims all over the world memorise by heart who are known as Hafez al-Qur'an. It is the most read holy scripture in the world it is read everyday five times a day in every corner of the world. Respect our scriptures like we respect yours, we want justice and equality in the world and we want to live in peace, but you want Empires and Crusades.

As for your NYPD "New Yorks so called finest" where where they on 9/11?

Posted by **UK Muslim** at May 21, 2005 11:29 AM

I live in the West due to the same reason that Western governments are raping and pillaging and propping up dictators and preventing the spread of democracy and freedom, Economics. The only difference is, is that we pay our taxes employ people in businesses contribute to society to improve our communities. I'll do you a deal if you give the land back to the native Indian tribes I will think about going back to the land of my grand parents who were invited to come to the UK. There are many good people in the West who fight injustice with us just look at the people of Britain millions of us marched together for justice as someone who went to a Catholic school I have great respect for people of the book not everyone in the West is evil, by the way many of the Brits on these various marches like to buy and wear OBL & Mullah T-Shirts he's more popular then the fool in the White House.

You should listen to your new MP for Bethnal Green he shares similar views so do the thousands of Muslims who voted for him and ousted the pro-Zionist Oona King just listen to their speeches and interviews. There is only one Islam the basics are all the same and the fundamentals cannot be cherry picked therefore there is no such thing as moderates. I am not just dismissing Hindus; I am talking about actual facts which "Indian background" can deny until the cows come home (sorry no pun intended)

Female Baby Killers <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/4173597.stm>

Urine Drinkers [http://www.ananova.com/news/story/sm\\_1383293.html](http://www.ananova.com/news/story/sm_1383293.html)

Sati Urban Legend? Medieval Period BULL!!!  
[http://www.navhindtimes.com/stories.php?part=news&Story\\_ID=05205](http://www.navhindtimes.com/stories.php?part=news&Story_ID=05205)  
<http://www.hindu.com/thehindu/holnus/004200505131651.htm>

War Like World War I & II, Use of Atomic Bombs, Imperialism well you know all the rest!

US Army rapists <http://www.guardian.co.uk/g2/story/0,3604,1335105,00.html>  
<http://alternet.org/story/18481/>

If you don't respect my thoughts fine but you should know the facts! I suggest you go and speak to the people of Bethnal Green again. We as in the global community, of the Ummah.

Lies forbidden in Islam  
<http://www.islamonline.net/fatwa/english/FatwaDisplay.asp?hFatwaID=86538>

As for lying the Western leaders have lied so much in the past few years they have begun to believe their own lies that is sad. (please read the links)

Posted by [UKMuslim](#) at May 23, 2005 08:53 AM

## Appendix Sixteen

### Italian Muslims Survive "Hate Fits" in 2004

<http://www.islamonline.net/English/News/2004-12/28/article03.shtml>

*By Tamer Abul Einein, IOL Correspondent*

ROME, December 28 (IslamOnline.net) – Despite right-wingers and xenophobes, the year 2004 can be dubbed as the "year of integration" for the Muslim community in Italy, though they desperately need a recognized union to unite their efforts against daunting challenges ahead.

It is also partly thanks to several positive stances taken by the Italian government of Silvio Berlusconi, who has been keen on making no room for religious discrimination or bigotry, in addition to encouraging the Muslim integration into society as the best way to nib "radicalism" in the bud.

The teaching of Islam in state-run schools has been a welcome addition that gave the country a bit more atmosphere.

Hijab is in no way an odd thing to wear on the streets of Italy, unlike many other European countries, France in particular.

Interior Minister Giuseppe Pisanu always cites the story of his veiled mother, who insisted on taking on the headscarf till her death, when the issue of hijab-donned Muslim women is raised.

More and more, the number of mosques in the capital Rome has risen to some 400 in 2004 and halal slaughterhouses and restaurants have increased across the Catholic country.

Islam, however, has not been yet recognized as one of the official religions like Judaism and Buddhism.

#### Zero Tolerance

The government, on the other hand, adopted a zero tolerance with imams it dubs "radical", deporting those who it regards a mouthpiece of violence or religious hatred.

Senegalese-born imam Abdel Qadir Fadlallah Mamour had been deported "for disturbing public order and being a "danger to state security" after expecting attacks on Italian troops serving in Iraq.



A file photo of Berlusconi taking off his shoes before stepping in a Rome mosque.

On December 12, an Italian court has invalidated the “illegal” deportation of Mamour, saying his statements merely represented personal views.

In April, Italian authorities expelled an Algerian teacher after leading worshippers in a funeral prayer in absentia for Hamas spiritual leader Sheik Ahmad Yassin, who was assassinated by an Israeli missile attack a month earlier.

Abdul Karim Al-Tibsi, a teacher of Arabic and Islam at the Islamic Center in Rome, had told IslamOnline.net that he was ordered to leave the country despite being a legal resident for 12 years.

Until December, six imams have been deported to their motherlands for failing to “eschew violence and terrorism.”

### **Muslim Voice**

The Muslim community has, in effect, made their voices heard in key events, though they do not speak in unison.

The one million Muslims in Italy are in need of an umbrella organization to streamline their efforts and enthusiasm to stand up to xenophobic ideologues, according to observers.

The government has taken the initiative and formed a Muslim consultative panel to discuss the affairs of the community to the outrage of the right-wingers, who criticized the cabinet for its “lenient” stances toward “Muslim terrorists.”



The grand mosque in Rome.

Muslim leaders, however, never crawled into their shell but rather countered such extremist calls with mass rallies in Rome to denounce terrorism in the third anniversary of the 9/11 deadly attacks on the United States, according to IOL correspondent.

Muslims, in their capacity as Italian citizens, have also strongly opposed their government support of the US-led occupation of Iraq.

All in all, the right-wing anti-Muslim bids have failed to dampen the integrationist policy of the government, which came to realize the fact that all Muslims cannot be placed in one basket.

In 2005, Italian Muslims could find themselves in a better position to integrate more if they managed to close their ranks and appear more unified as a community.

### **Read Also...**

- [2004 “Year of Islam” in France](#)

## **Appendix Seventeen**

### **2004 “Year of Islam” in France**

<http://www.islamonline.net/English/News/2004-12/27/article03.shtml>



*By Hadi Yahmid, IOL Correspondent*

PARIS, December 26, 2004 (IslamOnline.net) – A perusal of the annals of 2004 in France makes it indeed the “year of Islam” with all its pluses and minuses for the sizable Muslim community.

Topping the pluses are the conversion of a record 50,000 people to Islam, according to an Interior Ministry census, and big sales of books about Islam.

Several TV programs on Islam and Muslims also proved to be a must-see and received due attention from the French.

On the political landscape, two French citizens of North African origin cruised their way into the Senate.

Alima Boumediene Thiery of the Greens Party and Bariza Khiari of the Socialist Party made big gains in the September 26 elections, securing their seats in the upper house of French parliament.

Other success stories of Muslims in France include the one of top Comedian Jamel Debbouze, who is indeed a shining example of Muslims’ positive integration into French society.

“I’m proud of being Muslim. I fast the holy month of Ramadan, never drink alcohol and do not smoke. I never thought about doing drugs,” Debbouze always repeats on TV interviews.

The Muslim achievements in 2004 were crowned by the release of two French journalists who were held hostage in Iraq.

French media thanked the country’s Muslim community in helping bring a smile to French faces a few days before Christmas.

Leading newspapers also highlighted the pivotal role played by the leaders of the community to facilitate the release of Christian Chesnot and Georges Malbrunot.

They thanked in particular Lhaj Thami Breze, the president of the Union of French Islamic Organizations (UOIF), and Dalil Boubakeur, chairman of the French Council for the Muslim Religion (CFCM), for their September visit to Iraq and their heartfelt feelings for their fellow citizens.

## **Hijab**

Nonetheless, the year 2004 had some bad news of the sizable Muslim community, estimated at around 6 million.

Hijab was indeed the thorniest issue that set off seismic waves in the country, especially after a bill banning the veil and religious insignia in state schools went into effect in September.

The ruling Union for a Popular Movement (UMP) and the opposition Socialist Party (PS) joined forces and got the measure enacted.

After it came into fruition at the beginning of the new school year in September, some 40 hijab-donned students were kicked out of state schools.



Lhaj Thami Breze was one of the leading French Muslim activists in 2004



French Muslim schoolgirl Cennet Doganay shaved her head protesting the hijab ban

One of the schoolgirls shaved her head to protest the ban on hijab, which is considered in Islam as obligatory and not a mere religious symbol.

Cennet Doganay, 15, took off her hijab as she was entering the Louis Pasteur Lycee high school in Strasbourg, eastern France, only to reveal a bald head.

The French measure triggered shock waves across the world, especially in Arab and Muslim countries, and was dismissed by the US-based Human Rights Watch (HRW) as “discriminatory.”

Former French interior minister Nicolas Sarkozy, who took over last month the leadership of the UMP, has long opposed the law, warning it would provoke a backlash among Muslims, who would view it as an “insult and punishment”.

Sarkozy further suggested a bandana as a possible alternative to hijab.

### **Imams**

The role of imams in French society also come under close scrutiny from the interior ministry, which threatened to expel “radicals” and close mosques preaching “Islamic fundamentalism.”

The expulsion of Turkish Midhet Guler and Algerian imam Abdelkader Bouziane brought the issue to the fore.

At recommendations from French Interior Minister Dominique de Villepin, imams are now required to study [a miscellany of subjects](#) on Islam and the history of secularism in France as a part of a government initiative to help train them.



De Villepin pressed for teaching imams French history and culture

Jean Jacques Rousseau’s 1762 Le Contract Social (the social contract), the ideas of Baron de Montesquieu and Ibn Kathir’s interpretation of the Noble Qur’an are among the mandatory subjects.

### **Islamophobia**

The year 2004 also witnessed a semantic battle in France regarding the use of the term “Islamophobia” to refer to religious discrimination and harassment against Muslims.

The Movement against Racism and for Friendship among Peoples, an NGO, recognized the term in a November conference as the best expression to describe bigotry against Muslims.

Prime Minister Jean Pierre Raffarin also used it during a meeting with Boubakeur, also the rector of Paris Grand Mosque.

While the term was also used by Sarkozy, President Jacques Chirac condemned the phenomenon.

Vicent Gisser, an expert in Islamic affairs who authored a book entitled *Islamophobia*, told IslamOnline.net the term was not the making of Muslims.

“Islamophobia is manifesting itself on the ground and not in the imagination of Islamists as some claim,” he added.

The French expert cited a series of racist and arson attacks on Muslims and mosques across the country.

On November 27, unknown people drove up to a house which serves as a Muslim cultural centre and a mosque in the southern Corsican town of Sartene and opened fire randomly.



The imam of the mosque narrowly escaped death and the group left after daubing a swastika and the slogan "Arabi For a" (Arabs Out in the Corsican language) on the walls of the building.

French experts and rights activists have warned of the unprecedented escalation of Islamophobia and racist attacks against the Muslim and Arab communities in France during the past two years.

## Appendix Eighteen

### French Senate Approves Hijab Bill By Majority

<http://www.islamonline.net/English/News/2004-03/04/article02.shtml>

PARIS, March 4 2003 (IslamOnline.net & News Agencies)  
– The French Senate approved by a large majority a bill banning hijab and other religious insignia in state schools on Wednesday, March 3 2003

The proposal was adopted with 276 in favour and 20 against, despite the recent mass protests by the five-million-estimated Muslims and human rights at home and the appeal of some countries against the ban, BBC reported.

French President Jacques Chirac has 15 days to sign into law the bill - adopted by the lower house last month by [overwhelming majority](#), according to the BBC.



"We do not feel or claim to believe that all's been settled with this bill," Raffarin

Chirac said in a televised speech in December 2003 that the "Islamic veil - whatever name we give it - the kappa and a cross that is of plainly excessive dimensions" have [no place](#) in the precincts of state schools.

Human Rights Watch also said in a report published on Friday, February 27, that the law- expected in effect in September 2003 - is "[discriminatory](#)" as it disproportionately affects Muslim girls in the European country.

"The impact of a ban on visible religious symbols, even though phrased in neutral terms, will fall disproportionately on Muslim girls, and thus violate anti-discrimination provisions of international human rights law as well as the right to equal educational opportunity," read the report.

In Islam, hijab is an obligatory code of dress, not a religious symbol displaying one's affiliations – unlike the symbolic Christian crucifixes or Jewish Kappas.

Demonstrators took to streets in more than 25 countries on Saturday, January 17, for an [international day](#) against the ban.

#### 'Powerful Signal'

French Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin told senators before the vote that the law did not aim to discriminate against religions but to "send a powerful and quick signal".

Raffarin insisted the law was needed to contain the spread of what he called "Muslim fundamentalism" and ensure that the principle of secularism on which France is based remains intact.

"Our vision of secularity is not opposed to religions. Everybody has the right to express his faith as long as he respects the laws of the Republic inside the Republic's schools," he said.

"We do not feel or claim to believe that all's been settled with this bill," he added.

Observers voiced concerns that the ban in public-owned schools could sweep to other areas beside public schools, much to the consternation of Muslims here.

Raffarin said France needs to explain the planned law better, especially "on the international level".

French missions abroad must "try to reassure those who are concerned," he said.

The Senate, which like the lower house is controlled by conservatives such as Chirac, dismissed 23 proposed amendments raised in two days of debate. The amendments were offered mainly by the left, the USA Today reported.

The law is to be re-examined after a year in force to see whether "conspicuous" should be replaced by "visible", it added.

The opposition Socialists had argued during the lower house debate that "visible" is a less ambiguous term that would make the law easier to apply.

Some French MPs, backed by Muslim leaders and rights groups, have warned that the new law could be seen as intolerant and undermine the integration of France's Muslims.

Many governments and human rights groups have criticized the bill - including the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights and the U.S.-based advisory group, the Commission on International Religious Freedom.

London Mayor Ken Livingstone who said Paris's move is "[anti-Muslim measure](#)" and accused Chirac of playing a "terribly, terribly dangerous game".

A U.S. Congressman threatened in February that he would draft resolution [condemning](#) the imminent law, and 50 other senators signed a letter sent to the French ambassador to express their concerns over the ban.

But Press reports said that most of France's political parties, and around 70% of the population, support the ban which Muslim leaders keep warning it risks being intolerant.

## Appendix Nineteen

### Why Do the French Refuse Hijab?

<http://www.islamonline.net/English/ArtCulture/2004/01/article10.shtml>

By Hadi Yahmed, IOL Correspondent in France

24/01/2004



Can we say that the campaign against hijab implies the notion that the Muslim minority was not up to the challenge it faced?!

Translated by **Dalia Abu Bakr**

Despite the acknowledgment of men of law and Muslim and non-Muslim men of religion that a law prohibiting hijab in state-run French schools and public offices runs counter to all religious and personal rights, the French government intends to pass a law to the parliament in this respect.

Demonstrations were organized everywhere, yet one unanswered question is still absent from all hypotheses defending hijab: what is the role played by the Muslims of France in this regard? Have the Muslims of France contributed, either intentionally or non-intentionally, to mobilizing such a hard-line secular trend against them?

