Islamophobia
a challenge
for
us all

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Report of
the Runnymede Trust
Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia

Chair of the Commission
Professor Gordon Conway

The Runnymede Trust
1997

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Members of the Commission

The Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia was set up by the Runnymede Trust in 1996. Its membership was as follows:

Chair
Professor Gordon Conway, vice-chancellor of the University of Sussex.

Members
Maqsood Ahmad, director of Kirklees Racial Equality Council *(from March 1997)*.
Professor Akbar Ahmed, fellow of Selwyn College, Cambridge.
Dr Zaki Badawi, principal of the Muslim College, London.
The Rt Revd Richard Chartres, Bishop of London *(till December 1996)*.
Ian Hargreaves, editor of the New Statesman.
Dr Philip Lewis, adviser on inter-faith issues to the Bishop of Bradford.
Zahida Manzoor, chair of Bradford Health Authority.
Rabbi Julia Neuberger, trustee of the Runnymede Trust.
Trevor Phillips, chair of the Runnymede Trust.
Dr Sebastian Poulter, reader in law at the University of Southampton.
Usha Prashar, civil service commissioner.
Hamid Qureshi, director of the Lancashire Council of Mosques *(from March 1997)*.
Nasreen Rehman, trustee of the Runnymede Trust.
Saba Risaluddin, director of the Calamus Foundation.
Imam Dr Abduljalil Sajid, director of the Sussex Muslim Society.
Dr Richard Stone, chair of the Jewish Council for Racial Equality.
The Revd John Webber, adviser on inter-faith issues to the Bishop of Stepney *(from December 1996)*

Editor
Robin Richardson, co-director of the Insted educational consultancy.

Secretariat
Sukhvinder Kaur Stubbs, chief executive of the Runnymede Trust.
Randeep Kaur Kular, administrator *(from July 1997)*
Gwynneth Rigby, administrator *(from November 1996)*
Veena Vasista, administrator *(till October 1996)*

Acknowledgements

Foreword

by Professor Gordon Conway

We were pleased, and somewhat surprised, by the widespread media coverage of our consultation paper *Islamophobia – its features and dangers*, published in March 1997. Television and radio reported and commented on the document and there were numerous articles in the national and local press, and in Muslim, Jewish and Christian papers. The coverage and the numerous letters which we received were overwhelmingly positive. It was clear that we were tackling a set of issues which are of great concern to politicians, to religious and community leaders and to the general public.

We did not coin the term Islamophobia. It was already in use among sections of the Muslim community as a term describing the prejudice and discrimination which they experience in their everyday lives. For some of us on the Commission it was a new term, a rather ugly term, and we were not sure how it would be received by the readers of our document. However, it is evident from the responses which we received that Islamophobia describes a real and growing phenomenon – an ugly word for an ugly reality. Hardly a day now goes by without references to Islamophobia in the media.

Many people wrote in with positive suggestions and we were particularly pleased to learn of local groups holding seminars to discuss the issues, and of proposals for specific studies on topics such as Islamophobia in the media and discrimination against Muslims in employment.

This report builds on the consultation document. It takes on board the comments and suggestions which we received, provides a fuller explanation of Islamophobia and of its consequences throughout society, and sets out recommendations for practical action – by government, by teachers, lawyers and journalists, and by religious and community leaders. We believe that we are presenting here a set of views which will command widespread support, and a set of proposals which will result in decisive action to eliminate discrimination and prejudice against Muslims in our society.

For the members of the Commission the creation of this report has been a rewarding experience. Some of us came to the task with considerable experience of working in community relations and religious affairs. Others, including myself, had little first-hand knowledge, but were willing to learn. We were a multi-ethnic and multi-religious committee, and at times we had strong disagreements over key issues. But we were able to talk through our differences amicably as well as vigorously and to arrive at common conclusions. In many respects we were a microcosm of a multi-cultural community trying to come to grips with common problems. The task now is to translate our modest success to the national scale.

The Commission was greatly aided by the staff of the Runnymede Trust, particularly Sukhvinder Stubbs, its chief executive, and Gwynneth Rigby, the Commission's principal administrator, without whose hard work and commitment we would not have succeeded. I am also extremely grateful to Robin Richardson, who put our thoughts and conclusions into readable and persuasive prose.

Gordon Conway
University of Sussex, August 1997

BOXES

The report contains many boxes, separate from the main text. They provide a range of illustrative material and background information. Their topics are as follows:

TABLES

The report contains the following statistical tables:

Chapter 1: Introduction

Background and summary

A retired British ambassador recently gave an address in which he looked back over the course of his life and career.[1] "I have served," he said, "in several Muslim countries. Stereotypes are very misleading. Extremists certainly exist, some violent. Usually their actions do not flow from Islam itself but from resentment towards the West. But there are millions of devout Muslims who are not only upright and humane but respectful of Christianity ... In the current world situation, overshadowed as we are by political and ecological crises, building bridges of understanding with our Muslim neighbours – and compatriots – must be important."

Neighbours on the world scene, compatriot British citizens, bridges of understanding: these are three recurring themes of this report.

There has been a Muslim presence in Britain for several centuries, and for even longer the arts and architecture of western Europe, as also European science, mathematics and philosophy, have been influenced by the Islamic world. It is only in the last thirty years, however, that there have been substantial numbers of British Muslim citizens, active in a wide range of professions and occupations in the public and private sectors of the economy and society.

The UK Government's official stance is one of welcome and inclusion. It is our fundamental objective, the Government has declared, to enable minorities such as Muslims "to participate freely and fully in the economic, social and public life of the nation, with all the benefits and responsibilities which that entails, while still being able to maintain their own culture, traditions, language and values."[2]

It is a fine aspiration. The reality, however, frequently falls short. In practice it is not at all easy for Muslim citizens of the United Kingdom both "to participate freely and fully in the economic, social and public life of the nation" and at the same time to take a full part in the religious and cultural traditions to which they belong.

"Where," asked a senior British naval officer, when interviewed recently in some Government-sponsored research about the absence of ethnic minority citizens in the British armed forces, "would you pray to Mecca on a submarine?"[3] It was a rhetorical question, the purpose being to explain and justify why the Royal Navy does not actively encourage recruitment of British Muslims to its ranks, and why any failure to retain Muslim personnel is neither surprising nor, in the officer's view, worrying.

The remark was presumably some sort of joke. It is all the same worth unpicking. The officer cannot have been under the impression that it is impossible on a submarine to know the direction of Makkah. Nor can he have imagined that Arab mariners over the centuries have never said their prayers whilst at sea. He was, though, perhaps unaware that the British Merchant Navy was dependent on Muslim seamen (so-called 'lascars') throughout the second world war to man the boiler rooms of its vessels. It is no more difficult to "pray to Mecca" in a boiler room than on a submarine. What the officer presumably had in mind, alas, was a notion that it is inappropriate for British Muslims to play a part in defending their country since Britain is not really, he believes, their country. They therefore cannot be expected, he believes further, to be loyal to it.

A new word

In recent years a new word has gained currency which evokes the outlook and world-view of that officer. The word is 'Islamophobia'. It was coined in the late 1980s, its first known use in print being in February 1991, in a periodical in the United States.[4] The word is not ideal, but is recognisably similar to 'xenophobia' and 'europhobia', and is a useful shorthand way of referring to dread or hatred of Islam – and, therefore, to fear or dislike of all or most Muslims. Such dread and dislike have existed in western countries and cultures for several centuries. In the last twenty years, however, the dislike has become more explicit, more extreme and more dangerous. It is an ingredient of all sections of our media, and is prevalent in all sections of our society. Within Britain it means that Muslims are frequently excluded from the economic, social and public life of the nation – not only from the submarines of the Royal Navy – and are frequently victims of discrimination and harassment.

This report describes Islamophobia's main features, and the main dangers which it poses. Further, and more importantly, it considers what should be done to engage with Islamophobia and to reduce its impact. The report is concerned with anti-Muslim sentiment within Britain, but stresses that the situation in Britain is influenced by the wider context of developments and events elsewhere.

Throughout we use the term 'Muslim' to refer to people who describe themselves as Muslims, or who were born to families where Islam is the household faith. Such a definition does not assume that all Muslims are observant in their religious practice to the same extent and in the same ways. On the contrary, it acknowledges that Muslims vary in the ways they interpret and practise their faith and that Islam has non-observant adherents just as do all other religions. An analogy may be drawn with the situation in Northern Ireland, where to refer to someone as Protestant or Catholic is to refer to their identity within a broad cultural tradition and community, not necessarily to their personal religious beliefs and practice.

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1   Sir Nicholas Barrington, formerly ambassador to Pakistan, speaking at St James's Church, Piccadilly, 17 November 1996.
2   From the Government's submission to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), 1995. A fuller extract is provided at the start of chapter 5.
3   Quoted in *Review of Ethnic Minority Initiatives: Royal Navy/Royal Marines*, compiled and published for the Government by the Office for Public Management, August 1996, page 7. The review maintains that there is a prevalent belief amongst influential senior officers in the Royal Navy that ethnic minority people are not fully British, and therefore should not be encouraged to join the British armed forces.
4   "Islamophobia also accounts for Moscow's reluctance to relinquish its position in Afghanistan, despite the estimated $300 million a month it takes to keep the Kabul regime going." *Insight*, 4 February 1991, p. 37. As of March 1997 this was the first use in print known to the compilers of the Oxford English Dictionary.

Background

The Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia was set up in 1996 by the Runnymede Trust. Its members are listed on page ii. We held a series of one-day and half-day meetings between May and December 1996 and in February 1997 published a consultation paper entitled *Islamophobia, its features and dangers.* Over 3,500 copies of this were distributed – to county councils and metropolitan authorities, police forces, government departments, race equality councils, a wide range of Muslim organisations and a range of professional associations, universities, unions and think-tanks. There was widespread media interest. Copies were requested by several hundred individuals.

We received more than 160 written responses. About 100 of these were submitted by corporate bodies rather than by individuals, and were based on meetings, consultations and discussions. Many were accompanied by lengthy reports and documents. Inevitably we have not been able to include here all the points which were made to us. Nevertheless our final report draws considerably on the responses which we received and frequently quotes directly from them. The vast majority (over 90 per cent) of the responses were supportive. A flavour of these is given in the extracts in Box 1.

Box 1: views of the consultation paper

"I felt I could relate to everything"

"Being a British Muslim and an academic who is writing up her PhD, it definitely distresses me that the West is so anti-Muslim. The consultation paper was excellent. I felt I could relate to everything that was discussed. From a personal example, I normally tend not to wear a 'hijab' headscarf, however during Ramadan I did. The response I received was varied, some unhostile and some hostile. People who frequently said hello gave me curious and questionable glances. It definitely made me feel 'different' all right!"

A correspondent in Glasgow

"No doubt"

"I have no doubt that we do suffer across Europe from a profound fear of Islam. We can find evidence, on a daily basis, of all-embracing attitudes and of stereotypical judgements that magnify differences between Muslims and other citizens . . . The actions of a small number of nations are presented as the general pattern of Islamic behaviour. These prejudices are resistant to change. Muslim cultures are seen as monolithic and different."

A local government officer

"Unchallenged until now"

"It is with a feeling of deep appreciation and admiration that I write to thank you for addressing the growing problem of Islamophobia in the UK. It is evident that a growing number of Muslims have, over the years, had to endure instances of abuse which largely remained unreported and unchallenged until now."

A Muslim organisation in the West Midlands

As part of the consultation exercise members of the Commission visited Bradford, Waltham Forest and Tower Hamlets. In both places we had opportunities to engage in lengthy conversations and discussions with young Muslims in the 17-24 age-range as well as with community leaders. In addition, members of the Commission addressed a range of meetings and seminars throughout the country, including a large gathering in Waltham Forest. We are grateful also to the Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations at the University of Warwick for a piece of research on the media, and to officers in local authorities who sent detailed documentation for a survey which we conducted of current policies and practices. There are full lists of acknowledgements on page ii and in Appendix B.

Summary of key findings

The outline of this report is as follows. In **Chapter Two** we describe the nature of anti-Muslim prejudice and draw a key distinction between closed views of Islam on the one hand and open views on the other. We equate Islamophobia with closed views and itemise eight main features. The eight features are tabulated in a box which appears on page 5. We urge all our readers to study this tabulation particularly closely, for much of the rest of our report flows directly from it.

Chapter Three recalls the history of the Muslim presence in Britain, and outlines problems currently facing Muslim communities, as seen by the younger generation and by leaders and elders. Our overall intention here is twofold: (a) to counter Islamophobic assumptions that Islam is a single monolithic system, without internal development, diversity and dialogue, and (b) to draw attention to the principal dangers which Islamophobia creates or exacerbates for Muslim communities, and therefore for the well-being of society as a whole.

In **Chapter Four** we consider the role of the media in reinforcing Islamophobia and discuss the responsibilities of journalists. We acknowledge and indeed stress that freedom of speech and expression is an essential component of democracy. There need also, however, to be certain rules of engagement such that media coverage overall is less distorted and negative. We recommend that the Press Complaints Commission should modify its code of practice for journalists, or interpret it differently, and that organisations and individuals should routinely complain to the Commission, and to the newspapers concerned, whenever they consider that coverage of Islam and of Muslims is inaccurate, misleading or distorted.

In **Chapter Five** we outline the ideal society towards which public policy should be directed, and in accordance with which progress can be measured. We stress two main goals which interact with and qualify each other: social inclusion on the one hand and cultural pluralism on the other. We discuss how progress towards such a society may be measured, and note also the thorny legal and philosophical questions which such a society has to resolve. We summarise the disadvantage which Muslims suffer in politics and public life, and in employment, income, housing and health.

In **Chapter Six**, we note a particularly dramatic aspect of social exclusion, the vulnerability of Muslims to physical violence and harassment. We do not know what the mix may be, in the mentality and motivations of offenders, of notions of race, nationality, culture and religion. However, we are considerably more concerned with the effects of the kind of violence which Muslims suffer, and with measures to combat and reduce it, than with the motivations of offenders. Our essential point is that whatever the motivations of racist attackers may be, the consequence of this kind of violence for Muslims is that they are unable to play a full part, as Muslims, in mainstream society. Racial violence is all of a piece therefore with anti-Muslim prejudice. Our key recommendation is that this must be explicitly recognised in whatever new legislation may be introduced. A legal term such as 'religious and racial violence' is required. The term 'racial violence' is no longer adequate on its own. This must also be recognised by race equality councils, housing authorities, police forces, and inter-agency monitoring groups.

Chapter Seven continues the theme of social inclusion and cultural pluralism by considering the application of these twin goals within the education system. We note that Muslim pupils usually have satisfactory attainments when compared with pupils in the same schools as themselves but that they are at a severe disadvantage when compared with national norms. We recommend in this connection that there should be a review of English language teaching. Also in this chapter we recommend that issues of social inclusion and cultural pluralism should be included centrally in citizenship education, that formal policies and guidance should be developed on meeting the pastoral, religious and cultural needs of Muslim pupils in mainstream schools, and that there should be state funding for Muslim schools. We point out that about 98 per cent of all Muslim children of school age are in mainstream schools and stress that it is essentially in mainstream schools that their needs must be met.

Chapter Eight points out that anti-Muslim prejudices frequently feature in other religions and mentions an instance of Christian prejudices regarding the proposal to build a new mosque in Chichester. The chapter notes also, however, that non-Muslim faith communities have often cooperated closely with Muslims in recent years in building bridges of dialogue and mutual understanding. We refer to Jewish-Muslim relations, and to projects which involve adherents of different world faiths coming together to make common cause to the secular world.

Policies of social inclusion (Chapters Five, Six and Seven), measures to affect opinion (Chapters Four and Seven) and projects in inter-faith and inter-community dialogue (Chapter Eight) are important and indeed essential. They are not, however, sufficient. There need to be legal changes also. These will consolidate the changes in public opinion and popular understanding which are required, and which we outline throughout the pages of this report. We consider legal changes in **Chapter Nine**. We focus in particular on the need to make discrimination on religious grounds unlawful, but refer also to the law on blasphemy and to the possibility of legislation against incitement to religious hatred. We recommend that the law on blasphemy should be formally reviewed, and that there should be an amendment to the Public Order Act 1986.

Finally, in **Chapter Ten**, we set out our vision for the future and draw together the recommendations which have been mentioned in earlier chapters. **We recommend that the Runnymede Trust should ensure that the recommendations in this report are brought to the attention of all relevant bodies.** Further, **we recommend that the Trust should ensure that actions over the years to implement the recommendations in this report are closely monitored.**

We are anxious that our report should not stay on shelves or in filing cabinets. We hope that it will on the contrary be a spur to timely action, by many people, in many places, of many kinds. Everyone, we stress, has a relevant and important part to play. Islamophobia is a challenge for us all.

Chapter 2: Islamophobia
The nature of anti-Muslim prejudice

The term Islamophobia refers to unfounded hostility towards Islam. It refers also to the practical consequences of such hostility in unfair discrimination against Muslim individuals and communities, and to the exclusion of Muslims from mainstream political and social affairs. The term is not, admittedly, ideal. Critics of it consider that its use panders to what they call political correctness, that it stifles legitimate criticism of Islam, and that it demonises and stigmatises anyone who wishes to engage in such criticism. When our consultation paper was first published, the *Independent on Sunday* (2 March 1997) ran a large headline in which we were accused of wishing to be 'Islamically correct'.

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 a similar way there was a time in European history when a new word, antisemitism, 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, we believe, it can play a valuable part in the long endeavour of correcting perceptions and improving relationships. That is why we use it continually throughout this report.

It is not intrinsically phobic or prejudiced, of course, to disagree with or to disapprove of Muslim beliefs, laws or practices. Adherents of other world faiths disagree with Muslims on points of theology and religious practice. By the same token agnostics and secular humanists disagree with Muslims, as with all religious believers, on basic issues. In a liberal democracy it is inevitable and healthy that people will criticise and oppose, sometimes robustly, opinions and practices with which they disagree. It can be legitimate to criticise policies and practices of Muslim states and regimes, for example, especially when their governments do not subscribe to internationally recognised human rights, freedoms and democratic procedures, or to criticise and condemn terrorist movements which claim to be motivated by Islamic values. Similarly, it can be legitimate to criticise the treatment of women in some Muslim countries, or the views and attitudes which some Muslims have towards 'the West', or towards other world faiths. Debates, arguments and disagreements on all these issues take place just as much amongst Muslims, it is important to recognise, as between Muslims and non-Muslims.

How, then, can one tell the difference between legitimate criticism and disagreement on the one hand and Islamophobia, or unfounded prejudice and hostility, on the other?

In order to begin answering this question it is useful, we suggest, to draw a key distinction between *closed* views of Islam on the one hand and *open* views on the other. Phobic dread of Islam is the recurring characteristic of closed views. Legitimate disagreement and criticism, as also appreciation and respect, are aspects of open views.

In the tabulation in Box 2, on the opposite page, we itemise eight main features of closed views, and contrast them in each instance with eight main features of open views. We hope that readers will look quite closely at Box 2, since it underlies much of our report. For example, our later chapter on the media (Chapter Four) maintains that much press coverage of Islam and Muslims over the years has reflected and given currency to 'closed' views and our chapter on social inclusiveness (Chapter Five) assumes that one essential mark of an inclusive society is the kind of civil discourse referred to in Box 2 as 'open'.

A disadvantage of tabulations such as the one in Box 2, however, is that the various points which are itemised, each in its own tidy little box, can appear separate from each other. In point of fact closed views feed off each other, giving and gaining additional resonance and power and giving each other kickstarts, as it were – they are joined together in vicious circles, each making the others worse. Also they sometimes provide codes for each other, such that whenever one of them is explicitly expressed some of the others may also be present, tacitly between the lines. Similarly it happens that open views feed off each other, and give each other additional clarity – they interact in virtuous circles, each making the others stronger and more productive. In summary form, the eight distinctions which we draw between closed and open views are to do with:

1. Whether Islam is seen as monolithic and static, or as diverse and dynamic.
2. Whether Islam is seen as other and separate, or as similar and interdependent.
3. Whether Islam is seen as inferior, or as different but equal.
4. Whether Islam is seen as an aggressive enemy or as a cooperative partner.
5. Whether Muslims are seen as manipulative or as sincere.
6. Whether Muslim criticisms of 'the West' are rejected or debated.
7. Whether discriminatory behaviour against Muslims is defended or opposed.
8. Whether anti-Muslim discourse is seen as natural or as problematic.

In the following paragraphs we consider each of these eight issues in turn. In each instance we discuss mainly the features of closed views, i.e. the features of Islamophobia. But first, we recall briefly the historical context.

Over the centuries

In 1920, when the French army entered Damascus, their commander marched directly to Saladin's tomb and declared, famously: *"Nous revoilà, Saladin"* – "we're back!" or "here we are again!"[1] It was the end, so the commander believed, of an episode which had begun in November 1095, when Pope Urban II urged his audience to undertake a 'just war' against Muslims. The episode included the spread of the Ottoman Empire as well as the

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1   Cited in, for example, 'Christianity and Islam' by Jeremy Johns, In John McManners, ed (1990), page 194.

Box 2: closed and open views of Islam

Distinctions	Closed views of Islam	Open views of Islam
1. Monolithic / diverse	Islam seen as a single monolithic bloc, static and unresponsive to new realities.	Islam seen as diverse and progressive, with internal differences, debates and development.
2. Separate / interacting	Islam seen as separate and other – (a) not having any aims or values in common with other cultures (b) not affected by them (c) not influencing them.	Islam seen as interdependent with other faiths and cultures – (a) having certain shared values and aims (b) affected by them (c) enriching them.
3. Inferior / different	Islam seen as inferior to the West – barbaric, irrational, primitive, sexist.	Islam seen as distinctively different, but not deficient, and as equally worthy of respect.
4. Enemy / partner	Islam seen as violent, aggressive, threatening, supportive of terrorism, engaged in 'a clash of civilisations'.	Islam seen as an actual or potential partner in joint cooperative enterprises and in the solution of shared problems.
5. Manipulative / sincere	Islam seen as a political ideology, used for political or military advantage.	Islam seen as a genuine religious faith, practised sincerely by its adherents.
6. Criticism of West rejected / considered	Criticisms made by Islam of 'the West' rejected out of hand	Criticisms of 'the West' and other cultures are considered and debated.
7. Discrimination defended / criticised	Hostility towards Islam used to justify discriminatory practices towards Muslims and exclusion of Muslims from mainstream society.	Debates and disagreements with Islam do not diminish efforts to combat discrimination and exclusion.
8. Islamophobia seen as natural / problematic	Anti-Muslim hostility accepted as natural and 'normal'.	Critical views of Islam are themselves subjected to critique, lest they be inaccurate and unfair.

Crusades themselves. When Constantinople fell to the Ottoman Turks in 1453, Cardinal Bessarion, writing to the Doge of Venice, encapsulated the view which dominated western perceptions for centuries: "A city which was once so flourishing ... has been captured, despoiled, ravaged and completely sacked by the most inhuman barbarians ... by the fiercest of wild beasts". In the nineteenth century Ernest Renan said that a Muslim is "incapable of learning anything or of opening himself to a new idea"[2]. Such views were used to legitimise the colonisation of most Muslim countries by European powers.

Whether there is a continuous line from the Crusades of medieval times through the Ottoman Empire and European colonialism to the Islamophobia of the 1990s, with each main event having an element of "here we are again", is a question on which historians disagree. At first sight, certainly, there appears to be continuity. It is present in the perceptions of both Muslims and non-Muslims. An alternative view is that human beings make selective use of the past in order to understand and to justify aspects of the present, and that the past is continually being re-defined, even re-invented.[3] According to this view both Muslims and non-Muslims choose to 'remember' the past (more accurately, choose stories from the past) to illustrate feelings, fears and animosities in the present. Either way, the task of combating Islamophobia involves a repudiation of the power which stories about the past in general, and about the Crusades in particular, do certainly have. The

task involves having an open view of Islam, in opposition to the closed view which the stories themselves reflect and perpetuate.

1 Islam seen as monolithic and static rather than as diverse and dynamic

Closed views typically picture Islam as undifferentiated, static and monolithic, and as intolerant of internal pluralism and deliberation. They are therefore insensitive to significant differences and variations within the world of Islam, and in particular they are unable to appreciate that there are tensions and disagreements amongst Muslims. For example, they ignore debates about human rights and freedoms in Muslim countries and contexts, and about appropriate relationships between Islam and other world faiths, and between Islam and secularism. In short, debates and differences which are taken for granted amongst non-Muslims are neither seen nor heard when they take place within Islam.

Sweeping generalisations are then made about all Muslims, in ways which would not happen in the case of, for example, all Roman Catholics, or all Germans, or all Londoners. Also, it is easy in these circumstances to argue from the particular to the general – any episode in which an individual Muslim is judged to have behaved badly is used as an illustrative example to condemn all Muslims without exception.

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2   Both Bessarion and Renan are quoted by John Esposito in *The Islamic Threat: myth or reality*, 1992.
3   See for example *Islam and the Myth of Confrontation* by Fred Halliday, Tauris 1996.

Diversity within Islam, as also diversity within other religions, is multi-faceted and multi-dimensional. Some of the differences within a religion are doctrinal, to do with interpretations of historic beliefs, the nature and role of symbols, the authority of scripture, the authority of leaders. Others are about forms of worship and organisation. Others again are about lifestyle, cultural customs and personal morality, and about views of politics and social justice. Further, there are of course well-known differences in all religions between the 'observant' or 'committed' (whether 'from the cradle' or 'born-again') and the 'nominal' or 'cultural'. Further, in Islam as in all other religions there are overlaps between religious and non-religious differences. Often the latter are more significant in determining how conflicts arise and develop, and how they are managed or resolved. Secular differences which have an impact on religious affiliation and practice include differences of status, caste, wealth and social class (historically, as is well known, the distinction between church and chapel in England was linked to social class), of ethnicity (as for example in Northern Ireland, or in the former Yugoslavia between Catholic Croat and Orthodox Serb), of national, regional, linguistic or cultural identity (as at the time of the Reformation in Europe, and frequently since), and with regard to gender issues and roles, the role and authority of elders, access to education, the social control of the young, and the urban-rural divide. Box 3 summarises some of the differences and diversity which are ignored or over-simplified in much Islamophobic discourse.

A consequence of ignoring differences and diversity within Islam is that criticisms in the British media of countries such as Iraq, Iran or Saudi Arabia are understood as coded attacks on Muslims in places such as Bradford, Birmingham or Tower Hamlets. In a later box, Box 7, a brief satire in the *Sun* newspaper combines an attack on Pakistani-background people in Birmingham with references to Saddam Hussein, Yasser Arafat, Colonel Gaddafi and Ayatollah Khomeni.

A recurring phrase in the Western media nowadays is 'fundamentalism'. It is not, we believe, a helpful term. In Box 4 we provide a brief history, recalling that the term was coined as self-definition in the first instance by a strand within Christianity and only much later, almost as a metaphor, to criticise aspects of Islam. It is emphatically not a term which Muslims themselves ever use for purposes of self-definition, and the 'fundamentals' in Islam to which it claims to refer are of a different order from those to which it refers in Christianity.

2 Islam seen as other and separate rather than as similar and interdependent

Closed views see total difference between Islam on the one hand and the non-Muslim world, particularly the so-called West, on the other. Islam is 'other', with few or no similarities between itself and other civilisations and cultures, and with few or no shared concepts and moral values. Further, Islam is seen as hermetically sealed off from the rest of the world, with no common roots and no borrowing or mixing in either direction. The alternative, 'open' view sees similarities and shared values, as also incidentally shared problems and weaknesses, and also many kinds of interaction.

Box 3: diversity and difference within Islam

- between the Middle East and South Asia, Iranians and Arabs, Bosnia and Chechenia, Nigeria and Somalia, Pakistan and Bangladesh;
- between Muslims who are profoundly critical of the human rights records of certain Muslim countries and those who maintain that such criticisms are merely symptoms of Islamophobia;
- between different interpretations of specific terminology, doctrines and injunctions in the Qur'an and Islamic traditions;
- between the perceptions and experiences of women and men;
- between older and younger generations, particularly in the Muslim communities of Western Europe;
- between members of different social classes;
- between a wide range of political movements, parties and projects which have little in common with each other apart from the tendency of their opponents to label them as fundamentalist;
- between major strands and paths in the twentieth century, for example between sufism and islamism, or between the movements known as modernism and revivalism.