Such questions should be introduced in order to interpret the current scene before accusing a particular sect or group. As the debate grows hectic, different sides may misuse these interpretations. Our ultimate goal here is to reveal the mutual misunderstandings and decipher the sophisticated cultural specificities.

Apart from the extremist right National Front, under the leadership of Jean-Marie Le Pen, whose slogans can be summarized in "oust Islam," there has been a growing sense of suspicion and apprehension on the part of several sectors of French society regarding this religion, which was officially recognized in April 2003. By forming the French Council for Islam, Islam has been added to the three recognized religions in France: Catholicism, Protestantism, and Judaism.

Why is there all this worrying? What are the motives? The general atmosphere prevalent after the events of September 11 and the wave of Islamophobia that has overwhelmed all Western capitals, made the French realize that they are actually hosting one of the biggest Islamic communities in Europe, averaging around 6 million Muslims. The people who belong to the same religion as Osama bin Laden surround Paris and occupy complete districts inside Paris and in several other French counties.

French bookstores and the front pages of newspapers and magazines mirrored this attitude during the months that followed the collapse of the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York.

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**Demonstrations were organized everywhere, yet one unanswered question is still absent from all hypotheses defending hijab: what is the role played by the Muslims of France in this regard?**

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Photos of veiled women, men with beards, prayer halls full of the faithful, the streets of Paris blocked with worshipers-this media propaganda nurtured a growing worry among the French elite, and they called upon the Republic to take steps to reassure them and to save secularism.

### Up to the Challenge?

Apart from describing this as "a second Battle of Poitiers" or as "a war against Islam," which is coupled, as some believe, with a real Islamophobia, not only in France but the West in general, can we say that Muslims in France have actually played a part in what is going on? Regardless of the fact that hijab in general is a matter of personal and religious freedom, can we say that the campaign against hijab implies the notion that the Muslim minority was not up to the challenge it faced? In other words, "do religions threaten the republic?"

The periodical *World of Religions* in its third issue (January and February) put forward a file that concluded, "France needs to add the slogan of secularism to its three famous slogans of freedom, equality and fraternity." This was the headline on the front page of *Le Figaro*, 17 December, 2003, when the French president made his speech on secularism in which he recommended a legislation that prohibits all religious symbols in schools and public administrations. Was France really in need of being reminded that secularism is the fourth of its slogans? What urged President Jacques Chirac, three centuries after the French Revolution, to mention that equality between both sexes is a basic value in the republic?

Many perceive that the mere mention of the values of equality and secularism and the call to have a legislation prohibiting religious symbols, is an indication that there is some sort of ambiguity of vision; or, as the French philosopher Jean Paul Ricoeur expressed it, "shaky trust in the power of secularism." The ambiguity of vision discloses another genuine problem created by the hijab and Islamic conduct in French society, which believed that it had finally got rid of superstitious thinking after the French Revolution and a long conflict with the Church and religion.

### Threatening the Secular Entity

Based on the results of the Bernard Stasi report, the focus was on several marginal incidents that implied a violation of certain secular values; however, those incidents were not faked or fabricated. When a French Muslim woman, for instance, refuses to let a male doctor examine her, this incident causes panic in the communal conscience of France. The same happens when a French Muslim woman working as a public relations employee refuses to shake hands with male clients or to go alone into an elevator with a male. Several examples were included in the Stasi committee report; all underscoring that French secularism is facing valid problems concerning Islamic religious manifestations that flagrantly violate the principle of total equality between male and female as called for in the secular doctrine.

#### Discussion Forum

- Please feel free to join our discussion forum ["Why Do the French Refuse Hijab?"](#) to add your input.

A manager of a French company mentioned that she finds no problem whatsoever with any of her employees, be they Jews, Christians, or even disbelievers, yet she finds a real problem with those veiled employees who refuse to shake hands with others. This manager commented, "I do not know if I have to hide my employees in order not to embarrass either my clients or my employees." Many French are also in favor of steering clear of such offending incidents; they find it embarrassing, for example, to have a veiled woman in a mail office dealing with a Jewish client wearing a *kiba*, or the other way round.

Isn't it more convenient for both to take off their religious symbols, to guarantee that administrative work is done in a smooth way? There are many other examples other than those mentioned in the Stasi report; these examples were given wide media coverage, which in turn touched the French secular societal conscience.

The French secular elite portrayed these incidents as an exhibition on the part of some Islamic activist organizations and movements in France. When the French Muslims performed their prayers in the area facing the Parisian municipality of Cliché in May 2002, to demand a private hall for prayers, the extremist right National Front Party considered this a flagrant challenge to the feelings of the French public. France thought that it had finally excluded religion from French public life in 1905, when the law separating Church and State was passed. The French Muslims, by this demand, spared Jean-Marie Le Pen, the leader of the extremist right, any additional effort to make Islam and the Muslims seem the biggest danger to threaten the secular republic entity.

Thousands of veiled women appearing before the head of one of the Islamic organizations, in a conference for the Islamic Organizations Union (April 2003), clearly showed that the Islamic wave, which had been stopped before in Tours in southern France, is continuing today and has not only reached Paris, but Brussels too, the capital of the European Union. Doesn't this give the French the right to suspect the intentions of the Islamic associations working in France and to suspect their aspirations in Islamizing France?



There is a call prevalent in Western Islamic circles to set a clear *fiqh* for minorities

It is usual for French women to see the black Taliban *chador* or "the mobile tent"-as described by the French media-roaming around the streets of France. This is despite calls from Islamic leaders for the veiled women to consider the traditions and culture of the country they are living in and to wear an appropriate costume and veil that match the values of beauty, fashion, and bright colors. It is not strange in this regard to find that the image of hijab is associated in the French feminine mind with the Taliban movement.

Several incidents and violations have impaired the introduction and performance of Islam in the democratic environment of French society, and these violations have nothing to do with the issue of private or collective freedoms. This has led the French elite to render the value of tolerance as one of the values of secularism, and they spread the idea that some Muslims make use of the democratic environment they are living in to compensate for the lack of democracy in their country of origin. Such freedoms make it easier to spread hard-line Islamic thoughts.

The same idea has also been mentioned in several articles by French authors interested in French Islam. One has to admit that there is a real problem brought about by the introduction of the Islamic rituals and practices in a secular environment. *Fiqh* of minorities is a new law given for Islamic life. Muslims living in a secular society are asked to respect the traditions of this society and to yield to its laws, a belief that is totally new in Islamic thought, and was never put forth before.

The current experience is entirely different from past experiences, even that of Spain's Muslims after the fall of Grenada. Whereas the Moors faced persecution, the Muslims of France are living in a democratic system, whose power springs

from respecting the freedom of belief guaranteed by the 1905 law. This law stipulates that "the republic guarantees the freedom of belief and protects the freedom of practicing religious rituals," in so far as no provocation to Western secularism takes place in one of its historic strongholds-namely France.

### Sources of Hostility

Searching for the sources of hostility to hijab among the French elite, it is obvious that there is a sense of danger, which was mirrored by the prohibition of *all* religious symbols, spearheaded by Islamic hijab, and is attributed to the following:

**First**, the intransigent application of the hijab (veil) as a religious manifestation has been linked to the growth of Islamic movements, or rather political Islam in Western terms; no doubt the American war on radical Islam, or rather terrorism, enhances these attitudes. Many of the French elite think that the prohibition of hijab is not an infringement on Islam, as much as it is resistance to the growth of political Islam. It must be remembered that France is a base for the activities of several Moroccan Islamic movements that wish to make up for the oppression they are facing in their countries, the Tunisian Nahda movement, the Islamic Salvation Front, the Moroccan Al-`Adalat wal-Ihsan movement, and other fundamentalist movements.

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**The intransigent application of the veil (hijab) as a religious manifestation has been linked to the growth of Islamic movements, or rather political Islam in Western terms**

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This explains why those interviewed in the media, when asked about hijab, answered that hijab is not an Islamic obligation as much as it is a new political symbol associated with the Islamic movements that are gaining strength in France. This belief was manipulated by Jean-Marie Le Pen to mobilize the French in support for his extremist rightist front.

**Second**, it is largely believed that hijab is a symbol of the submission of women in Arab and Islamic countries, and therefore contradicts the principle of the freedom of women. Hijab is believed to be the natural outcome of a patriarchal society in which the father and the brother have the upper hand, and in which the choices of a wife, daughter, or sister are made through the males. Therefore, the call for the prohibition of hijab in schools is relevant from the secular point of view; the girl, at this age, is compelled by her father or elder brother to put on the veil. In many Parisian districts and other areas, girls are compelled to put on the veil so as not to be labeled as prostitutes. The "no prostitution, no submission" movement was greatly welcomed by the French elite, which considered this movement an opposition to the prevalent picture of these districts as strongholds for Islamists.

Going back to the contribution and the responsibility of the Muslims of France in mobilizing the secular intransigent trend against them, one can easily deduce that the issue of hijab would not have been put forth that strongly if there was an authentic strategy for merging on the part of the Muslim organizations working in France. The issues of merging and adaptation are totally absent in most associations' agendas, with the exception of very few efforts on the part of some Muslim intellectuals (Tarek Ramadan for example). Otherwise, the French Muslim arena seems to lack the existence of any potential leadership capable of introducing a vision in harmony with the new reality lived by Muslim groups in France.

Most French Muslims are still under the control of Algerian, Moroccan, or Saudi Islam. Therefore, the concept of European Islam, put forth by Tarek Ramadan,



is often contradicted in Friday sermons that have nothing to do with the new reality that the Muslims are living in, speeches that call for a narrow-minded Islam that has nothing to do with the environment in which the French Muslims are living. This urged French Interior Minister Nicolas Sarkozy to threaten to oust some preachers from France and to accuse them of spreading a hard-line Islam that has nothing to do with France.

**Third**, there is a call prevalent in Western Islamic circles to set a clear *fiqh* for minorities in order to provide answers for Muslims living there. The lack of such *fiqh* has led many French Muslims to resort to the Eastern *fatwa* banks that are totally ignorant of the European Islamic reality, impeding all the more the issue of merging.

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**One has to admit that there is a real problem brought about by the introduction of the Islamic rituals and practices in a secular environment.**

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The Jews of France found a slogan to adhere to, represented in the declaration of Rabbi Joseph Sitruk "the law of our country is our law." Muslims on the other hand, in the absence of any French Muslim references capable of crystallizing a clear *fiqh* for minorities, have fluctuated between [Sheikh Tantawi's fatwa](#) supporting the law, and [Sheikh Qaradawi's messages](#) to President Chirac objecting to the law.

Some of France's Muslims have intentionally, or non-intentionally, mobilized the right wing and a considerable part of the left wing around a law that prohibits hijab in schools and public administrations. Several erroneous practices were implemented, leading to the generation of a negative image of the hijab. In a demonstration on 21 December, 2003, by veiled girls objecting to the law due to be submitted to parliament, TV channels and journalists were surprised to see a man with a red beard, dressed in a white shirt, pulling a bike with a three-year-old child on it, veiled in the black *chador*. One of the veiled girls defending the issue of hijab commented that "the ignorant should shoulder his responsibility" and then she left.

## Appendix Twenty

### France in a Headscarf Gothic Secularism's Counter-Authenticity

<http://www.islamonline.net/English/ArtCulture/2004/01/article06.shtml>

By [Tarek A. Ghanem](#)  
Staff writer - *IslamOnline.net*

12/01/2004

To restrict the discussion of any broad-ranging matter-like that of the forthcoming ban of the Islamic headscarf in France-to parochial references is to add more salt to our multi-cultural wound. It is effortlessly self-satisfying to one's ideological preferences to allow reductionism to play its everlasting game between two poles: black and white, good and evil, "secularism" and "traditionalism," Islam and the West-all, of course, are impotent positioning of relationships.

To think or believe that the "forward-looking" gaze-secularism, pluralism, freedom of expression and their sisters from the same modern plane-will enable us to ascend to a man-made utopia has systematically become an academic trance; what has happened to such axioms? Are they becoming mirror images of their medieval opposites? All mainstream religious peoples, non-Muslims as well as Muslims, are getting more and more tribally quarantined by secular forces, equal in absolute values, to that of the unenlightened dogmatists-those of the "backward gaze." In fact, the fundamentalists within them-in all beliefs-are making things even worse for them.



We cannot ignore the distinctiveness of the Muslim community in France

### The Context in Space

Here, we are trying to pave a path for our contextual assessment. Let us knock on the doors of the global world, first of all. Does the bankruptcy of the nation-state project still need an official announcement in order to be confirmed? It must be noted that the people at stake are not clandestine immigrants, because the majority of Muslims in France are *French*. Therefore, under trans-global skies, the French government is still looking upward and contemplating the definition of citizenship, both internally and externally constructed.

In the eyes of the French government, to be a true French citizen you must be stripped of any milieu or identity and conform to the plea (prescription?) of the state in order to assimilate-can we call that fascist pluralism or secular fundamentalism? First, let us see the well-constructed argument by one of the best scholars in cultural studies, on the subject of identity and its return to the public sphere:

The logic of the discourse of identity assumes a stable subject [to be French is to be "religionless"], i.e., we've assumed that there is something which we can call our identity which, in a rapidly shifting world, has the great advantage of staying still. Identities are a kind of guarantee that the world isn't falling apart quite as rapidly as it sometimes seems to be. It's a kind of fixed point of thought and being, a ground of action, a still point in the turning world. That's the kind of ultimate guarantee that identity seems to provide us with<sup>1</sup>.

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**In the eyes of the French government, to be a true French citizen you must be**



What the French officials are failing miserably in, just like an unmotivated and below-average-intelligence student, is that one needs a personality even before being a citizen. It is simple: no enunciation, no personality; hence no identity, no citizenship. One has to put oneself somewhere, sometime, somehow, before knowing

and doing anything at all. A reference point is the prerequisite to knowledge or action. To try to delimit identity in a changing world like ours is to castrate one's pursuit to "authenticate" oneself, experience, and potential.

**stripped of any milieu or identity and conform to the plea (prescription?) of the state.**

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In this, ethnicity comes as the middle ground between both identity and difference and is the method of authentication in the face of the modern and global forces of destabilization. Still, the ethnicity we are approaching here is not a tribal one in essence or effect. "It is no longer contained within that place as an essence. It wants to address a much wider variety of experience. It is part of the enormous cultural relativization of the entire globe that is the historical accomplishment-horrendous as it has been in part-of the twentieth century."<sup>2</sup> This ethnicity is saturated in mythical historical dialects. It is the settlement between identity (the one that appreciates and recognizes the plain occurrence of its own form and of others) and difference.

### **Particularizing the Case: Muslim France**

Let us not ignore the distinctiveness of the Muslim community in France. It has been mentioned earlier that the majority of Muslims there are French. In addition, historical investigation shows that the majority of that Muslim French community is North African- Moroccan, Tunisian and Algerian-and the majority comes from the latter, as Algeria was considered a "department," not a colony as other countries were, under French imperialism. Given that, let us dwell more on the socio-economics and cultural presence of that segment.

French *Megherbis* are generally referred to as *Beurs* and *Beurettes*, although they are born and raised in France, and French is their first language. "In spite of and because of the *Beurs'* Frenchness, a large section of the French population resent their presence in France; they are seen as a kind of invasion from the south, responsible for many of the ills of contemporary France-economic social and otherwise."<sup>3</sup> They are looked upon as a constant reminder of the dark side of the society where all dire symptoms of the decay of the French social security are manifested and concentrated: the ghettos on the outskirts of Paris and the main cities, unemployment, vandalism, crime, drugs, religious fanaticism, and all other items on the dreadful list of the ghettos.

Nonetheless, the *Beurs* have contributed a great deal to French culture in literature, music, and sports-names like Jacques Derrida, Cheb Khaled, Taher Ben Jelloun, and Zinedine Zidane. However, it must not be forgotten that in the eyes of the French administration, conformist as it is, Arabic and Islamic signifiers are still seen as they were through the colonial eyes.

### ***Islam à la Français: Has the Veiled Girl Done Her Homework?***

If one really does not fall for the misconceptions and sealed associations, the Muslim community in France has really done its homework-at least on both the organizational and collective levels. The Muslim community in France has been through sturdy secular harassment, varying from banning *any* Islamic publications and arrest (that was during the time of Charles Pasqua, former interior minister), restrictions on *halal* slaughter, and foreign finance to

mosques, and still no Muslim institution can represent any form but secular architecture (it seems fair to call that aesthetic despotism).

Yet, in any case, the government has been trying to collaborate with the Muslims, which is seen as an acceptable way to cut off foreign finance from the Muslim world.<sup>4</sup> In the face of this, most of the Muslim community in France agrees on advocating *Islam de France*:

They emphasize one or the other of two poles in their public deliberations: either the *diasporic* networks of Muslims in Europe, Africa, and Asia, united by Arabic and by common political as well as scholarly visions, or the hexagonal framing of Islam within France, *distinguished* by a commitment to *laïcité* [secularism] (emphasis added).<sup>5</sup>

Whether this or that camp, both openly agree on maintaining an *Islam à la Français*. The "diasporic" camp, the majority of whose members gather in the European Council of Fatwa and Research, is represented in the *Union des Organisations Islamiques de France* (UOIF). The hexagonal camp stresses more on French style and use of the French language in learning Islam. Many fatwas have been given by Muslim scholars-based on developed Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) particular to Muslims living in France like all non-Muslims-related to specific conditions: the permissibility of mortgages for buying the first house, marriage and divorce under the present civil law, and eating non-*halal* meat. All these efforts are seen as creating a *fiqh de France* to manifest the translocality of Islam under the secularist skies.

### How "Veiled" is "Visible"?

Central to the issue of the ban of the headscarf in France is the question of "visibility" in the public space. However, before we shed light on the visible aspect of "Muslimness," let us take a little detour in the dark. Prayer in Islam is of a cardinal essence to maintain one's spiritual connectedness to the Divine in a physical manner. One does it at a mosque, or any place. Outside of Prayer, there is no physically visible trace that negates secular laws-be they French or whatever-yet one will be surprised to read the following (and I quote from an accomplished paper by John Bowen, with references-emphasis added):

In France, the frequency of performing salat [Prayer] was taken by one government body to indicate the degree of one's assimilation into French culture. The Institut National d'Etudes Démographiques (INED) defined "assimilation" as the disappearance of culturally specific features, the convergence of behavior into a general French model, and a mixing of populations (Tribalat 1996:254-55). Assimilation implied the reduction of religion to the private sphere and a lessened intensity of religious practices, "in sum, a laicization of behavior" (254). Specific indices of assimilation used in the report include *praying less frequently; not following the fast, abandoning polygamy, and making fewer visits to the country of origin*...This judgment of assimilation can have very practical consequences for the individual. Each year the French government refuses about one-third of the applicants for admission, and some of those refusals were of candidates who met the formal conditions for naturalization (Liberation 5 April 2000)...*Some highly educated Muslim candidates have been rejected on those grounds* (D. Bourg, personal communication, 20 August 1999).<sup>6</sup>

That is that. The ridiculousness of seeing the occurrence (or “visibility” or “conspicuousness”) of religious practices as the return of religion cannot be overlooked. It is relative to its location; that is why “the ‘head scarves question’ in France is symptomatic of extreme partiality and relativity to the nature of visibility. In other words, the Islamic headscarf is visible in France but much less so in Germany and the United Kingdom.”<sup>7</sup> Here comes the problem; just like Judaism, Islam is a way of life and functions as a vector pertaining to a *collective identity*. That is exactly why, in the negative contrast of the absolutist French of “assimilation,” this is exposed as heretical to the secular gospel.

### Power-Discourse: French Game and Vocabulary

Jocelyne Cesari, a prominent scholar from the Sorbonne-Paris, lists the following as the main reasons for the “visibility” of Islam within France (and not the return of religion; let us make sure not to make that mistake as he suggests):

“working class”, “immigrant”, “worker” and even “immigrant suburban youth” no longer provide easy identification...offering alternative methods of social or political action...cultural activism...counter mechanism of exclusion...Difficulties of finding employment, the feeling of social relegation and discrimination, perspective of the highly negative public opinion of Islam, the vivid memory of humiliations from the French colonial past passed on by their families (as if that part of their history was not included in the French national identity), and the bankruptcy of a whole series of ideologies such as Marxism or the Third World movement which fired the ideals of elder brothers and sisters.”<sup>8</sup>

A long list indeed. What is significant at this point, in relation to the issue at hand, is to remember that the headscarf not only represents the religious symbolism of commitment but much more. In the majority of all the discussions over the headscarf, the old ideologically supercilious motifs were spontaneously incarnated; it is a sign of male-domination, chauvinism, violation of female rights, patriarchal social order, etc.

For sure, some Muslim parents force their daughters to wear it. However, in the first cases of dealing with the headscarf in 1989, the *Conseil d’Etat* (State Council) left it to the Minister of Education, who advised school principals to deal with the cases on an individual basis, by advising discussion and consultation. If it were enforcement (and all the supremacist allegations that come along with it), that would have solved the issue. But no, “by and large, the courts have overturned these exclusions [in case consultation did not take place or work] unless wearing the headscarf has been accompanied by a refusal to attend physical education classes or been associated with protest outside organizations.”<sup>9</sup>

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**Islam is a way of life and functions as a vector pertaining to a collective identity. That is exactly why, in the negative contrast of the absolutist French of “assimilation,” this is exposed as heretical to the secular gospel.**

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### Secular Blues

The headscarf, and what it represents, is seen as a threat to conformity within the educational system. The ban of the headscarf is nothing but an enforcement of power to neutralize the girls who refuse to attend the sex-education classes

or wear the same training suits that other girls do-and their parents, class, beliefs. It is as if chastity has become a modern-day crime; what a cultural *menefregismo*. Certainly there are militant Muslim fundamentalists in France, and some have imported the Algerian civil war to France, but does counteracting such threats mean the castration of an entire community from its legitimacy, religious, cultural, and historical setting? One wonders.

All in all, the French case against the Islamic headscarf cannot be seen as anything but a manifestation of a power discourse trying to offset a troublesome segment of French society with a (mistakenly seen) potential to upset the balance of social fabric though a discursive conformity. French-style secularism has reached the bottom of self-destruction and defeat. What is the difference between the power of the Catholic Church and the feudal system in medieval times and that of the French officialdom today? None. **"Compel them all."** Just substitute the axioms of heretical for religiosity, assimilation for conformity, complete neutrality for freedom of expression, and you will have a perfectly inverted history of the evolution of European secularism taking place in modern day France.

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## Appendix Twenty

### Qaradawi Sends Letter To Chirac Over Hijab

<http://www.islamonline.net/English/News/2003-12/25/article07.shtml>



"Hijab does not come in the teeth of liberal

CAIRO, December 25 2003 (IslamOnline.net) - A prominent Muslim scholar appealed in a letter to French President Jacques Chirac to go back on his decision backing a ban on Hijab in public schools. secular beliefs," Qaradawi

Sheikh Youssef Al-Qaradawi, the head of the European Council for Fatwa and Research (ECFR) said in the letter handed over to the French Consul in Doha that the decision stems from a "biased perception" of the Islamic wear and a "misleading interpretation" of secularism.

"Hijab does not come in the teeth of liberal secular beliefs, which take a neutral no-support-no-refuse stand on all religions," Qaradawi said in his letter.

In a [televised speech](#) a few days ago, Chirac came out in favor of the ban, which he wants written into law by the start of the next academic year, saying that "long-established" secularism in the country should be reaffirmed.

The Islamic scholar considers the justification illogical, saying western secularism does rather guarantee free expression of religion - unlike Marxist secularism which he called hostile to religions.

"This trend rather launches an unrelenting attack on the percepts of Islam by France, a country supposed to show respect to of liberty and tolerance," read the letter.

"Mr. President, we have felt resentful over your considering Hijab is aggression on others. It is just worn out of commitment to religious principles, no more, no less," read the letter, in reference to Chirac's earlier describing hijab as ["a sort of aggression"](#).

Qaradawi was keen in his letter to highlight the fact that Hijab is not a religious symbol unlike crosses or Kippa are in Christianity or Judaism which were also recommended to be taken off in the President's speech.

Hijab is not an "outer expression of identity (as you say), but it is imposed by Islam with a function to protect" a woman by covering her hair, neck and the upper part of her chest," he further said in the letter to Chirac.

Qaradawi echoed the edict of Egypt's Mufti Ali Goma saying that hijab is an obligation on all Muslim consenting female adults, as firmly established in the Holy Qur'an and Prophet Muhammad's hadiths as well as unanimously agreed upon by Muslim scholars.

Gomaa cited the noble Qur'anic verse, which reads: "O Prophet! Tell thy wives and daughters, and the believing women, that they should cast their outer garments over their persons (when abroad): that is most convenient, that they should be known (as such) and not molested. And Allah is Oft- Forgiving, Most Merciful".

#### **'Father OF House'**

Qaradawi ended his letter with a call on Chirac as "a father of the (French) house" to rule his subjects with equality.

"The merciful father does not feel satisfied that some of his children are living in continued panic and disturbance," he said.

The prominent scholar had earlier asserted that the French ban on hijab testifies to the [spread of "extremist" secularism](#) that "we had seen in Marxism with their such slogans as 'Religion is the Opium of the People'".

French Education Minister Luc Ferry said a bill introducing the ban would be put before the National Assembly in February and should come into effect by September, 2004.

As both Chirac's governing conservative party, the UMP, and the opposition Socialists are in favor of a law, reports said it is unlikely to fail.

But the planned legislation continues to send shockwaves among Muslims in Europe and abroad.

Syria's mufti, Sheikh Ahmad Kaftaro wrote to Chirac Wednesday expressing his "surprise at the ban".

"The Muslim nation sees the veil as one of the foundations of its religion," Kaftaro wrote, asking the French President to reverse his support for the ban in order to be in harmony with the glorious history of France".

Lawmakers in Iran have also sent a letter to their French counterparts, asking them not to pass the bill.

In Tel Aviv, meanwhile, a group of Arab Israelis staged a protest outside the French embassy against French President Chirac's approval of the proposed law,

Dozens of female Lebanese Muslim students gathered outside the French embassy on Saturday to protest against French President Jacques Chirac's "discriminatory" decision to back a ban on Islamic headscarves.

The Union of Islamic Organizations in Europe denounced the French decision as a blatant infringement on their right to freedom of religion.

The Union's chairman, Ahmad al-Rawi, said Saturday the French move was evidence that France [had misinterpreted](#) secularism and tailored it for its own requirements in a sharp contrast to the situation in other secular European countries, notably Britain.

## Appendix Twenty-one

French Against French : The Uneasy Incorporation<sup>(1)</sup> of Beurs into French Society

<http://www.arts.uwa.edu.au/MotsPluriels/MP297hj.html>

**MOTS PLURIELS** Vol.1. no 2. 1997.

<http://www.arts.uwa.edu.au/MotsPluriels/MP297hj.html>

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**[Hélène Jaccomard](#)** \*\*

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Who suffers the most from racism in France today?<sup>2</sup> According to a recent French survey, not the Blacks, nor the Asians but the Maghrebis and their sons and daughters : the [Beurs and Beurettes](#) . Usually born in France and educated in the French school system, the overwhelming majority of the Beurs speak French like native speakers, have the same way of life of other French people and have never set foot in their parents' countries of origin. France is their "patrie", their homeland even if the rejection of parental religion and values is often felt as a painful



acculturation. Yet, in spite of and because of the Beurs' Frenchness, a large section of the French population resents their presence in France; they are seen as a kind of invasion from the south, responsible for much of the ills of contemporary France: economic, social and otherwise.

Unlike their parents who came to France from North-Africa after World War II as unskilled labourers on the assembly lines, the Beurs are certainly a minority with an attitude. They were the first youth group to copy the Afro-American look of baggy shorts and caps with peaks turned backwards, the first to adopt rap music. The best French rappers, such as Alliance Ethnik, are Beurs. With or without their distinctive fashion style Beurs are easily recognised because of their non-white, North-African appearance, their youth in an ageing French population and even by their body language. All this forms part of their assimilation problem as they can easily be singled out by people with anti-Arab feelings who feel threatened, not by the Beurs' North-African background, but by their very Frenchness. As Perrineau's studies on the National Front show<sup>3</sup>, fear and racist outbursts are not directed primarily against people who are completely different, but rather against neighbours and fellow workers of similar socio-economic background. It is therefore not surprising that the million or so Beurs living in France are faced with mounting intolerance and as a consequence are adopting more and more rebellious attitudes. More educated than their parents and similar to the rest of French youth in terms of their ambitions, they are pushed by economic circumstances into adopting idiosyncratic sub-cultural manners and loyalties expressed through distinctive clothing and language (verlan, veul and other slangs).

Here is how Nadia, the young Beur girl who is at the centre of Moroccan writer Tahar Ben Jelloun's recent novel, encapsulates the Beurs' predicament:

Our need for consolation is impossible to fulfil, our craving for understanding infinite, our will to exist fierce, our madness never far, our patience unreasonable, our fury blazing, our thirst for recognition unquenchable <sup>4</sup>. We are the children of the forgotten generation ... born with a small broken star on our foreheads.<sup>5</sup>

For the extreme right-wing political parties promoting racist attitudes, little difference is made between illegal immigrants, Beurs' search for identity and Maghrebi's cultural background, values and expectation: in their view, all are equally responsible for rising unemployment, the near-collapse of the French social security system, vandalism, crime, drug abuse, religious fanaticism etc. Although "only" 14% of voters favour right-wing politician Jean-Marie Le Pen, as many as 38% of French people agree with him when he points the finger at migrants to designate those responsible for France's current high level of unemployment and economic difficulties. As we well know in Australia, the anti-migrant phenomenon is not specific to France, but the depth of feeling is quite surprising as shown in some examples that made the front page of the French news for weeks on end.