In the open view it is impossible to assert that – for example – Islam is 'East' and Europe is 'West' (or 'Judeo-Christian'), with no inter-connections or commonalities. On the contrary, the open view stresses that there are close links between the three Abrahamic religions. At the same time it acknowledges that there are significant differences between Islam, Christianity and Judaism, and that each has its own specific outlook on what these differences are, and on how they should be managed.

3 Islam seen as inferior not different

Claims that Islam is totally different and other often involve stereotypes and claims about 'us' (non-Muslims) as well as about 'them' (Muslims), and the notion that 'we' are superior. 'We' are civilised, reasonable, generous, efficient, sophisticated, enlightened, non-sexist. 'They' are primitive, violent, irrational, scheming, disorganised, oppressive. An open view rejects such simplifications both about 'us' and about 'them'. It acknowledges that Islam is distinctively different in significant respects from other religions and from 'the West', but does not see it as deficient or as less worthy of esteem. Us/them contrasts, with 'them' seen as inferior, are typically expressed through stories – anecdotes, rumours, gossip, jokes and news items as well as grand narratives. In a later chapter we recall the power of stories in the media. In the meanwhile some examples of such stereotypes and them/us dualism are summarised in non-narrative form in Box 5.

Box 4: 'Fundamentalism', the history of a word

Fundamentalism in Christianity

The term 'fundamentalism' was coined as a proud self-definition by a movement within American Protestantism in the period 1865–1910. It became publicly well-known from 1919 onwards, with the foundation of the World Christian Fundamentalist Association. The movement stood for a re-affirmation of historic Christian theology, morality and interpretation of scripture – the so-called 'fundamentals' – and was in opposition to modernising and liberalising tendencies in American church life. Its essential distinguishing feature was an insistence on a literal interpretation of the Bible, as distinct from treating stories such as the Creation in the light of modern scientific knowledge, and therefore as symbolic. For decades after 1919 the only people who used the term 'fundamentalist' were Christians. Some used the term in proud self-definition, others as a term of disapproval.

Fundamentalists tended to be in sympathy with, and frequently indeed associated with, the political right. Christian fundamentalism, in both its theological aspects and in its interaction with right-wing politics, continues to be considerably stronger in the United States than in Europe.

Application to Islam

The term was first used about Islam in the *Middle East Journal* in 1957. But it was not until 1981 that its application to Islam gained currency. On 27 September 1981 there was an article by Anthony Burgess in the *Observer.* This referred to "the phenomenon of the new, or rather very old, Islam, the dangerous fundamentalism revived by the ayatollahs and their admirers as a device, indistinguishable from a weapon, for running a modern state". Burgess said also that Muslim states such as Iran were "little more than intolerant, bloody, and finally incompetent animations of the Holy Book [the Qur'an]". He compared the Qur'an to *Mein Kampf* and concluded that there is "more blood and stupidity than glamour in the theocracy of the Sons of the Prophet".

Burgess's article was widely influential and quite soon the terms 'Islamic' and 'fundamentalist' became almost inseparable in the Western media. For example, in the *Daily Telegraph's* on-line archives from November 1994 to May 1997, there were 194 items containing the word 'fundamentalist' and 142 of these (almost three quarters) also contained the word 'Islamic'. Only 29 (15 per cent) contained the word 'Christian'.

When applied to Islam the term refers virtually always to political matters not to theology, and more especially to the use of terror or repression. But because of its origins in Christian theology and disputation, particularly with regard to doctrines about the inerrancy of scripture, there is a tacit assumption in the Western media that the use of terror by dissidents or repression by the state is sanctioned or even encouraged by the Qur'an. Actually, this assumption is no more true of the Qur'an than of the Bible.

Groups around the world labelled as fundamentalist by their opponents have relatively little in common with each other. They include (a) pro-democracy movements engaged in struggles against authoritarian regimes (b) separatist or secessionist movements (c) dissidents in exile and (d) various governments with appalling human rights records. Politically they have a wide range of goals and religiously a wide range of belief and practice.

Box 5: claims about otherness and inferiority

- That Muslim cultures mistreat women, but that other religions and cultures have outgrown patriarchy and sexism.
- That Muslims co-opt religious observance and beliefs to bolster or justify political and military projects, but that such fusing of spiritual and temporal power is not pursued in societies influenced by other religions.
- That they do not distinguish between universal religious tenets on the one hand and local cultural mores (for example, those of rural Pakistan) on the other, but that a similar failure to distinguish between universal faith and local culture does not occur in other religions.
- That they are literalist in their interpretation of scriptures, but that analogous literalism is found only on the fringes of other faiths.
- That they have difficulties in sending representatives to meet external bodies, but that issues of political representation and legitimacy are unproblematic in other religions.
- That they are compliant and unreflective, but that other religions and societies have their healthy internal debates and diversity.

4 Islam seen as an enemy not as a partner

Closed views see Islam as violent and aggressive, firmly committed to barbaric terrorism, and implacably hostile to the non-Muslim world. Islam was once, said Peregrine Worsthorne in the early 1990's, "a great civilisation worthy of being argued with". But now, he continued, it has "degenerated into a primitive enemy fit only to be sensitively subjugated".[4] When our consultation paper was published in February 1997, he again asserted that all Muslims, all over the world, approve of terrorism and atrocities perpetrated against the West, and implied that they are morally inferior to Christians:

> "How would Islam react if Saddam Hussein, out of the blue, succeeded in dropping a nuclear bomb on Israel? Would the Islamic people as a whole recoil in horror, or would they be dancing in the streets? Based on what we know of the Islamic world's reaction to the earlier atrocities of Saddam, I think we can guess at the answer. Just as not one reproach was heard from a single mosque about these atrocities, including genocide, so there would be not one word of reproach from a single mosque if he incinerated Tel Aviv by a sneak nuclear attack. Nor, in all likelihood, would there be any more if a city belonging to the great Satan, America, were to suffer the same fate ... Contemporary Islam ... is a truly frightening force. When Nazis erupted in a Christian country, the other Christian countries combined to smother that evil. The other Muslim countries have done very little to smother either Saddam or the Iranian Ayatollah and still less to put down terrorism. To worry about contemporary Islam is not mad. It would be mad to do otherwise."[5]

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4   *Sunday Telegraph,* 3 February 1991.
5   'I Believe in Islamophobia', *Daily Telegraph,* 1 March 1997.

We wish to consider this statement in some detail, particularly since it was written in direct response to something written by ourselves and since it received high-profile publication. There are four main points we wish to make. First, a semantic point which may at first sight seem rather trivial but which is in fact of considerable importance. Mr Worsthorne appears to use the word 'Islamic' as a synonym for 'Muslim' – not only are all 'Islamic people' Muslims but also, in his view, all Muslims are 'Islamic people'. If indeed this is his meaning, his key statement is simply false. It is absolutely not the case that all Muslims admire the policies of, for example, Saddam Hussein, or that all approve of the activities of terrorist organisations.

However, it may be that the author is using the word 'Islamic' to refer to what is sometimes known as 'political Islam' as distinct from 'religious Islam'. The more usual term, if this is his intention, is 'Islamist' rather than 'Islamic'. It refers to all political movements, including democratic movements committed to the rule of law as well as terrorists and oppressive regimes, which maintain that they are motivated by Islamic principles. The use of the word 'Islamic' to refer to terrorism or to oppression is deeply offensive to the vast majority of British Muslims. In any case it is untrue to claim that all Islamists have a single political outlook. It is, however, accurate to observe that some Islamists support terror. If (if) that is all that Worsthorne is saying, we have no dispute with the content, as distinct from the tenor, of his argument.

Second, the equation of some Muslims (those who support terrorism or run the governments of certain countries) with all Muslims is an example of what we have called a closed view of Islam, even if the statement about some Muslims is accurate.

Third, it is no doubt true that "not one reproach was heard" from Muslims about Saddam's atrocities by Mr Worsthorne himself. But this is a comment on the western media's failure to report such reproaches, not on their actual non-existence. In point of fact, to repeat, very large numbers of Muslims, both in Britain and throughout the world, regularly express disapproval of terrorism perpetrated in, and justified by, the name of Islam.

Fourth, we wish to emphasise that our concern throughout this report, as also in the consultation paper to which Mr Worsthorne was responding, is with the situation of British Muslims, and with the impact of Islamophobia upon them, not primarily with issues of geo-politics. There is a place, both in Britain itself as well as in the world more generally, for robust disagreements about the policies and programmes of some Islamists. But, particularly within Britain, it is important that such disagreements should be conducted within the parameters of what we have called here an open view of Islam. The absence of an open view, and the expression on the contrary of closed views, systematically acts to the disadvantage of British Muslims. This is our fundamental

point. It is on this point that we should welcome further debate with Mr Worsthorne, and with others (of whom, we readily acknowledge, there are many) who hold the same views as he.

It is no accident, some commentators have suggested, that the recent demonising of Islam began at much the same time that the "evil empire" of communism receded as a real threat. Western political and popular culture required a new enemy, an implacable other, to replace the Soviet Union. Also, it is cynically if plausibly claimed, the western armaments industry needed a new enemy.

Be that as it may, it is certainly the case that Islam is depicted in Islamophobic discourse as wholly evil, wholly bent on – to recall an influential phrase used by Professor Samuel Huntington of Harvard University – "a clash of civilisations" .[6] The impending war will be with foreign states, the argument runs, and also there will be "waves of boat people", all of them Muslim, descending on the shores of Southern Europe and "there will be riots in the cities of Europe with much bloodshed".[7] When Prince Charles called for bridge-building between Islam and the West, in a speech on spirituality and science at Wilton Park in December 1996, there were widespread Islamophobic criticisms of his views in the press. (There is an extract from his speech in Box 23 on page 53). Most coverage ignored what he had said about modern science and about spirituality, and focused instead on topics he had not referred to at all, such as immigration or aspects of geo-politics. An article in the Daily Telegraph, for example, headlined 'Prince Charles is Wrong – Islam does threaten the West', implied that Prince Charles' proposals should be rejected since "many British Muslims ... feel, first, members of the worldwide Muslim community and only secondly members of British society".[8] The quotations in Box 6 express the perception that Islam is essentially a threat, both in the world at large and within Britain in particular. They mention Islam as a successor to nazism and communism, and contain imagery of both invasion and infiltration.

5 Muslims seen as manipulative not as sincere

It is frequently alleged that Muslims use their religion for strategic, political and military advantage rather than as a religious faith and as a way of life shaped by a comprehensive legal tradition. The Observer article whch first popularised the term 'Muslim fundamentalism', quoted in Box 4, asserted that Islam had been "revived by the ayatollahs and their admirers as a device, indistinguishable from a weapon, for running a modern state". Muslims are assumed to have an instrumental or manipulative view of their religion rather than to be sincere in their beliefs, for their faith is "indistinguishable from a weapon".

6   Samuel Huntington: The Clash of Civilisation and the Remaking of World Order, Simon and Schuster 1996.
7   The quotations are from a speech by David Atkinson MP at a meeting of the Western European Union, reported in his local newspaper, the Bournemouth Evening Echo, 7/8 December 1994.
8   'Prince Charles is wrong–Islam does menace the West', by Patrick Sookhdeo, Daily Telegraph, 19 December 1996.

Box 6: perceptions of Islam as a threat

"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) [9]

"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 akin to the menace posed by Nazism and fascism in the 1930s and then by communism in the 1950s."
(Clare Hollingsworth, defence correspondent.) [10]

"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.) [11]

"There will be wars"
"We do not know who primed and put the Oklahama 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 Oklahama, it will be called Khartoum-on-the-Mississippi, and woe betide anyone who calls it anything else."*
(Bernard Levin, columnist.) [12]

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

"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.) [13]

This image of Islam is often expressed succinctly in cartoons. In a later chapter (Chapter Four) we re-print several cartoons from the British press which imply that Muslims use their religion merely as a way of mobilising political support. A cartoon which first appeared a few years ago in the *Washington Post*, and which was later syndicated throughout the western press, showed "an Islamic holy man". He was presented as an 'authoritarian ayatollah' or 'mad mullah', as are some of the characters in cartoons re-printed in Chapter Four, and was considering the day ahead of him. "Let's see," he said. "Things to do today. I'll shut the newspapers, kill an adultress, flog her lover, shoot the Kurds, send 'em some money, assassinate an orchestra, and oh, yes ... mustn't forget about God. If he prays, I'll listen." The same view that Muslims are not sincere in their religious beliefs is reflected over and over again in the quotations elsewhere in this chapter. An open view of Islam, however, shows respect for Muslim beliefs and practices, and tries to understand them rather than dismiss them as devious or insincere.

6 'Racial' discrimination against Muslims defended rather than challenged

Islamophobia in Britain is often mixed with racism – violence and harassment on the streets, direct or indirect discrimination in the workplace. A closed view of Islam has the effect of justifying such racism. The expression of a closed view in the media, for example, gives support and comfort to racist behaviour, regardless of whether this was the wish or aim of the journalist responsible. Islamophobia merges with crude colour racism, since most Muslims are perceived to have black or brown skins; and also anti-immigrant prejudice, since Muslims in Britain are perceived to have alien customs, specifically 'Asian' customs.

The ways in which anti-Muslim feeling may be combined with anti-immigrant and anti-'Asian' feeling were strikingly seen in a satire which appeared a few years ago in the *Sun* newspaper. It is reprinted here in Box 7. The paper ridiculed a primary school in Birmingham which had decided to remove images of pigs in the illustrations of the alphabet on its classroom walls, since depictions of pigs were offensive to some of the school's Muslim (specifically Pakistani-background) parents and children.

The *Sun's* offensive satire on Islam involved a scattergun approach which took in the Middle East much more than Pakistan, and also the whole South Asian presence in Britain as represented by 'Indian' restaurants and food. Further, it was directed at initiatives within the education system to make schools more generous and inclusive, such that pupils of all backgrounds, religions and ethnicities have access to, and may benefit from, the curriculum.

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9   Television interview reported by Inter Press Service, 18 February 1995.
10   Claire Hollingsworth: *International Herald Tribune*, 9 November 1993.
11   Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilisations and the Remaking of World Order*, 1996, page 217.
12   Bernard Levin: *The Times*, 21 April 1995.
13   Charles Moore: 'Time for a More Liberal and "Racist" Immigration Policy', *The Spectator*, 19 October 1991.

Hostile views of Muslims are frequently combined with attacks on 'political correctness', on 'liberals', on the Race Relations Act, and on the Commission for Racial Equality. A columnist says she is happy to accept Muslim customs if she encounters them when on holiday in a Muslim country:

> "When I go into a shop in Luxor, and find its keeper bobbing up and down on a prayermat like a demented yo-yo, I don't interrupt. I steal away quietly and come back later. When I'm woken in Aswan at five in the morning by high-decibel wailing outside my window, I don't yell back. I plug my ears and try to go back to sleep. It's only courteous." [14]

Having established thus her readiness to respect Islam, she turns to liberalism and political correctness back in Britain:

> "With the wishy-washy excuse that 'it's their culture', we are supposed to tolerate idiots slaughtering goats on streets in Kensington, groups of idiots burning books on streets in Bradford and wealthy bigger groups building mosques on streets everywhere (try building a Methodist church in the central square in Riyadh and see how you get on).
>
> "Inside these mosques they encourage the murder of Salman Rushdie, a British citizen, as decreed by a dead idiot in Iran, but, say the liberals, don't worry about that: let's change OUR religious services instead, to make sure WE don't cause offence. And so we get schoolchildren denied the fun of singing Christmas carols – and, while we're at it, let's cancel the food of British tradition and serve halal food at inner-city council meetings."

7 Muslim criticisms of 'the West' rejected not considered

Criticisms which Muslims make of Western liberalism, modernity and secularism are frequently dismissed out of hand, not worthy of debate.

In point of fact there is much debate within Western countries about, for example, the limits of freedom of speech. Similarly under debate are the claims of religious and theological ideas and beliefs to be taken seriously in public forums, norms of reticence and modesty with regard to sexuality, and moral issues relating to gambling and alcohol. On this latter point one of our correspondents wrote as follows, commenting on the need for Muslims to play a full part in mainstream affairs:

> "In certain areas it would not be wise to try to persuade or expect Muslims to 'play a full part' in the prevailing economic and cultural life of the country. There is, just to mention one example, the major potentially divisive use of lottery money for the funding of literary, cultural and even religious projects, as the millennium celebrations loom. Far from expecting Muslims to fall in with such aspects of the economic and cultural life of the country, we respectfully submit that the nation will have a great deal to benefit – in terms of the strengthening of the work ethic, family cohesion, physical and mental health, etc – if the absolute Islamic ruling on gambling and alcohol should find resonance in the country as a whole."

Islamophobia prevents Muslims from being invited or encouraged to take a full part in society's moral deliberations and debates, and prevents their views from "finding resonance", as our correspondent put it, in the country as a whole. At a conference on Muslim community development in 1996 Tariq Modood referred to the respect in which the Chief Rabbi is widely held and looked to the day when Muslim spokespeople will command a similar hearing:

> "He does not just talk on Jewish matters nor just to a Jewish audience. A lot of what he does is aimed at a broad national public ... He is listened to and debated with on that basis, as someone that has something interesting to say ... Insha'Allah a time will come when Muslims will contribute to newspapers, to public debates and to arguments, and will be heard and appreciated, addressing not just Muslim issues but common social, national and international problems ..." [15]

8 Anti-Muslim discourse seen as natural not problematic

The expression of anti-Muslim ideas and sentiments is becoming increasingly seen as respectable. It is a natural, taken-for-granted ingredient of the commonsense world of millions of people every day. This aspect of Islamophobia

14 Carol Sarler, The People, 15 January 1995.
15 'Muslim Community Development: a starting point', Leicester, March 1996.

was illustrated by the quotations in Box 6, and is illustrated at length in our later chapter on the media.

It is not only tabloid newspapers which demonise Islam. There are routine derogatory references in all the British press, and in a range of widely-distributed pamphlets and books. Even organisations and individuals known for their liberalism and anti-racism express prejudice against Islam and Muslims. One of our correspondents put the point as follows:

> "A deep dislike of Islam is not a new phenomenon in our society. What is new is the way it is articulated today by those sections of society who claim the mantle of secularism, liberalism and tolerance. They are in the forefront of the fight against racism and against Islam and Muslims at the same time. They preach equality of opportunities for all, yet turn a blind eye to the fact that this society offers only unequal opportunities for Muslims."

Liberalism's prejudices are seen in particular, the argument continues, in the slowness and lukewarm assent with which the race relations lobby has responded over the years to proposals that discrimination on grounds of religion should be made unlawful, and in insensitivity to Muslim concerns and sense of outrage in relation to the Rushdie Affair.[16] On this latter point one of the century's leaders of liberal opinion, Stephen Spender, wondered in the *Spectator* "how far democracy is taught in English schools where there are large numbers of immigrants" [17]. And he added that he found

himself thinking "almost nostalgically of American schools, where children are made every morning to salute the American Flag" and wished that there was "a flag of democracy, symbolising freedom of speech, which children going into English schools were made to salute". In context it was clear that the term 'immigrant' here meant Muslim, and that Spender believed Muslim children in Britain, as distinct from other children, need special training in democracy and patriotism.

As in liberalism so also in academia. One of our correspondents writing from a university referred to the "dismissiveness of otherwise thinking academics" whenever Islam is referred to in everyday conversation, and located academia within the British climate of opinion as a whole:

> "Not only is academia a bastion of orientalism and Islamophobia but also a hothouse of culturally formative influences which spill down through dinner parties and think tanks into political parties, journalism, the arts, popular culture, the professions, local authorities, and everyday thought and encounters in the workplace and on the street."

Islamophobic discourse, sometimes blatant but frequently subtle and coded, is part of the fabric of everyday life in modern Britain, in much the same ways that antisemitic discourse was taken for granted earlier in the century. Those who urge that it should be countered and reduced have such parallels in mind. They do not, it follows, underestimate the difficulties before them, or the seriousness and urgency of the task.

Box 8: Islamophobia, a visual summary

from employment

from politics and government

from management and responsibility

Exclusion

in employment practices

Discrimination

in provision of services

education

health

physical assaults

Violence — vandalising of property

verbal abuse

Prejudice

in the media

in everyday conversation
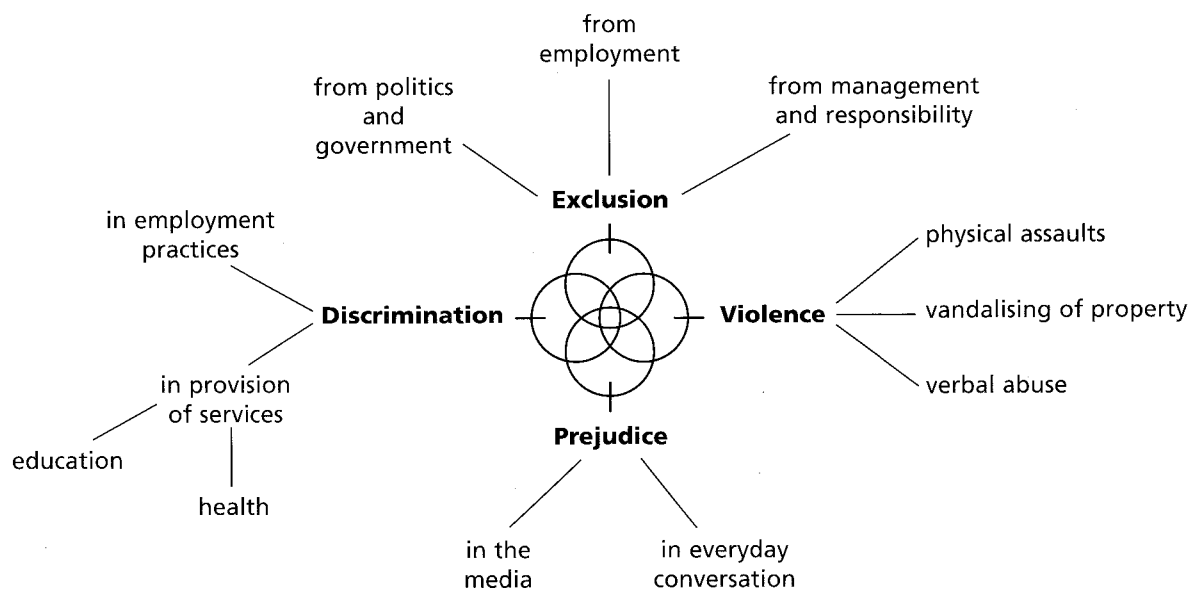
There is note about this visual summary on page 12.

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16 One comment which gave much offence in this connection was the claim that the Qur'an is "food for no-thought. It is not a poem on which society can be safely or sensibly based, It gives weapons and strength to the thought police." (Fay Weldon: *Sacred Cows,* 1989.)
   The author later maintained in an interview that these "peaceful and apt" words are "a perfectly valid comment to make either about the Bible or the Koran." She said also: "I say hooray for Muslims and down with Islam. The mullahs have done everyone a great disservice." (*Independent on Sunday,* 2 March 1997.)
17 Stephen Spender: 'Hoist By His Own Canard', *The Spectator,* 16 November 1991.

Consequences and connections

In Box 8 we summarise much of our report's subject-matter in the form of a mental map or web. At the centre of the web there are four overlapping circles (also shown in Figure 1) to express the idea that Islamophobia has four separate aspects – (a) social exclusion (b) violence (c) prejudice and (d) discrimination – and that these are inter-connected and mutually reinforcing. Round the edges of the map in Box 8 we note Islamophobia's salient features. The consequences of Islamophobia may also be tabulated as in Box 9.

Figure 1: the four overlapping aspects of Islamophobia

Exclusion

Discrimination — Violence

Prejudice
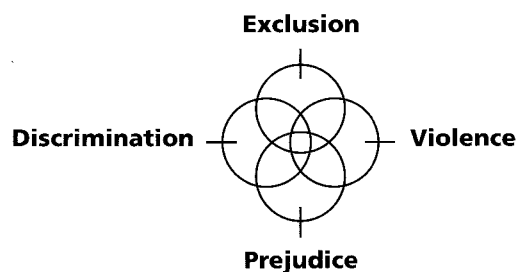
Box 9: consequences of Islamophobia

Injustice
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.

Effects on the young
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.

Dangers of disorder
Islamophobia increases the likelihood of serious social disorder, with consequent high costs for the economy and for the justice system.

Muting of mainstream voices
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.

Waste in the economy
Islamophobia means that much talent is wasted. This is bad for wealth creation and the economy, and bad also for international trade.

Obstructing cooperation and interchange
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.

Harming international relations
One of the great strengths of a multicultural society is that it is more likely to be efficient and competitive on the world scene. But 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.

Further, Islamophobia makes it more difficult for Muslims and non-Muslims to cooperate in the solution and management of shared problems such as global ecological issues and conflict situations (for example, most notably in recent years, 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 so far a just and lasting settlement. One of our correspondents (not himself a Muslim) wrote as follows:

"During the Bosnian war I had many encounters with politicians, including a senior cabinet minister. It was clear to me that irrespective of their political loyalties their reluctance to sanction military intervention in Bosnia was rooted in a large degree in their reluctance to support the creation of a new Muslim polity in Europe. 'Muslims have a tendency to radicalism,' the cabinet minister told me, when I asked why the government was refusing to lift the arms embargo against the Bosnian government."

Concluding note

Much of the rest of this report is an unpacking of points summarised in Boxes 8 and 9. Chapter Four discusses anti-Muslim prejudice in the media. Chapter Five considers issues of exclusion and inclusion in employment, politics, administration and health. Chapter Six considers violence and abuse on the streets, and Chapter Seven the roles and responsibilities of the education system. Chapter Eight refers to the problems posed by Islamophobia for inter-community dialogue and cooperation. Chapter Nine reviews the role of law. Finally, in Chapter Ten, we summarise a wide-ranging package of practical recommendations.

Chapter 3: Islam in Britain
Muslim communities and concerns

Islam in Britain, like Islam in the world, has many facets. British Muslims have links with a range of cultural, regional, ethnic and national traditions, are involved in British society and public life in a range of different ways, and are influenced by a diversity of strands and schools of thought within Islam itself. In Islam, as in other faiths and systems of belief, there are lively explorations and debates. Key topics include the practical interpretation and application of historic teachings; the distinction between what is authentic, abiding and essential in the inherited traditions as distinct from localised and an accident of history; the training, responsibilities and authority of leaders; and how to prepare the younger generation for the future.

Our concerns in this chapter are well summarised in a submission which we received from a local authority which has many Muslim residents:

> "Currently, many young South Asian Muslims grapple with complex issues of identity of which there are many facets, religion being one. Young people may be influenced easily, as they are alienated by society at large: also because of high unemployment levels, a lack of educational opportunities and racial issues. Fundamentalist groups may identify this problem and exploit it by attempting to influence disaffected youths … The strategy to counteract Islamophobia should offer genuine alternatives to young people, and counteract the influence of the extreme groups that seek to recruit young impressionable individuals, usually leading them up a blind alley and causing considerable damage to the cause of Muslims and to the well-being of British society."

Our overall intention in the chapter is twofold: to counter Islamophobic assumptions that Islam is a single monolithic system, without internal development, diversity and dialogue, and to note and stress some of the principal dangers which Islamophobia creates or exacerbates for Muslim communities, and therefore – as the quotation above stresses – for the well-being of society as a whole.

The chapter has two main parts. First, we recall the development of Islam in Britain over the centuries and, more especially, over the last 30 years. Second, we look to the future. We note in this connection two sets of issues, to do respectively with pressures and influences on young Muslims and the concerns and agendas of Muslim leaders.

Historical summary

There has been a Muslim presence in Britain for at least 300 years. The East India Company recruited seamen from Yemen, Gujarat, Sind, Assam and Bengal, known by the British as lascars, and a number of these created small settlements in port towns and cities in Britain, particularly London. Also there were a number of Muslim businesses in the nineteenth century, of which one of the best-known was the fashionable 'Mahomed's Baths' founded in Brighton by Sake Deen Mohammed (1750–1851). By 1842 three thousand lascars were visiting Britain every year. Following the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, seamen originally from Yemen settled in small communities in Cardiff, Liverpool, London, South Shields and Tyneside and set up *zawiyahs* (small mosques or prayer rooms). These were the settings for the rites of *nikah* (marriage), *aqikah* (birth), *khitan* (circumcision) and *janazah* (funeral), and for the celebration of Eid. One of the best known leaders was Sheikh al Hakimi, the imam of the Cardiff *zawiyah*, who died in 1934. In the 1920s and 1930s a large proportion of the South Asian seamen in the merchant navy were Muslims and a number of them stayed on in Britain after the second world war. Many of these were the pioneers who, ten or so years later, acted as initial points of contact and sources of assistance for the substantial chain migration from East and West Pakistan which took place in the 1950s.