*"L'affaire des foulards"*, (the "scandal" of the Islamic headscarf) that arose in 1989 was a typical example of a rather trivial issue blown out of proportion. The trouble started when a number of Muslim parents insisted that their daughters wear the headscarf and started complaining to the schools about their daughters having to attend sex-education and history lessons that presented the world in a way they did

not approve of. Yet serious trouble erupted only when the Ministry of Education advised school principals not to bow to any religious pressure and to eradicate any "ostentatious" religious signs, namely the headscarf. This hard line approach based on the premise that the republican principle of "laïcité" (secularism) that had been observed for a hundred years in the French public school system was now under threat inflamed racist intolerance across the spectrum of French society. Young girls who were requested to take off their headscarf faced expulsion if they did not do so. With no time to adjust and find their own way, they were caught between two equally unbending systems: that of the school principals and that of their parents.

A film made in 1995 for the TV screen, Romain Goupil's *Sa vie à elle* (Her very own life), shown on Arte TV station, illustrates the complex issues at work. It takes as its central character a Beur *lycéenne* who decides, without ever explaining the reasons why, to wear a headscarf despite strong disapproval from her own family, school friends, and teachers. She is abused at school and she is pushed around in the street. A most poignant scene shows some Beurs trying to pull her headscarf away in the street while screaming: "You and your type give us a bad name." She is expelled from her school but finally gives in and goes to another *lycée*. She is able to start a new life as a typical teenager - minus the headscarf and with a great sense of loss.

The Beur situation is also linked to recent political turmoil in Algeria. Although not officially recognised, a civil war is raging in Algeria between the Government and Islamic fundamentalist movements. The targeting of foreigners as well as Algerian intellectuals, university teachers, journalists, women who don't wear the Islamic headscarf and any vocal opponent to terrorism is making front page news almost daily. For example, last year the murder of the Bishop of Oran and eight French Trappist monks received considerable media coverage. These victims represent only a very small percentage of the 50,000 people - mostly Algerian civilians - who have lost their lives so far : fifty a month and on the increase, as exemplified by the bombing and killing of fifty people at the very time this article is being written.<sup>6</sup> French people's attitude to the civil war took a new turn two years ago with the attempt of the FIS (*Front islamique du salut*) and the GIA (*Groupeement islamique armé*) to export the war to mainland France, the former colonial power. Bombs were exploded in the heart of Paris (on the Champs-Élysées and in the Latin Quarter), one was defused just on time on the track of the Very Fast Train (TGV) and scores of others were found in pressure cookers in market places. (That explains why you will not find a bin left in the streets of Paris: all have been taken away for fear of being used as hiding places for bombs!)

In no time, suspicion turned to the large number of Algerian workers living in France. How could such acts of terrorism be carried out if there was no help from people living there? And who more so than the Beurs could be considered as obvious accomplices? Being young, mostly unemployed and rebellious, all this smacked of terrorist tendencies. Already accused of being dole bludgers, no-hopers, hooligans and vandals, the Beurs attracted this new tag while it was obvious that the Beurs and their parents were being made responsible for the worst aspects of a war and religious fundamentalism far removed from them.



Not surprisingly, the outcome of such crude scapegoating led to tragedies. The death of young Beur, Hamed Khelkad, at the hands of the police is a case in point. His shooting was video-taped and broadcast by local TV stations. Large sections of the French public were outraged by this "police stuff-up" (*bavure*) which was blamed on the National Front's indoctrination regarding the Beurs and by the misplaced zeal of the French police, often accused of anti-Arabic feelings, to the point that many Beurs feel it is dangerous for them to go about the streets.

The irony is that most French people - including the police - would also consider that it is highly dangerous to live in the *banlieues*, that is the outer suburbs of the cities where most migrant families live, and which provide fertile ground for spiralling racism, gang activities and confrontation. The outer suburbs are usually made up of high rise apartments which were hastily built in the sixties and seventies. Generally, they lack the indispensable amenities such as shopping centres, entertainment complexes, public transport, administrative offices and have very little to offer in the way of jobs, sports facilities or recreation areas.

With the rate of unemployment at its highest level ever in France (12.5% and up to 40% in some *banlieues*) all the ingredients for an explosive situation are there. Five years ago, riots and pitched battles with police took place in the Banlieue of Lyon, Vaulx-en-Velin. Since then it has been publicly admitted that about 130 such *banlieues* (i.e., about 1 million residents) are considered "no-go" areas by the police: "Forbidden cities" (the headline of an article on this new phenomenon in *Nouvel Observateur*, November 1995) are places where the minute a 'cop' (*un flic*) is spotted, stones are thrown, ambushes set up, and cars rammed into police vans. Mathieu Kassovitz 1995 film, *La Haine*, documents such a spontaneous uprising suggesting that all young people, whether Beur or not, are pushed to the point of exploding with hatred.

Many voices are being heard saying that not only right wing nationalists, but also a large section of the media, have been guilty of simplification and sensationalism. Anecdotal evidence can never give a full picture of a society. In fact the Beurs' fight for survival has already contributed a great deal to French culture in term of fashion, literature<sup>7</sup>, music and sport (the judo gold medallist at the 1996 Atlanta Olympics Games, Djamel Bouras, is a Beur).

Tolerance seems to be more and more in short supply but the new boundaries between individuals' samenesses and differences are constantly being redrawn. No doubt that given a chance to live, work and escape racist harassment, and being treated with respect, most Beurs would live quietly and happily with the rest of their fellow French residents.

## Notes

Used publicly for the first time in 1981 on a pirate radio station, the word Beur gained currency because the term "arabe" from which it derives had become a term of racist abuse in some quarters of French society. Beur derives from the word arab in "verlan" slang (back to front words, with some euphonic changes, with Beurette as a feminine form). Although at first claimed by Beurs themselves as reflecting their distinctive identity, the word has now lost its "contestation" edge. It is now widely

accepted even if it is sometimes used with a negative overtone such as in the diffident title of a novel by Soraya Nini, **Ils disent que je suis une beurette** (They say I am a Beurette] (Paris: Fixot, 1995). Presumably it is an acceptable alternative to the wordy "offsprings of the North-African migrants to France" or "second-generation youth" which also tends to disregard the Beurs' actual French identity. See Alec G. Hargreaves, "Writers of Maghrebian Immigrant Origin in France: French, Francophone, Maghrebian or Beur?", in **African Francophone Writing, A Critical Introduction** L. Ibnlfassi & N. Hichcott (eds), Oxford: Berg, 1993, pp. 33-43.

1. "Incorporation" appears more neutral than "integration" or "assimilation" both suggestive of "effacement of differentiation", Alec G. Hargreaves, Immigration, 'race' and ethnicity in Contemporary France, London, New-York, Routledge, 1995, 32-3.

2. In December 1996 the Nouvel Observateur published a survey conducted among migrants and their children investigating their perception of how the French treat them. Contrary to expectation, the Beurs expressed feelings of victimisation second only to their parents' (75% and 86% respectively).

3. Pascal Perrineau says : *"Prise dans une logique de l'enfermement, ne pouvant plus se différencier socialement de ses voisins de palier ou de quartier, cette population [souffrant de la désintégration sociale et politique des banlieues] développe une 'différence raciale', un racisme 'petit Blanc' qui nourrit le vote FN"*. p. 272.

Pascal Perrineau. "Le Front National: 1972-1994", in **Histoire de l'extrême droite en France**. Michel Winock (ed) Paris: Seuil, 1994, pp.243-298.

4. Tahar Ben Jelloun. **Les Raisins de la galère**. Paris: Fayard, 1996, p.117. My translation

5. **Les Raisins...**, p.121.

6. Written on the 18th January 1997.

7. Alec G. Hargreaves. **La Littérature beur, un guide bio-bibliographique** New Orleans: Celfan Ed. Monographs, Tulane University, 1992.

\*\*For the past four years, Dr. [Hélène Jaccopard](#) has been teaching French literature in Australian Universities. Her current research programme reflects her teaching preoccupation and her interest in the role played by literature in relation to the social problems of our time. Her focus is on autobiography, literary texts dealing with AIDS and Beur literature.

## Appendix Twenty-two

### Islamic Renaissance in the West: An Interview with Murad Hoffman\*



Murad Hoffman

By [Hossam Tammam](#)  
Staff writer - *IslamOnline.net*

15/01/2004

"I can see that because I'm standing with one leg in the orient and with the other one in the Occident that's why I understand both worlds sufficiently well to explain them to each other, so often when I'm in the Muslim world I explain to them the west and in the west I explain Islam". This is how Murad Hoffman the famous Muslim German thinker reflects his unique situation, being exposed to different knowledge and experiences.

Murad Wilfried Hoffman was Germany's ambassador to Algeria and Morocco between 1987-94 and was earlier Director of Information for NATO at Brussels. He embraced Islam in 1980. He received his education at Union College in New York and did his Masters degree in German Law in Munich and took his doctorate from Harvard. His first book on Islam was *Diary of a German Muslim* (1990). Second book *Islam: the Alternative* raised protests in Germany and he was dubbed a fundamentalist by Leftists.

Here Hoffman discusses with Islam Online his views and concerns about various intellectual and practical problematic contexts of both the common grounds and the differences between the East and the West especially after September eleventh. He tries to reassert the opportunities and challenges of Islam and Muslims in the western societies, drawing the difference between these western societies.

**\* Can we consider September eleventh events as a turning point and a beginning of another era? And do you think that there is a suitable Islamic project, dealing with the western mentality, by which we can confront the ramification of such events?**

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**Eleventh of September has in the long run been an advantage to Islam in as much as more people than ever are seeking information about Islam** 🕌

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I don't believe really that eleventh of September was such a monumental change. It was very important for the American mentality just like Pearl Harbor have been for instance. In Germany we had monumental events like the end of World War II which was an enormous catastrophe. The Japanese had events like the atomic attacks and yet after some time the world gets back to normal. I

also think that this will be the fate of eleventh of September; it will be an important date in the history books, but the world will settle down to normal and as far as Islam is concerned eleventh of September has in the long run been an advantage to Islam in as much as more people than ever are seeking information about Islam, all books on Islam were sold out within 14 days. In Germany, a translation of the Quran which I edited sold 40,000 times within a year which goes to show that the shock effect can translate into more knowledge about Islam in the long run and if we move out of the present hysteria, we may see more appreciation of Islam after all.

**\* But at least those events have had serious effects on Muslims, how do you evaluate these effects?**

Of course I'm living these effects. I encounter suspicion, when you are law abiding, even then you are suspected of being a potential terrorist. When you travel to the United States, you are being treated as never as before; you have to wait for hours for your suitcase and you are obviously under suspicion. But the Muslims in America reasserted their approach; they even organized after eleventh of September the first central meeting of Muslims in America, the so called ISNA (Islamic Society of North America) meeting. They organized that for the first time in Washington to make a point and 42000 Muslims came to Washington, most of them very young and most of the very young women wearing Hijab. That was the answer of the Muslims; not to fight but to stand up for what they believe and to be assertive, not defensive.

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**D'awa can not be centralized.  
Effective D'awa can only be carried out locally because if somebody speaks for Islam with a foreign accent, Islam will automatically be treated as a foreign thing, not as a universal thing.** 

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**\* In your opinion, how can you see the Islamic project and its approaches towards the West?**

D'awa can not be centralized. Effective D'awa can only be carried out locally because if somebody speaks for Islam with a foreign accent, Islam will automatically be treated as a foreign thing, not as a universal thing. Also you have to know how people think, that means you have to go through the same education they had in order to know the pitfalls. You have to know the history of the people because they have collective memories. Only if we know all that you can be an effective D'uaa. To give you an example, we get often Islamic books from Pakistan or from India, their English is faulty, their paper is bad, the binding is awful, there are many printing mistakes. That alone disqualifies the books, people won't even touch them because they are used good paper, good binding, perfect printing and it is little things like that that disqualifies a book that otherwise would be worthwhile reading. This is cultural. This is the answer to that question.

**\* There are repeated calls from different sides to the Muslims to renew their discourses and projects, what do you think about that?**

Every new generation of Muslims has to reconvert, you can not inherit a religion. The Western German poet called Goethe who put it very well, he said: "You have to acquire your inheritance in order to boss it". And that means every generation has to go back to Quran and Sunna again and again in order to make it relevant against the background of its own problematic context.

**\* Some people believe that the achievements or the Islamic intellectual thought and jurisprudence so far has not interacted effectively with humanity and the world at large. Being an intellectual who is Muslim and Western, what is your opinion?**

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**Every new generation of Muslims has to reconvert, you can not inherit a religion.** 🕌

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I agree with that statement fully. The problem is that the Muslim world has not developed with corresponds to orientalism in the West. In the West there are specialists for Islam who know a lot about Islam, who speak Arabic and Persian (I mean Farsi) and Turkish, this is the minimum of what they have to learn, so the West is equipped to understand Islam from the inside. There is no such thing as Occidentalism in the Muslim world. You find very few people who have a command of western languages plus western history plus western philosophy plus Christianity for instance in all its details and that is part of the function. I can see that because I'm standing with one leg in the orient and with the other one in the Occident and I understand both worlds sufficiently well to explain them to each other, so often when I'm in the Muslim world I explain to them the west and in the west I explain Islam.

**\* Do you think that there is an Islamic absence in the respect of engaging with human international issues and problems? For example, with the international anti- globalization movement, what we have to do in order to readdress the situation?**

I think the Palestinian issue is central in this respect .It is true that the policies of Israel against Palestinians and the support given to it by the United States are highly criticized in most of Europe and even in America itself. There's a growing feeling among Americans that Washington is no longer run by Americans but by Zionists and basically from Israel and this makes these people very unhappy, so there may be a growing numbers of people who are against this Bush policy towards Israel. And you are definitely right, what happens in Chechnya, in Kashmir, in Algeria, in Pakistan, in the United Nations Security Council is dealt with a double standard. United Nations resolutions against Israel are never applied but United Nations resolutions against any of the Muslim countries are immediately applied. And that's why one of my books I wrote a chapter called: "Blond blue eyed and other human rights" meaning, I said, human rights are blond and blue eyed.

And the Muslim world is mostly absent; the same was true in Bosnia. Who finally interfered massively in favour of the Muslims in Bosnia and in Kosovo? It was the west; it was not the Muslim world. Why is this so? Why can we not get our act together? It is first of all, I think, because the Muslim world has been divided by colonialism into nations that now behave like independent nations and not like the Umma. Everybody has a flag and a dictator and that is tragic. If the Muslim people themselves would count, they would get their act together. It is the governments that don't permit it.

**\*Many may think that Muslims in the west are living on the production of the intellect and jurisprudence made in the East. What is the reason**

**for this and when do you think there will be an independent Islamic Fiqh and intellect and culture which are the production of the west?**

I fully deny the assumption you made. There is much more intellectual Islamic life in the west than in the East. More serious books on Islam are being published in English than in Arabic. We have very productive centers for Islamic institution of thought in Washington led by Taha Gaber Al-Elwany, he's an Azharite. We have another one in Los Angeles led by Fathy Othman, Azharite. We have one in London led by Zaky Badawy, Azharite. I'm writing book reviews, every year about 20 books; meaning I read about 4000 pages of Islamic books each year for the so called Muslim world book review which is published in England in Markfield where there is a wonderful Islamic foundation. And since Muslim thinkers in the West can write without censorship, their production is likely to be essential for the development of Islam in the Muslim world. I think the Muslims in America and in Europe will be the leaders for the intellectual revitalization of the Muslims in the East.

**\*But at the same time we believe that the west is still depending on the east in terms of intellect and thought. Even the names you have just mentioned like Elwany, Badawi and Fathy Othman, they were reared and they started their life in the east. Besides that the European Council for Fatwa and Research (ECFR) is still headed by Al-Qaradawi and Mawlawi. The question is: is the infrastructure for westerner Islamic thought and intellect being built in the west?**

I think so indeed and even the three people mentioned are so much influenced by their being in the west. This has fruitful repercussions on their production, on their thinking, on their approach.

**\*How do you see the future of Muslims in the west especially after the eleventh of September tragic events?**

This can not be answered without distinguishing between those parts of the west which is mainly atheistic and where the Christian church is no longer a major player and those countries where people are still religious. Take the United States; the United States is a religious country. You can not be the President of the United States without going to some church.

In Europe, it is the opposite, the German chancellor, he is a professing atheist. And the majority of the intellectuals in Europe are non believers. Now, it is easier for Muslims to deal with believers than with non believers.

The second element is: who is the majority of Muslims? In Germany: it is Turks, in France: it is North Africans, in England: it is Indo-Pakistanis. And that makes a big difference for each of these countries. The Turks for instance came without knowing any German while the North Africans; they knew French before they came to France and the Indo-Pakistanis knew English before they came to England so they had a head start.

Secondly, India is so far away that these people immediately identify with burden. The North Africans identify with France because they are political refugees, they don't want to go back. The Turks however want to go back because they came for economic reasons, not for political reasons. The picture is different in every country.

Now, the most important difference is in favor of Muslims in America. The Muslims in Europe all came as workers, unskilled workers and therefore, socially, they started from the bottom and this you can still notice. In America, Muslims came as students from the entire Muslim world and they all went to



become doctors, engineers, lawyers... with the result that the Muslim population in America has the highest ratio of academically trained people in America, more than the Jews.

**\*Having retired from civil service, are you writing your memoirs? What is new in your production? Are you writing special books?**

I am 72 years of age and I have written ten books on Islam, I think that is sufficient. My diary you would find in the book: "rehla ela Makka"; (My Journey to Mecaa) But I do write articles for "Islamic Studies" in Islamabad, for the "American Journal for Islamic Social Studies" in Washington, for "Encounters" in England and I'm writing for an Islamic newspaper in Germany. We have an Islamic newspaper.

- *Based on an interview by Hossam Tammam, the Editor of the Cultural page in islamonline.net (Arabic Section), during an intrafaith dialogue conference in El Manama - Bahrain*

## Appendix Twenty-three

### Author Oriana Fallaci accused of defaming Islam in her The Strength of Reason Book

<http://www.themuslimweekly.com/newspaper/viewfullstory.aspx?NewsID=TW00002795>



A judge in northern Italy has ordered that Italian author Oriana Fallaci should stand trial on charges of public defamation against Islam in a recent book, a lawyer in the case said.

The case follows a lawsuit brought against Fallaci by a Muslim activist over her book "**The Strength of Reason**," said the activist's lawyer, Matteo Nicoli. "Some of the things she said are offensive to Islam," Nicoli said. He cited a phrase from the book that refers to Islam as "a pool ... that never purifies."

No one at Rizzoli, which published the book in 2004, was immediately available to comment. Fallaci, a former resistance fighter and war correspondent now based in the United States, has often stirred controversy for her blunt publications and provocative stances.

The activist, Adel Smith, is also known for taking radical positions. He gained attention

in Italy in 2003 when he sought unsuccessfully to have the crucifix removed from the public elementary school his sons attended. "Fallaci did her best to propagandize hatred against Islam and Muslims, distorting real historical facts and inventing others," Smith said in a written statement. "She libeled, offended and defamed many times the Muslims all over the world."

Nicoli said no date had been set for the trial to begin in the northern town of Bergamo.

In her 278-page book Fallaci wrote that Muslims "multiply like rats" and said "the children of Allah spend their time with their bottoms in the air, praying five times a day." It also accuses the Roman Catholic Church of being too weak before the Muslim world and Europe of selling itself to Islam "like a prostitute."

In 2002, her best-selling essay "The Rage and The Pride" drew accusations that Fallaci was inciting hatred against Muslims.

## Appendix Twenty-four

### French Court to Rule on Racist, Anti-Muslim Book

PARIS , November 19 2004 (IslamOnline & News Agencies) - A Paris court is to rule Wednesday, November 20, whether an Italian journalist who wrote a racist book on Islam and the Muslim culture violated French anti-racist laws.

Human rights and anti-racist groups brought the suit against Italian, New York-based journalist Oriana Fallaci and her French publisher, Plon, for inciting racial hatred in the book titled "The Rage and The Pride," Agence France-Presse (AFP) reported.

Fallaci, 72, will not be in court for the verdict. Ill-health has left her confined to her New York apartment, said AFP.

She wrote her racist book, which has sold more than one million copies in Italy , following the 9-11 attacks in the United States , calling it a sort of "sermon" to Europeans. Her critics have rated it a xenophobic rant.

In it, she claims that Islam is a religion against freedom, justice and democracy and describes Muslims as "secretly jealous of us [in the West]".

The journalist speaks of a so-called unbridgeable gap between the Muslim and Christian worlds, and warns of what she describes as a " Pearl Harbor " against the West.

Fallaci further makes numerous slanders about Muslim society, including that they "multiply like rats".

Anti-racist group, MRAP, had called for a ban on the book. Two other rights groups, the International League Against Racism and Anti-Semitism (LICRA) and



"The Rage and The Pride":  
"a work that concentrates  
hate against Muslims"



the League for Human Rights, had demanded a public warning against the work and that the court's verdict be widely published.

The head of the MRAP, Mouloud Aounit, said "the book constitutes permanent incitement to racist violence".

MRAP's lawyer, Hacem Taleb, added: "When you finish the book, you feel like you have the right to kill any Muslim in the street".

Patrick Baudoin, a lawyer for the League of Human Rights, said Fallaci had given herself over to "a discourse of rage" that tried to present Western civilization as "the only good civilization," AFP reported.

"It is a work that concentrates hate against Muslims," said Baudouin.

But Fallaci's lawyer intends to defend the book on the grounds that the complaints are allegedly based on taking the Italian writer's words out of context.

"The Rage and The Pride" represents an attack on the Islamic clergy and not a people, the lawyer, Christophe Bigot argued.

A similar case was brought against French writer Michel Houellebecq for insulting Islam and Muslims in his book "Plateforme" and in an interview to a literary magazine. In "Plateforme", a character admits to a "quiver of glee" every time a "Palestinian" is killed.

In one chapter, the protagonist says, "Every time I heard of a Palestinian terrorist, a Palestinian child or a pregnant Palestinian woman being shot in the Gaza Strip, I felt a rush of enthusiasm."

In February's issue of *Lire* magazine, Houellebecq described Islam as "a dangerous religion right from the start" and "the dumbest religion".

Houellebecq's "despicable comments on Islam, the Arabs and the Palestinians" have given rise to legitimate outrage among the Muslim community in France and the world.

"What Houellebecq wrote is extremely insulting to Muslims all over the world and is a direct attack on the Muslim faith to which more than 1.25 billion people around the world ascribe to," said Abdul-Aziz bin Othman al-Tuwaijri, the general director of the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO).

## Appendix Twenty-five

## Swiss Muslims File Suit Over "Racist" Fallaci Book

GENEVA, June 20 2004 (IslamOnline & News Agencies) - Geneva's top Islamic center said Thursday, June 20, it had filed a suit under Swiss anti-racism laws against Italian journalist Oriana Fallaci, including a call for her book "Rage and Pride" to be banned.

"Mrs Fallaci is insulting the Muslim community as a whole with her shameful words," the head of the Islamic Center, Hani Ramadan, said in a statement carried by Agence France-Presse (AFP).

Ramadan said the Center wanted Geneva's prosecutor to order the book withdrawn and banned from shops, and called for action against those involved in its distribution.

He said the "racist terms" in the book violated Swiss law.

The journalist claims in the book that there is an unbridgeable gap between the Muslim and Christian worlds, and makes insulting comments about Muslim society.

She also warns of a "Pearl Harbor" against the West.

An anti-racist group had also filed a suit in France to have Fallaci's insulting book banned. A French judge said Tuesday, June 18, he would rule Friday, June 21, on the request.

The Movement Against Racism And For Friendship Between Peoples (MRAP) said in its plea that Fallaci's "Anger and Pride," published in France last month, was an "incendiary tract of Islamophobia."

"Freedom of expression is and will remain a fundamental right... but when this great writer resorts to outrageous stigmatization of Islam, the limits of what is tolerable are breached," MRAP said, AFP reported.

A representative from the state prosecutor's office, Pierre Dillange, said an emergency ban on the book made no sense, even though he said it contained "an unacceptable mixture of ideas".

Fallaci, 72, is one of Italy's best-known journalists and now lives in New York, where she witnessed the September 11 attacks.



"Mrs Fallaci is insulting the Muslim community as a whole with her shameful words," the head of Geneva 's top Islamic center said.



Fallaci's "Anger and Pride" is an "incendiary tract of Islamophobia," said MRAP in its plea.

Fallaci's book, strongly in favor of the United States, was published two weeks after the September 11 attacks and has topped the bestseller lists in Italy since.

Her book, in which she accuses Europe of being blind to the growing problems of Islamic immigration and so-called terrorism, has already aroused hot debate in Italy.

An article Fallaci wrote denouncing anti-Semitism stirred controversy in June after she pointed the finger at the Roman Catholic church and the political left over the current Mideast crisis.

## Appendix Twenty-six

### Intellectual Pirating



A view of al-Azhar of Cairo, one of the Islamic world's oldest intellectual institutes and centers of Islamic learning

**By Tarek A. Ghanem**

*Freelance writer – Cairo*

**05/09/2002**

The exposé of Islam is under the command of the media, academia and literati: and its out in the open. Islamophobia, we are told, is order of the day and the Muslim world is the empire of evil. At last, the civilized (principally Western) world, psychic and aggressive as it is, is pleased with finding its new sacrifice for the sake of artificial idols of supremacy, superiority and self-righteousness. Already secularism made itself the custodian of human consciousness and liberty, ousting the Judeo-Christian heritage and any other religious promise or enterprise. And now the shot is on Islam.

The drums of vehemence are beating so loud and sanity had its throat cut by the pitchforks of nihilism. Even the light of reason is overshadowed by the seriousness of the pack of swaggering ignorance—to a degree that cannot be outshined. The time for polemics is due and the space is infinite. It is not only a fashionable wholesale business. Stardom is given, profit is made, and prizes are furnished too.

#### **Ride the Wave**

A cold-blooded wave of hatred in literature has targeted Islam and Muslims. The phenomenon is not incomprehensible. Before the carnage of 9/11 such works were

isolated (the most well known is Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*). Yet, never before has there been a wave with such height and intensity, and indeed such fascination.

Oriana Fallaci, an Italian author in her seventies who rode the European, fashionable wave (yet still ongoing) of sharply jumping from left to right, published a new book *La Rabbie e l'Orgoglio* (Anger and Pride). In it racism is the standard. Racism is even intellectualized in some passages: "...the sons of Allah multiply like rats." It is a best seller in both Italy and France selling one million copies.



Oriana Fallaci

Fallaci has never denied that her work is racist. Evidently, her loathing for Muslims seems to compensate for her outrageous favoritism for Jews. She seems to be in awe of the "Shakespearean figure" (her words) Ariel Sharon and his works—the ideal mentor for mass murderers.

The eloquent Muslim writer Rana Kabbani, who lives in Paris, says regarding this:

Had this book's victims been anyone other than Muslims, it would not have been published, and certainly not by any self-respecting house. But Muslims are fair game now and to defame them en masse has become not only respectable, but also highly profitable. The defamer has nothing to fear, as there are no laws to check such vitriolic prejudice, nor do Muslims have the organised self-defence groups that Jews have formed so successfully to silence would be anti-semites (*Guardian*, June 11, 2002).

Kabbani referred to high-profile Jews, in particular Bernard-Henri Levy, who rejected her onslaughts.

If that is not enough, the Noble Prize novelist Michel Houellebecq could not fulfill his literary dreams without bashing Islam and other faiths. In an interview in French daily *Le Monde* he declared Islam to be the "stupidest of all religions." He added that Islam is a dangerous religion and "materialism is a lesser evil [than Islam]." His racist passion includes other races and nationalities like Japanese, German and American. Although it may seem ironic that such an award winner is a pornographer, Stalinist, xenophobic, nihilist, chauvinist and caused other anti-feminist and racist controversies, it could be that traits like this are actually prerequisites to winning the latest Impac award: the world's richest literary prize!

This depressing image calls to mind the timing of last year's Noble prize in literature awarded to V.S. Naipaul - the travel writer living in the darkness of post-modern ignorance and in his loathe for Islam, and even his own country, India. His remark on Islam being worse than imperialism is a case in point.

In modern literary circles, where the writer is the saint of the secular paradigm, prophesying about the duality of the world forms and artistically witnesses the

encounters of life forces, such writers are nothing but intellectual demons preaching intolerance, racism and hatred. They subsist under their “victim mentality” of multiculturalism and blind generalizations.

### **Pipes Along with his Pipe Nightmares**

Moving towards the “scholarly” end of the spectrum, we find the new-crowned specialist and architect of the threat of Islam, Daniel Pipes. Although Pipes does his homework and his research (as a result of his prestigious Harvard education) his mind cannot escape the “orientalist” paradigm. In fact, it is custom-made to fit his former job as “an advisor” to the US State Department. For him the existence of Islam is a menace and being a Muslim, by definition, is political. His earlier hoax, *In the Path of God: Islam and Political Power*, is fat in size but thin in accuracy, and can be summed up as: Muslim resurgence is synonymous to fundamentalism and is a product of the oil boom. Its main founders are Saudi Arabia and Libya, and the main supporter is Russia.



Daniel Pipes

[Parvez Manzoor, a renowned Muslim thinker wrote concerning this book:](#)

Here is a link, if ever it was in need of a demonstration, between the academic Orientalism of Harvard and the grisly Realpolitik of the State Department. The only talent that Pipes really possesses is scurrility and the only argument he knows is calumny. As a tireless crusader of the ideology of Western dominance and as an ardent member of the Lodge of US-Israeli Freemasonry, Pipes has wielded his stock invective against Islam and Muslims with considerable skill; nonetheless, his scholarly diatribe, the present work clearly shows, is a monumental exercise in frivolity, banality and paranoia.