Also groups of Muslim intellectuals emerged in Britain in the late nineteenth century. In the period 1893 to 1908 a weekly journal, *The Crescent,* was distributed from a base in Liverpool. Its founder was William Henry Quilliam (known within the Muslim community as Sheikh Abdullah Quilliam), who by profession was a lawyer. He had become a Muslim in 1887, following time spent in Algeria and Morocco, and as author of the influential *The Faith of Islam* was famous throughout the Islamic world.

The Liverpool Muslim community set up the Islamic Institute and the Liverpool Mosque in Broughton Terrace, the Medina Home to care for children and orphans, the Muslim College, and a Debating and Literary Society with weekly meetings. In 1889 Britain's first mosque was established, at Woking in Surrey. The funds for this were largely provided by Shah Jehan, the ruler of Bhopal, India. It was the base for the journal *Muslim India and the Islamic Review,* re-named as the *Islamic Review* in 1921, and people associated with it included Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din, a barrister originally from Lahore who was seen by the British press as the spiritual leader of all Muslims in Britain; Lord Headley, who had worked in India as a civil engineer and had converted to Islam in 1896; Rt Hon Syed Ameer Ali, an Indian jurist and well-known Islamic scholar, and to the present day the only Muslim privy councillor ever; and Abdullah Yusuf Ali and Marmaduke Pickthall, known for their influential translations of the Qur'an. In 1910, a group of prominent British Muslims, including Lord Headley and Syed Ameer Ali, met at a central London hotel and formally established a fund, the London Mosque Fund, to finance the building of a mosque in the capital. In 1941 the East London Mosque Trust purchased three buildings in Commercial Road, Stepney, and converted them into London's first mosque. In the 1980s the East London Mosque moved to its present site in Whitechapel Road. In the meanwhile, major purpose-built mosques had been built in Birmingham, Glasgow and Manchester. The site for the Regents Park mosque in London was donated by the British government in 1944, in recognition of a similar donation by the Egyptian government to the Anglican community in Cairo. The building itself was

completed in 1977. The first large mosque in Bradford was established in Howard Street in 1959.

Migration of Muslims to Britain on a large scale began in the 1950s. In 1951 the probable Muslim population of Britain was about 23,000. Ten years later it was about 82,000 and by 1971 it was about 369,000.[1] Migration mainly involved men in the first instance. In Bradford in 1961, for example, all but 81 of the 3,376 Pakistanis in the city were men [2]. Migration was encouraged because there were major labour shortages in Britain ,particularly in the steel and textiles industries of Yorkshire and Lancashire, and particularly for night shifts. The workers who came were needed by the economy, were actually or in effect invited by employers, and as Commonwealth citizens had full rights of entry and residence, and full civic rights. They came principally from the Mirpur district of Azad Kashmir in the country which at that time was known as West Pakistan (now Pakistan), or from the North West Frontier region of Pakistan, or from the Sylhet area of north eastern Bangladesh, known then as East Pakistan. In all of these largely rural areas there was a longstanding tradition of young men migrating for lengthy periods to other countries or regions to raise money for their families back home. The migration to Britain was thus from a rural setting to an urban one as well as to a different country and culture, and involved an increase in wealth and income as well as a change of occupation. In the case of the Mirpuris it was affected by the building of the Mangla Dam on the river Jhelum in the years following independence, which displaced the populations of some 250 villages, about 100,000 people altogether. Many of the villagers received compensation money, and some used a portion of this to finance their journey to Britain.

Migrant workers came also from India. About a sixth of the Indian-background people who came to Britain in the 1950s and 1960s were Muslims, a high proportion of these being from three districts of Gujarat – Baroda, Surat and Bharuch. Gujarati-background Muslims are influential in several northern cities in Britain through their involvement in the management and leadership of mosques, seminaries and Muslim schools. About 15 per cent of the 150,000 Asians who came from East African countries in the late 1960s and early 1970s were Muslims, with their family roots in Pakistan or Gujarat. They included Muslims belonging to the Ismaili tradition of Islam. It was also in the 1970s that substantial communities from Turkey and Middle Eastern and North African countries began to be established. Latterly, substantial Somali, Iranian, Arab and Bosnian communities have been established in many cities, and there are considerable numbers of students from Malaysia. There are currently at least five thousand converts to Islam within Britain, about half of whom are of African-Caribbean origin[3]. Overall, we estimate the present Muslim population of Britain to be somewhere between 1.2 and 1.4 million. The basis for this estimate is explained in Appendix A.

More than half of all British Muslims have their roots in Pakistan. Table One shows the ten local authority districts with the largest numbers of Pakistani residents in 1991. Almost one in seven (14 per cent) of all Pakistanis lived in Birmingham and almost one in ten (9.5 per cent) in Bradford. The other main areas of settlement were Rochdale in Lancashire, Kirklees in West Yorkshire, and Newham and Waltham Forest in East London.

Table 1: Residence patterns of British Pakistanis

	Pakistani population	Percentage of Pakistanis in Britain
Birmingham	66,085	13.9
Bradford	45,280	9.5
Kirklees	17,475	3.7
Manchester	15,371	3.2
Waltham Forest	13,298	2.8
Newham	12,504	2.6
Rochdale	11,054	2.3
Glasgow City	10,945	2.3
Luton	10,657	2.2
Totals	**202,669**	**42.5**

Source: British Pakistanis by Muhammed Anwar, 1996.

Table Two is similarly about the distribution of the Pakistani population. It shows also, however, the main areas of Bangladeshi settlement. It interestingly links population distribution to parliamentary constituencies, and estimates the numbers of voters (i.e. persons over 18) at the time of the 1997 general election. It lists the parliamentary constituencies in which at least eight per cent of the voters were of Pakistani or Bangladeshi background.

Table 2: The constituencies in which voters of Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin constituted at least eight per cent of the electorate in the 1997 general election.

Constituency	Pakistani %	Bangladeshi %	Total %
Birmingham Sparkbrook	27.70	4.36	32.06
Bethnal Green and Bow	0.92	27.51	28.43
Bradford West	26.17	0.89	27.06
Birmingham Ladywood	15.57	4.56	20.13
Bradford North	11.48	1.88	13.36
Luton South	7.84	4.40	12.24
East Ham	8.10	5.03	13.13
Rochdale	11.03	1.72	12.75
Poplar and Canning Town	0.65	11.15	11.80
Birmingham Hodge Hill	10.19	0.68	10.87
Manchester Gorton	8.20	1.79	9.99
Slough	9.66	0.11	9.77
Batley and Spen	6.50	3.20	9.70
Walthamstow	8.91	0.57	9.48
Pendle	9.44	0.01	9.45
West Ham	5.14	3.65	8.79
Dewsbury	8.28	0.04	8.32
Glasgow Govan	8.27	0.04	8.31

Source: Ethnic Minority Data Archive, University of Warwick.

1   Ceri Peach, 'The Muslim population of Great Britain', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol 13 no 3, 1990.
2   Cited in Philip Lewis, *Islamic Britain: religion, politics and identity among British Muslims,* Tauris 1994, page 16.
3   Jørgen Nielsen, *Muslims in Western Europe,* Edinburgh University Press, 1991, page 43.

The age-profile of South Asian communities in Britain is different from that of the majority population. A higher proportion are under twenty, and a lower proportion are over sixty. Because of these demographic facts, the communities are bound to increase in size over the next twenty years, both absolutely and relatively. By the year 2001 there are likely to be over 700,000 people of Pakistani background in Britain, of whom two thirds will be British-born.[4] It has been estimated that the Pakistani population will eventually stabilise towards the year 2020 at about 900,000, and the Bangladeshi population at about 360,000.[5] The total Muslim population at that time is likely to be approaching two million.

The development of Muslim identities

In the early days most Pakistani migrants to Britain saw themselves as temporary visitors who would one day return to their country of origin. By the 1960s, however, they began to see themselves as settlers rather than as temporary residents. They established families whose future, it was increasingly entirely clear, was going to be spent in Britain. A major spur to permanent settlement was the Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1962, for it was as a direct result of this that families had to choose, in effect, between being together in Britain or divided for lengthy periods between Britain and Pakistan. In five years between 1961 and 1966 the Pakistani population grew by over 400 per cent, from about 25,000 to 120,000. Between 1973 and 1981 a further 82,000 people came as settlers, almost all of them being the dependants of men already here.

The voucher system introduced by the Act consolidated kinship and friendship patterns. It also involved the issuing of 'B vouchers', as they were known, for people with professional backgrounds, and contributed therefore to the more rapid creation of a Muslim middle-class than would otherwise have happened. In the period 1965–1967 vouchers were issued to 1,264 doctors from Pakistan, 577 teachers and 632 engineers and scientists. South Asian Muslims also created a wide range of small businesses, of which the 8,500 or so Bangladeshi restaurants up and down the country (usually referred to confusingly as 'Indian' restaurants) are particularly well-known to non-Muslims. Incidentally, the Bangladeshi catering industry now employs more people (about 60,000) than steel, coal and shipbuilding combined, and has a yearly turnover of £1.5 billion.[6]

The spur for self-employment in the service sector was provided by the restructuring of manufacturing industries in the 1970s, and the disappearance of many of the jobs in northern Britain for which South Asians had originally been recruited. It was affected also by religious and cultural factors. A survey in the 1990s found that two thirds of self-employed Pakistani people

mentioned that being their own boss meant it was easier for them to perform their religious duties, and suggested that their strong religious faith gave them confidence to set up on their own despite a lack of formal qualifications and poor access to finance. [7]

As both a reflection and a reinforcement of the transition to seeing themselves as settlers, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis established in the 1960s a wide range of community organisations. They began at the same time to be more self-consciously Muslim than previously in their sense of identity, and more observant in the practice of their faith. Factors affecting this strengthening of religious belief and practice included:

- the desire to build a sense of corporate identity and strength in a situation of material disadvantage, and in an alien and largely hostile surrounding culture;
- the desire, now that communities contained both children on the one hand and elders on the other, to keep the generations together, and to transmit traditional values to children and young people;
- the desire for inner spiritual resources to withstand the pressures of racism and Islamophobia, and the threat to South Asian culture and customs posed by western materialism and permissiveness.

Further, the choice of Muslim as a self-definition involved a defiant rejection of racist stereotypes in the majority population ("No more Paki. Me a Muslim," says a character in a novel set in the 1980s [8]), an opposition to 'Western' values ("pleasure and self-absorption isn't everything," the character continues), the shedding of an identity based on a specific country or region of parental origin, and the embracing of an identity which was seen on the contrary as international and global, surpassing both Britain and South Asia. Researchers at the Policy Studies Institute in the mid 1990s asked a wide range of British people about the importance of religion in their lives. Seventy-four per cent of the Muslim respondents said that religion was 'very important'. This compared with around 45 per cent for Hindus and Sikhs, and only 11 per cent for white people who described themselves as belonging to the Church of England. Amongst Muslim men over the age of 35, four in five reported that they visit a mosque at least once every week.

Also the increased influence of Islam in the politics of Pakistan and Bangladesh in the 1970s, and the increased influence in international affairs of oil-exporting countries, most of which were Muslim, contributed to Muslim self-confidence and assertiveness within Britain. In addition, a sense of community strength grew through the 1980s from successful local campaigns to assert Muslim values and concerns, for example for halal food to be served in schools and hospitals, and from the

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4 As estimated by Muhammad Anwar, 1996, page 131.
5 Estimated by Roger Ballard and Virinder Singh Kalra, *The Ethnic Dimensions of the 1991 Census,* pages 14 and 16.
6 Figures cited in an article by David Bowen, *Independent on Sunday,* 3 March 1996.
7 Hilary Metcalf, Tariq Modood, Satnam Virdee, *Asian Self-Employment,* Policy Studies Institute 1996.
8 *The Black Album* by Hanif Kureishi, Faber 1995, page 107.

extremely high-profile campaign to protest against the insulting vilification of Islam, as Muslims in Britain almost unanimously saw it, perpetrated by Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*.

The building of mosques

Before 1964 only seven new mosques had been registered in Britain. But in 1964 itself a further seven were registered and over the next decade there were about eight new registrations each year. From 1974 onwards new registrations were running at 25–30 a year.[9] The creation of mosques was both a cause and a consequence of increased Muslim observance and self-definition. In the first instance most mosques were converted from existing buildings. But increasingly from the 1970s onwards they were purpose-built. In autumn 1996 it was estimated that there were 613 mosques in Britain, of which 96 were purpose-built.[10] In most of them the imam is from a South Asian background and there is a majority of South Asian people on the mosque management committee.

Mosques are essentially places for prayer. In all the larger ones there are five acts of corporate worship each day, every day. The *jum'ah* prayers and sermon at noon on Fridays are particularly important for Muslims and involve large numbers of worshippers. Some of the larger mosques in Britain operate also as cultural centres and community centres, and as vehicles for social welfare and philanthropy, since it is through the mosques that *zakat* (Muslim alms-giving) is channelled. They organise visits to the sick and bereaved, and play a significant role in providing religious education classes in order that children may be nurtured in the Muslim faith, and that Muslim beliefs and culture may therefore be transmitted and maintained. Latterly a number of imams in Britain have begun to assume pastoral roles, broadly similar to those of a Christian chaplain, in hospitals, prisons and universities.

Islam's strands and schools of thought

In the 1960s mosques such as the Howard Street Mosque in Bradford catered for Muslims of all traditions, ethnicities and geographical regions. But as communities became more established and confident, they began to define and develop their religious identity in terms of Islam's principal strands and schools of thought, particularly those influential in South Asia. Also they began to reflect and re-create cultural, regional and linguistic diversity in South Asia, and indeed in the worldwide Muslim community *(ummah)* generally. Coordinating organisations such as the Council for Mosques in Bradford and similar organisations in other cities, national bodies such as the UK Action Committee on Islamic Affairs (UKACIA) and the recently formed Muslim Council of Britain (MCB), are all determinedly

non-sectarian. They have helped the diversity to be dynamic rather than divisive, and have consistently stressed that Islam is a single world wide faith and that Muslims belong essentially to the world wide community of the *ummah*. However, anyone wishing to understand the dynamism, and through such understanding to have a sense of the future for British Muslims, and of how Islam in Britain is likely to develop, needs to appreciate some of the diversity within Islam as well as its essentials and fundamentals.

Most non-Muslims know, if they know anything at all about Islam, that the religion has two main strands, Shi'a and Sunni. They may know also that these strands began to develop within a hundred years of the Prophet Muhammad's death in 632; that Shi'a Muslims are in the majority in Iran and Iraq (though not in Iraq's government and ruling elite) but not in any other Muslim country; that about nine tenths of all Muslims in the world are Sunni, and that this proportion is even higher amongst South Asian Muslims in Britain. They realise, it follows from these points, that to understand religious influences affecting the development of Islam in Britain it is more important to appreciate different strands within Sunni Islam, particularly in South Asia, than differences between Sunni and Shi'a. But most non-Muslims in Britain have only the haziest notion, or no notion at all, of what these are. The key distinctions between Barelwis and Deobandis, for example, and the key features of the Tablighi Jamaat and Jamaat-i-Islami movements, are a closed book to most non-Muslims.[11] It is not the task of this report to elucidate these distinctions and features. There is clearly a need, however, for an authoritative brief account for non-Muslims of Islam's principal strands and schools of thought. Such an account would valuably counter the false belief that Islam is monolithic, without internal diversity and debate. Someone with extensive experience of teaching about Islam within church settings in Britain told us that he finds that there is no more powerful way of dispelling the image of Islam as monolithic and threatening than that of explaining the rich diversity in Islam's various strands and schools of thought.

Pressures and influences on young Muslims

Young British Muslims, like all other young British people, shape their identities within parameters set by the wider world. They seek a sense of their own worth and contribution within family, peer-group, neighbourhood and community affairs, and within the institutions, systems and organisations (particularly those relating to education and employment) to which they belong. The influences and pressures on them come from a range of different, often conflicting, directions. In the notes which follow we briefly describe seven of these.

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9   Figures given by Jørgen Nielsen, director of the Centre for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations. Birmingham, November 1991.

10 Figures given by Sher Azam, formerly president of the Bradford Council for Mosques, in the newspaper promoting Islam Awareness Week, 23-29 September 1996.

11 These strands of thought are described in detail by, for example, Philip Lewis (1994) and Ron Greaves (1996). There are interesting references also in Kepel (1997) and LeBor (1997). Full details in the bibliography in Appendix D.

1) The family. Muslim families, like all families, vary in their approaches to child-rearing and in the freedoms they permit to teenagers, and vary in their own loyalties and sense of belonging. Young Muslims, like all young people at all times and in all places, may be impatient or critical regarding some of their parents' loyalties and priorities.

2) The mosque. Up to the age of 14 most Muslim children attend a local mosque school. The pedagogical style is typically different from that which they encounter at their mainstream school, for it puts much emphasis on learning the Qur'an in Arabic by heart and on oral repetition (*tartil/tajwid*), and gives relatively low priority, in the first instance, to discussion and intellectual understanding. The imams and other teachers at the mosque schools mostly received their own education, both secular and religious, outside Britain. There is an increasingly widespread perception in Muslim communities that imams are not equipped by their own training to help young British Muslims cope with issues such as unemployment, racism and Islamophobia, drugs, the attractions of Western youth culture, and so on. By and large mosques do not provide educational activities for young people over the age of 14, and thus are not well placed to support them if and when they question, as many in their mid and late teens are inclined to do, the pedagogy which they encountered at the mosque school and the interpretations of Islam which were presented.

3) Muslim youth organisations which seek to promote understanding of the Muslim faith within the setting of a non-Muslim country such as Britain. Their publications are in English, as are the meetings which they organise. For many young Muslims there is a disparity, they feel, between what they hear and learn from such organisations and what they were told at the mosque school or by their families.[12] At the very time that they become more devout and observant in their own personal Muslim beliefs and in their determination to live according to Muslim principles, they feel that the mosques and imams are often unable to respond to their particular needs and concerns. In Box 10 we quote from a recent essay competition for Muslim students, to show the kinds of religious, social and ethical issues which concern them.

4) Extremist Muslim organisations. These too use English in their publications and meetings, and are implicitly or explicitly critical of aspects of traditional Islam which they consider to be cultural accretions rather than essential. Also their discourse is frequently anti-western and they have closed and hostile views of other religions. Their references to Judaism and Israel are indistinguishable from crude antisemitism. Their phobic hostility to all things western is a mirror image of western Islamophobia and indeed helps to feed it. Their simplistic messages can be attractive to young people, since they appear at first sight to give a satisfactory picture of the total world situation (the West is the root of all evil) and appear to have a clear practical agenda (resistance and struggle). However, they have fewer active supporters than the mainstream media suggest.

5) The Islamophobic messages of the mass media. These often have the effect of undermining young people's self-confidence and self-esteem, their confidence in their parents and families, and their respect for Islam. A young Muslim teacher working in a secondary school wrote to us that "Muslim youths of the third generation are ignorant of their religious identity because of the prejudice surrounding them. The distorted image portrayed by the media is so profound, it is believed by Muslim elders that 60-80 per cent of young Muslims will never practise Islam other than ... rituals." Islamophobia makes extremist organisations, however, even more attractive. An editorial article in a Muslim periodical has put the point as follows:

> *"For many youngsters, Islam is proving to be a genuine way out, a way to make sense of the bewildering maelstrom of currents surrounding them. For many others, it is a reactionary grab at something they see as a source of opposition. The irony is that by demonising Muslims the mass media is also erecting a romantic notion of opposition to mainstream culture."* [13]

Box 10: questions for young Muslims

The following questions were set in an essay competition organised in summer 1995 by the Federation of Student Islamic Societies

1 "Islam is a restrictive and authoritarian religion that prohibits individual freedom." Defend the case of Islam.

2 Is membership of any particular Islamic group a necessary condition for engaging in effective *da'wah* [invitation to Islam]? What are the advantages and disadvantages of being a member of a group when giving *da'wah* ?

3 Should Islam condone practices such as genetic engineering, egg transplantation, etc, as examples of scientific progress for the benefit of humanity, or should such practices be condemned as giving scientists the opportunity to play God?

4 Is democracy a hypocritical concept which has no place in Islam as claimed by some, or is it a misunderstood concept that is compatible with Islam and something Muslims could benefit from?

5 Muslim communities in the UK have adopted and display many different cultures originating from the East and from the West. How much of this adoption of cultures is correct and within Islamic rules and regulations?

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12   This point is discussed at length in 'British Muslims and the Search for Religious Guidance' by Philip Lewis, in J Hinnells and W Menski, eds, *From Generation to Generation: religious reconstruction in the South Asian diaspora*, Kegan Paul 1997.

13   Quoted in a paper by the Revd Molly Kenyon, *The Bradford Disturbances: healing the wounds*, Bradford 1995. Also we draw on this paper in our account of sources of pressure and influence on the young.

6) The largely secular culture of mainstream society, encountered through the education system and the mass media, and in employment and training. Mainstream western culture is largely indifferent to all forms of religious commitment, not only to Islam. Also, at the same time, it seems distinctively hostile to Islam, since so many Muslims meet rejection when they apply to mainstream employers for jobs, and since so many are unemployed. The Policy Studies Institute's recent research showed a clear decline in religious observance amongst younger Muslims.[14]

7) The street culture of the young people themselves. There are trends amongst young British Muslims, particularly those who are unemployed or who expect to be unemployed, towards territoriality and gang formation, and towards anti-social conduct, including criminality. In the prison population of England and Wales the numbers of Muslims increased by 40 per cent in the period 1991–1995. Such trends exist everywhere in the world where young people feel dispossessed and disadvantaged. Amongst other things social exclusion is a fertile seedbed for extremists.

To be concerned about British Muslims is to be concerned with Muslim youth, for around 70 per cent of all British Muslims are under the age of 25. We have sketched above seven main directions in which they are pulled, or by which they are repelled, as they seek to make their way in the world. The tensions, threats and attractions raise issues for the whole adult generation – their parents and relatives, their teachers, lecturers and youth workers, and their religious and community leaders. In a later chapter we consider the implications for the mainstream education system.

We continue and conclude the present chapter by considering the impact of Islamophobia on Muslim leaders and elders.

Tasks and concerns of Muslim leaders

In our consultation paper we asked whether Muslim organisations and leaders have distinctive responsibilities in relation to the overall task of combating Islamophobia. In Box 11 we quote some of the responses to this question which we received, drawing mainly on submissions from Muslim individuals and organisations. First, we cite some words of warning on this general theme from one of the submissions which we received:

> "Islamophobia is a classic demonstration of the formula that 'prejudice + power = discrimination'. We must recognise, therefore, that this issue, like all racism, is the responsibility of those with power, rather than a problem for the Muslim communities to overcome themselves."

This warning cannot, in the present context, be over-emphasised. Although Box 11 is addressed to Muslim leaders its principal importance within the framework of this report is in stressing points which those with power in the wider society need to bear in mind when

intending to help, and when doing their best not to hinder, the tasks which Muslim communities themselves undertake.

Specific tasks which were mentioned to us, within the approaches and perspectives outlined in Box 11, included:

- creating and developing a national body to represent British Muslims to government, and to other public bodies;
- the production of more high quality books about Islam for schools and libraries, and persuading major publishers to employ Muslim writers for this purpose;
- taking steps to ensure that imams and other religious leaders have training and expertise in helping young British Muslims to cope with the problems and pressures of modern secular society;
- encouraging Muslims to train as teachers, including but not only as teachers of religious education;
- undertaking training in media relations;
- providing awareness-raising seminars and training for journalists;
- getting involved in making a range of TV and radio programmes, and writing articles for the press;
- setting up media monitoring projects, and routinely complaining about inaccurate, misleading or distorted coverage;
- setting up voluntary welfare projects to help non-Muslims as well as Muslims;
- making common cause with non-Muslim organisations to secular bodies;
- setting up Islamic financial institutions to fund apprenticeships and training, and to encourage more Muslims to start well-planned business initiatives.

We hope that Muslim organisations will continue to discuss and implement ideas such as those in this list, and that they will receive assistance, understanding and support from non-Muslims, as appropriate. **We recommend that Muslim organisations should discuss this report and identify the recommendations on which they themselves can take immediate initiatives. Further, we recommend that both locally and nationally Muslim organisations should press for the implementation of the recommendations in this report.**

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14   Modood and Berthoud (1997) tables 9.9 and 9.13.

Box 11: tasks for Muslim organisations

Dispelling myths and misunderstandings

"We do not under-estimate the role Muslims themselves must play in the process of generating goodwill in the wider community. Racism and Islamophobia have many similarities and the underlying cause for both is only one – ignorance. Muslims are aware that they must take the first initiative to reach out to the society around them to dispel the myths and misunderstandings."

A Muslim organisation in London

Accessing established power structures

"The ways in which Muslim opinion leaders can assist are, in my view, the same as those with influence in any other community, whether the minority or majority. They need to assist their communities to develop so that they can access established power structures. They should encourage participation in democratic politics and encourage respect for the values of other communities, recognising that life in all societies requires some measure of compromise."

A city councillor in the West Midlands

Assurances of goodwill

"Muslim communities and their opinion leaders have a responsibility to guide their followers as to how they should react to cases of Islamophobia. The Qur'anic teaching on this is quite clear: (41:34) 'Repel evil with what is better; then will he between whom and thee was hatred become as it were thy friend and intimate.' In respect of other people they have the duty to speak out and correct misapprehensions, as well as give assurances of the goodwill of Muslims towards others."

A national Muslim organisation

To educate themselves

"Muslims should be educated about British culture and Islamic principles – how Islam can be applied practically in modern day Britain ... Muslims must take responsibility to educate themselves to reason and distinguish culture from Islam and be able to apply principles of Islam to modern day life. The problem has been compounded as the imams have generally been called from the Indian sub-continent with no understanding of issues facing the British population and therefore have been unable to properly guide and lead British Muslims, especially the young."

A Muslim organisation in the West Midlands

Visibly active

"The Muslim community has a great responsibility in promoting the teaching of Islam and its values. Many mosques and Muslim organisations have dismally failed because they do not have the vision, purposefulness and cohesion to deal with the challenge of living with others. To some extent, Muslims have contributed to the negative image of Islam. Often some of the opinion leaders have played to an eager media gallery and have used intemperate language to articulate knee-jerk reactions, alienating public opinion in the process. Muslims must be visibly active in the political, social, educational, economic and cultural activities of the country. Parents should actively encourage their children towards such participation."

A national Muslim organisation

Both message and method

"There can be no doubt that Muslims have an important, indeed pivotal, role in correcting Islamophobia ... Islam is both a message and a method. For example, Muslims should resist responding to provocation in kind but should repel evil, in the words of the Qur'an, by 'that which is better'. Reasoned discussion and persuasion is ultimately the only way forward in promoting understanding and cooperation."

A national Muslim organisation

Chapter 4: Media coverage

Freedom of speech and rules of engagement

"Muslim rebels massacre 93 in overnight raid," says a headline in the *Guardian* (23 April 1997), with no hint that the people who were murdered were also Muslims, or that the government against which the rebels are fighting is Muslim. "Sod off back home if you don't like it here," says the *Sun* (18 January 1992), quoting the views of two of its readers about a prominent British Muslim. "Slaughtering goats, burning books, mutilating teenagers ... and still they want me to respect the Muslim ways?" says a headline in the *People* (15 January 1995) next to a photograph of Muslims at prayer. "This is a Christian country not a Moslem country. If they don't like our ways, then they should go back to where they came from and experience how they treat their own people," says a letter, one of many on the same theme, in the *Birmingham Mail* (21 December 1996) about a trivial event in a local school. "I hate Christmas," says a diarist's headline in the *Independent* (13 December 1995), "– if you have no money, no boyfriend and no friends, it makes you want to emigrate to a vicious Muslim regime."