Pipes displays his theatrical horror of Islam in his column in *The Washington Post* as nothing but intellectual terrorism. The items on his literary agenda can be covered rather simply in two points: Islam is a threat that must be eradicated; and “Islamist” (in his view, fanatic) is equated with terrorist who is not physically and ideologically different from the average Muslim living next door. Nurturing and amplifying the mass Islam-is-the-threat obsession, he is profiting from the sales of his latest literary labor, *Militant Islam Reaches America*; the latest stage of his ideological sickness.

### **9/11 and 9-1-1**

The literary blackening of Islam is multi-layered and deep-rooted. Part of it stems from the classical problem of orientalism that has backfired on Western mentality (amidst its expansion to disguise all Asian civilizations and representations with a focus on Islam). In the beginning, the ideas of God, man, nature and society in Islam

were ridiculed and demonized, and claimed as inferior to Christendom. As orientalism evolved, it infected scholarship, travel literature and fiction. This furnished the theological and military dominance of the Crusaders, the intellectual superiority of the Renaissance, the backwardness of the occupied under imperialism, and the dependence of the underdeveloped in accordance to the “civilized” (“us”) benchmark, of course.

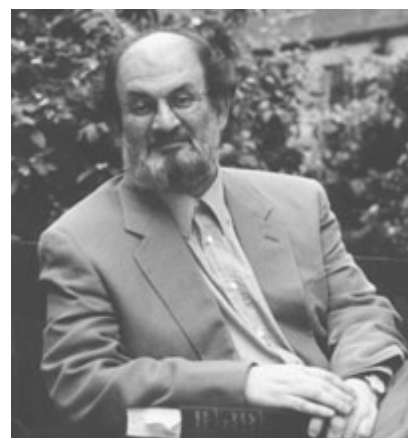
The criminal bloodshed, which bastardized the name of Islam and stained it by the blood of the victims, opened the door wide open for such cultural and ideological upsets. There is also the absurdity of the “clash of civilizations.” But the actual clash on the level of civilization between the Muslim world and the West is uneven: in the technological, developmental, productive, military capabilities, and intellectual, political, and religious discourses. In fact, the very idea of “globalization” proves the deception of this unmatched course of conflict. The course of collision has only involved America and certain organizations, and not the entire West, or the entire Muslim world.

Maybe 9/11 has strengthened the stereotype image of Muslims as “terrorists.” It has also showed the ideological and intellectual standpoints of the West and the “other” as a case of cultural victimization. The other’s victimization of “us” (being “us” the west or “us” the Muslim world) as well as its threat and its (distorted) image, is the new mechanism of cultural relativism on historical, social and political levels. There is also the self-assurance about the other being uncompromisingly wrong. But due to the West’s violation of what is moral, tolerant and accepting of the “other,” the relation between the two sides is disproportionate and dysfunctional.

Such intellectual and ideological propaganda deserves effort and time due to its roots and penetration. A long-term cultural rapprochement is indispensable at this point where the two sides can come to an understanding in each other’s logic and on each other’s own terms. Cultural exchange programs and a strong awareness campaign about the Muslim world and the diversity of its cultures, languages, races and origins are possible scenarios.

### **Our “Pride and Anger” Now**

On seeing the cruel attack on Islam and Muslims (which actually nourishes and mushrooms hate on the “other” side) there is a need to counter such hostile environment on Islam, Muslims and Arabs. It is imperative to institutionalize and intellectualize groups that discriminate against Muslims. In a world where racism and persecution are universally condemned, Muslims cannot be singled out as undeserving in the struggle for modern human and civil rights. To achieve such an objective one can follow in the footsteps of the African-Americans and Jewish communities in America and other Western countries. It is really stunning how powerful efforts



Salman Rushdie



against anti-Semitism can defend their minority groups as well as attack the slightest, and in many cases fabricated, insults (even anti-Israeli occupation or apartheid criticisms).

Jewish efforts to create an anti-Semitic platform after the holocaust were far reaching. They accompanied the biggest wave of immigration in the twentieth century to Palestine and the revival of Hebrew (an ancient language) in twenty years. This shows that there are the possibilities with organization and planning.

All the while the Muslim world and the Muslim communities in the west receive severe animosity and offensives from the mighty American arsenal and Western media.

The Arab-American Anti-Discrimination Committee (AADC) is a remarkable model - despite its short existence, limited community work, and hostile surrounding environment – especially in the aftermath of 9/11. With the nightmarish awakening of extreme European right-wingers and their racist political agenda, such Arab and Muslim Committees must be instituted. On another level, the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) must create an international anti-Islamic discrimination committee against animosity towards the Muslim faith and sentiments.

The turmoil of the post-modern, blasphemous *The Satanic Verses* must be dealt with as a warning (somehow Rushdie was recently graced by appearing in the movie *Bridget Jones's Diary*). Islam, which deserves a tolerant and intellectually stimulating space for dialogue, cannot be obscured by politics of despair. Muslim communities fulfilled their role in following the legalities of filing a lawsuit against Houellebecq in France. There is no need for book burning or a reward for killing the offending writer. The intellectual heritage of a “book-for-book” under the magnificent days of Muslim civilization is an example that may be burdensome to Muslim intellectuals, but actually must be adopted. This is the way by which Muslim sorrows and pains on the severe attacks on their faith, beliefs and pride, that grief, can be relieved.

*The author encourages your comments. Please e-mail him at [t.ghanem@islam-online.net](mailto:t.ghanem@islam-online.net)*

## Appendix Twenty-seven

The followings are two messages given for previous OSCE Conferences held at Baku on Oct 2002

**From:**  
**Iqbal Sacranie,**  
**Secretary General,**  
**The Muslim Council of Britain**

**To:**

**The OSCE International Conference,  
Gulistan Palace, Baku, Azerbaijan,  
10<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup> October 2002**

I am pleased to learn from MCB Central Working Committee member Imam Dr Abduljalil Sajid that he will be attending as an invitee of the British Foreign Commonwealth Office and contributing to this timely conference on “The Role of Religion and Belief in a Democratic Society: searching ways to Combat terrorism”

The Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) is a national umbrella organisation that serves and represents British Muslims by sharing in the common good of our society as a whole. The MCB works with a number of government forums such as the Inner Cities Religious Council and the Race Relations Forum and many other major faith communities to promote the well being of all. Cultural diversity and religious pluralism inspire healthy competition between communities and nations, and God enjoins us to direct that competition towards the seeking of the common good for all humanity. Co-operation and Solidarity among the faiths means that competing human communities strive to understand and reach out to one another in pursuit of a united human ethic and vision.

The Muslim Council of Britain condemns violence and terror of all kinds, as there is no justification for senseless and extra judicial killing. Terrorism is an evil and destructive phenomenon that inflicts pain and suffering on defenceless people. Those who planned and perpetrated those atrocities, regardless of their religious, ideological or political beliefs, stand outside the pale of human values. Islam commands us to be just and wrong no one.

To eradicate terrorism it is imperative that we address the conditions that can give rise to it. To combat terrorism effectively we need a united front against terror. Building bridges between nations and peoples must be an integral part of that strategy. Sadly, the world is instead being pushed towards more violence and division. Instead of vengeance we need justice and instead of rhetoric we need reason. We must deny terrorists the opportunities to exploit the social, economic and political problems that continue to blight our world.

The real and long-term answer to the evil of terrorism is to give people their due stake both in the resources and the affairs of their world. The Muslim Council reiterates its own commitment to the way of peace and pro-existence in its quest for the common good of all. On behalf of the Muslim Council of Britain I wish you every success with your conference and look forward to receiving a full report from Imam Abduljalil Sajid

Iqbal Sacranie  
Secretary General  
**The Muslim Council of Britain**

**MCB Message for OSCE 13 Sep 2004 OSCE Conference at Brussels**



25 August 2004

From: Iqbal Sacranie, Secretary General,  
The Muslim Council of Britain

To: The OSCE International Conference,  
13<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup> September 2004 at Brussels

I am pleased to learn from MCB Central Working Committee member Imam Dr Abduljalil Sajid that he will be attending as an invitee of the British Foreign Commonwealth Office and contributing to this timely conference on “The Role of Governments and Civil Society in Promoting Tolerance, Respect and Mutual Understanding, Particularly through Interfaith and Intercultural Dialogue and Partnerships”

The Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) is a national umbrella organisation that serves and represents British Muslims by sharing in the common good of our society as a whole. The MCB works with a number of government forums such as the Inner Cities Religious Council and the Race Relations Forum and many other major faith communities to promote the well being of all. Cultural diversity and religious pluralism inspire healthy competition between communities and nations, and God enjoins us to direct that competition towards the seeking of the common good for all humanity. Co-operation, Solidarity and partnership between governments and non governmental agencies and among the faith communities mean that competing human communities strive to understand and reach out to one another in pursuit of a united human ethic and vision.

We view with utmost respect and admiration your achievements. You have, indeed, set a splendid example for many in civil society to follow.

With respect to the theme of your conference - “Tolerance and the Fight against Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination” - the Muslim Council of Britain affirms both its relevance and urgency. We note with regret, however, that since the 2001 UN World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance in Durban, Europe has witnessed the continued spread of all these social diseases. Herein lays your challenge. Today, the entire community of nations look, with expectation, to see what models you adopt and how well you succeed in curing these ills.

The Muslim Council of Britain wishes you every success in your deliberations and reaffirms its unreserved support for your noble endeavours. The Muslim Council reiterates its own commitment to the way of peace and pro-existence in its quest for the common good of all. On behalf of the Muslim Council of Britain I wish you every success with your conference and look forward to receiving a full report from Imam Abduljalil Sajid

Iqbal Sacranie  
Secretary General

## Appendix Twenty- eight

### Press Report on OSCE Cordoba conference

#### **British Imam Says Discrimination Against Muslims Overtaking Anti-Semitism in Europe**

Associated Press

[http://www.beliefnet.com/story/168/story\\_16818\\_1.html](http://www.beliefnet.com/story/168/story_16818_1.html)

Cordoba, Spain, June 9, 2005 - Fear and suspicion of Muslims have increased in the European Union since the Sept. 11 attacks, and deserve as much attention as anti-Semitism, a British imam told an international conference on racial and religious intolerance Thursday.

"Islamophobia has replaced anti-Semitism as the new sharp end of racist issues in the world wherever you go," Imam Dr Abduljalil Sajid told the conference of the 55-country Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

After the Sept. 11 attacks in the United States in 2001, the EU asked its then 15-member countries to compile reports on what effect the attacks had had on their Muslim communities. The conclusion was that "hatred against Muslims and crimes against Muslims increased tremendously," Imam Sajid said.

The imam criticized the draft final statement being prepared at the two-day conference here for not explicitly using the term Islamophobia, and said Europe has no choice but to face the reality that millions of its people are now Muslims.

"Muslims are not going anywhere. They are going to stay," Imam Sajid said.

Despite this, EU countries have no established system to monitor or record crimes against Muslims, he said.

Barbara John, a member of the German Senate, disagreed that intolerance towards Muslims has replaced anti-Semitism as the gravest threat to a religious community, but said fear of Muslims does "continue the evil concept" of denigrating people because of their faith.

A delegate representing the Organization of the Islamic Conference said Islamophobia has historic roots but was clearly fuelled by the Sept. 11 attacks blamed on al-Qaida.

"We are very worried," said Saad Eddine Taib, adding that Sept. 11 was a crime under Islam.

"For Muslims, 9-11 was a dark day in their history," he said.

### **Islamophobia Replaces Anti-Semitism in EU after 9/11**

6/11/2005

[http://iqna.ir/NewsBodyDesc\\_en.asp?lang=en&ProdID=20152](http://iqna.ir/NewsBodyDesc_en.asp?lang=en&ProdID=20152)

Tehran, IQNA: June 11, 2005-- Discrimination against Muslims has increased in Europe since the September 11, 2001 attacks, a British imam told a conference on religious intolerance, reported woi website.

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### **Imams and Rabbis Conference in Brussels 3 Jan 2005 in Telegraph**

[Telegraph | News | Leaders of Jews and Muslims aim to halt ...](#)

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### **Leaders of Jews and Muslims aim to halt extremism**

**By Colin Randall in Paris**

(Filed: 03/01/2005)

<http://news.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2005/01/03/wpeace03.xml>

Imams and rabbis from across the world will gather in Brussels today in an unprecedented effort to quell the rising tensions [between Muslims and Jews in Europe](#).

The "imams and rabbis for peace" conference will bring together 150 leaders of the two faiths, allowing them a unique opportunity to meet face-to-face.

It promises to be much more than a mere talking shop. Speaking before tonight's opening ceremony, a British Muslim delegate called for the "naming and shaming" of extremists.

Dr Abduljalil Sajid, a senior figure in the Muslim Council of Britain, said he hoped the conference would demonstrate that "99.9 per cent of Muslims, along with 99.9 per cent of Jews" favoured peaceful co-existence.

The organisers are seeking to "create dialogue and an enduring partnership between Islam and Judaism", promoting personal friendships and joint initiatives.

Alain Michel is the founder and president of the Paris-based peace foundation, Hommes de Parole (Men of Their Word), which is staging the conference.

He said: "A lot of imams and rabbis never get the chance to meet and work with each other, though there are many initiatives between Islam and Christianity, and Judaism and Christianity."

The aim was to provide a unique forum for inter-religious discussion, in which an influential gathering could demonstrate its mutual opposition to violence, Islamophobia and anti-semitism.

The chief rabbis of Austria, Brussels, Bulgaria and Denmark are among Jewish religious leaders taking part, while a strong contingent from Israel includes the chief rabbi of Haifa and prominent members of the High Rabbinical court of Jerusalem.

Rabbi Joseph Sitruk, the chief rabbi of France, said: "The assembly is an important moment because it carries hope and freedom for a disillusioned world."

During the conference, Dr Sajid, who is also the imam of Brighton, will chair a session in which imams and rabbis will study values common to both religions.

He said: "We should stand shoulder to shoulder to name and shame the tiny minority of agitators and extremists within our own communities and stress our respect for the sanctity of life."

Dr Sajid said he had encountered the militant north London cleric Abu Hamza in the late 1980s, before Hamza went to fight with the mujahideen in Afghanistan, and became concerned about his views.

"Hamza was staying at our mosque while studying in Brighton," he said. "When you see someone day in, day out, you quickly see what they are like. I alerted the authorities but no one would listen because he had not actually done anything."

Dr Sajid said the views of mainstream religious leaders were not heard. "That leaves a tiny minority of troublemakers to dominate headlines and cause scare-mongering coverage that frightens people."

He said he was prepared to meet "obnoxious people" and confront their views. "We have to start somewhere."