These are just a handful of examples of negative references to Islam in the press, taken at random from the many hundreds which have been brought to our attention. Closed as distinct from open views of Islam (as tabulated in Box 2 on page 5) are routinely reflected and perpetuated in both broadsheets and tabloids, in both the local press and the national, in both considered statements and casual throwaway remarks, and in editorials, columns, articles, readers' letters, cartoons and headlines as well as in reports of events. Closed views are also prevalent in the electronic media, in news reports as well as in documentaries. In Box 12 we quote from some of the many letters which we received on this topic. Our correspondents made a range of suggestions for improving the media coverage of Islam and Muslims, including the following:

- a greater range of positive images of Islam in the media, to offset the negative images which (it is ruefully accepted) are going to continue;
- a more balanced and responsible use of Muslim spokespersons, to show the range of opinions and outlooks in Muslim communities, and to reflect mainstream Muslim opinion;
- the formation of media lobbying groups, to organise complaints and protests about negative reporting, and to ensure that letters columns contain a broader range of views;
- the inclusion of Muslim characters and concerns in radio and TV serials and soap operas;
- a greater and more expert use of public relations methods by Muslim organisations;

- the modification and strengthening of existing codes of practice, in particular those of the Press Complaints Commission and the National Union of Journalists;
- the appointment of more Muslim people as reporters, columnists, editors, producers and presenters;
- consideration of Islamophobia and related issues in media studies courses at all levels, and in the training of journalists;
- the provision of training, seminars and awareness-raising for journalists, at both national and local levels.

We hope that our discussion in this chapter, and more especially our report as a whole, will help nudge the public mood towards greater responsibility in its consideration of Islam and of Muslims, particularly British Muslims. In this connection **we recommend that as many individuals and organisations as possible, including of course non-Muslims as well as Muslims, should routinely complain to the Press Complaints Commission and to the newspapers concerned when they consider that coverage of Islam or of Muslims has been inaccurate, misleading or distorted.** In order that the complaints may be considered more sympathetically, **we recommend that the Press Complaints Commission should review the wording of its code of practice, and should consider modifying and strengthening the statement which it makes about avoiding racial and religious discrimination.** For the same reason **we recommend that the National Union of Journalists should complement its statement and guidelines on race reporting with a statement and guidelines about reporting on culture and religion.** Also Muslim organisations have significant roles to play, at both local and national levels. **We recommend that Muslim organisations should draw up action plans on media relations, and should provide awareness-raising sessions and seminars for journalists.**

We consider in this chapter the modifications and strengthenings which the Press Complaints Commission and the National Union of Journalists should consider incorporating into their respective codes. We recall two cases in recent years when significant complaints were made about media coverage. The one, about coverage of Arabs, was upheld. The other, about coverage of Muslims, was rejected. We recall then, though briefly, the *Satanic Verses* affair, since this had, and continues to have, great resonance in Britain in all discussions of freedom of speech and expression, and the requirements of responsibility and civility. We conclude the chapter with a discussion of how Islam and gender issues are presented in the media. First, by way of general introduction, we consider cartoon imagery over the last 25 years.

Box 12: action on media coverage

Lobbying

"The formation of media lobbying groups has proved effective for minorities who feel that the media misrepresents them. The Muslim community could learn from the experience of these groups. We recommend that Muslims consider forming their own media lobby. A better approach is to agitate to have more positive images in soap operas and TV drama, and to ensure that newspapers are kept informed of the creative activities of Muslims. The only way to oppose the media's negative images is to provide them with positive ones. This will be more successful in generating more sympathetic images of the Muslim community than accusing editors of racism or Islamophobia every time a legitimate news report is filed that points up the activities of Islam's more extreme adherents throughout the world."

A national secular organisation

Leaders who are moderate

"The media could be encouraged not just to highlight stories of juicy and controversial Muslim 'leaders', but also leaders who are moderate and who are working hard for good community relations and sincerely working to tackle deprivation."

A Muslim organisation in the West Midlands

Denouncing the crime

"One fault of the media is that when an atrocity occurs in Ulster the journalist/cameraman will regularly cut to a picture of a church leader denouncing the crime, but when Muslims carry out sectarian violence the British media never interview a Muslim leader who denounces the act. And Muslim leaders do denounce these acts, as anyone who reads the Arabic press will realise. Hence the public perception grows that 'Islam' as some uniform essence has sanctioned the actions of a few extreme individuals."

A correspondent in Cambridge

Providing the overall context

"Those responsible for producing and/or reporting issues affecting Islam and Muslims should do justice to the subject by providing the overall context. It is often the case that the media only highlights fringe, extreme or religiously unorthodox cases, which end up tainting, consciously or unconsciously, the whole of the faith and its adherents. Responsible production and reporting means that they should be thorough in dealing with the particular issues but also in providing the necessary context or the larger picture. The Channel 4 programme *Tottenham Ayatollah*, shown in April 1997, on Umar Bakri Muhammad, typifies the present imbalance in the media. Channel 4 has of course the freedom to air such programmes. Nevertheless, it cannot neglect its duty in providing an accurate picture of the Muslims in the UK. In the above case, for example, Mr Bakri heads a fringe movement, yet no mainstream Muslim leader was interviewed in the programme. Inevitably the viewer is left with the impression that the whole community shares the same attitude as Mr Bakri. This has obviously never been the case."

A national Muslim organisation

Should get involved

"Muslims should get involved in making a variety of TV and radio programmes, and in writing articles for the press which are good-humoured, kind and positive, in line with Islamic ethics."

A national Muslim organisation

Imagery in cartoons

[The seven cartoons in this section have not been reproduced in this scanned PDF file as we only have permission to reproduce them in printed form.]

Closed views of Islam are seen with particularly stark clarity in cartoons. For in order to make their point, cartoonists simplify. In order to simplify, they frequently use, and expect their readers to recognise, stock characters and imagery. Such characters and images are typically, though to varying extents, negative or uncomplimentary.

We recall here some of the stock images of Muslims which cartoonists in Britain have used over the last 25 years, none of them complimentary, all of them closed. Such images reflect and embody stereotypes in everyday conversation and culture, and give the stereotypes greater currency and credibility, such that they become part of commonsense, something to take completely for granted. They are arguably all the more insidious for being 'funny', not to be taken too seriously — many an honest and offensive word is spoken in jest.

A turning point in Western consciousness of Islam came in 1973/74, with the oil crisis. Two *Punch* cartoons from that period show negative stock images of Arabs rather than of Muslims — primitive, sensual, unsophisticated, ridiculous, not very bright, out scheming and plotting and (this was what was new, post 1973) rich.

In the first cartoon, one Arab is seen saying to another "But if we ban oil, won't they ban CocaCola?" In the other, a group of Arabs are seen saying "Passed unanimously – we buy Canada".

In the background, in both these *Punch* cartoons from 1973, there is a sketchy minaret. As yet, cartoonists did not see Islamic culture as fundamental for their Arab characters. But these lightly sketched minarets were harbingers, so to speak, of what was to come. Negative images of all Arabs would in due course be applied to all Muslims.

A cartoon in the *Daily Mail*, from the time of the Rushdie Affair, in 1989, shows an older English couple leaving their local library with a copy of *The Satanic Verses*. They are being chased down the street by Arabs wielding swords and guns. The man says angrily to his wife "I told you to stick to Barbara Cartland". The cartoon depends on the assumption that all Muslims are typically Arabs, and again shows Arabs as primitive and unsophisticated. Also, Muslims are now shown not only as rich but also as frightening and threatening, and as present here on the streets of Britain as well as out there in geo-politics, though within the frame of a 'funny' depiction of them.

It was of course an Iranian not an Arab who issued the fatwa against Salman Rushdie's novel. Many cartoonists understood the difference, if only because this gave them a further stock character for their cast-list — the mad mullah, or authoritarian ayatollah. Sometimes Arab and Iranian stereotypes have been combined in single images, as in a cartoon in a cartoon by Cummings in the *Sunday Express* in 1990, which shows British Muslims and Russian Muslims as identical to Arabs and Iranians as well as to each

other. In it, Mrs Thatcher is saying to Gorbachev "Let's join together NATO and the Warsaw Pact to defend ourselves against Islam".

Amongst other things, Cummings prophetically gave expression to the Huntington thesis — his cartoon envisaged a major global fault-line shifting eastwards, with eastern Europe coming into alliance with 'the west' against the new evil empire of Islam. At the same time he implied that British Muslims are a fifth column or bridgehead, an enemy enclave within British society.

The mullah image was still being used in summer 1997, as for example in a cartoon in *The Times* which showed a transformation overcoming Tony Blair in his handling of an affair involving a Pakistani member of his party.

A further stock image is the evil Muslim. He appears in cartoons not to raise a laugh but to send a shiver down the spine. He is shown in a cartoon in *The Times* in 1992 shortly after committing an unusually brutal murder. The accompanying article (by Bernard Levin in *The Times*) makes it clear that he is wiping his crescent-shaped sword clean with a Union Jack because he is contemptuous of British hospitality, yet also confident that liberal do-gooders and multiculturalists in Britain will not pursue him with all the rigour of the law, since he committed the murder for, he believes, good Muslim reasons.

The final cartoon considered, by Steve Bell for the *Guardian* in 1992, is of the merely ridiculous Muslim. At least, it might be said, he is no more ridiculous than his Christian counterpart. Both Muslim and Christian in the cartoon have absurdly mundane attitudes to their religion, and to prayer, worship and preaching. The Christian is saying "My dear friends, this is the decade of bums on pews". The Muslim is saying "Oh no it's not! It's the decade of foreheads on carpets!" 'Dialogue' between them is reminiscent of a pantomime routine, or of the ritualistic squabbling of children. The cartoon is profoundly and cheerfully secular and disrespectful, but even-handed —"a plague on both your houses". But does this make the reference to Islam less offensive or more? And is it in fact as legitimate, as civil, to mock a religion which is relatively powerless in British public life, Islam, in the same context as a religion which on the contrary has very considerable power and influence, Christianity? Dialogue between Islam and Christianity is not, after all, between equals, so far as the balance of status and influence in surrounding society is concerned. So is to treat them with even-handed mockery in fact to treat Islam with greater disrespect?

These are questions on which our readers, both Muslim and non-Muslim, will presumably have a range of views. Airing and discussion of them will help to clarify a broad consensus on what is and is not acceptable when balancing freedom of speech and expression on the one hand with the need for rules of engagement on the other.

Rules of engagement

Freedom of speech and expression is a sinew of democracy. Therefore print and electronic media must be free, for they both mirror and shape surrounding society. Equally the media must be free to use a wide range of means to make and keep themselves attractive to their readers, and to increase their circulations. So also, incidentally, must political campaigning be free. None of this is in dispute.

Freedom of speech and expression is not, however, an absolute value – either in the media or in political campaigning. On this latter point an important report in 1993 by the Liberal Democrats, written in the wake of the election of a British National Party candidate to Tower Hamlets Borough Council, proposed in effect certain rules of engagement. Such rules would respect not only freedom of speech but also other democratic freedoms and values, particularly the freedoms and values of an inclusive multi-ethnic, multi-religious society:

> "The right to freedom of political speech and public debate is essential ... [but] is not an absolute right which has no limits. There are other fundamental democratic values. Because of the vital importance of promoting equality of opportunity and respect for everyone, of respecting the human dignity of everyone, and of discouraging group prejudice and the scapegoating of minorities, political activity must not be allowed to be abused in the competition for the popular vote. The right to political expression cannot be abused by exploiting or encouraging racial, religious or cultural prejudices. Political activities must not only be honest and truthful and lawful; they must seek to avoid, whether blatantly or covertly, stirring up prejudice, or encouraging racial or religious discrimination."[2]

We commend this statement by the Liberal Democrats to the attention of everyone involved in the media. There are significant differences, of course, between what is irresponsible in the media and what is irresponsible in political campaigning, for what is at stake is different and so are the immediate contexts. Nevertheless the concepts and terms in the Liberal Democrats' statement are challenging for journalists as well as for politicians. "Because of the vital importance of promoting equality of opportunity and respect for everyone, of respecting the human dignity of everyone, and of discouraging group prejudice and the scapegoating of minorities," the statement may be modified to assert, "media activity must not be allowed to be abused in the competition for readers and viewers. The right to freedom of speech in the media cannot be abused by exploiting or encouraging racial, religious or cultural prejudices. Media coverage must not only be honest and truthful and lawful. It must seek to avoid, whether blatantly or covertly, stirring up prejudice, or encouraging racial or religious discrimination."

Similarly the Press Complaints Commission (PCC) and the National Union of Journalists (NUJ) see freedom of speech and expression as essential, but subject to rules of engagement. The NUJ statement on race reporting declares that "press freedom must be conditioned by responsibility and an acknowledgement ... of the need not to allow press freedom to be abused to slander a section of the community or to promote the evil of racism." The work of the PCC is based on its code of practice about how journalists should and should not behave. "What we are seeking to put in place," said its chairman Lord Wakeham in a lecture in 1995, "is a stable, enduring and fair framework within which public, politicians and press can resolve their differences tolerantly, effectively, without burden on the public purse and without undermining in any way the freedoms of speech and expression which have been our precious birthright since Magna Carta."[3] The preservation of that birthright depends on, rather than is merely thwarted or constrained by, observation of the Commission's rules of engagement, its code of practice. The first clause of the code is as follows:

> "Newspapers and periodicals should take care not to publish inaccurate, misleading or distorted material."

A clause headed 'discrimination' runs as follows:

> "The press should avoid prejudicial or pejorative reference to a person's race, colour, religion, sex or sexual orientation or to any physical or mental illness or disability. It should avoid publishing details of a person's race, colour, religion, sex or sexual orientation unless these are directly relevant to the story."

In its progress reports over the last few years the Commission has frequently emphasised that interpretation and application of the code of practice is continually evolving as members of the public "vote with their stamps" – as they write in, that is to say, with their complaints. "I realise we still have a great deal to do," said Lord Wakeham in a speech in 1995. "We will not succeed if we pitch our tents where we are."[4] And in the lecture cited above he said: "Complaints are my business – and the more complaints the better: the public won't waste time complaining to a toothless and bureaucratic body; they will complain if they know they can achieve redress without cost."

The Commission's code has not yet, however, evolved to the point where it reflects the specific issues in the Liberal Democrats' report on political campaigning quoted above. The disapproval of "prejudicial or pejorative" references to a person's race or religion is rather weak compared with the political report's stress on "respecting the human dignity of everyone, and of discouraging group prejudice and the scapegoating of minorities" and on not "stirring up prejudice", and not "encouraging

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2   *Political Speech and Race Relations in a Liberal Democracy,* Liberal Democrats 1993.
3   *Away from Damocles,* the Harold Macmillan Lecture, Nottingham Trent University, 23 October 1995.
4   The PCC report *Moving Ahead,* outlining the development of policy and practice in 1995, contains the texts of several key speeches by Lord Wakeham, the Commission's chairman.

racial or religious discrimination". The Commission's code does not assert in as many words that the media's freedom of speech should not "be abused by exploiting or encouraging racial, religious or cultural prejudices".

The NUJ's code of practice is more explicit than that of the PCC, but its recurring references are to 'race' and colour rather than to issues of religion or culture. Its statement includes the following points:

- "The NUJ believes that its members cannot avoid a measure of responsibility in fighting the evil of racism as expressed through the mass media."
- "The NUJ reaffirms its total opposition to censorship but equally reaffirms the belief that press freedom must be conditioned by responsibility and an acknowledgement by all media workers of the need not to allow press freedom to be abused to slander a section of the community or to promote the evil of racism."
- "The NUJ believes that newspapers and magazines should not originate material which encourages discrimination on grounds of race or colour."

Making complaints: two case studies

"Complaints are my business – and the more complaints the better," says the chairman of the Press Complaints Commission. But what happens when you complain to the PCC about media coverage of Muslims? We describe below how the PCC dealt with a complaint in 1995. We introduce it with some brief notes on the genre of polemical writing and by recalling an earlier complaint to the Press Council.

It is sometimes not clear whether a journalist is referring to 'all Muslims' or only to 'some Muslims'. This may be a matter of genre rather than of the specific words used. The genre of polemical writing, for example, uses robust generalisations, exaggerations and colourful language as its stock in trade, and frequently depends on being insulting and outrageous. Columnists and leader writers who engage in such writing (and all newspapers have at least one regular columnist who is expected to be controversial and outrageous, and several make a virtue of being punchy rather than measured in some or all of their editorial comment) may maintain that to accuse them of being "inaccurate, misleading or distorted" is to misunderstand the genre they are using. A column or leading article is not, after all, the same as a news story. In a news story, according to the well-known dictum, facts are sacred. But comment by columnists and editors, the dictum continues, is free. The Press Complaints Commission aspires to be scrupulously clear about the distinction between fact and opinion.

From time to time complaints have been made to the Press Complaints Commission concerning generalisations by columnists or leader writers about specific cultural groups. The newspaper concerned has usually been able to claim successfully that the statements complained about were clearly not intended to be factual statements

about all members of the group in question, but were merely legitimately expressed opinions about some members. A landmark judgement in the other direction, however, was made in 1987 by the Press Council.

In a leading article the *Sun* criticised the Arab state of Qatar for refusing to permit a six-year-old child to return to his family since he was suffering from Aids. The item continued:

> "The Arabs are very sensitive people, continually proclaiming their virtues before the rest of the world. In reality, they show themselves again and again to be the modern barbarian, with as much humanity and warmth as a piece of rock."[5]

In defence against the complaint the editor of the *Sun* argued that the editorial was an opinion piece and that the right to express opinions was an intrinsic part of the freedom of the press. In any case, he continued, the article did not state that all Arabs are barbarians, only that some acts of some Arab governments may fairly be described as barbaric. The Press Council found, however, that the article was not aimed at a particular Arab state or government. Its judgement continued:

> "[The article] developed into a broad attack on 'the Arabs' at large, accusing them of being modern barbarians. Such an indiscriminate attack on a whole people was too sweeping to be justifiable and inevitably appeared racist."[6]

The complaint against the *Sun* was upheld. Broadly similar complaints about coverage of Muslims, however, have not been successful. A complaint made in 1995, for example, was made about a column entitled "Islam's creed of cruelty" by Robert Kilroy-Silk on Monday 16 January 1995 in the *Daily Express*. The full text of the article was as follows:

> "The Iraqis are publicly cutting off the ears and hands and branding the foreheads of thieves and army deserters. They claim that this barbarity is sanctioned by the Koran.
>
> Moslems everywhere behave with equal savagery. They behead criminals, stone to death female – only female – adulterers, throw acid in the faces of women who refuse to wear the chadar, mutilate the genitals of young girls and ritually abuse animals. Nor are non-Moslems immune to their depravity. They conspired to kill the Pope, placed a death sentence on Salman Rushdie for writing things they did not like, murdered several of his supporters, threatened the life of a Moslem author who said, rightly, Islam treats women as second-class citizens, and indiscriminately murdered Western holiday-makers in Algeria, Egypt and elsewhere – just because they were Westerners.
>
> No matter. We have to treat them and their religion with respect. Of course we must.

---

5   *Sun*, 5 January 1987.
6   From a Press Council statement, 27 April 1987.

*That is what the new dogma of political
correctness demands of us. We are in peril if we
do not.*

*We must teach their religion and culture in our
schools to the detriment of our own and respect
their values in our society and acknowledge that
Islam is as good as – or at least equal to – Western
Christian values.*

They must be joking."

The complainant wrote that "had a similarly vulgar piece
of writing been aimed at the Christian faith the
blasphemy laws would have been invoked" and that "in
the case of the Jewish faith the article would have been
considered antisemitic as well as a criminal offence
against the race relations legislation". A legal loophole,
however, the complainant continued, permits the press
to slander other large sections of the population. The
complaint was dismissed by the PCC. Its letter to the
complainant contained the following passage:

> *"The objections which you raised were reviewed
> within the context of the article as a whole, taking
> into consideration the requirements of the Code
> of Practice. After careful assessment the
> Commissioners did not find that the substance of
> your complaint suggested that the Code had been
> breached. The Commissioners took the view that
> the column clearly represented a named
> columnist's personal view and would be seen as no
> more than his own robust opinion."*

The editor of the *Daily Express* was quoted as saying: "I
can see that this kind of generalisation is too sweeping
and I don't think that too fair on any group of people.
The point about columnists in newspapers is that they
express their own opinions ... What he's done is taken
various things that irritate him and put them all together
but they are his opinions. He's not actually attacking all
Muslims. He's just attacking the ones he doesn't like."[7]

It is nevertheless, we believe, worth complaining. A
critical mass of complaints will affect the general climate
of opinion, such that columnists and editors think twice
before printing the more "robust" of their opinions. This
will involve being more careful and sensitive when
making the distinction between all Muslims on the one
hand and some Muslims ("just the ones he doesn't like")
on the other. A critical mass of complaints will also, it is
reasonable to assume, affect how the Press Complaints
Commission interprets its own code of practice. The *Daily
Express* article quoted in its entirety above was not
deemed by the PCC, in the climate of opinion prevailing
in January 1995, to be "prejudicial or pejorative" in what
it said about Muslims, nor "inaccurate, misleading or
distorted". Another time, if enough people vote with
their stamps, it will surely take another view.

A touchstone

The complainant quoted above maintained that the
editor of the *Daily Express* would not have permitted an
attack on Christians or Jews similar to the one which he
published on Muslims. This was indeed, surely, a relevant
comparison to make. Responsibility is a matter of
editorial judgement, exercised in the midst of deadlines
and production schedules, and has to be juggled with
other pressures and imperatives. (For responsibility too,
of course, is not an absolute value.) Frequently a relevant
touchstone, in the heat of the moment, is the coverage
of other communities. Editors may ask themselves:
"Would I print this article or cartoon, or make this
juxtaposition of text and illustration, or slant this story in
this way, or make this generalisation, if it were about
any other topic besides Islam? For example, if it were
about a Jewish person or community?" If the intuitive
answer is "no" this is a sign that the editor needs to
think twice before proceeding. In some of the episodes
mentioned in this chapter, and elsewhere in this report,
the use of this touchstone might have led to a different
editorial decision being taken. In some, however, this
particular touchstone would probably have had no
effect. Either way there is of course no single touchstone
which is equally valid for all occasions. Not least, this is
because the climate of public debate is continually
evolving, as are notions and conventions of civic
responsibility.

The Satanic Verses remembered

In the history of British Muslims, as in the history of
Islam generally in the late twentieth century, and as in
the history of deliberations about the nature and limits
of freedom of speech and expression, 14 February 1989
is a resonant date. On that day Ayatollah Khomeini
issued his judgement that the author of *The Satanic
Verses*, being an apostate, deserved the death penalty.
The publication of *The Satanic Verses*, and the
worldwide responses to it and to Khomeini's action,
spawned a huge collection of books and articles. These
in their turn have moulded the context in which Muslims
and non-Muslims see each other and in which, amongst
other things, they strive to create laws and rules to
manage their conflicting outlooks. We cannot do justice
here to the full debate. It is important, however, to
remember and name *The Satanic Verses* affair as one of
the formative, defining events in the stories not only of
nations and communities but also of countless
individuals. In Box 13 we recall just a handful of the
thousands of voices which have been heard.

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7   *Q News*, 17 February 1995.

Box 13: *The Satanic Verses* remembered

So much anger
"Perhaps no other book has ever caused so much anger, fury and revulsion amongst Muslims the world over as the publication by Viking/Penguin in September 1988 of Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* ... Instead of trying to understand the offence *The Satanic Verses* has caused to Islam and Muslims and instead of listening to authentic Muslim points of view, the entire establishment in the West, with a few exceptions, has turned against Islam and hounded the Muslim community with all its might and contempt. What should have been seen as a genuine Muslim reaction of anger and protest has been misdirected to issues of freedom of expression and censorship."

M.M Ahsan and A R Kidwai [8]

Changed all that
"I felt quite comfortable within the liberal camp until the Salman Rushdie affair. I thought those who believed in religion were backward. The Rushdie affair changed all that. I was shocked by the way that liberals, who proclaimed their belief in freedom of thought and expression, were completely unwilling to listen to the voice of very powerless people who felt offended by the book ... I knew the way all Muslims were being portrayed was quite unfair – these supposedly dangerous people were my mum, my aunts and my uncles. My liberal associates were talking about them in terms of pure hatred. But it was not just the hatred which angered me. It was also the way liberals totally misunderstood people's continuing need for religion, particularly among members of Muslim groups who are still finding it hard to find their place in British society."

Yasmin Alibhai-Brown [9]

Lionised
" ... Rushdie was perceived by many Muslims as being guilty of cultural treason ... What is more, he had been lionised, praised and lavishly rewarded and financed by outright enemies and hostile critics of Islam."

Ali Mazrui [10]

Debate as fellow-citizens
"The national press reflected, reinforced and did little to bridge the racial divide in the country as a whole. Either the white writers discussed Muslim protests among themselves, thereby treating Muslims as passive objects and outsiders, or Muslim spokesmen were 'invited' to state 'their' case. Rarely did the two meet together to debate as fellow-citizens the kind of Britain they wished to create and the terms of their membership of it."

Bhikhu Parekh [11]

Communication
"What is needed ... is a commitment to freedom of speech as one of the conditions for obtaining a better understanding of different groups ... The justification of free speech will then be that it enhances rather than thwarts the possibilities of communication between different people. Additionally, however, the conditions of communication, and of morality generally, include our capacity for emotional love – our ability to recognise the needs of others and their similarities to us. Where free speech is employed in such a way as to destroy the possibility of communication, and of mutual understanding, then its raison d'être is destroyed."

Susan Mendus [12]

Stereotypes and complexity – the case of Islam and gender

"Barbaric methods are used to slaughter lambs for Moslem dinner tables." Thus a columnist prefaces a comment on Islam and women.[13] "Yet there is not a peep," he continues, "from the usual vociferous quarters. This is because slitting sheep's throats is part of Moslem culture. And to criticise their culture would be racist. And that would never do. Which is why Moslem men can continue to treat women as second-class citizens in Britain without a murmur from the equal opportunities brigade." A high profile article in another paper is introduced with the statement, in large print, "Beheadings, amputations, women as subservient citizens – these are the manifestations of Islam today".[14] If the headline had said "this is the reputation" or "this is the image", rather than "these are the manifestations", it would have been a considerably more accurate summary.

The claim that Islam oppresses women, in ways significantly different from and worse than the ways in which women are treated in other religions and cultures, is a recurring theme of much press coverage and comment. One recurring stock story is about an unhappy arranged marriage. Such stories usually cast both the bride's father and her husband (sometimes also her brothers) as villains, and customarily contrast the joys of a western-style love marriage with the supposed miseries of an Islamic-style (more accurately, South Asian-style) arranged marriage. Another stock story or image is of the hijab, seen by the western media as a symbol of male oppression. From time to time the stock stories break down – a love-marriage takes place between a Muslim and a westerner, for example, or a western woman becomes a Muslim and chooses to wear the hijab. Both these occurrences were present in the story of the marriage between Imran Khan and Jemima Goldsmith in summer 1995. Box 14 shows some of the press comment. There was incidentally ignorance as well as prejudice: an article about the marriage in *The Times*, for example, was illustrated with a photograph of a Hindu wedding.

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8   Introduction to *Sacrilege versus Civility: Muslim perspectives on The Satanic Verses affair*, Islamic Foundation 1991, expanded and updated 1993. This book also contains a chronology of key events, 1988-1993, and a valuable annotated bibliography. There are chronologies also in Appigananesi and Maitland (1991) and Kepel (1997).

9   In an interview with Ben Jupp, published in *Demos*, quarterly issue 11, summer 1997.

10 In *Cultural Forces in World Politics* (1990), page 85.

11 'The Rushdie affair and the British press: some salutary lessons', in *Free Speech*, published by the Commission for Racial Equality (1990b).

12 'The tigers of wrath and the horses of instruction', in Commission for Racial Equality (1990b).

13 Richard Littlejohn, 'Moslem Lambasted', *Daily Mail*, 12 May 1995.

14 Headline for an article by Robert Fisk, 'Between Faith and Fanaticism', *Independent*, 9 November 1996.

The last quotation in Box 14, dissenting strongly and explicitly from the rest, shows some of the complexity and perspective which was generally missing. At the same time it appears to reflect and to commend attitudes which many Muslims (and some non-Muslims – see Box 15) do not share.

Box 14: views of a marriage

"You will be expected to live in women's quarters, to eat with the women and dress as they do. For those months spent in Lahore, your life will be diametrically opposite to that of a western woman. And if you have children, it could change still more radically." (An article in the *Guardian*, 15 May 1995)

"He will fiercely oppose any hint of feminism in married life and will demand that his wife must wear the traditional dark veils of the Chador." (*Wolverhampton Express and Star*, 15 May 1995.)

"Despite her ill-advised conversion, Pakistan doesn't tolerate outsiders easily. And however successful the marriage, she must always have one niggling thought on her mind: how many other wives will Imran Khan take?" (*Manchester Evening News*, 16 May 1995.)

"Sleepwalking to slavery." (Andrew Neil in the *Daily Express*.)

"Jemima Goldsmith faces the shock of her life. The shackles of a strict Islamic society will clamp invisibly but firmly shut the moment she steps out of ... Lahore airport into the thick heat of the Punjabi summer. She will reel from a sea of whiskered taxi drivers barging and bellowing for business, unchecked by the policemen waiting in the shadows for opportunities to extort money."(Christopher Thomas, 'The fate that awaits Jemima', *The Times*, 16 May 1995)

"The elite in Lahore and Karachi, which the soon-to-be Mrs Khan will be part of, enjoys in most aspects a better standard of living than you would find in the United Kingdom ... As for alcohol, or dress codes, it is known that to hold a 'dry' party would be to invite disaster, as no one would bother to come. And as for clothes, I have seen more skin in Lahore and Karachi than I have at any party in London." (Letter in the *Independent*, 17 May 1995.)

Many Muslim writers in recent years have published views of Islam and gender issues which run counter to western prejudices. Rana Kabbani, for example, wrote a few years ago as follows:

"If Jesus of Nazareth, that iconoclastic Palestinian Jew, were to return to earth today, what would he think of the Christian Church's entrenched misogyny, or its rejection of women priests? ... And what would Muhammad, that desert visionary who chafed against the cruel practices of his time, think of the way Muslim men have over the centuries distorted his ideas for their unjust and sexist purposes? Born poor, orphaned young, ascetic and sensitive, Muhammad grew up on the side of the dispossessed. He revolted against a society where ... women were disinherited and disenfranchised ..."[15]

She concluded:

"A Muslim reformation is in the making, and it is Muslim women who are at its forefront. Nothing in Islam itself would make us second class citizens, but a great deal in Islamic societies distorts the religion's spirit. Patriarchy, misinterpretation, ignorance must be fought – that is the jihad that calls out to us. It is time to separate the wheat from the chaff, and who but women have the skill for such an undertaking."

The kinds of debate outlined here by Rana Kabbani have been pursued in detail by books such as *Gender Equity in Islam* by Jamal Badawi, *Feminism and Muslim Women* by Sajda Nazlee and Huda Khattab, *Feminism and Islam: legal and literary perspectives*, edited by Mai Yamani, some of the chapters in *Refusing Holy Orders: women and fundamentalism in Britain*, edited by Gita Sahgal and Nira Yuval-Davis, and published entries to an essay competition organised in 1994 by the Federation of Students' Islamic Societies (FOSIS) and the Islamic Foundation. Full bibliographical details are given in Appendix D.

We give the last word here to the quotation in Box 15. It is by a non-Muslim journalist, reflecting on her involvement in the making of a TV series about Islam. It shows the kind of perspective and viewpoint which media coverage of gender and Islam generally fails to provide. Also, incidentally, it in effect makes a critical comment on the attitudes apparently expressed in the last quotation in Box 14 – "I have seen more skin in Lahore and Karachi than I have at any party in London".) The absence of positive views, for example the kind outlined in Box 15, is as influential as the presentation of negative ones.

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15 'The Gender Jihad', *The Guardian*, 22 January 1992.

Box 15: Gender and Islam, a re-evaluation

The BBC series Living Islam *was filmed over two years in 19 different countries. The production team was all male apart from the production coordinator, Mary Walker. In an article about her experience on the film Mary Walker described the preconceptions which she held before beginning to work on the series, and the re-evaluation of these views crystallised by meeting with a women's group in Nigeria:*

"... When I joined the team of *Living Islam* two years ago, my perception of Islam was dominated by prejudice and ignorance, and I found its treatment of women abhorrent. To me the veil symbolised the oppression of women, making them invisible, anonymous and voiceless, and the cause of this oppression lay in the will to perpetuate the family and maintain a patriarchal framework – the very basis of Islamic society. I thought women were entirely submerged by divine justification of their role as wife and mother.

... "[The Muslim women] argued that the veil signified their rejection of an unacceptable system of values which debased women, whereas Islam elevated women to a position of honour and respect. Just as to us the veil represents Muslim oppression, to them miniskirts and plunging necklines represent oppression. They said that men are cheating women in the West. They let us believe we're liberated while enslaving us to the male gaze...

By choosing to wear the veil, these women were making a conscious decision to define their role in society and their relationship with men. That relationship appeared to be based more on exchange and mutual respect (a respect that was often lacking in the personal relationships I saw in the West) than the master/servant scenario I had anticipated. The veil to them signified visual confirmation of their religious commitment, in which men and women were united.

... If my definition of equality was free will then I could no longer define that oppression as a symptom of Islam. The women had all exercised their right to choose. To some extent they were freer than me – I had less control over my destiny. I could no longer point at them and say they were oppressed and I was not. My life was as influenced by male approval as theirs – but the element of choice had been taken out of mine. Their situations and their arguments had, after all, served to highlight shortcomings in my view of my own liberty."

Mary Walker's article was first published in the magazine Impact International.

Chapter 5: Towards an inclusive society

The measurement of progress

In a submission to the United Nations in 1995 the UK Government stated succinctly and boldly its vision of an inclusive society:

> "It is a fundamental objective of the United Kingdom Government to enable members of ethnic minorities to participate freely and fully in the economic, social and public life of the nation, with all the benefits and responsibilities which that entails, while still being able to maintain their own culture, traditions, language and values. Government action is directed towards addressing problems of discrimination and disadvantage which prevent members of ethnic minorities from fulfilling their potential as full members of British society." [1]

Not all British Muslims are members of ethnic minorities, of course, for there are growing numbers of converts from the majority population. The Government's statement to the United Nations is relevant to considering the situation of Muslims in UK society, however, as also to the inclusion of other faith communities. The twin aims of public policy, the statement declares, should be (a) social inclusion and therefore participation by all in a shared civic culture combined with (b) cultural pluralism and sensitivity. The long endeavour of creating such a society, the Government acknowledges, involves addressing (a) discrimination and (b) disadvantage. Discrimination has two aspects, direct and indirect. Also disadvantage may be said to have two aspects:

- capability disadvantage (when a person or group lacks the know-how, material resources, contacts, time, power base, organisation, and so forth, which are needed to take a full part in public life);
- systemic disadvantage (the absence of a level playing field, such that, to continue the metaphor, those playing uphill are likely to lose).

One of our correspondents explained systemic disadvantage as follows:

> "Muslims live and work within social, political and economic institutions where they are a minority and which are not designed to accommodate their religious obligations. There are therefore barriers to their full participation in these institutions, and they are at a disadvantage."

One example of systemic disadvantage which several correspondents mentioned to us is the widespread use of National Lottery funds by voluntary organisations. Many Muslim organisations (as also some Christian organisations) are precluded by their religious faith from applying for such funds. Another example is the social role played by alcohol in many occupational cultures, and by the local pub in many neighbourhoods. Muslims are precluded from taking part in everyday social interaction which for most other people is largely or entirely unproblematic. Even more obviously, there can be tensions between workplace routines and expectations on the one hand and religious requirements on the other.

We recommend that the Department for Education and Employment should issue guidelines on good employment practice on matters affecting Muslim employees. Further, **we recommend that all employers, employers' organisations and unions – whether in the private, public or voluntary sector – should include references to religion in their equal opportunities statements and policies, and state their opposition to discrimination on religious grounds, both in recruitment and in general personnel management.**

With regard to funding of voluntary organisations, **we recommend that charities and statutory bodies should be sensitive to religious and ethical concerns about the use of National Lottery funds.** With regard to race equality organisations, for example racial equality councils and the race relations units of public bodies, **we recommend that they should address Islamophobia in their programmes of action, for example by advocating and lobbying for the policy and procedural changes included in this report.**

Maintaining balance

Endeavours to create and maintain an inclusive society involve intricate issues of political philosophy and law, and trade-offs, settlements and compromise. The key questions may appear unduly theoretical, but in fact are very concrete indeed, with no easy answers or quick solutions, in thousands of workplaces, schools, hospitals, courts, town halls, committee rooms, streets, up and down the country:

- How do we ensure that the over-arching public culture embodied in "the economic, social and public life of the nation, with all the benefits and responsibilities which that entails" remains strong and coherent at the same time that it is open to people maintaining "their own culture, traditions, language and values"?
- How do we maintain cultural coherence and historical continuity at the same time as being sensitive and responsive to new claims and demands in the present?
- How do we balance the legitimate claims and interests of both the majority and minorities, and claims between minorities?

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1   Submission to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD), 1995.

- How do we provide differential treatment, as distinct from identical treatment, yet ensure that there is also equal treatment in terms of the law?
- Where do we draw the line between private lifestyle choices on the one hand and the realm of public law and interest on the other?
- How do we prioritise, at any one time and in any one place, given that resources, energy and good will are always limited?
- How do we balance the need for equality with other important values, such as efficiency, uniformity, corporate spirit, and a climate of goodwill and trust?

"Much of what makes human life valuable," writes Bhikhu Parekh, reflecting on the nature and endeavours of multicultural societies, "depends on the goodwill and spontaneous cooperation of others, and falls outside the ambit of claims and rights ... Claims and counterclaims, insistence on one's due, and so forth ... do have an important place in social life. But they must not be allowed to obscure the central fact that our lives overlap at countless points, that we are profoundly influenced by how others live their lives, and that every society is ultimately sustained and indeed made bearable by the spirit of charity, goodwill and mutual respect and accommodation." [2]

An inclusive society is not, then, straightforward either to describe or to attain. The concept nevertheless permits a series of empirical questions about inclusion – and exclusion – to be asked. The answers will permit comparisons to be made between different places – between Bradford and Birmingham, for example, or between Britain and France – or between different times in the same place. In the present context the key questions about inclusion are whether Muslims do in fact take part, in numbers commensurate with their numbers in the population as a whole, in the principal areas of public life:

- **party politics,** as candidates, elected members, activists and staff;
- **public administration,** as civil servants, members of public bodies, local government officers, officers and members of health authorities;
- **law and justice,** as judges, magistrates, barristers, solicitors, court officers, police officers, probation officers;
- **education,** as teachers, governors, lecturers, administrators, inspectors, academics and textbook writers, and as successful pupils and students;
- **the arts,** as creators, performers, critics and administrators;
- **science and medicine,** as researchers, technologists and consultants;
- **the media,** as reporters, editors, producers and columnists;
- **industry and commerce,** at all levels of management and responsibility.

In addition, it is relevant to ask questions about inclusion of Muslims collectively, as distinct from the inclusion of individuals. Five significant questions in this respect are to do with:

- **civic religion:** the representation of Islam in official ceremonies and symbols of state, and in civic occasions at local levels;
- **chaplaincy and pastoral arrangements:** in health care, prisons, schools and universities;
- **grants to voluntary organisations:** provided both by public bodies and by charitable foundations;
- **consultation:** the extent to which Muslim organisations are routinely and equitably consulted by public bodies, both locally and nationally;
- **immigration policy:** the extent to which Muslims may be unfairly affected.

In order to begin answering these questions we wrote to the chief executives of local authorities which have substantial numbers of Muslim residents, and to the Cabinet Office about Muslim involvement in the Civil Service and quangos. Further, we studied a range of recent research reports, particularly *Ethnic Minorities in Britain,* published by the Policy Studies Institute in summer 1997[3], and the many submissions which we received from public bodies in response to our consultation paper.

A major problem, of course, is that most researchers and public agencies do not at present collect and publish data on religious affiliation or sense of religious identity. Therefore other categories have to be used as proxies. It can reasonably be assumed that over 95% of Bangladeshi-background and Pakistani-background people in Britain are Muslim. Since Bangladeshis and Pakistanis constitute over half of all British Muslims, and well over half of the Muslims in the local authority areas where they live, this proxy is reasonable. Unfortunately Muslims of Indian background cannot be identified, nor can African Muslims such as Somalis and Nigerians. Also the many Muslim people in Britain from Arab countries and from Iran cannot be identified through the categories most frequently in use.

The Office for National Statistics used a trial question in June 1997 about religious affiliation. There has always been a census question about religion in Northern Ireland, and other countries which routinely include a question about religion in their censuses include Australia, Canada, India and New Zealand, and most of the European Union. Such questions yield valuable data and in addition give many people a sense that an important part of their identity is being recognised and respected. **We recommend that there should be a question about religion in the 2001 census.** Further, **we recommend that the 2001 census of population should contain a question which enables reliable estimates to be made of the size and demographic features not only of Bangladeshi-background and Pakistani-background communities (as in 1991) but also – amongst others – of Bosnian, Middle Eastern, North African, Somali and Turkish communities.**

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2   Bhikhu Parekh, 'Equality in a Multicultural Society', in Jane Franklin ed (1997). Also Parekh's paper 'Minority Practices and Principles of Toleration' (1997) is an invaluable study. Full details of both papers are in Appendix D.

3   Modood and Berthoud *et al,* full details in the bibliographical references in Appendix D.

Several of the local authorities which wrote to us have developed religious questions for their ethnic monitoring, and the categories which some of them use are considerably more precise, and therefore potentially more useful, than those adopted for the trial census question. Also several local authorities include Somali, Arab and Turkish as ethnic categories in their monitoring. Further, a number of them use a computer program which enables them to identify Muslim, Hindu and Sikh names on lists and registers. So wherever people's names are known – on electoral rolls, for example, or for admission to schools and hospitals, clients for social services, victims of crime, and so on – it is possible to identify Muslims with considerable accuracy.

Several local authorities issue excellent leaflets and booklets explaining clearly the purposes of ethnic and religious monitoring, and the uses to which data will be put. However, it is striking and worrying that there is so much inconsistency across the country on these matters. Also it is disappointing that the categories proposed by the Office for National Statistics for the 2001 census are so imprecise when compared with the best practice in local authorities. **We recommend that the Home Office and the Office for National Statistics should give a clear lead from central government on ethnic monitoring, aimed at developing coherence in policy, collection, analysis and use, and spreading the best practice which already exists at many local levels.**

In a later chapter we consider education. In the rest of this chapter we consider statistics of social exclusion and inclusion under nine main headings:

- local government – (a) elected members
- local government – (b) officers and employees
- national politics
- public bodies and the civil service
- employment
- housing and public health
- health care
- immigration policy
- criminal justice system

Local government – (a) elected members

We were informed that Birmingham City Council has 13 Muslim members, Bradford 10, Kirklees 4, Sheffield 5, Tower Hamlets 13 and Waltham Forest 7. Most of these figures appear close to what would be expected if the proportions of Muslim councillors reflected the proportions of Muslim voters. Other authorities to whom we wrote on this matter did not reply to our enquiry. It is clear from the authorities which did reply that Bangladeshi and Pakistani people in Britain are quite active in government at local levels (though the vast majority of all Muslim councillors in the country belong to a single party, the Labour Party). Thus to an extent Bangladeshi and Pakistani communities have a voice in town hall policy-making and decision-making. They do not, however, appear to be well represented yet at officer level.

Local government – (b) officers and employees

We asked local authorities if they have ethnically based data on their workforce, and if they can cross-tabulate this with gender, and with salary and seniority levels and Council department. We received papers and reports which are all publicly available as Council publications, but will not identify the authorities concerned by name, since some of our remarks may seem invidiously critical:

- One authority has recently provided a breakdown of its whole workforce by ethnicity, salary grade, gender and Council department. The data appears to be of a remarkably high quality. The breakdown establishes an invaluable baseline to enable the authority to study its own progress over time in building up a workforce which reflects the diverse community which it serves. Also it can compare itself with other authorities, if they too collect and publish data in such valuable detail.
- Unfortunately, however, the authority in question uses the blunt category 'Asian' and is therefore unable to distinguish between Bangladeshis, Indians, Pakistanis and 'other' Asians.
- The analysis of seniority levels in this authority shows that:
- 'Asian' people make up 10.7 per cent of the workforce, but only 4.1 per cent of those who are in the highest income band (over £30,150 in 1995). They are under-represented also in the second highest income band. At other levels their representation is close to what would be expected.
- White people make up no more than 75.6 per cent of the workforce, but 92.6 per cent of the highest income band and 87.8 of the second highest. Otherwise their representation is close to what would be expected.
- Only 5.4 per cent of all Asian staff are in the top two bands, compared with 13.2 per cent of white staff.
- One authority has quite a substantial Pakistani community, but only 0.2 per cent of its workforce is of Pakistani background. This is about 12 times less than would be expected if the workforce accurately reflected the community which it serves.

National politics

There has never been a Muslim member of the House of Lords. Until May 1997 there has never been a Muslim Member of Parliament. With the single exception of Glasgow Govan in May 1997, no political party has ever selected a Muslim candidate for a clearly winnable seat. In Table 2 we showed the parliamentary constituencies which had the largest proportions of Muslim voters in the 1997 election. In several of these there was an open contest for the Labour Party nomination, in the sense that there was no sitting MP. There were Muslim candidates for the Labour Party nomination in some of these instances, but for whatever reason or reasons non-Muslim candidates were selected.[4] **We recommend that all political parties should take measures to**

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4   Research in Birmingham in the early 1990's by John Solomos and Les Back showed that there are quite high levels of prejudice and suspicion amongst white Labour Party activists towards their 'Asian' (mainly Pakistani) colleagues. They for their part claimed that their Asian colleagues were unduly influenced by the internal politics of Pakistani communities. Bibliographical details in Appendix D.

increase the likelihood of Muslim candidates being selected in winnable seats at the next general election. Further, **we recommend that political parties and the Prime Minister's office should propose the appointment of Muslims to the House of Lords.** Even more importantly, **we recommend that all political parties and Government departments should use their influence to increase the representation of British Muslims on public bodies and commissions, including quangos of all kinds.**

Public bodies and the civil service

Each year the Cabinet Office publishes statistics on the membership of public bodies, including the non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs) often known as quangos (quasi autonomous non-governmental organisations). The publications of the last few years show that there has been a gradual increase in the proportions of ethnic minority appointments to public bodies – from 2.6 per cent in 1994 and 2.9 per cent in 1995 to 3.3 per cent in 1996. These figures mask quite large differences between government departments. For example, 7.6 per cent (167 out of 2,207) of Home Office appointments in 1996 were of ethnic minority people, compared with only 2.1 per cent (23 out of 1,080) of those made by the Department for Education and Employment.

The Cabinet Office does not provide a breakdown of the umbrella term 'ethnic minority'. It is therefore impossible for outsiders to know even how many of the appointments are of South Asian people, let alone how many are Muslim. Further, the publications do not indicate where the offices of public bodies are situated and how large the 'travel-to-work' areas may be. So it is impossible to know how far the membership of the bodies falls short of what could reasonably be expected. (For example, 3.3 per cent is about two thirds of what might be expected if the travel-to-work area were the whole of the United Kingdom. It is only a sixth of what might be expected, however, if the travel-to-work area were Greater London.)

In the civil service, ethnic minority representation has increased from 4.2 per cent in 1989 to 5.5 per cent in 1996.[5] This compares with 4.9 per cent in the economically active population in spring 1996. At senior levels (Grade levels 1-7) it has increased from 1.5 per cent in 1989 to 2.4 per cent in 1996. Sixty-five per cent of all ethnic minority staff earned less than £15,000 a year in 1996, compared with 51 per cent of white staff. At the top end of salaries, one per cent of all white staff earned over £45,000, but only 0.3 per cent of all ethnic minority staff.

The Cabinet Office has figures on the breakdown of the broad category 'ethnic minority', and can in addition provide breakdowns by salary level and government department. But it does not publish these in a high-profile way.[6] **We recommend that the Cabinet Office should in future provide a breakdown of the broad category 'ethnic minority' in the routine progress reports prepared by the Development and Equal Opportunities Division, and should conduct an internal review to check whether the South Asian employees of the Civil Service appear to include an equitable proportion of Muslims.**

Employment

Long-term unemployment is one of the most serious kinds of social exclusion, since it is likely to lead to low income, low standard of living, poor housing and poor health. The Policy Studies Institute report of summer 1997 [7] is an invaluable and comprehensive source of data on Britain as a multi-ethnic society. Its topics include families and households, educational qualifications, employment, income, standards of living, housing, health, racial harassment and culture and identity. Respondents were asked about their religious affiliations but the researchers mainly used the categories of the 1991 census in their reporting. So again 'Pakistani' and 'Bangladeshi' have to serve as proxies. This obscures Indian-background Muslims, as also of course Muslims from all other countries. In addition to using the main census categories the researchers treated 'African Asians', i.e. South Asian-background people who came to Britain in the early 1970s from East African countries, as a separate category. About a sixth of these people were probably Muslims, many with ties with what is now Pakistan. But probably far fewer than a sixth of the 'African Asians' in the PSI research were Muslim.

The research found that Pakistani and Bangladeshi people are excluded from employment, and therefore from mainstream society, much more than white people and also much more than other South Asians ('Indian' and 'African Asian'). Table 3 shows the overall picture with regard to unemployment. It shows that the unemployment rate for Pakistani and Bangladeshi men is 47 per cent in inner-city areas, 40 per cent in outer urban areas and 31 per cent in the rest of England and Wales. These proportions compare with 26, 14 and 12 for white people. For women, the differentials are even greater.

The PSI researchers used the concept of 'employment disadvantage' to compare the situation of ethnic minority groups with that of white people. They applied it to men and women separately, and in the case of men with regard to six separate categories of employment or unemployment: employers and managers in large establishments; professionals, managers; employees; supervisors; unemployed; and long-term unemployed. They also considered rates of earnings. Tables 4 and 5 show the situations of, respectively, men and women. They show that Pakistanis, both men and women, are under-represented at all levels of employment and over-represented in unemployment. The situation for Bangladeshis is even worse.

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5   Cabinet Office, *Civil Service Data Summary 1996: women, race, disability, age.*
6   The figures are sometimes published in Hansard, in reply to parliamentary questions.
7   Modood and Berthoud, eds, details in Appendix D.

Table 3: Unemployment rates, by ethnicity, gender and type of area

(All figures are percentages)

	Inner city	Outer urban	Rest of England and Wales
men			
Bangladeshi/Pakistani	47	40	31
Caribbean	41	30	23
Indian	27	15	20
White	26	14	12
women			
Bangladeshi/Pakistani	48	42	31
Caribbean	18	18	17
Indian	14	12	11
White	12	8	8

Source: Policy Studies Institute (Modood and Berthoud et al), 1997. The figures for Indian people include East African Asians.

Table 4: Employment disadvantage of ethnic minority men

	Bangladeshi	Caribbean	Indian	Pakistani
Employers and managers in large establishments	0.01	0.5	0.5	0.3
Professionals, managers	0.6	0.5	0.8	0.6
Employees	0.4	0.7	0.6	0.4
Supervisors	0.6	0.9	0.9	0.7
Unemployment rates	2.8	2.1	1.3	2.5
Long-term unemployment	7.7	5.9	3.1	7.7

Source: Policy Studies Institute (Modood and Berthoud et al), 1997. The figures include self-employed. Disadvantage is expressed as a relationship to the employment situation of white people, which is taken to be represented by 1. A figure below 1, therefore, shows under-representation compared with white people and a figure above 1 shows over-representation.

Table 5: Employment disadvantage of ethnic minority women

	Bangladeshi	Caribbean	Indian	Pakistani
In paid work	0.1	0.9	1.0	0.3
Professionals, managers and employers	-	0.7	0.8	0.8
Higher and intermediate non-manual	-	0.8	0.7	1.1
Supervisors	-	0.6	0.8	0.6
Earnings	-	1.0	1.0	-
Unemployed	4.4	1.3	1.3	4.3

Source: Policy Studies Institute (Modood and Berthoud et al), 1997. For explanation see note on Table 4.

The researchers asked respondents about their experiences of discrimination in the work place, and about their perceptions of its nature. Fewer Pakistanis and Bangladeshis than members of other groups believed that they had been discriminated against in employment. This was probably due to the fact that so many of them were in fact unemployed. On reasons for hostility and discrimination, they felt far more strongly than other groups that this was because of their religion.

A high proportion of all respondents believed that South Asians face more prejudice and discrimination than other groups. For white people and Caribbeans, it was the 'Asianness' of South Asians which was the key marker of difference in such hostility. In the perceptions of South Asians themselves, however, the key marker was religion and there was a widespread perception amongst non-Muslim South Asians as well as amongst Muslims that the essential object of hostility is Islam, not (for example) Hinduism or Sikhism.

With regard to income from unemployment, the research found (not surprisingly from the data reported in Tables 3 – 5) that Pakistani and Bangladeshi households were considerably more disadvantaged than others. The average weekly income for white people was £395, compared with £380 for 'African Asians', £367 for Indians, £327 for Caribbeans and only £245 for Pakistanis and Bangladeshis.

We recommend that measures and programmes aimed at reducing poverty and inequality, for example through the Social Exclusion Unit and the Single Regeneration Budget, should be scrutinised with regard to their impact on Muslim communities. Further, **we recommend that measures and programmes aimed at reducing poverty and inequality should involve Muslims, as appropriate, at the early planning stages.** In a later chapter (Chapter Nine) we recommend that discrimination on grounds of religion should be made unlawful, and that in the meanwhile all employers should state formally their opposition to religious discrimination.

Housing and public health

The research by the Policy Studies Institute contains much data on the health and housing conditions of ethnic minority communities and again shows that Pakistanis and Bangladeshis are the most disadvantaged. Pakistanis and Bangladeshis were 50 per cent more likely to suffer ill health than white people, and than most other ethnic minorities. Of those aged over 40, almost a quarter of Bangladeshis and Pakistanis reported symptoms of heart disease, compared with 16 per cent of white people, 12 per cent of Indians and 8 per cent of Chinese. One in 13 Bangladeshis and Pakistanis over 40 were suffering from diabetes, compared with one in 50 white people.[8] A study published in 1996 of 107 households in Tower Hamlets, 83 per cent of whose members were Bangladeshis, itemised the impact of poor housing (cold, damp, infested and overcrowded conditions) on health and well-being.[9] There were high levels reported of coughs and colds, aches and pains, asthma and bronchial disorders, diet and digestive disorders, and stress and depression, and also high levels of anxiety about crime, security, the safety of children and racial harassment. The researchers concluded that poor housing conditions have not only direct effects on health but also indirect, as follows:

- the cumulative effects of living in a poor, stressful and uncongenial setting on levels of resistance to physical and mental illness;

8   James Nazroo, *The Health of Britain's Ethnic Minorities*, 1997.
9   Peter Ambrose, *I Mustn't Laugh Too Much: housing and health on the Limehouse Fields and Ocean estates in Stepney*, University of Sussex, 1996, page 91.

- the adoption of apparently 'unhealthy' habits (poor nutrition, use of tobacco and other harmful substances) as coping strategies to get through each day rather than freely exercised choices of lifestyle;
- a disinclination to make full use of healthcare facilities or to comply fully with treatments prescribed;
- the expense of time by healthcare providers in helping people cope with bad housing situations, for example by writing letters to Housing Departments;
- a general disempowerment, leading to loss of confidence in one's ability to cope and manage.

The researchers themselves described 'disempowerment' as follows:

"A sense of disempowerment is a potent factor affecting the capability of people to act in their own best interests in terms of health care ... It does seem significant that when residents were asked what improvements they would like to see to the housing, the estates and the management, 'more tenant control' was mentioned only once in a long litany of required improvements. It may well be that most residents have so much to think about, and have such difficulty making decisions about how to cope with their problems, that they have little time and energy seeking to make decisions on behalf of others. Alternatively it may well be ... that a prolonged process of external disempowerment tends to lead to self-disempowerment."