## **British Imam Dr Abduljalil Sajid says discrimination against Muslims has risen 9 June 2005**

### [The Muslim News](#)

... Spain, **Abduljalil Sajid** said: "Islamophobia has replaced anti-Semitism as the ... The **imam** criticised the draft final statement being prepared at the ... [www.muslimnews.co.uk/news/news.php?article=9448](http://www.muslimnews.co.uk/news/news.php?article=9448) - 10k - 1 Aug 2005 - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

## British Imam says discrimination against Muslims has risen

09-06-2005

<http://www.muslimnews.co.uk/news/news.php?article=9448>

PA News:

Fear and suspicion of Muslims have increased in the European Union since the September 11 attacks, and deserve as much attention as anti-Semitism, a British imam told an international conference on racial and religious intolerance.

Speaking at the conference of the 55-country Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, being held in Cordoba, Spain, Abduljalil Sajid said: "Islamophobia has replaced anti-Semitism as the new sharp end of racist issues in the world wherever you go."

After the September 11 attacks in the US in 2001, the EU asked its then 15-member countries to compile reports on what effect the attacks had had on their Muslim communities.

The conclusion was that "hatred against Muslims and crimes against Muslims increased tremendously," Sajid said.

The imam criticised the draft final statement being prepared at the two-day conference for not explicitly using the term Islamophobia, and said Europe has no choice but to face the reality that millions of its people are now Muslims.

"Muslims are not going anywhere. They are going to stay," Sajid said.

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British **Imam** Says discrimination against Muslims overtaking ... wherever you go,"

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[www.muslimnews.co.uk/news/news.php?article=9447](http://www.muslimnews.co.uk/news/news.php?article=9447) - 10k - 1 Aug 2005 - [Cached](#) -

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[iqna.ir/NewsBodyDesc\\_en.asp?lang=en&ProdID=20152 - 11k](#) - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

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## At OSCE meeting praise for steps taken but a hope for more serious progress

June 10, 2005

By Jerome Socolovsky

<http://www.worldjewishcongress.org/press/article.cfm?id=4286>

[World Jewish Congress Online](#)

"Islamophobia has replaced anti-Semitism as the new, sharp end of racism in the world, wherever you go," **Abduljalil Sajid**, an imam and adviser to the ...

[www.worldjewishcongress.org/press/article.cfm?id=4286](http://www.worldjewishcongress.org/press/article.cfm?id=4286) - 16k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

CORDOBA, Spain, June 9, 2005 (JTA) — At first the challenge was to get people talking about the problem. Then it was to turn words into actions. This year, the effort at the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe conference was on maintaining the focus on anti-Semitism.

Ever since the OSCE began dealing with the challenge of anti-Semitism in the world today, Jewish organizations have faced an uphill battle.

This year's meeting in Cordoba — which drew delegations from 55 governments — was the third sponsored by the OSCE.

The first gathering, in Vienna, set the precedent of a conference devoted to anti-Semitism. Last year, in the German capital, delegates issued a "Berlin Declaration" calling for concrete action.

But this year's meeting was different: As its title makes clear, the Conference on Antisemitism and Other Forms of Intolerance included other types of discrimination, though the precedence given to anti-Semitism was more than implicit.

Gov. George Pataki (R-N.Y.), who headed the U.S. delegation, considered it "a positive step" to include categories such as discrimination against Muslims, Christians, Gypsies and other groups.

"But we cannot lose the fact that the whole concept of this conference began as an effort to elevate public awareness, governmental awareness in response and to eradicate anti-Semitism. That still has to be the primary focus," Pataki told JTA.

"To me it's quite obvious that anti-Semitism, not just currently, is frightening and damaging and horrific," the governor said. "When you look at its history, we've never seen the inhumanity to man that we saw during the course of the Holocaust."

Representatives of Jewish groups said one of the greatest challenges at the Cordoba meeting was to acknowledge the suffering of others, while reminding Europeans that their continent has a particular duty to focus on anti-Semitism because of the Holocaust.

"It is not our intention to prove that anti-Semitism comes first in some hierarchy of oppression," said Rabbi Andrew Baker of the American Jewish Committee. "But one has to be blind not to recognize that anti-Muslim sentiments are prevalent in Europe today."

Still, striking the right balance was no easy task.

"Islamophobia has replaced anti-Semitism as the new, sharp end of racism in the world, wherever you go," Abduljalil Sajid, an imam and adviser to the Commission on British Muslims, declared from the podium.

Another difficult issue was keeping the Israeli-Palestinian conflict separate from the anti-Semitism discussions.

Gert Weisskirchen, the OSCE's special representative for combating anti-Semitism, said hatred toward Jews in Europe is "nourished by pictures that are not fair" about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Reasonable criticism of Israel is fine as long as it doesn't cross a red line, as it has a number of times in European press and political debate, Weisskirchen said.

"If you, for instance, compare the actions of what the Israeli army is doing, or if you compare Sharon with Hitler, than this red line is crossed," he said.

Ed Morgan, president of the Canadian Jewish Congress, objected to an assertion by an Arab speaker that anti-Semitism will disappear only when the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is resolved.



"If I were to say that hatred of Arabs won't end until Arab countries come to terms with the State of Israel, that would be a racist statement," he said.

Some other non-Jewish organizations groups presented moderate stances.

"We can't make this a competition of who's more a victim. That's childish," said Yusuf Fernandez of the Spanish Federation of Religious Islamic Entities. "If Muslims had lived in Europe at the time of the Holocaust, then both Jews and Muslims would have ended up in the gas chambers."

Many participants felt that having members of different groups at the conference was an opportunity.

"I have tremendous hope from the fact that we are sitting in the same building, and some of us in the same room, as Muslim organizations," said Israel Singer, chairman of the World Jewish Congress.

He recalled Jewish-Catholic relations just a few decades ago, "when we were like that famous Michelangelo painting on the Sistine Chapel ceiling — almost touching, almost touching with the hands reaching out to each other, and the synapse not being made.

"The Catholics today are our closest allies from having been our greatest enemies over 2,000 years," he added.

Delegates discussed new national programs to raise Holocaust awareness and collect data on racist organizations.

The OSCE cited the FBI's cooperation with German police in investigating German-language Web sites registered with American Internet addresses. France also was mentioned because its judges can sentence perpetrators of hate crimes to racism-awareness education.

But the chairman of the conference, Slovenian Foreign Minister Dimitrij Rupel, criticized many countries for not implementing the Berlin recommendations.

"Unfortunately the findings fall short of expectations, as only 29 out of the 55 OSCE states provided statistical information relevant to hate-motivated crimes," Rupel said.

"We hope states leave here with resolve to implement and institutionalize the mechanisms they agree are essential to counter anti-Semitism and hate crime," Stacy Burdett, the Anti-Defamation League's associate director of government affairs and an adviser to the U.S. delegation, said in a statement.

"We welcome the focus and support demonstrated at this meeting," she said. "But in the end, no meeting or statement can be a substitute for national governments, one by one, taking action that can improve the safety and security of Jews and other minorities seeking to live in security and dignity."

The OSCE noted that only a few countries have appropriate mechanisms in place to respond to anti-Semitism.

And in those countries where statistical information has been gathered, the trends remain disturbing. The ADL presented findings of a 12-nation survey, which found that "Europeans continue to question the loyalty of their Jewish citizens."

It also found "alarmingly high levels" of the belief that Jews are too influential. Fifty-five percent of Hungarians and 45 percent of Spaniards polled more or less agreed with the statement that "Jews have too much power in the business world."

Weisskirchen said he was most concerned about "the growing tide of anti-Semitism and incidents" in Russia, which remind him of his native Germany during the Nazi era.

He added that "after the Second World War we would be confronted with that kind of anti-Semitism growing again," he said.

Behind the scenes, some countries expressed reservations about continuing the annual OSCE meetings.

Pataki said there was "a greater reluctance among some countries than I expected."

"It's shocking to even have to raise the possibility that there are those who would even look the other way," he said.

Delegates also were at odds over complaints that Weisskirchen has not been given a strong mandate. Some countries wanted to combine his position with that of two other officials dealing with other forms of racism.

Rabbi Marvin Hier of the Simon Wiesenthal Center warned that merging the jobs "would send the wrong message at the wrong time."

"It will only diminish the focus on anti-Semitism, and effectively remove it from the world's policymakers," Hier said.

Still, many Jewish leaders were satisfied that what had been achieved at the previous meetings at least was not rolled back this year.

"Last year we hit such a high point that it was hard to repeat it," Singer said. "What we were hoping to do was maintain the level."

## **Imams and Rabbis Conference in Brussels 3 Jan 2005 in Telegraph**

[Telegraph | News | Leaders of Jews and Muslims aim to halt ...](#)

... During the conference, Dr **Sajid**, who is also the **imam** of Brighton, will chair a session in which imams and rabbis will study values common to both religions. ... [news.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2005/01/03/wpeace03.xml](http://news.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2005/01/03/wpeace03.xml) - 22k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

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(Filed: 03/01/2005)

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He said he was prepared to meet "obnoxious people" and confront their views. "We have to start somewhere."

### **Anti Muslim Bias Growing in Europe OSCE Conference Told** *Fri 10 Jun 2005*

[http://www.mcb.org.uk/mcbdirect/searchresult.php?ann\\_id=1007](http://www.mcb.org.uk/mcbdirect/searchresult.php?ann_id=1007)

Violence by a small minority of Islamic militants and the West's war on terrorism have fuelled bias against Muslims meeting held in the southern Spanish city of Cordoba by the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe

Jewish groups at the conference expressed concern that discussion of anti-Muslim bias -- the first time the OSCE has addressed the issue -- might divert attention from anti-Semitism, which experts say is also on the rise in Europe.

A similar conference of the 55-nation OSCE in Berlin last year vowed to fight resurgent anti-Semitism in Europe and discrimination against Muslims, Christians and other believers to its list of concerns.

"Anti-Semitism has been combated by all European countries in a very strong way. This is a very positive thing, but

combat against anti-Semitism they are neglecting the importance of Islamophobia," Doudou Diene, the United Nations Rapporteur on Racism and Xenophobia, told Reuters.

"Islamophobia is now becoming the central challenge of European countries in the field of discrimination and racism,"

"Islamophobia and anti-Semitism are two sides of the same coin," said Abduljalil Sajid, adviser to the Commission on Muslims. "But Islamophobia has replaced anti-Semitism as the new sharp end of racist issues in the world wherever Muslims live."

Read the full article in Reuters, at the following link:

[http://www.reuters.co.in/locales/c\\_newsArticle.jsp;:42a87c9d:1026f7d9b6ba1e32?type=worldNews&localeKey=en\\_IN&story](http://www.reuters.co.in/locales/c_newsArticle.jsp;:42a87c9d:1026f7d9b6ba1e32?type=worldNews&localeKey=en_IN&story)

## **European Muslims Facing Tough Times**

*Mon 14 Mar 2005*

[http://www.mcb.org.uk/mcbdirect/searchresult.php?ann\\_id=874](http://www.mcb.org.uk/mcbdirect/searchresult.php?ann_id=874)

A survey of 25 EU countries by The International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights reported discrimination against Muslims in Europe.

Their findings are that Muslims in these countries have felt increasingly stigmatised, partly based on the current widespread fight against terrorism, and partly because of a perceived threat of religious extremism in Europe.

Helsinki Federation Executive Director Aaron Rhodes said discrimination against Muslims has risen as the fight against terrorism has intensified.

"They're very often subjected to verbal abuse on the street and public transportation...We found that in France 70 percent of all attacks on Muslims were comprised of attacks on women wearing headscarves," he said. "And people with Muslim or Arab sounding names are less likely to be invited to job interviews."

Read the full article in DW-WORLD.DE, at the following link:

<http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,1564,1513012,00.html>

## **Appendix Twenty-nine**

### **The War against Islam**

<http://www.mpacuk.org/content/view/6/718/105/>

Among the factors leading to the French and Dutch rejections of the European constitution last week, none looms more ominously than the nightmare of antagonism between "the West" and Islam. Many Europeans fear a rising tide of green, both within the continent and from outside it. Where once



communists threatened, now Muslims do. A new wall is being built.

Muslims, meanwhile, see a flood of contempt in pressures on immigrant communities in European cities, in restrictions on Islamic expression, and in openly expressed reservations about Turkey's admission to the EU precisely because of its Islamic character. Given escalations of the war in Iraq together with widely reported instances of Koran-denigration by US interrogators, such trends in Europe make the global war on terror seem expressly a war against Islam. The "clash of civilizations" seems closer at hand than ever.

To make sense of this dangerous condition, it can help to recall some of the forgotten or misremembered history that prepared for it, from the remote origins of the conflict to its manifestations in the not so distant past. As the story is usually told in Europe and America, the problem began when a jihad-driven army of "infidel" Saracens, having brutalized Christians in the "Holy Land," threatened "Christendom" itself with conquests right into the heart of present-day France. Charles Martel is the hero of primal European romances because he defeated the Muslim army near Tours in 733. But for Martel, Edward Gibbon wrote, "the Koran would now be taught in the schools of Oxford."

Across subsequent centuries, in the European memory, Islam posed the great threat to the emerging Christian order. But was that so? Lombards, Normans, Vikings, forces from the Slavic east, and violent contests among Christians themselves all wreaked havoc in Europe, even in Martel's time. As I learned from the historian Tomaz Mastnak, the threat from the Saracens was one among many. It was defined as transcendent only with the later Crusades, when Latin Christian armies set out to rescue that "Holy Land" and roll back Islamic conquests. The crusading impulse presumed a demonising of Saracens that was justified neither by the threat they actually posed nor by their treatment of Christians in Palestine. Indeed, chronicles of the earlier period take little or no notice of the religion of Saracens. Religious co-existence, famous in Iberia, was a mark of other lands conquered by Arabs. Europe's initiating "holy war" with Islam, that is, was based on flawed intelligence, propaganda, and threat exaggeration.

The poison flower of the Crusades, with their denigrations of distant cultures, was colonialism. The dark result of European imperial adventuring in the Muslim world was twofold: first, the usual exploitation of native peoples and resources, with attendant destruction of culture, and, second, the powerful reaction among Muslims and Arab populations against colonialism, a reaction that included an internal corrupting of Islamic traditions. The accidental wealth of oil in the Middle East made both external exploitation and internal corruption absolutely ruinous. The political fanaticism that has lately seized the Arab Islamic religious imagination (exemplified in Osama bin Laden) is rooted more in a defensive fending off of assault from "the West" than in anything intrinsic to Islam. The American war on terror, striking the worst notes of the old imperial insult, only exacerbates this reactionary fanaticism (generating, for example, legions of suicide bombers).

Having forgotten the deeper history, nervous Europeans seem also to have forgotten how large numbers of Muslims settled in the continent's cities in the first place. In the 1960s and 1970s, Turks, Arabs, and North Africans were welcomed as "guest

workers," taking up menial labour with the implicit understanding that they could never hope to be received as citizens of the nations that exploited them. The rank injustice of a system depending on a permanent underclass was bound to issue in political resistance, and now it has, but with a religious edge.