Health care

The inclusiveness or otherwise of a society is seen particularly clearly in the provision which it makes for its members when they fall ill, and perhaps especially when they have to spend extended time in hospital. At this point of stress and distress in the lives of individuals and their families, are people helped to "maintain their own culture, traditions, language and values"? The Patient's Charter of 1991 requires that health care providers should ensure "respect for privacy, dignity and religious and cultural beliefs".

One way of helping to ensure that such respect is shown is through the appointment of hospital chaplains. Their role is to provide counselling and spiritual support for patients and staff, conduct worship, lead ceremonies and rites, and advise managers on matters of general organisation relating to religious beliefs and cultural needs. Historically, state funding for hospital chaplains has been spent on appointing Church of England clergy, or else clergy from Roman Catholic and Free Church traditions. In principle, however, it is entirely possible for managers to appoint chaplains from a range of world faiths, including Islam. One hospital in London, for example, has recently appointed an imam to be a full

member of its chaplaincy team. Some of us visited the hospital in question and formed the impression that the arrangement is working extremely well. Generally, however, it is still the case that the vast majority of state funding for hospital chaplaincy is spent on appointing Christian clergy. In this respect as in others the National Health Service is not as inclusive as it should be in the provision it makes for Muslim communities, or indeed for non-Christian communities generally.

Members of non-Christian faith communities are used in many health care organisations as 'visiting ministers' or 'contacts'. But most are unpaid and few of them are given opportunities to play a full part in the forums at which key policies and decisions are made. Further, most do not have adequate access to records and office facilities.[10] Christian clergy are frequently of great practical assistance to them, in the role of facilitators. Nevertheless their work should be put on a more official basis and should be properly funded, and there should be clear lines of accountability. An informal basis, dependent on goodwill, is not a sufficient basis for fulfilling the requirements of the Patient's Charter. In an article published in 1994 a Christian chaplain wrote that "we are frequently being asked to extend our workloads to enable our managers to be able to claim that they are meeting the needs of all faiths ... It is easier and safer to ask familiar chaplains about the requirements or individual problems of 'other faiths' than to engage in direct consultation."[11]

Chaplains – whether Christian or from other faith communities – cannot by themselves, of course, tackle racial and religious discrimination in health care organisations. Nor indeed are they the principal staff who need to address the attitudes, routines and customs which are referred to in anecdotes such as the following:

"There was a menu card which said I could have halal food, so I chose that but the staff said I couldn't have it because it wasn't available. The ward nurse said it was the catering department's fault and tried to sort it out but the meal never turned up."[12]

"When I was in hospital recently one of the Muslim patients prayed five times a day. She either drew the curtains round her bed or went into the TV room if it was empty. The other patients laughed at her and made rude comments, and the nurses did nothing to try and stop them. Of course she was very hurt and upset."[13]

The Department of Health and the NHS Executive are aware of the issues requiring attention. **We recommend that they should develop guidelines on good practice in health care relating to the following topics:**

- **employment and use of non-Christian chaplains;**

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10   Research by Beckford and Gilliat (1996).
11   Quoted in Beckford and Gilliat (1996), page 30.
12   Quoted in a report for the Ethnic Minorities Representatives Council, Brighton and Hove, 1994.
13   Quoted in Alex Henley, *Caring in a Multiracial Society*, Bloomsbury Health Authority, 1997.

- **religious observance;**
- **diet and food;**
- **respect for cultural and religious norms and injunctions relating to modesty, for example to do with mixed-sex wards and the examination of female patients by male doctors;**
- **consultation and contacts with local faith communities;**
- **advocacy and befriending services;**
- **general pastoral care in multi-faith settings.**

Further, **we recommend that health care organisations should review their equal opportunities policies in employment, service delivery and public consultation, and ensure that these refer explicitly to religion as well as to ethnicity, race and culture.**

Immigration and asylum policy

Quite literally, issues of exclusion and inclusion are basic in every society's policies on immigration and asylum. What are the explicit and tacit principles which underlie the policies, and to what extent are these racially or religiously discriminatory in their intentions or in their effects? These are the key questions. In an article in the *Spectator* in 1991 the journalist Charles Moore wrote that "you can be British without speaking English or being Christian or being white", but added: "Nevertheless Britain is basically English-speaking, Christian and white, and if one starts to think it might become urdu-speaking and Muslim and brown, one gets frightened and angry." He went on to argue that Britain should inclusively open its doors to Poles, Hungarians and Russians "in the hope that one day we could return to the situation before 1914 in which you could travel from Paris to St Petersburg without a passport". He added: "Muslims and blacks, on the other hand, should be kept out as strictly as at present."[14]

It is not, of course, official policy that "Muslims and blacks" should be kept out. The practical consequence of official policy, however, is that Muslims and black people are disproportionately affected. The policy is embodied in the British Nationality Act 1981, the Immigration (Carriers' Liability) Act 1987, the Immigration Act 1988, the Asylum and Immigration Appeals Act 1993, the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996, and changes in social security regulations. In particular Muslims have been adversely affected by the primary purpose marriage rule, since a high proportion of the husbands and wives refused admittance to Britain have been from Bangladesh and Pakistan. This rule was relaxed by the new Government on 5 June 1997, and the Home Secretary has indicated in general terms[15] that some of the other reforms advocated over the years by bodies such as the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants (JCWI) and the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) are to be sympathetically considered, with a view to removing discrimination and to making policy more

humane, positive and rational. Whatever new policies and arrangements are proposed and introduced, **we recommend that they should be monitored and evaluated according to religion as well as to race and nationality.**

Criminal justice system

One of the most obvious kinds of social exclusion, in any society, is imprisonment. To be imprisoned is literally to be excluded. Also, to engage in crime is to exclude oneself, for whatever reason, from society. Each year since 1991 the Prison Service Chaplaincy has collected data on the religious affiliations of prisoners in England and Wales. The trend in the case of Muslims is worrying, though may to an extent be due to an increase in foreign nationals who are Muslim or, more probably, to changes over the years in self-definition. For between 1991 and 1995 there was a 40 per cent rise in the number of Muslim prisoners in England and Wales. This was a considerably larger rise than for any other religion. It was in addition worrying that in every year considerably more Muslims were in prison than would be expected from their numbers in the population generally. The trend almost certainly reflects growing disaffection and alienation amongst young Muslim men. The raw figures are shown in Table 6. **We recommend that bodies in the criminal justice system should continue to monitor trends according to the religious affiliations of offenders.**

Table 6: the prison population of England and Wales, 1991– 1995

Year	Total prison population	No. of Muslim prisoners	% of Muslim prisoners
1991	32,991	1,959	5.9
1992	33,532	2,095	6.2
1993	30,334	2,106	6.9
1994	31,853	2,513	7.8
1995	30,300	2,745	9.0

Source: *Annual Religious Census* 1995, Prison Service Chaplaincy, as collated in *The Church of England and Other Faiths in a Multi-Faith Society* by James Beckford and Sophie Gilliat, University of Warwick 1996.

Concluding note

The Government has recently announced the establishment of a Social Exclusion Unit, to tackle deprivation and disadvantage. It is vital that this should take account of the multiple disadvantage affecting British Muslims, as summarised in this chapter. Further, the new unit will need to consider the role played by Islamophobia in exacerbating such disadvantage, and in contributing to bureaucratic delay and inertia. Amongst other things this must involve addressing the subject-matter of the next chapter of our report, racial and religious violence.

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14   Charles Moore, *The Spectator*, 19 October 1991. There is an extract from this article also in Box 6.
15   In a speech to the Black-Jewish Forum, 24 July 1997.

Chapter 6: Violence

Racial, cultural and religious attacks

"Oi, Paki!" writes a 16-year-old British Asian school student, citing the kind of verbal abuse she and her friends routinely receive on the streets of the city where they live. "Wotcha doin' in our country? Go back to where you belong." [1] She continues:

> *I hold my head up high and proud*
> *And walk on with dignity.*
> *How long can I walk on?*
> *How long can I ignore?*
>
> *The anger inside me burns red, dark red.*
> *How I'd like to tear them apart.*
> *But instead I hold my anger.*

For many British Muslims, as for many other British citizens who are presumed by their attackers to be different in some way from the majority ("wotcha doin' in our country?"), racist violence is a fact of life. So are the emotions of rejection and outrage, and fierce determination not to despair, to which the poem refers. The Policy Studies Institute found in its recent study that around 14 per cent of all ethnic minority people had been subjected to racial abuse of the kind evoked by the poem, or to even more serious attacks and assaults, during the previous twelve months.[2] It calculated also that about 20,000 ethnic minority people are physically attacked each year, 40,000 have their property damaged, and 230,000 are racially abused or insulted. A report by the New York-based Human Rights Watch, published in 1997 after three years of investigation, revealed that Britain has one of the highest rates of racially motivated crime in Western Europe.[3] It concluded that since "racist violence is not random but rather targets particular ethnic groups in orchestrated campaigns to force vulnerable groups from their homes, it should be associated more with political terrorism than street crimes" and that many of the attacks are so serious that they have "a quality of ethnic cleansing".

Racist violence has many forms. In addition to physical assaults, ethnic minority British citizens are subjected to insults, threats and abuse, as in the poem quoted above, and to graffiti, vandalising of property, broken windows, anonymous letters and telephone calls, arson attacks, the dumping of offensive refuse and desecration of religious buildings. Box 16 mentions some of the attacks on Muslims which were drawn to our attention. All such incidents are profoundly distressing for the individual people who are attacked even when they do not involve any physical injury or damage to property. They are particularly serious in so far as they have a cumulative effect, such that those who are attacked feel increasingly unsafe, and increasingly unable to enjoy a normal life.

Box 16: attacks on Muslims, some examples

The following recent incidents, amongst many others, were drawn to the attention of the Runnymede Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia:

- From a notice pinned to the door of a mosque in London, entitled "Notice to all (so-called 'British') Moslem Wog": "While the homogenous patriotic British detest you paki faced bastards, and have suffered your presence far too long, be warned of our violent retaliation if you filth want a Gaddafi sponsored jihad. You will all be exterminated ... Fuck off back to wogland ... When Mecca and Medina have churches, we *may* consider a mosque in the Outer Hebrides *only.*"
- A leaflet is delivered to Muslim households by an organisation calling itself English Solidarity Against Multiracialism: "Calling all Muslims!" it says. "Take your fundamentalism and faith back home and fight for them on your own soil. Calling all Christians! Defend your faith on English soil." Another leaflet delivered to Muslim homes says: "The world of Islam is totally alien to the English way of life, yet it is being allowed to grow within the very heart of our homeland ... we call on Parliament to act and order our Army to remove all mosques & temples from our Christian land!"
- Episodes which may be relatively trivial in themselves but which have a cumulative effect on the victims, making them feel physically less safe and secure:
  - A Bangladeshi woman opens her front door when the bell is rung. Two small white boys throw eggs at her face and shout that they will kill her and her family if she doesn't move from the estate.
  - A young Muslim is on his way to the mosque for prayer when a car pulls up beside him and its two white occupants spit on his clothes.
  - Muslim children born in Britain are told by white children, on the street near their home: "We do not like Pakis here. Go back to your dirty country."
  - A Bangladeshi restaurant owner is followed at 2am virtually every night, as he walks home, by a group of white youths muttering racist abuse and threats.
  - A Pakistani woman wearing hijab is spat on in a London tube train.
  - A leaflet is distributed purporting to be by a Muslim organisation and calling on Muslims to attack and kill African Caribbeans.
  - A hoax bomb is left in the foyer of flats occupied mainly by Sudanese students
  - Rotten fish is left on a doorstep.
  - Corrosive liquid is poured over a car.

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1   Tania Ahsan of Willesden High School, in *Drum, Talk and Dub*, Brent Education Department 1990.
2   Modood and Berthoud (1997), table 8.3 on page 266.
3   Human Rights Watch/Helsinki, *Racist Violence in the United Kingdom*, May 1997.

Underlying the kinds of offensive behaviour listed in Box 16, there is one essential feature which makes racist violence different from most other kinds of violence. A person or household is attacked not as an individual, as in most other violence, but as the representative of a group. The signs or markers of group membership are usually physical in the first instance, to do with skin colour and facial appearance. But also they are frequently cultural or religious as well, to do for example with dress or with the fact that the victim is associated with a place of worship. Either way, the fact that someone is attacked as a representative of a wider group, not for their characteristics as an individual, has three particularly serious consequences.

First, many other members of the same group are made to feel under threat and insecure as well, and to feel less inclined to walk the streets of their neighbourhood. It is not only individuals, in other words, who suffer a limitation of their freedom and security. The Government's aim that ethnic minority people should be able to take part in mainstream social, political and economic life, whilst still maintaining their culture, traditions, language and values, is a mockery when many ethnic minority people are virtual prisoners in their own homes, afraid because of racist violence to venture into public spaces.

Second, since attacks of this kind are on a community as well as on an individual, they are experienced as attacks on the values, loyalties and commitments which are central to a person's sense of identity and self-worth – their family honour, their friends, their culture, heritage, religion, community, history. Racist, cultural and religious abuse is accordingly more hurtful, as indeed its perpetrators consciously know and intend, than most other kinds of abuse. In this respect too it is a forceful rejection of the Government's aim that all people should be able to take part in mainstream social, political and economic life, whilst still maintaining their culture, traditions, language and values.

Third, this kind of violence is not only an act but also a statement. It states a notion of British identity as essentially white and 'Christian' – "we call on Parliament to act and order our Army to remove all mosques & temples from our Christian land," says one leaflet in current circulation.[4] The recurring message is "wotcha doin' in *our* country?" (italics added). Non-white and non-Christian people do not belong "on British soil". So this kind of violence is a forceful (literally) rejection of official government policy. Also it implicates, since it is committed in the name of white Britishness, all other white British people as well. Even more than is the case with most other crimes, it is therefore essential that mainstream public opinion should:

- express its disapproval
- make a point of showing solidarity with and support for victims

- take care not to provide any kind of comfort or encouragement to the offenders.

To what extent is Islamophobia, as defined and discussed in chapter two of this report, an ingredient in the kinds of violence illustrated in Box 16? Is there evidence that Muslims are the victims of such violence more than are other groups? If so, is this because of anti-Muslim prejudice, or could it in fact be for other reasons? What is the mix, in the mentality and motivations of offenders, of notions of race, culture and religion? These are important and entirely relevant questions. However, we are considerably more concerned with the effects of this kind of violence, and with measures to combat and reduce it, than with the motivations of offenders.

Our essential point is that whatever the motivations of attackers may be, the consequence of this kind of violence for Muslims is that they are unable to play a full part, as Muslims, in mainstream society. Such violence is all of a piece therefore with anti-Muslim prejudice, and co-extensive with it, in all of Islamophobia's various forms and impacts.

For the discussion which follows we propose the following working definition of the kind of violence we are concerned about.[5] We include in it a reference to a person's religion as one of the features which may mean that he or she may be a victim of such violence:

> ***Behaviour which causes distress or suffering to the victim and which appears to be motivated by hostility towards someone because of their ethnicity, culture, community, religion, descent, appearance, race or national origin. It includes not only physical assaults but also verbal abuse, threats and insults, and damage to buildings and property.***

A broadly similar definition has been adopted by some, though no means by all, public authorities. One housing authority, for example, has issued the following statement:

> ***"What is racial harassment?***
> *Racial harassment is when someone abuses or assaults you (or your family) because of your colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, or religion. This harassment can be any kind of behaviour which is meant to frighten or harm you and may include name-calling, physical attacks, damage to property and racist graffiti."*[6]

The Government has indicated[7] that its forthcoming Crime and Disorder Bill will include legislation making racial violence a specific offence. We broadly welcome this intention, though are aware of arguments that to make this kind of violence a specific offence is unnecessary, and would be counter-productive.[8]

4   Association of British Ex-Servicemen, Ashford.
5   Adapted from a definition developed by the Sussex Muslim Society and submitted to the Home Affairs Committee Session 1993/94 on *Racial Attacks and Harassment.*
6   Brighton Housing Services, a leaflet issued in 1995.
7   For example, in a speech by the Home Secretary on 24 July 1997, reported in the press on the following day.
8   The arguments for and against are well rehearsed in *Racial violence: a separate offence?*, a discussion paper by Professor Bhikhu Parekh prepared for the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Race and Community, 1994.

We recommend that the new legislation should definitely make a reference to religion. Further, as discussed in greater detail in our chapter on law (Chapter Nine), **we recommend that the Public Order Act 1986 should be amended to make incitement to religious hatred unlawful.** We hope that a term such as 'racial, religious and cultural attacks' will come into legal parlance. If the term 'racial violence' is used to describe attacks on mosques, for example, the implication will be that Muslims belong to a 'race'. This implication may well be intended by the attackers themselves. But it should be wholly unacceptable to wider society. When police officers, the Crown Prosecution Service and the courts consider whether to define a particular piece of behaviour as an instance of racial, cultural or religious violence, they will need to use a statement such as the following:

> *Attacks and harassment are presumed to be motivated by hostility towards a group or community rather than only by hostility towards a single individual – if (a) the attackers on the one hand and the victims on the other belong to different ethnic, religious or national groups and if (b) at least one of the following features is present also:*

> - *the attacker uses explicit racist insults or abuse, or makes explicit references at the time of the attack to the victim's culture or religion;*
> - *the victim was wearing distinctive cultural or religious dress at the time of the attack;*
> - *the offender is known to have engaged in the past in racist abuse and threats;*
> - *offenders have been warned or cautioned in the past that their behaviour has the appearance of being racially motivated;*
> - *the offender is a member of, or is associated with, an organisation or group known to promote or support racist views;*
> - *the victim believes that he or she was attacked because of their ethnicity, culture, community, religion, appearance, race or national origin, and feels in consequence less safe and secure.*

In the meanwhile, before the new legislation is on the statute book, **we recommend that when sentencing offenders for crimes of violence or harassment, courts should formally treat evidence of religious hatred as an aggravating factor, as they already do with regard to racial violence.**

We are aware that different organisations use a range of different definitions and understandings of racial violence, and that it is therefore difficult to compare different places with each other. **We recommend that the Home Office should give a clear lead on the monitoring of racial and religious violence, such that there is greater comparability between the records of different police districts and monitoring groups.**

A note on statistics

The British Crime Survey has shown that South Asian people report that they are victims of racist violence more than African Caribbean, and that there was a significant rise between 1988 and 1992. Two thirds of all threats experienced by South Asians in 1992, for example, were perceived to be racially motivated, compared with only a quarter of threats experienced by African Caribbeans. The figures are summarised in Table 7.

Table 7: incidents seen as racially motivated, 1988 and 1992				
(All figures are percentages)				
	African Caribbean		South Asian	
	1988	1992	1988	1992
Assaults	34	24	36	56
Threats	44	24	50	66

Source: British Crime Survey (Home Office Research and Planning Unit, paper 82), collated by the Runnymede Trust (1994)

The more recent research of the Policy Studies Institute, however, did not replicate this finding. There were no significant differences between the experiences of racial violence of Caribbean and South Asian communities. Fifteen per cent of Caribbean people had been subjected to some form of racial harassment in the previous 12 months, compared with 14 per cent of African Asians, 13 per cent of Pakistanis and nine per cent of Bangladeshis. Figures provided by the Metropolitan Police[9] similarly do not imply that South Asian people in general, or Muslims in particular, suffer disproportionately from racial violence and abuse. The London boroughs with the greatest incidence of racist violence include Greenwich and Southwark, which have relatively small proportions of South Asian residents, and Hounslow and Ealing, where the South Asian residents are more commonly Sikh or Hindu than Muslim.

It would be relatively simple for a police force to make a pilot study of the names of people who report having been the victim of racial violence, to check the pattern, if any, of attacks on Hindu, Muslim and Sikh victims. Box 17 shows the names of people killed in racist murders in 1992-1993, based on press monitoring by the Runnymede Trust. Nine of the thirteen names are Muslim. The murders were probably racist rather than religious so far as the attackers themselves were concerned. But for the families and communities of the victims of such murders, there has often been a profound religious element as well.

We recommend that when recording acts of violence and harassment which appear to be racially motivated, police forces should note acts which have a specifically religious dimension, for example desecration of places of worship, violence accompanied by abuse of religious beliefs and practices, and violence against people wearing distinctively religious dress or symbols. We are aware that in some districts this is already routine practice.

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9   Privately to the Runnymede Trust, 1993.

Racist violence and Islamophobia

There is widespread anecdotal evidence in Muslim communities that an individual Muslim is more likely to be a victim of racist violence when he or she is wearing Islamic dress or symbols. This applies to white Muslims – a white woman wearing the hijab, for example – as well as to South Asians. There is also a widespread perception that Muslims are particularly likely to be attacked when going to or from their local mosque, and that a peak time for racist attacks is the month of Ramadan.

The perpetrators of racist violence against Muslims may or may not be aware of the religion of those whom they attack, and may or may not be consciously motivated by anti-Muslim prejudice and hatred. Some, presumably, are aware and motivated in these ways. They may have been influenced by the anti-Muslim discourse which has in recent years joined antisemitic discourse in publications of the extreme right.[10] It is also relevant in this context to recall that there is evidence of increased racist violence within Britain at times of international tension. At the time of the Gulf War, for example, the West Yorkshire Police noted a 100 per cent increase in racist attacks in Bradford and a 58 per cent increase in West Yorkshire as a whole.[11] A senior police officer was quoted as saying that "dark-skinned people were attacked because they were considered to be supporters of Saddam Hussein."

If the police officer's conjecture was right, there is frequently amongst racist offenders a seamless convergence of anti-Muslim, anti-foreigner, anti-Asian, anti-immigrant and anti-black hostilities. Such a convergence is readily seen in racist propaganda, together with hatred of the mainstream media and of anyone perceived to be left wing. "There are thousands of mosques, synagogues, communist headquarters, nigger estates, TV companies and newspapers all waiting to be blown to bits," says a magazine circulated by Combat 18.[12] Precisely because these hostilities hang together, and merge with each other, they can reinforce each other in complex ways. For example, Islamophobia may both feed and be fed by hostilities which have nothing to do with Muslims. A black person or a Hindu may be attacked or abused on the street because Britain is in dispute with a country which happens to be Muslim, and conversely Muslims may be attacked not because of their religion but because of their non-white, 'Asian' appearance. 'Paki-bashing', as white adolescents call it, is primarily anti-Asian and anti-immigrant, and an affirmation of white adolescent sub-culture and sense of territory. It has an anti-Muslim strand, no doubt, but it is unlikely that this strand is so strong that adolescent offenders on the streets know or care whether their Asian victims are Muslims, Sikhs or Hindus. Yet in the same way that a newspaper may illustrate a feature article on Muslim marriage with a photograph of a Hindu wedding[13], so a white racist adolescent may attack a Hindu (as it were, any Asian) when stirred by anti-Muslim prejudice. All South Asians, it follows, are potential victims on British streets of Islamophobia.

This is all, we acknowledge, speculative. However, the conscious perceptions and motivations of offenders are not by any means our only concern here. Nor, indeed, are they our principal concern. The essential point is that, whatever the motivations of offenders may be, the consequence of racist violence for Muslims is that they are prevented from – to cite the Government's policy aims yet again – "participating freely and fully in the economic, social and public life of the nation ... while still being able to maintain their own culture, traditions, language and values." It is of urgent importance for British Muslims, as for many other British people, that further action to reduce racist violence should be undertaken.

Education and youth work

Police figures show that many perpetrators of racist violence are children or teenagers.[14] It follows that there is a need for special action in schools and the youth service. In a later chapter we consider the context for action in schools. Interesting and important research on this matter has been undertaken recently in the London Borough of Greenwich.[15] Points arising from it include the following:

- Adolescent racism is part of an adolescent sub-culture, both male and female, and is bound up with young white people's sense of identity and self-worth. It often exists independently of parents. ("If people of our age had the vote," a teenager told the researchers, "the BNP would get in easily round here because all the young people would vote for them.")

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10 Research by Professor Nira Yuval-Davis at the University of Greenwich, to be published in 1998, shows that there was much more anti-Muslim racism in far right publications in 1994 than 1984. The Norwegian researcher Tore Børgo (1997) shows that there is much anti-Muslim discourse in Scandinavia amongst far right groups, even though Scandinavia's contacts with Islam have been relatively slight.

11 In January-June 1991 there were 51 racially motivated attacks in Bradford compared with 23 in the same six-month period in the previous year, and in West Yorkshire 193 compared with 121. Reported in *The Muslim News*, 25 October 1991.

12 Quoted in the *Daily Telegraph*, 13 March 1997, 'Combat 18 members jailed over race hate magazine'.

13 For example, as mentioned in Chapter Four, *The Times* illustrated Jemima Goldsmith's Muslim marriage to Imran Khan with a photograph of a Hindu wedding (16 May 1995). An article about a Muslim marriage in the *Independent* (21 June 1993) similarly carried a picture of a Hindu bride.

14 For example, Metropolitan Police figures cited in *Multi-Ethnic Britain*, Runnymede Trust (1994).

15 Reported in Hewitt (1996).

- Youth workers and teachers working with white adolescents need further training on how to recognise and address the social base of racism in the teenage sub-culture as well as on how to focus on racism directly.
- White adolescents often seek to justify their racism on the grounds that they themselves are treated unfairly by teachers, youth workers and police officers, whereas ethnic minority people, they claim, receive preferential treatment. A white girl is quoted as saying: "... I had a fight with a girl, right. She was Turkish and she said to me first, 'You white ice-cream head', and I said 'Shut up, you Turkish delight'. I got done for racism, she didn't ... They're allowed to say 'you white this or white that' and we can't say anything back." Perceptions of unfairness such as this are in their essence false, but nevertheless the ways in which antiracist policies have been promulgated and implemented have sometimes contributed to them.
- There needs to be a thorough-going review of antiracist policy, discourse, presentation and practice, and a re-focusing of energies and resources.

We recommend that schools, education authorities and youth services should review the definitions of 'racial harassment' used in their policy documentation and programmes of work, and ensure that there is an explicit reference to religion.

Action to reduce racist violence

Action by public authorities on racist violence can be grouped into four broad categories:

(a) vigorous identification, punishment and deterrence of offenders, through the creation and enforcement of requirements, regulations, rules and laws
(b) moral support for those who are attacked, including:
- provision of information about measures to identify and prosecute the offenders
- public statements and symbolic acts by authority figures
- victim support counselling
(c) material support for those who are attacked, including:
- enhanced security
- installation of burglar alarms
- security cameras
- provision of mobile phones and personal alarms
- escorts for children
- offers of new accommodation
(d) long-term preventative or contextual action, including:
- educational projects of various kinds
- modifications to buildings and public spaces to make them safer
- urban regeneration projects to reduce the socio-economic deprivation in which sub-cultures of racist talk and behaviour thrive.

We are aware that good practice has been developed in recent years by local authorities and police forces in each of these four categories. We welcome the fact that there is now a law against harassment, and that racist motivation is considered by courts to be an aggravating factor at the point of sentencing. Our general impression, however, is that public authorities are insufficiently sensitive to hatred of religion as an ingredient in racist violence. For example, there was no reference to religion in the two-volume report of the Home Affairs Committee on racial attacks and harassment, published in 1994, nor in the Government's reply. We know that at least one Muslim organisation submitted a lengthy paper about violence based on victims' religion as well as their race, but this was not referred to in the Committee's report. There is often no reference to religion in the formal definitions and documentation used by local housing authorities. Reports by the police and inter-agency monitoring groups seldom refer to religion. A major policy lead will be given by the Government in this respect if, as we have recommended, it includes an explicit reference to religion in its proposed new legislation on racist violence. In addition, **we recommend that housing authorities should review the definitions of 'racial harassment' used in their policy documentation, and ensure that there is an explicit reference to religion. Further, we recommend that inter-agency monitoring projects should review the definitions of 'racial harassment' used in their policy documentation, and ensure that there is an explicit reference to religion.**

Concluding note

"How long?" asks the young woman quoted at the start of this chapter. The violence and abuse of which she writes are endemic in British society and will continue for a long time yet. But at least it need not be long before they are more correctly named than at present. The violence is religious and cultural as well as 'racial'. This semantic point is trivial compared with the task of putting an end to the violence. But the least society owes the victims is an accurate naming of the offence from which they suffer. It is adding insult to injury to imply that the violence inflicted on them is only ever 'racial'. Whatever racists themselves may think, the human species does not consist of races.

Chapter 7:
Making the nation

Inclusive education for an inclusive society

"Schools," one of our correspondents noted, "are places where a nation is made or unmade." Another similarly stressed that "education has a crucial role to play. High achievement of Muslim pupils would provide access to employment and encourage wider participation in public life. Education in schools and through the media can also help dispel myths about Muslim communities and promote social justice." An earlier chapter discussed the twin policy aims of social inclusion and cultural pluralism. We consider in this chapter the implications of these aims for the education system. We discuss four main sets of issues:

- **the academic achievement of Muslim pupils and students,** such that they are equipped – in the words cited in the earlier chapter – "to participate freely and fully in the economic, social and public life of the nation";
- **the content of the curriculum,** such that all pupils and students, both Muslim and non-Muslim, acquire knowledge of, and commitment to, a common civic culture relevant to "participating freely and fully in the economic, social and public life of the nation";
- **support for the pastoral, religious and cultural needs of Muslim pupils and students in mainstream schools,** such that they participate in education "while still being able to maintain their own culture, traditions, language and values";
- **the inclusion of Muslim schools within the state sector of education,** such that there is clear equity and parity of esteem between different faith communities, and more sharing of perception, outlook and experience.

In all four of these sets of issues it is important that Muslim educationists should have opportunities to contribute to national and local debates without their Islamic perspectives being marginalised by Islamophobia. Such opportunities include membership of schools' governing bodies, lecturing at mainstream conferences and contributing articles to mainstream academic journals, formal consultation at national level, and good channels of communication, particularly at local levels, between Muslim community schools and mainstream schools.

As a backdrop to the chapter we provide quotations from a selection of news stories, shown in Box 18, taken from national, local and ethnic minority press in one month in early 1997.[1] Between them the incidents touch on all the four questions outlined above. They are a reminder of the specific local realities, and the often passionate controversies, which are otherwise treated rather abstractly and generally in the chapter as a whole.

Box 18: nation-making in the news, January 1997

A selection of quotations from newspapers in one month:

"Muslim pupils have been able to participate actively in these assemblies by demonstrating their knowledge, skills and achievements. Muslim pupils have consequently gained greater confidence in themselves, in the school and its staff, feeling proud that their religion and culture are valued." *(From a report on school assemblies).*

"As long as the state pays for other religious-based schools ... there can be no complaint about establishing a Moslem school. Its pupils would, by law, be required to study the national curriculum. They would also be taught about Islam and they may be able to learn Arabic, but that would be no more outlandish than the widespread teaching of Welsh language and literature in Wales." *(From an editorial).*

"We maintain very high standards in the school. We push for education first and foremost and do not 'turn the children into fundamentalists' as some would have you believe ... I invite anyone to come and see it for themselves to make up their own minds. We give normal education with normal studies." *(Headteacher of a Muslim school).*

"I only wanted my sons taught Christianity and Judaism. Sikhism is just made up. Islam is too aggressive, and Hinduism and Buddhism are just rubbish. I believe in God and I want my children taught about Christianity ... I believe that when you are in Rome you do what the Romans do." *(Parents in Newham, east London).*

"It was very offensive and we are very angry. The tension here is very high and it is doing nothing to reassure the parents who send their children to our school that it can stamp out racism. The school is supposed to have anti-racist policies that are meant to be observed by all the pupils but what's the point when teachers seem to break the rules." *(Pupil at a school in Yorkshire).*

"During Ramadan cooking and dancing classes were organised. Pork was served to Muslim children at lunchtime. Parents' written requests for their children not to attend assembly went ignored. The parents are incensed. They have gone to meetings with teachers and have come out crying." *(Spokesperson for Muslim parents, Yorkshire).*

Academic achievement and success

Muslim young people need to succeed at school, and therefore to achieve sound academic qualifications, if they are to be able to play a full part in society. Muslim parents and educators want high academic standards for their children and the best possible qualifications. It is

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1   The incidents are all from January 1997, and were reported in the *British Muslims Monthly Survey*, a media monitoring service of the Centre for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations, University of Birmingham.

relevant therefore to ask whether there are differences between Muslim and non-Muslim pupils in the standards they achieve in the national curriculum, particularly at ages seven, eleven and thirteen (key stages 1–3), in GCSE at the age of sixteen, and in A levels and entry to higher education at eighteen.

We wrote to the 15 local education authorities in England and Scotland which have the largest numbers of Bangladeshi and Pakistani residents, asking about the data on academic performance of pupils and students in schools. Authorities vary a great deal in whether they do in fact collect data from schools. They differ also in the categories they use (some distinguish between Bangladeshi, Indian and Pakistani, others treat these as a single group of 'Asians'), and in the kinds of comment and analysis which they make, if any, in their published reports. Since there are wide variations in the ways in which data is collected, presented and used, it is difficult to obtain a national overview. The general picture seems to be:

■ The achievements of Pakistani and Bangladeshi pupils have risen over the years, but so also have those of other groups. The relatively poor attainments of Pakistani and Bangladeshi pupils at 16+, particularly when compared with national norms as distinct from the norms of their school or local authority, mean that they continue to enter the labour market, or competition for places in higher or further education, at a considerable disadvantage. There is absolutely no room for complacency.

■ There appears to be a significant difference between Pakistani achievement in London and Glasgow on the one hand and Pakistani achievement elsewhere, with achievements in London and Glasgow being higher. This may be related to differences in social class. There may be a similar pattern of regional and class differences in relation to Bangladeshis.

■ At age seven, Pakistani and Bangladeshi children have lower attainment than others, since (a) many of them are not yet fluent in English but (b) tests of attainment are administered in English. They subsequently catch up with white pupils in the same schools and local authorities as themselves, but not with national norms.

■ Being able to speak two or more languages is not a handicap, but on the contrary assists intellectual development.

Tables 8 and 9 show the kind of data which has been published. They use the standard of five GCSE passes at grades A–C as the basic measure of school success. This standard is widely used throughout the country and in league tables published by the Government. Table 8, relating to Birmingham in 1994, shows that only one in

five Pakistani pupils obtained five GCSEs A–C, compared with over a third of white pupils. Table 9, relating to Bradford in 1996, shows only 13 per cent of Pakistani boys reaching this standard, and 19 per cent of Pakistani girls, compared with 25 per cent and 33 per cent respectively for white pupils. The Youth Cohort Study of England and Wales found a broadly similar picture. 24 per cent of Bangladeshi and Pakistani people in the study achieved five or more GCSE passes at grades A–C in 1994, compared with 43 per cent of white pupils, and 45 per cent of Indian.[2] From the point of view of competing successfully in society at large, the key points for comparison are standards achieved by all pupils nationally rather than white pupils locally. It is sobering in this connection to note that 40 per cent of all boys obtained five or more grades A–C in 1996, and 49 per cent of all girls.[3]

Table 8: Academic attainment at 16+ in Birmingham LEA, 1994

(Percentages of Year 11 pupils achieving five or more GCSE passes at grades A–C, by ethnicity and gender)

	Male (%)	Female (%)
African-Caribbean	13	23
Bangladeshi	32	25
Indian	37	42
Pakistani	20	22
White	34	38

Source: City of Birmingham Education Department quoted in *British Pakistanis* by Muhammad Anwar.

Table 9: Academic attainment at 16+ in Bradford LEA, 1996

(Percentages of Year 11 pupils achieving five or more GCSE passes at grades A–C, by ethnicity and gender)

	Male (%)	Female (%)
African-Caribbean	0	19
Bangladeshi	15	19
Indian	37	44
Pakistani	13	19
White	25	33

Source: Bradford Education Department, 1994–1996 Examination Results

Tables from LEAs do not include grant-maintained schools. They may therefore seriously distort the real picture. Since LEAs cannot obtain ethnically based information about pupils' performance from grant-maintained schools in their area, action is urgently required at central government level to collect statistics in a standardised form. Even when the independence of grant-maintained schools is ended, as the Government currently intends, there will still be a need for a national policy on the collection of ethnic statistics in education, led by the Department for Education and Employment

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2   Office for National Statistics, *Social Focus on Ethnic Minorities* (1996).
3   Department for Education and Employment, *Excellence in Schools* (1997), page 80.

(DfEE). **We recommend that the DfEE should collect, collate and publish data on the ethnic origins and attainment of pupils in all schools, including independent and grant-maintained schools as well as locally maintained schools.** Further, **the DfEE should collect, collate and publish data on the religious affiliations of pupils in all schools, including independent and grant-maintained schools as well as locally maintained schools.** Such data collection should start immediately as a matter of urgency and should of course continue in the new proposed structure of community schools, voluntary schools and foundation schools.

The principal source of funds for raising the attainment and standards of ethnic minority pupils is through Section 11 of the Local Government Act 1996, administered by the Home Office. In recent years relevant funds have also to an extent been available through the Single Regeneration Budget, administered by the Department of the Environment, and Grants for Educational Support and Training (GEST) administered by the Department for Education and Employment. It would be valuable if the DfEE or the Home Office were as a matter of priority to commission and fund some high quality research highlighting the best practice in teaching English as an additional language. Over the years since 1966 well over a billion pounds has been spent by central and local government through Section 11 on teaching English to Muslim (i.e. Pakistani and Bangladeshi) pupils. But there has not yet been a major government-funded research study about the practical approaches which work best. Such research would amongst other things, almost certainly, demonstrate the advantages of being bilingual. **We recommend that the Home Office should commission a swift review of good practice in the use of Section 11 funding for English language teaching in schools, and should be prepared, in the light of such a review, to permit or encourage greater flexibility in the conditions attached to this funding.**

A review of English language teaching and learning ought ideally to take place within the context of a review of Section 11, and of funding for race equality in education more generally. "Current Government policy," said the National Union of Teachers in their submission to us, "is incoherent and lacks stability." In a supporting paper the union cited the following problems, amongst several others: funding comes from three different Government departments, there is no overall strategic framework to relate funding to needs or purpose, there is no national framework for determining relative needs, the distribution of grants depends upon the political will and financial ability of individual LEAs and on their ability to frame acceptable bids in a process of competitive bidding, and there is a lack of transparency, clarity and accountability in Government decisions on grant allocation.

It would generally be beneficial if there were more Muslim teachers, and if there were more Muslims involved in education as governors and mentors. **We recommend that the Teacher Training Authority, schools and Muslim organisations should encourage more Muslims to train as teachers, including but not only for the teaching of religious education.** Further, **we recommend that all responsible bodies – local authorities, diocesan boards and schools – should use their influence to ensure that local Muslim communities are appropriately represented on schools' governing bodies, particularly schools which have substantial proportions of Muslim pupils.** In addition, **we recommend that responsible bodies should use their influence to encourage mentoring schemes, particularly in secondary schools, which will provide role models for Muslim pupils.**

Curriculum for an inclusive society

The Government's white paper of summer 1997, *Excellence in Schools,* has a brief section entitled 'Skills for life' and within this there is a brief paragraph on citizenship. "A modern democratic society depends on the informed and active involvement of all its citizens. Schools can help to ensure that young people feel that they have a stake in our society and the community in which they live by teaching them the nature of democracy and the duties, responsibilities and rights of citizens." The paper adds that this forms part of schools' wider provision for personal and social education. It does not, however, indicate that there are implications for all curriculum subjects; it makes no mention of young people's sense of personal, cultural, religious and national identity; and does not recognise in as many words that the "duties, responsibilities and rights of citizens" cannot be considered independently of issues of ethnic and religious diversity, nor of issues of discrimination and disadvantage. The Government intends "setting up an advisory group to discuss citizenship and the teaching of democracy in our schools".

We recommend that this should include Muslim educationists, as also educationists from other faith communities. Further, **we recommend that its terms of reference should include attention to concepts of national, cultural and religious identity.** In addition **we recommend that the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) should issue formally a set of principles for teaching about religion and citizenship in a multi-faith and multi-ethnic society, and that such principles should be incorporated, as appropriate, into the Agreed Syllabuses of local education authorities.** The principles would be relevant for the teaching about separate religions each on its own ("learning *about* religion") and also for approaches which stress topics and themes in pupils' own moral and spiritual development ("learning *from* religion"). Also, **we recommend that similar principles should be developed about the teaching of history, for example with regard to what pupils learn about the Crusades, and about the spread of Islam over the centuries.** More generally, **we recommend that QCA should involve Muslim scholars, theorists and educationists more than hitherto in its consultations about education regarding national identity and common citizenship.**

The pastoral and cultural needs of Muslim pupils

In an earlier section of this report (pages 16-18) we itemised the main pressures and influences on Muslim young people. We consider here the implications of that list for schools. In autumn 1996 we received a letter from a Muslim pupil at a secondary school. An extract was quoted in our consultation paper, and is reprinted here in Box 19. Several correspondents mentioned and commended it as a succinct and relevant introduction to major concerns, and stressed that they had experienced or observed similar distress. "May I say," wrote a correspondent in Birmingham, "what touched me most in your whole booklet was the letter from the school student. I hear similar stories over and over again from my own three teenage children (only one of whom is Muslim, but the other two go to a majority Muslim school and their friends are Muslims) and my nieces and nephews."

Box 19: letter from a school student

I am a fifteen year old Bengali girl who has recently reverted to Islam. Before, I never understood what Islam was, but I have realised what a beautiful and perfect religion it is.

I am writing to you so that I can share my feelings with someone who I'm sure would understand how I am feeling. As soon as I started practising my religion and wearing a headscarf, some teachers in my school have changed their attitudes towards me. I go to a majority Asian school, so the pupils aren't a problem, but it's the teachers I have trouble convincing that I am not a terrorist. They don't understand me or my religion.

I am in my GCSE years, and I am stuck with a maths teacher who makes it clear that he doesn't like us Muslims. He will go out of his way to make fun of us. Lots of other girls who have reverted are also suffering. It may be too late for me now, since it's my last year but I would like to make a change, so that other people don't suffer like I have. Please give me some advice on what I can do to make a difference.

As a consequence of including the Box 19 extract in our consultation paper, we received a letter from another student;

> "Dear Runnymede Trust, my name is ... and I am thirteen years old. I am a British Muslim. I think I am very fortunate to be able to come to a mixed community school, where a majority of the pupils are Muslims. The staff understand and respect the needs of their Muslim pupils, and try to help us as much as possible ... I am writing to invite you to come in and have a look at our school. This may help you to convince and help other schools to learn more and grow a better knowledge of Islam."

A teacher at the same school itemised some of the principal ways in which the cultural and pastoral needs of Muslim pupils are met, and concluded as follows:

> "As a British Muslim teacher I feel I am extremely fortunate to work in a school where other religions are understood, accepted and respected. Having spoken to other Muslim teachers working in schools around the country, I know that this is not always the standard practice."

The chair of governors commended the staff and reflected on the key qualities which are required:

> "Teachers who are willing to adapt to change, and who have a natural sympathy with the child who has extra hoops to jump through, such as a child from another culture, tend to choose inner-city schools. Such sensitive teachers are often Muslim children's best friends. The children grow into a world where they will be both Punjabi/Sylheti and British. Their homes and communities prepare them for the former; their teachers for the latter. Teachers who listen to children, and headteachers who support them, are the most vital resource."

"Teachers who listen to children, and headteachers who support them": this is, of course, an essential point. The listening is to multiple identities and belongings, "both Punjabi/Sylheti and British". Such listening requires, amongst other things, coherent policies on topics such as the following:

- religious education
- school dress code
- school meals
- collective acts of worship
- fasting periods
- religious holidays
- Friday prayers
- single-sex groupings and classes
- contacts with parents
- contacts with mosques and mosque schools
- physical education dress
- showering arrangements

The content of policy is likely to vary from place to place, and from time to time. **We recommend that local education authorities should work with schools in their areas to develop guidelines on all the points listed above.** Further, **we recommend that the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) should give guidance to registered inspectors on points to look for when reporting on the arrangements which schools make for the pastoral and cultural needs of Muslim pupils.**

The inclusion of Muslim schools in the state sector of education

There are currently 58 full-time independent Muslim schools in Britain.[4] They cater between them for about two per cent of all Muslim children. The majority of the pupils are of South Asian background. But several of the 58 schools are multi-ethnic, with pupils from a wide range of cultural and national backgrounds. Non-Muslim children are welcome in principle to attend them, and some do. Many of the schools employ non-Muslims as teaching staff as well as Muslims. Nine of the schools are residential and are linked to seminaries whose purpose is to train religious leaders – *ulama* – for British-born and British-educated Muslims. A few cater in particular for the international diplomatic and business community.

At primary level most Muslim schools are co-educational, but at secondary nearly all are single-sex and, apart from the seminary-attached schools, they are principally for girls. Several of the schools with secondary age pupils have achieved high levels of success in GCSE examinations at 16+. In summer 1996, for example, several Muslim schools were close to, or in some instances vastly exceeded, the national average with regard to the numbers of pupils achieving five or more GCSE passes at grades A–C.

However, the numbers of secondary-age pupils in Muslim schools are as yet quite small. In 1996 there were only about 660 pupils aged 15, for example, spread across 32 different schools.[5] The average size of the cohort was thus only about 21. The three largest schools had cohorts of respectively 77, 66 and 52 at this age. Ten of the 32 schools had fewer than ten 15-year-old pupils each.

Some of the 58 schools have applied in the past, or else may apply at some stage in the next few years, to be included in the state education system with grant-maintained, foundation or voluntary aided status, and therefore to receive state funding. The criteria for approving such an application are that there should be a demonstrable demand from parents; that there should be no spare places in other schools in the vicinity; that the school should be resourced and staffed to teach the national curriculum; and that the premises should be of a required standard. Currently there are almost 7,000 state schools with an explicit religious affiliation. Not a single one is Muslim. About 4,800 are Church of England, 2,140 Roman Catholic, 28 Methodist and 23 Jewish. They have between them four main kinds of status: voluntary-aided, voluntary-controlled, grant-maintained and special agreement. In future the Government intends that there should be three types of status, to be known as foundation, community and voluntary. A consultation paper to be issued in late 1997 will presumably clarify the implications of the new proposed structure for Muslim schools which wish to become state-funded.

The applications made in the past by Muslim schools for state funding have so far (as of summer 1997) all been turned down by central Government. It is difficult to avoid the suspicion that anti-Muslim prejudice has played a part in the rejections, since the official reasons given by the Government have seemed generally unconvincing. Some extracts are given in Box 20 from articles which express the kind of viewpoint which may have affected the Government's decisions – one of them, by a senior journalist at the *Daily Telegraph*, explicitly commends the Government for its "hidden agenda" based on hostility to Islam. Others allege that Muslims discriminate against girls. Certainly there is a widespread perception in Muslim communities that the Government's inertia and unhelpfulness over many years on this matter has been affected or caused by the kind of anti-Muslim sentiment illustrated in Box 20.

Box 20: opposition to state funding for Muslim schools

"Islam has the greatest difficulty in coming to terms with the values of western secular society, which it is much more inclined to regard as satanic than as the greatest achievement of human civilisation to date ... Behind the Muslim demand that they be given their own schools out of public funds is a hidden agenda of discrimination and intolerance – just as one may suspect there is a hidden agenda, but this time a sound one, behind the Government's refusal."

Article by Clifford Longley in the Daily Telegraph, 3 September 1993.

"Racial and religious harmony are vital for the future, and I believe that the setting up of Muslim schools ... would be a disaster. Because most Muslims come from ethnic minorities, the schools would in practice become ethnically as well as religiously divisive. We would be deliberately and knowingly building apartheid into our schools and into our society. Instead of harmony and integration we would have division and strife ..."

Article by James Hutchings in The Times, 1 January 1993

"Eventually, a high proportion of Britain's 400,000 Muslim children could end up isolated in sectarian schools. Does it matter? It means the state will educate children to believe women are of inferior status, one step behind in the divine order of things. The state will acquiesce in the repression of young girls, putting their parents' cultural rights above the duty to educate all British girls equally."

Article by Polly Toynbee in the Independent, 14 February 1996

Those who have opposed the inclusion of Muslim schools in the state education system have mentioned four main objections.

1) An administrative and financial point. It has been claimed that there are already empty places in the vicinity of a proposed new school, and that therefore the new school is not only unnecessary but would exacerbate falling rolls elsewhere. At first sight this argument has a certain weight. However, the Government has agreed to provide funding for new Jewish schools in areas where

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4   Information provided by the Association of Muslim Schools, summer 1997.
5   As shown in *The Muslim News*, 20 December 1996, based on figures collected and published by the Department for Education and Employment.

there are already empty places and has therefore appeared inconsistent and unjust in its dealings with Muslim applications. In any case Muslim schools (like most Jewish schools and many Roman Catholic schools) draw their pupils from a wide surrounding area, not from the immediate neighbourhood. They have little or no impact, therefore, on the size of schools in the immediate locality .

2) Distraction from more important issues. It has been claimed that the creation of Muslim state schools would be a distraction from more important issues, for example those discussed earlier in this chapter about standards, about curriculum content, and about pastoral needs. "We cannot," said the Swann Report, "favour a 'solution' to the supposed 'problems' which ethnic minority communities face, which tacitly seems to accept that these 'problems' are beyond the capacity and imagination of existing schools to meet and that the only answer is therefore to provide 'alternative' education for ethnic minority pupils, thus in effect absolving existing schools from even making the attempt to reappraise and revise their practices."[6] Certainly it is important that all existing schools should "reappraise and revise their practices", and should not be absolved from this responsibility. It is most unlikely, however, that including a small number of Muslim schools in the state sector could prevent or discourage such reappraisal.

3) Divisiveness. It has been claimed that the creation of even a handful of Muslim state schools would be divisive. This was stated in the Swann Report, for example, which repeatedly spoke of Muslim schools as "separate schools" and with this phrase affected the terms of debate throughout the ensuing decade. An article in *The Times,* cited in Box 20, was headlined "Don't fund apartheid". However, there is state funding for thousands of Church of England, Roman Catholic and Jewish state schools. These are not generally seen as divisive or "separate", and there is no objective reason for assuming that Muslim state schools would be intrinsically divisive or separate in ways in which other religiously based state schools are not.

4) Miseducation. It is argued that Muslim schools would be seedbeds of "fundamentalism" – places for "trainee ayatollahs", as one MP put it, though he totally changed his view when he actually visited a Muslim school to see for himself[7] – and would therefore be anti-educational. "It is widely accepted in this country," said the Swann Report, "that education should seek to encourage children to question, to criticise, to investigate, to challenge, to debate, to evaluate and to be able to make decisions and choices about their future adult lives."[8] The implication was that Muslim schools would be unable to provide this sort of education. If it were indeed the case that Muslim schools provide a poor education, as thus described, then there would in fact be advantages in their coming into the state sector, for they would have to teach the national curriculum, and would have to be inspected regularly along with all other state schools. In point of fact, however, no evidence has been provided by opponents of Muslim schools for their claim that such schools are "fundamentalist" and cannot provide a proper education.

The reasons for not including a number of Muslim schools in the state system, to summarise, are in our view weak. The reasons in favour of providing state funding for such schools, however, are in our view strong. There are again four main arguments.

1) Equity. It is unjust that some faith communities, but not all who wish to and who satisfy the criteria, should have schools in the state sector.

2) Symbolism. Until and unless there are a number of Muslim schools in the state system, the inevitable message will be that Islam is less worthy of respect and public esteem than Christianity and Judaism. The inclusion of Muslim schools in the state sector, by the same token, will remove a constant source of legitimate grievance in Muslim communities, and will signal clearly to the whole population that the Government is committed to the development of a multi-faith society. For the foreseeable future the vast majority (over 98 per cent) of Muslim parents will continue to send their children to non-Muslim schools, either through necessity, because there are no Muslim schools in their vicinity, or else through deliberate preference, because they believe a particular non-Muslim school is better for their children.[9] They will be glad and reassured, though, that apparent injustice and insult to their faith have been removed. The general point about justice and symbolism was well made in an editorial in *The Times* in 1993, at the time that the Government had yet again turned down an application from a Muslim school to become voluntary-aided:

> "Ministers are very unwise if they assume that Islamic militancy will be fuelled more by separate Muslim schooling than by this kind of insensitive disregard for the feelings of a minority, who already see themselves as discriminated against. With this symbolic action, the government appears to be refusing to acknowledge the religious legitimacy of Islam or the permanent existence of a large Muslim population in this country."[10]

3) Facilitating dialogue and equal partnership. Muslim educators have valuable contributions to make in contemporary discussions of educational philosophy, for example with regard to moral education, spirituality and theory of knowledge. It would be easier for them to be heard and attended to if a number of schools embodying Muslim principles of education are included in the state system, and if the practical application of the principles is therefore more readily visible to non-Muslims.

6 The quotation is from paragraph 2.13 on page 510 of *Education for All* (the 'Swann Report'): *the report of the Committee of Inquiry into the Education of Children from Ethnic Minority Groups,* Her Majesty's Stationery Office 1985.

7 Ken Livingstone MP, quoted in 'The Case for Muslim Schools' by Ibrahim Hewitt, *Issues in Islamic Education,* Muslim Educational Trust, July 1996.

8 Paragraph 2.7, on page 504 of the Swann Report.

9 Research by the Policy Studies Institute in the early 1990s found that most Muslims, particularly of the younger generation, did not want to send their own children to Muslim schools. Modood et al (1994), pages 54/55.

10 'Perversity and Prejudice: the government's new policy on Muslims is in error', *The Times,* 20 August 1993.

4) Facilitating contacts and interaction. It would be easier to arrange contacts between Muslim and non-Muslim schools if some of the former were in the state sector: contacts such as teacher exchanges, joint inservice training, involvement of heads, staff and governors in LEA activities and affairs, sports fixtures for pupils, shared cultural activities, and so on.

The Government's official stance is that it has no inherent objection to Muslim state schools as such, and it points out that the right to establish such schools is firmly established in British law. What is required, therefore, is a fairer, more generous and more transparent application of the rules; a preparedness to incur new expenditure, if necessary, for the sake of equity and in order to signal commitment to developing an inclusive society; and a presumption that state funding for a number of Muslim state schools is now an urgent priority. **We recommend that the criteria and procedures for providing state funding to religiously-based schools should be reviewed and modified to ensure that they do not discriminate unfairly against Muslim bodies.** Further, **we recommend that the criteria and procedures for providing state funding to religiously-based schools should be more transparent, and appeals against the Secretary of State's decisions should be possible.**

Concluding note

If, as we hope, most or all of the applications made for state funding are successful it will still be the case that over 98 per cent of Muslim pupils in state schools will be at mainstream schools. It is in the mainstream schools that their academic, religious, cultural and pastoral needs, accordingly, must be met.

Chapter 8:
Building bridges

Inter-community projects and dialogue

"An unfortunate consequence of the paper's justified concern with Islamophobia," wrote one of our correspondents, referring to the consultation paper which we had distributed, "is that it paints a picture weak on context. Yes, Islamophobia exists and yes, it looks as if it is growing. But it is part of a wider picture. Attitudes to Islam and Muslims are more varied across a wide spectrum than the document appears to suggest." In particular the writer had in mind the work and activities of a wide range of inter-community projects and meetings, and various kinds of grassroots collaboration. He continued as follows:

"There has built up over the decades much positive experience and much constructive goodwill across the country, especially in religious and educational circles. The interfaith movement is, arguably, stronger than it has ever been and it has the support of significant institutions. Government attacks on the ethos of multicultural and multifaith education have often foundered on the strength and commitment of significant numbers of teachers trained since the 1970s – even though there is still an enormous amount to be done. It must also be registered that compared to virtually all other countries in Europe, with the possible exception of the Netherlands, the situation in Britain is (at least) the least bad."

Also several other correspondents wrote to us about the significance of inter-community and inter-faith dialogue and encounter. We cite in Box 21 some of the points which were made.

The projects which we describe in this chapter illustrate between them the following points:

- the importance of face-to-face interactions and friendships
- the need for mutual trust to be built up before worthwhile dialogue can take place
- the need for straightforward factual information, based on firsthand experience
- the need to acknowledge centuries of mutual antagonism and suspicion, and the realities of Islamophobia in the present
- the crucial role of leadership in the various faith communities
- the commonalities which exist between different religious faiths, and the ways in which they have influenced and borrowed from each other over the centuries
- the importance of practical projects which require people from different communities and faiths to work as partners on the resolution of shared problems, and to make common cause to other bodies
- the value of expressions of regret, sympathy and solidarity at times of heightened tension, for example at times when individuals or organisations claiming to be motivated by a religious faith engage in acts of terrorism or persecution.