The point is that this conflict has its origins more in "the West" than in the House of Islam. The image of Muslims as prone to violence by virtue of their religion was mainly constructed across centuries by Europeans seeking to bolster their own purposes, a habit of politicised paranoia that is masterfully continued by freaked-out leaders of post-9/11 America. They, too, like prelates, crusaders, conquistadors, and colonizers, have turned fear of Islam into a source of power. This history teaches that such self-serving projection can indeed result in the creation of an enemy ready and willing to make the nightmare real.

*James Carroll's column appears regularly in the Globe. His most recent book is "[Crusade: Chronicles of an Unjust War](#)."*

*Published on Tuesday, June 7, 2005 by the [Boston Globe](#)*

## Appendix Thirty

13.03.2005

**Times for Muslims in Europe**

<http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,1564,1513012,00.html>



Showing allegiance to Germany

**A report by human-rights watchdogs confirms something many Europeans may have noticed on their own: Life has gotten harder for Muslims in Europe since the terror attacks of Sept. 11, 2001.**

The International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights

discrimination against Muslims in Europe. It found that Muslims in these countries have felt increasingly stigmatized, partly based on the current widespread fight against terrorism, and partly because of a perceived threat of religious extremism in Europe.

### **Verbal abuse, job bias**

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"They're very often subjected to verbal abuse on the street and public transportation...We found that in France 70 percent of all attacks on Muslims were comprised of attacks on women wearing headscarves," he said. "And people with Muslim or Arab sounding names are less likely to be invited to job interviews."

The report by the International Helsinki Federation, a group of 44 human rights NGOs that aims to uphold human rights standards, said the 2004 French law prohibiting religious attire in public schools helped encourage discrimination against Muslim women.



In Sweden and many other countries, studies have shown that people with Arabic sounding names had a reduced chance of being invited for a job interview, despite having the same qualifications as other applicants, the report said.



The report also took the media and right-wing and conservative parties to task. They have reinforced patterns of prejudice against Muslims, Rhodes said.

"Media accounts very often use stereotypical and negative one-dimensional language and

they tend to contribute to a popular perception of Muslims as aliens or dangerous," he said. "The rise of right-populist parties has had a distinct impact on debate about immigration and integration issues in the EU."

Far-right parties in Italy, Belgium and Austria depict Muslim immigration as a threat to the security and values of EU countries, according to the report.

### **'Islam' equals 'terrorism'?**

Rhodes pointed out that in Britain, the media have hailed the country's criminal justice system for successfully prosecuting Muslim terrorists, despite the fact that only three out of hundreds of Muslims arrested were actually convicted.

In the Netherlands, people believe that Muslim schools undermine integration efforts, while in Germany, 80



percent of those surveyed associated the word "Islam" with "terrorism" and "oppression of women," Rhodes noted.

Even lobby organizations, such as animal rights groups in Denmark, are calling for restriction of religious freedoms to ban Islamic and Jewish ritual animal sacrifice.

Such discrimination could encourage moderate Muslims to join extreme groups in order to protect their cultural and religious identity, Rhodes said.



"They challenge the moderate parts of these communities and they sometimes divide them and threaten them," he said. "And the terrorist agenda -- which is to obviously create terror -- is also to polarize society and generate fear. When that is allowed to happen then the terrorists are winning." *Anita Purcell (jen)*

**Enemy within** [Magda El-Ghitany](#) Al Ahram  
Weekly Cairo Egypt  
14 - 20 July 2005 Issue No. 751

Europe appears reluctant to embrace its Muslim communities, reveals [Magda El-Ghitany](#)  
14 - 20 July 2005  
Issue No. 751

<http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2005/751/fo2.htm>

[Al-Ahram Weekly | Focus | Enemy within](#)

"In most of Europe, Muslims are made to feel that they do not truly belong," **Imam**

Abdul-Jalil **Sajid**, chairman of the UK-based Muslim Council for Religious ...

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## Enemy within

Europe appears reluctant to embrace its Muslim communities, reveals [Magda El-Ghitany](#)

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"In most of Europe, Muslims are made to feel that they do not truly belong," Imam Abdul-Jalil Sajid, chairman of the UK-based Muslim Council for Religious and Racial Harmony, told the Organisation for Security and

Semitism and Other Forms of Intolerance" in June. "They feel they are not accepted, let alone welcomed ... they are seen as 'an enemy within' or a 'fifth column' ... they feel that they are under constant siege," he added. Now "the words 'Muslim', 'asylum seeker', 'refugee' and 'immigrant' become synonymous and interchangeable ... in popular imagination."

According to Sajid, when the UK Home Office launched a campaign to highlight the alleged dishonesty of asylum seekers, it chose to focus public attention on Muslims. The poster read: "Ali did not tell us his real name or his true nationality. He was arrested and sent to prison for 12 months." This sentence was reproduced in five languages, each connected with a Muslim country. Only in small print would one learn that the case cited had nothing to do with asylum regulations.

Sajid also cited e-mails that the Muslim Council itself received after 11 September 2001: "Have you heard the saying 'crocodile tears', well in my opinion your sentiments of sympathy regarding the attacks in New York are exactly that ... Your kind knows nothing but force. Well you've sown the seed, now reap the whirlwind, you have woken us up to what you all stand for." Another threatened: "The rest of the world will now join to smash the filthy disease infested Islam ... you must be removed from Britain in body bags. Hope you like the bombs, payback for your satanic religion." One received in February 2003 simply stated, "We know where to find you."

Indeed, the majority of the 20 million Muslims of Europe -- most of which arrived after WWII to work in labour markets -- are perceived by the European continent as outlanders. According to representatives of Islamic European bodies approached by *Al-Ahram Weekly* and a number of recently released international reports, there is a two-way psychological barrier separating the majority of Europe's Muslims and the mainstream of European societies. Muslims are perceived as a backward community whose religion is incompatible with Western values. Indeed, Sam Vaknin -- former economic adviser to the government of Macedonia -- in the online magazine *Global Politician* labelled Europe's Muslims as "Europe's new Jews".

The segregation Muslims have been confronting is mainly due to the "exceptionality of Islam" policy that European governments have been applying, Professor Jocelyne Cesari, research associate at the Center for Middle Eastern Studies, Harvard University, and coordinator of the European Commission's Network on Comparative Research on Islam and Muslims in Europe

(NOCRIME), told the *Weekly*. Such governments have been dealing with Islam using "special, harsh measures" as its centrality to Muslims' lives has been perceived as colliding with European secular values. "Islam is simply a religion. There is nothing exceptional or radical about it," Cesari said. Further, there remains fear that Europe's social climate might dramatically change given recurrently high birthrates among Muslims, which "will [make Europe] a majority of Muslims by the end of the 21st century", according to Orientalist Bernard Lewis.

Making matters worse, 11 September and the 7 July London bombings came, which "accelerated" pre-existing "negative attitudes towards Islam and Muslims". It is "unbelievable how Islam is slandered, not only by extremist groups, but also by moderate parties, intellectuals and journalists," Cesari notes. Ahmed Jaballah, director of the Federation of Islamic Organisations in Europe, believes that the September attacks led Europeans to "perceive moderate Muslims as extremists". Muslims became the target of different forms of religiously motivated harassment. "Islamophobia topped the mainstream," Jaballah told the *Weekly*.

The 2005 report of the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights (IHF) -- a non-governmental organisation that has consultative status at the UN and the Council of Europe -- on "Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims in the EU" backs up the claim, covering 11 EU countries: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and the UK. The report noted that attacks on Muslims markedly increased following attacks that took place in the name of Islam, especially the slaying of Dutch filmmaker Theo Van Gogh and the March 2004 Madrid bombings.

The social climate in which Muslims of Europe live differs, both between and within countries. It is noteworthy that, according to secretary-general of the European Islamic Council, Adli Abu Hajar, many European states began to "put more money" in Muslim districts to enhance their quality of life, as far as public services are concerned. European bodies also, after 11 September, began to establish a dialogue with Muslim communities in order to genuinely comprehend Islam. Yet, concurrently, almost all governments of the 11 EU countries highlighted in the IHF report pursued security policies to combat "religious extremism". While implementing new policies, governments tied security and terror with -- specifically -- Muslim immigration.

Being viewed as a threat to the stability of societies, it

thus became more common to publicly "express hostility against Muslims in the post-11 September period ... to use intolerant language against Muslims in a way that was not previously acceptable", like publicly linking Islam with violence and oppression of women. Muslims, therefore, face daily preexisting prejudices held against them. They have experienced "growing distrust" in their interaction with the majority, "and have felt growing pressure to justify their beliefs" and to "distance themselves from terrorism".

In the UK, for example, many Muslims were arrested under anti- terrorism laws, "but only very few of them were really involved in crimes related to terrorism", Ahmed Versi, editor of the British *Muslim News*, told the *Weekly* . According to the IHF report, 64 per cent of Muslims interviewed in the UK said that they were "unfairly targeted by counter-terrorism policies". In Germany, thousands of Muslims have been screened only because "their profiles have matched basic criteria, including an affiliation with Islam", the IHF report states. Jaballah confirms that a large number of mosques have been raided in Germany, "with soldiers entering without taking off their footwear -- contrary to Islam's regulations".

Meanwhile, right wing parties have deftly exploited European fears. They gained wide popularity in advocating anti- immigration policies that would "oblige immigrants to adapt to [European life]". The French Front National, for example, according to the IHF report, stated publicly that France's Muslims "share an allegiance to a wider community of believers that threatens national sovereignty". Right-wingers in Sweden warn of a "Muslim invasion".

Aside from security fears, Europe's Muslims confront discrimination in labour markets, health care systems, housing, and in building mosques. According to Versi, those who carry Muslim names are unlikely to get employed, unlike those who have Christian or Jewish names. "Mohamed, a British national, applied for a vacancy and was not accepted. Then he reapplied for the same job but identified himself as Jacob and he was promptly accepted," Versi said. According to the IHF report, Muslims in Sweden, Denmark and Austria are encountering similar barriers. In Sweden, Muslims are advised to change their names to "Swedish- sounding ones" to enhance their chances in getting employed. In Denmark and Austria, the report reveals, Muslim women wearing headscarves are less likely to find a place in the labour market.

According to Jaballah, the number of mosques has

greatly increased in Europe -- France now sports 1600 mosques alone. Muslims in certain countries, however, have experienced difficulty in building mosques. It has been frequently stated in Denmark and the Netherlands that mosques with minarets are "incompatible with the [countries'] architectural landscape". In Germany, citizens organised several movements to oppose the building of new mosques. Muslims, according to the IHF report, gather to pray in apartments or basements. Adli Abu Hajar told the *Weekly* that the Greek Orthodox Church has so far opposed the establishment of mosques in Athens.

The IHF report also indicates that throughout the 11 EU countries studied, media have played a role in reinforcing perceptions that Muslims are "alien and dangerous" in using terms like "Islamic terrorists". In doing so, an "us and them" difference has been established between Muslims and the rest of the society. According to the IHF report, Muslim organisations in Denmark, France and the UK have observed that media coverage tends to enhance prejudices against Muslims through the use of "sensationalist" headlines and photographs and giving greater airtime to extremist versions of Islam over more moderate ones.

"The newspapers and TV news would give enormous amount of space and airtime to people like Abu Hamza, and do not seek moderate voices. He is a nothing figure in the Muslim community ... Young Muslims are not particularly attracted to his teachings," said Versi. Why would Western media focus on Hamza? "It is Islamophobia," Versi concludes.

Of all places, it has been the liberal-minded Netherlands where Muslims became targets of dozens of religiously motivated attacks. Tensions passed boiling point following the murder of the Dutch filmmaker Theo Van Gogh. Van Gogh directed a film on the treatment of women in Islam. The film, entitled *Submission*, presented a naked woman with verses of The Holy Qur'an on her body. Van Gogh was murdered on 2 November 2004 by a Moroccan-Dutch Muslim.

Following his visit to the Netherlands in May, Ambassador Omur Orhun, personal representative of the chairman-in-office of the OSCE on Combating Intolerance and Discrimination Against Muslims, stated that "there is a problem in Holland as far as tolerance and non-discrimination is concerned." A 2004 report by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, entitled "An Uncertain Road: Muslims and the Future of Europe," on Van Gogh's death -- which came two years after the killing of sociologist Pim Fortuyn, who had described

Islam as "backward and incompatible with modern Western values" -- led Dutch Deputy Prime Minister Geritt Zalm to announce that "the Netherlands will step up the fight and make sure radical Islamists will disappear."

Muslims in the Netherlands were reportedly subject to 106 violent incidents from 2-30 November 2004 alone, which, according to the IHF report, included "verbal abuse, intimidation, graffiti, physical violence, vandalism, bomb attacks at mosques and Muslims' schools, and arson". Following Van Gogh's death, Versi noted, "there was a girl wearing a headscarf while on a bus in Amsterdam, and she had a glass smashed on her head by a young man. No one tried to intervene. The bus driver did not stop to see what was going on." Meanwhile, a recent survey demonstrated that 80 per cent of the Dutch population favours harsher measures for ensuring integration, while the popularity of Geert Wilders, a former Liberal Party member who has described Islam as "retarded", sky-rocketed.

Such discrimination forms led IHF executive director Aaron Rhodes to warn: "these developments threaten to undermine positive efforts at integration and further increase the vulnerability of Muslims to human rights violations and marginalisation". IHF thus recommends that EU government "enhance efforts to prosecute and punish discriminatory and violent acts".

The extent to which Muslims are integrating in European societies has been the subject of heated debate. Some parties -- in Germany for example -- warn that Muslims are forming "parallel societies" that do not adhere to the values adopted by the "lead culture" of European states. According to Robert S Leiken in an article published in *Foreign Affairs*, the means through which European states attempt to augment Muslim integration differs from one country to another. While countries like the UK adopted "multiculturalism" -- where people of different cultural and ethnic backgrounds live peacefully within the same society -- which allowed it "to seem tolerant" by "showering minorities with rights while segregating them from, rather than absorbing them into, the rest of the society", other countries like France favoured assimilation, making Muslims full French citizens. Both strategies failed to a great extent. As a result, according to Leiken, Europe has yet "to develop an integration policy that works". This, he adds, will "not happen over night."

Perhaps "European Islam", a school of thought adopted by prominent intellectual Tarek Ramadan, grandson of Muslim Brotherhood founder Hassan El-Banna, may

provide guidelines towards integration. According to Ramadan, one can be both a loyal Muslim and a full European citizen. "Loyalty to one's faith ... requires firm and honest loyalty to one's country; [Islamic law] requires honest citizenship," Ramadan states in his book *To be a European Muslim*. Such a blend can happen, he noted, if Muslims neither lose their identity through assimilation nor reject European values and thus separate themselves from the societies in which they live.

Cesari believes that integration is a two-way process that involves commitment on both sides. "Muslims have a duty to reveal the genuine tolerant face of Islam, to show its diversity and reveal to the world that an intellectual as Mohamed Abdou is the best example for a modern thinker." On the other hand, "now is the time to merge Islam into European culture; to insert its culture in Europe's educational curricula."

Ramadan holds similar beliefs: "It is important for us as Muslims to be unambiguous that we respect the law and the secular [European] framework," he said. But "Europeans also must start considering Islam as a European religion."

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