Box 21: principles of dialogue and encounter

"Opening up channels of communication"
"Encounter and dialogue are of vital importance in breaking down prejudices and stereotypes. All faith communities need to find ways to work to build good inter-faith relations with other communities. This means that opinion-leaders within these communities need to work, as indeed many are already doing, on making sure that their own clergy and teachers are equipped to respond in unprejudiced ways to other faiths; teaching their own followers about the importance of being respectful of those who differ in belief and practice (even where there is genuine disagreement); opening up channels of communication with the other faiths, and making use of existing ones."
A correspondent in London

"Culture of mutuality and trust"
"In a society where trust has broken down, any criticism can be perceived by Muslims as evidence of hatred or dread towards Islam. In such a context, the right to criticise should be a product of trust-building

and friendship. In some cases it might be wise to leave the criticism to Muslims themselves until a culture of mutuality and trust exists."
A national Christian organisation

"European debt"
"We understand our own Christian faith to be ill-served by bearing false witness against others, and deeply regret the stirring up of fear and hatred against members of minority communities who are already disadvantaged in Britain. We are particularly conscious of the long history of mutual antagonism between Christian and Muslim, of the legacy of Muslim conquest in Europe, Crusades and colonialism. Many of us are deeply involved in building contacts across communities, and count Muslims among our personal friends. We reject the 'Huntington thesis' of probable conflict between Islam and the West in a 'clash of civilisations', and would remind our fellow-citizens of the European debt to the civilisation and culture of Islam."
A national Christian organisation

We illustrate these points by describing a range of projects, initiatives and problems. They are as follows:

- historical summary – dialogue and encounter over the years
- making common cause – (a) to public bodies
- making common cause – (b) to modern science
- making common cause – (c) solidarity at times of tension
- Islamophobia and the building of mosques

Historical summary – dialogue and encounter over the years

"The only sympathetic ear came from the churches," writes Ataullah Siddiqui, research fellow on inter-faith relations and Islam in Europe at the Islamic Foundation, Leicester, recalling the early days of Muslim settlement in Britain.[1] At local levels congregations gave assistance to the recently arrived immigrants, motivated by human concern: "Basic needs, such as housing, jobs and even language interpretations, were taken up by them; Friday congregational facilities were made available." Out of such activity there developed dialogue and encounter. The earliest events included a national conference in Peterborough in 1973 entitled *Islam in the Parish*. Later conferences were entitled *The Family in Islam and Christianity* and *Worship and Prayer in Islam and Christianity*. The proceedings were edited by the Community Relations Consultancies of Bradford and Wakefield, and published by Bradford Community Relations Council.

At around the same time the British Council of Churches set up an advisory group on the presence of Islam in Britain, chaired by the Bishop of Guildford. The group published *A New Threshold: guidelines for the churches in their relations with Muslim communities* in 1976. This urged Christians to adopt "confident and reconciling attitudes towards Muslims". The Centre for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations (CSIC) was founded in Birmingham in 1975. "Since its inception," writes Ataullah Siddiqui, "Muslim participants, either in its tutorial courses or in annual summer schools, have felt free to express their thoughts with the conviction that their opinions will be valued in an atmosphere of mutual respect and dialogue."[2] To provide a Muslim perspective on inter-faith dialogue the Islamic Foundation publishes a bi-annual journal, *Encounters: a journal of intercultural perspectives.*

Bilateral dialogue between Islam and Christianity has continued. It has throughout been accompanied and complemented by Jewish-Muslim dialogue, by 'trialogue' involving Judaism, Christianity and Islam, and by multi-lateral projects involving other world faiths as well. Over the years such projects have been influenced for Muslims by teachings in the Qur'an such as "O humankind! – We created you from a single pair of male and female, and have made you into tribes and nations that you may ˚ know each other" (Qur'an, Al-Hujraat, 49: verse 13) and

"Let there be no compulsion in religion: truth stands out clear from error" (2, verse 252).

In 1972 the Standing Conference of Jews, Christians and Muslims in Europe (JCM) came into existence. A leading role was played by a Jewish foundation, the Leo Baeck College, London, an institution for the training of rabbis and Jewish educators. The purpose of JCM is "to provide a forum in Europe for meetings among members of the three religious communities that share a belief in one God and that find their roots in the figure of Abraham." Similarly the Calamus Foundation, inaugurated by a group of Muslims in 1989, promotes dialogue between followers of the three Abrahamic faiths. The Maimonides Foundation focuses on Jewish-Muslim relations and provides a forum for consideration of Israel and Palestine. One valuable consequence of such forums is that their members are able to contact each other at times of heightened inter-community and international tension, and to help maintain mutual trust and respect.

The first meeting of the British Council of Churches' Committee for Relations with People of Other Faiths (CRPOF) took place in May 1978. Its work over the years has been based on four principles of dialogue first articulated by the World Council of Churches. Subsequently (from January 1993 onwards) CRPOF changed its name to the Churches' Commission for Interfaith Relations (CCIFR). Since 1988 the journal *Discernment: a Christian journal of inter-religious encounter* has been published on behalf of CCIFR from Westminster College, Oxford.

Multi-lateral projects, for example the Inner Cities Religious Council (set up in 1992 by the Department of the Environment), the World Congress of Faiths and the World Conference on Religion and Peace, have involved members of other world faiths as well as Muslims, Jews and Christians. So have broadly parallel educational projects, for example the Standing Conference on Interfaith Dialogue in Education (SCIFDE) and the work of the Shap Working Party, both of which have had a significant impact on the development of multi-faith religious education syllabuses in schools and teacher training, and a wide range of locally-based projects of which the Leeds Concord Inter-Faith Fellowship is one of the most longstanding. Since 1987 a valuable organisational framework for inter-community dialogue and encounter has been provided nationally by the Inter Faith Network for the United Kingdom. Its first joint chairmen were the late Rabbi Hugo Gryn and the Rt Revd Jim Thompson, at that time Bishop of Stepney. This links over 80 organisations, including national bodies representing Britain's main faith communities, national and local interfaith groups, and educational and academic bodies. Seven Muslim organisations are members of the Network. The Network's publications include a succinct and influential statement of general principles and guidelines and a comprehensive directory of organisations.[3]

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1   Ataullah Siddiqui, 'Muslims and Interfaith Dialogue in Britain – an overview', *Worlds Faiths Encounter*, November 1996. Siddiqui's full-length book (Macmillan, 1997) provides further detail and background.
2   Ataullah Siddiqui, ibid.
3   Weller (1997), details in Appendix D.

British Muslims are affected not only by Christian-Muslim and Jewish-Muslim relations in the wider world but also by events and situations involving Hindus or Sikhs. There have been several occassions in recent years when an occurrence in South Asia (particularly India) has led to increased mistrust and tension in British cities. It follows that Hindu and Sikh leaders have important roles to play in combating Islamophobia in their own communities, and that bridge-building between faith communities should involve Hindus and Sikhs as well as Muslims, Jews and Christians.

We recommend that all faith communities should appoint officers, at a range of appropriate levels, to be responsible for inter-faith relations, and should give them relevant administrative, financial and institutional support.

In the rest of this chapter we show some of the practical projects which such postholders have to engage in. At one stage, in relation to a proposed new mosque, we recall the kind of dispute and tension where they have to act as mediators and bridge-builders.

On the basis of these accounts **we recommend that all religious leaders, at local as well as national levels, should accept that they have a responsibility for speaking out against Islamophobia, and for in no way giving encouragement to it.** This responsibility is particularly important in Christian and Jewish communities. It needs ideally to be embedded in a range of practical cooperative activities, particularly those which involve making common cause to other bodies. **We recommend that faith communities should make common cause to secular bodies, at local as well as national levels.** Further, **we recommend that all inter-faith groups, at local as well as national levels, should discuss Islamophobia directly and should incorporate reference to Islamophobia into their guidelines and policy documents.** Also, **we recommend that all inter-faith groups, at local as well as national levels, should be ready to make complaints to the Press Complaints Commission, and to the newspapers concerned, about instances of Islamophobia in the press.**

Making common cause –
(a) to secular public bodies

In Box 22 we describe an example of a bilateral project undertaken at a local level, *Building Bridges in Lancashire,* in order to show the kind of practical activity which the term 'inter-community dialogue and encounter' covers. One of its distinctive features is that it involves local government and other public bodies as well as mosques and churches – county and borough councillors take part, and also MPs and MEPs, and leaders of a range of voluntary and statutory organisations.

Box 22: common cause to secular bodies

The Lancashire Council of Mosques and the Blackburn Diocese of the Church of England have created a forum to discuss matters of mutual concern. The forum meets formally twice a year and organises a range of activities bringing Muslims and Christians together. These have included visits by Muslims to Blackburn Cathedral and visits to mosques by Christians. Latterly there has been an annual gathering attended not only by mosque and church leaders but also by the mayors, leaders and chief executives of local councils, by MPs and MEPs, and by representatives of voluntary organisations and community development projects. Such large-scale and relatively formal events arise from, and at the same time give impetus to, a range of informal, face-to-face meetings and friendships. A formal statement of objectives has been drawn up, as follows:

1 To build mutual trust and understanding between Muslims and Christians.
2 To help forge links between people and organisations from the various communities of Lancashire.
3 To create an opportunity whereby various individuals, organisations and statutory bodies could form relationships, through which different community relations projects may develop.

Making common cause –
(b) to modern science

In December 1996 a consultation was held at Wilton Park, the international relations conference centre. It was chaired by Sir John Coles, permanent under-secretary of state at the Foreign and Commonwealth office. The opening speaker was HRH The Prince of Wales. Its focus was on ways in which Islam and Christianity can cooperate with each other in contributing a shared religious outlook on contemporary problems and issues which are usually thought of as essentially secular, because technical and scientific. Such topics include healthcare and medicine, architecture and urban planning, land management and agriculture, and care of the environment. The speakers used extracts from Islamic and Christian spiritual traditions to illustrate concepts which the two religions broadly have in common.

Rather as mosques and churches came together in Lancashire (Box 22) to make common cause to local government and other public bodies, so at Wilton Park Islam and Christianity came together to present common cause to modern secular science. On theological and doctrinal matters, observed one of the speakers at the conference, each religion is "the jealous guardian of its central tenets". Therefore meaningful dialogue has to "start at the peripheries where encounter is least threatening to each side". How each religion views and understands the physical world, and the discoveries and insights of modern science, "provides a meeting point where the conversation can concern issues of real importance without leading to any temptation for either side to be defensive".[4]

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4   Professor John Polkinghorne, 'Science as a Meeting Ground between the Faiths', paper presented at the Wilton Park conference, December 1996, and published by the Stationery Office (Wilton Park, 1997).

In Box 23 there are quotations from some of the speeches.

Box 23: common cause to modern science

The wholeness of healing
"In medicine, the rupture between religion and science, between the material world and a sense of the sacred, has too often led to a blinkered approach to healthcare, and to a failure to understand the wholeness and manifest mystery of the healing process. Hospitals need to be conceived and, above all, designed to reflect the wholeness of healing if they are to help the process of recovery in a more complex way."

HRH The Prince of Wales

Recovering the sense of the sacred
"The Qur'an states that human beings were created to serve God. It follows that our sense of the sacred is the most important attribute of being human. Formal worship is just one, focused element of serving God. More broadly, service of God means a constant accountability to Him. Modern western attitudes rebel against this feeling of accountability. They prefer instead an untrammelled tenure of life and of this planet. Such attitudes, let me stress, are no longer western in a geographical sense, only in point of cultural origin. Present-day Muslim societies are acquiring these attitudes at a tremendous speed. Muslims are therefore as much in need of recovering the sense of the sacred as anybody else."

Dr Fahan Nizami, director of the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies

Stewardship
"Christianity and Islam are both aware of the God-dimension in the human personality. Christianity speaks of this as the *imago Dei*, the image of God in us. Islam speaks of it more in the sense of *khilafa*, or stewardship, which has been entrusted to humanity. Stewardship is, indeed, a common and important theme in both the Bible and the Qur'an and reminds us immediately that our sense of the sacred is related to the sacredness of the world around us. In spite of the world's tiredness because of human greed and exploitation, there still lives, as Gerard Manley Hopkins saw, 'the dearest freshness deep down in things'. It is part of human stewardship to allow this freshness to appear and to renew creation."

The Rt Revd Michael Nazir-Ali, Bishop of Rochester

Including the truths of science
"Why is science possible at all? Why can we understand the physical universe so deeply and find such wonder in the understanding that is granted us? Our powers of comprehension vastly exceed anything required for the evolutionary necessities of everyday survival. Our faiths both reply that it is because the world is a creation and we are creatures made in the image of our Creator ... We must make common cause in witnessing to our secular society that science (to many the ground of their secularity) in fact points beyond itself to the God of all truth, including the truths of science."

Professor John Polkinghorne

These are quotations from speeches at the Wilton Park conference of December 1996.

Making common cause – (c) solidarity at times of tension

From time to time there is an event which raises tension between different communities and which appears to make continuing dialogue and mutual trust all but impossible. Examples include disturbances involving young people and the police; acts of terrorism by individuals or groups claiming to be motivated by a religious faith; and acts of persecution or aggression by governments in the wider world, for example in the Middle East. If forums already exist for the calm discussion of such tensions and debates, and if in consequence there are strong interpersonal bonds and contacts between representatives of different faith communities, messages of regret, support and sympathy can be sent with sincerity, and received with gratitude. And common cause can be made against extremist outlooks and responses of many kinds.

At the time of the Bradford disturbances in summer 1995, for example, an inter-faith group of women had a significant impact, along with others, in reducing tension and maintaining trust. The previous year there were several well-publicised attacks around the world – including London and Argentina as well as Israel – on Jewish communities and targets. These were perpetrated by people claiming to be motivated by Muslim beliefs. A number of Muslim leaders in Britain took it upon themselves to write letters of regret to the national and Jewish press, and to Jewish individuals and organisations. The text of one such letter is shown below. In Box 24 we quote from some of the responses, to illustrate the importance which such letters have.

> "We, as members of the British Muslim community, have been outraged at the recent bombings aimed at the Jewish community.
>
> "Peaceful coexistence of all communities is not only desirable but is also in line with the basic teachings of Islam. It is in fact a duty of every Muslim to uphold the rights of other members of the society, to observe the principles of brotherhood and good neighbourliness and to stand up against all such acts of violence – whoever the perpetrators." (Letter published in the *Independent*, 1 August 1994. The signatories were Tariq Azim Khan, Dr Zaki Badawi, Mrs Meher Khan, Professor Akbar Ahmed, Imam Dr Sajid and Dr Karim Admani.)

The quotations in Box 24 recall, in effect, that relations between Muslims and Jews in Britain have been increasingly affected in recent years by the geo-political situation of Israel/Palestine. All the main conflicting parties in the Middle East seek and receive support (material, political, moral) from the wider world, including from within Britain. Their supporters readily use discourse which sounds antisemitic on the one hand or Islamophobic on the other. Some Muslims see Jews in general and Israel in particular as the vanguard of anti-Muslim prejudice. Jewish organisations, for their part, increasingly see terrorists claiming to be motivated by

Islam as a greater and more immediate threat than far right 'white' organisations.[5] The building of bridges between Muslims and Jews in Britain is of immense consequence to themselves. Also it is essential for the well-being of society more generally, not least since such bridges are models for many other kinds of bridge as well. The Jewish commentator David Cesarani has used the term 'truly liberal society and state', derived from an article on liberalism by Bhikhu Parekh, to summarise the ideals which we in this report have called (at the start of Chapter 5) 'an inclusive society'. He writes as follows:

> "The prospects for Jews and Judaism, as for Muslims and Islam, to prosper in Britain in the next century will depend on the nature of British society and, above all, the realisation of 'a truly liberal society and state'. That is a possibility which some Britons find unappetising. It is in their interests that Jews and Muslims remain at loggerheads. While Jews continue to demonise 'fundamentalism' ... and conflate the struggle against Israel which, however unjustified and horrifying it might be, is a geo-political fact of life, with the assertion of a Muslim identity this cooperation will remain elusive.
>
> "The tragedy in the making is that most Jews and most Muslims will not see that they have more uniting them than dividing them, that the extremism in the one camp inflames the other and that neither will win by perpetuating this antagonism. On the contrary, they will only justify the dogma of English liberals who find abhorrent the particularist agenda of both groups and who will lose no time in redoubling their efforts, long practised in the era of colonialism, to erase these apparently irascible cultures and traditions ..."[6]

Islamophobia and the building of mosques

From time to time there is fierce opposition from Christian individuals and organisations, or from people and organisations claiming to be motivated by Christian principles and considerations, to the building of a mosque. Such opposition is a stark reminder of the context in which inter-community and inter-faith dialogue frequently takes place. Neither Christians nor Muslims can ignore the context or the bitterness and mistrust which are released. One such occasion was in summer 1996 in the city of Chichester. We quote in Box 25 some of the statements which were quoted in the local press, or which were included in letters to the editor which the local press printed. Many of these statements and letters expressed the kinds of Islamophobic attitudes which we describe and illustrate elsewhere in this report.

The expression of Islamophobic views by people who maintain that they are motivated by Christian principles requires that church leaders should vigorously express alternative views. In Chichester, the church leaders, including the Bishop of Chichester and the Bishop of Portsmouth, did speak out in support of the proposed mosque and did dissociate themselves from the bigotry expressed in the name of Christianity. So did the editor of the local newspaper, though only after giving a platform to virulent anti-Muslim sentiment. However, the Chichester mosque controversy of summer 1996 basically illustrated the failure of inter-faith and inter-community cooperation and trust, and the wide gulf in places such as Chichester which inter-community dialogue has to bridge. As yet it is a warning, not a success story.

Box 24: responses to a letter of solidarity

"Thank you for your letter in the Independent. All of us in the Jewish community deeply appreciated your sentiments – and your courage in expressing them. The Muslim and the Jewish communities are fellow minorities, sharing many of the same problems and all of the same enemies. I am happy to work with your fellow signatories and with you, for the principles of brotherhood and good neighbourliness to which you so eloquently refer."

A Jewish Member of Parliament

"It is important to take note of the mainstream British Muslims who have condemned the terrorist bombings ... The surest long-term answer to terror lies in a stable Middle East peace. Here at home, it must reside in a shared commitment by all voices of reason, Jewish and Muslim, to oppose those who would abuse religion as a rallying cry for bigotry, hatred or violence."

Editorial in the Jewish Chronicle, 5 August 1994

"I should like to thank you most warmly for your letter condemning the recent violence against Jewish and Israeli institutions in Britain. We very much appreciate your condemnation of the recent terrorism, and your kind message of sympathy. You have written in the most generous terms, and the members of the Jewish community will feel particularly heartened by expressions of support we have received from yourself and other leading members of the Muslim community. Let us hope and pray for more peaceful times ahead."

Letter from a national Jewish organisation

" ... The entire episode is deeply disturbing. What made my return to work today that little bit easier was your letter, for which I am profoundly grateful ... What can I say except that it really helps to have friends."

Letter from a rabbi

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5   In Summer 1997 *The Jewish Quarterly* (number 166) published a roundtable debate between Muslims, Jews and British Black people, showing a range of mutual antipathies and suspicions as well as approaches to bridge-building.

6   *The Jewish Quarterly* number 157, Spring 1995.

Box 25: opposition to a mosque

"As far as Muslims are concerned, we should be trying to convert them ...What is being suggested is in complete contravention of our Lord's teaching. Once this sort of thing [a mosque] is established Muslims will be wanting to take part in events such as our Good Friday procession of witness, which would be utterly wrong." *(A Chichester representative on the General Synod of the Church of England, quoted in the Chichester Observer on 11 July 1996.)*

"We are dealing with the devil and his works in Islam ... If you allow a mosque in this city, God won't stand by and let it happen. The whole thing is an abomination to God." *(Speaker at a meeting organised by Chichester Christian Fellowship, reported in The News, Portsmouth, 25 June 1996.)*

"Have we forgotten during the Gulf war our servicemen had to hold their church services hidden away? It's getting ridiculous. We are far too accommodating to foreigners." *(Letter in Chichester Observer, 16 May 1996.)*

"A mosque in lovely old English Chichester? No! No! ... Thank God for everything English ... They wouldn't want one of our churches funded by Chichester in one of their Muslim areas. During the Gulf War our lads had to refrain from taking part in Christian prayers etc, so what on earth is going on?" *(Letter in Chichester Observer, 16 May 1996.)*

"The version of Islam proffered for western consumption is of a peace-loving, tolerant religion, where all are equal. However, real-life Islam can best be found in a Muslim country. There, other religions are usually repressed or even actively persecuted. In Saudi Arabia, to many the epitome of the Islamic state and the birthplace of Islam, no religious buildings are permitted to the non-Muslim, discussion of religious matters between Muslim and non-Muslim are effectively barred by the law against proselytising and ... any Muslim daring to convert to another religion is liable to be executed by beheading." *(Letter in Chichester Observer, 6 June 1996.)*

"I am in favour of permitting a mosque in Chichester, provided that there is corresponding freedom of worship for Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jews, Christians, Zoroastrians, Confucians, Taoists, Shintoists and other Kafirs (Infidels) in Muslim countries. Surely this is not being unreasonable, intolerant, bigoted, racist, sexist or politically incorrect?" *(Letter in Chichester Observer, 6 June 1996.)*

Concluding note: "how far can we travel together?"

"We are on a journey together," said the Archbishop of Canterbury recently[7], referring in particular to Christians and Muslims, "and we live in a world where the world of faiths jostle side by side." He continued:

"We are able to choose to walk together in harmony or to jockey for position and so add to the chaos and troubles of our world by treating one another as enemies rather than neighbours who should be friends. In my view interfaith dialogue is not an option but a necessity – neither is it an impossibility – but the answer to the question 'How far can we travel together?' is not one we can answer when the journey has only just begun. It is something we shall only discover as we set out boldly on the way."

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7   In a lecture in November 1996 to mark the 60th anniversary of the foundation of the World Congress of Faiths.

Chapter 9: Recourse to law
Principles of justice and redress of wrong

Law is one of the most important, yet also one of the least important, of our concerns.

Law is important because on the one hand it has a symbolic quality, for it embodies and proclaims principles of justice, and because on the other it operates in a coercive fashion to furnish remedies and to impose penalties for wrongdoing. It is wholly reasonable, in the present context, to expect British law to proclaim religious freedom as an elementary principle of justice, extending beyond the established church to encompass members of non-Christian faiths. Further, when harm is done to individuals or to communities, whether through discrimination, violence or insult, it is reasonable to expect action from the legal system to deal with such wrongdoing. A correspondent with 20 years of experience of working professionally in the field of equal opportunities wrote to us as follows:

> "I conclude that while legislation is no guarantor of fairness and/or equality it is a pre-requisite. It does occasion debate on an issue which (in this case) suffers from being outside of the legislative framework. There is a feeling that if something isn't unlawful it is all right. Therefore, setting aside absolutes, relatively speaking religious discrimination is fostered by a failure to condemn it – 'what you permit you promote'."

On the relative *un*importance of legislation a correspondent wrote to us as follows, stressing that discrimination and hostility towards Muslims need in the first instance to be delegitimised through "responsible public discourse" rather than through legislation:

> "Legislation in a field like this is a measure of last resort, because punitive legal action in such emotive arenas, especially in the field of incitement, easily has the opposite intention to that sought. Incitement and discrimination need to be delegitimised first by a responsible public discourse – had the offence of incitement existed in Belgium it would have been very unlikely to be used against the inflammatory statement about 'Islam the new enemy' by the Belgian former general secretary of NATO, Willi Claes! But his remark did more damage than dozens by other, lesser mortals."

(Claes said in a television interview that "Muslim fundamentalism .. is a serious threat because it represents terrorism, religious fanaticism and exploitation."[1])

English law addresses the essential issues in its own distinctive way. In stark contrast with the position in many other countries, basic civil liberties such as freedom of religion are not guaranteed by means of a written constitution. Rather, they spring from common law principles developed by the judges over many centuries. In the words of one judge, Sir Robert Megarry:

> "England is not a country where everything is forbidden except where it is expressly permitted; it is a country where everything is permitted except where it is expressly forbidden."[2]

The large measure of tolerance and respect which has traditionally been accorded to individual liberty of action and to freedom of expression and religion has, of course, been restricted in a range of ways, especially in modern times. The restrictions have come partly from judicial development of the common law and partly from the intervention of Parliament in the form of legislation. This process of legal reform is an ongoing one. But since the law often evolves in response to immediate and very specific problems, it tends to lack overall coherence at any one time and to contain various real or apparent anomalies.

In relation to Islamophobia in modern Britain, and to the discrimination towards Muslims which it encourages or permits, there are four main areas of concern. In each of these areas English law has not yet developed sufficiently to be fully responsive to the needs of British Muslims:

- discrimination in employment and the provision of services
- vilification and blasphemy
- incitement to hatred
- violence

We discussed the fourth of these, violence, in an earlier chapter. In this chapter we consider the first three, focusing in particular on the first.

Religious discrimination
Several pieces of legislation enacted in recent years, notably the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, the Race Relations Act 1976 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1996, show official recognition of the injustices which can be caused by patterns of discrimination. The Race Relations Act, for example, makes it unlawful to discriminate on the grounds of colour, race and nationality, and on grounds of ethnic or national origins, in the fields of employment, education, housing, and the provision of goods, facilities and services. However, there is no legislation in England specifically covering discrimination on the grounds of someone's religion. Muslims have sometimes been able to rely on the Race Relations Act to redress wrongdoing. But the important point to emphasise is that discriminatory behaviour which is not precisely covered by the Act is perfectly lawful. Common law upholds and supports individual freedom of action, for example in the recruitment of employees or in admission to membership of a club, unless it has been restricted by statute.

In order to appreciate how the Act has both helped Muslims on some occasions but failed them on others, it is necessary to understand its basic structure. A brief

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1   Inter Press Service, 18 February 1995. There is a fuller quotation in Box 6.
2   Malone v Metropolitan Police Commissioner, 1979.

summary of the structure will also demonstrate that Muslims are in need of two separate forms of protection. On the one hand they require a right not to be discriminated against simply because they are Muslims – a negative right. Second, they require others to bear in mind their religious traditions and practices when framing general rules and policies – a positive right. An example of the second kind of right would be in workplaces, where employers should respect traditions of dress and worship.

The 1976 Act outlaws two types of discrimination, direct and indirect. Direct discrimination occurs where one person treats another less favourably than others on grounds of their colour, race and nationality, or on grounds of ethnic or national origins. Indirect discrimination operates in a more subtle and less obvious fashion. It involves practices which:

(a) appear at first sight to be entirely satisfactory, since they apply the same neutral requirements to everyone regardless of their race or origins;
(b) are seen on closer examination to have a disproportionately adverse impact on certain minority groups.

Such practices are rendered unlawful by the Act, unless they are found to be legally justifiable. An example of direct discrimination would be if an employer told a job centre not to send along Jewish applicants. An illustration of indirect discrimination would be where a school refused to admit a Sikh boy as a pupil because his father insisted on him wearing a turban rather than the regulation school cap. The reason why both Jews and Sikhs are fully protected by the Act is due to the fact that discrimination on 'racial' grounds is defined as including grounds of ethnic origin, as well as colour or race. Religion itself is not mentioned in the Act. In the leading case of Mandla v Dowell Lee decided by the House of Lords in 1983, Lord Fraser ruled that 'ethnic' groups possess both a long shared history and a cultural tradition of their own, which they and outsiders regard as characterising them as a distinct community. Both Sikhs and Jews have been held to meet these requirements. By contrast, in several cases decided more recently by courts and tribunals at a lower level, Muslims have been found not to comprise an ethnic group. This is because, being members of a universal faith resident in a range of world cultures, they are not considered by the courts to have a shared history. In any case Muslims see Islam essentially as a universal religious faith, not merely a matter of ethnicity. Similarly Christians see Christianity as a universal faith, not as the name of a single ethnic group.

Muslims have, however, been able to win certain cases through reliance upon the Act's provisions. During the parliamentary debates preceding its enactment, an assurance was given by a Home Office minister that its provisions on indirect discrimination would do a great deal to protect those who are discriminated against by reason of their religious observance. Indeed, the wearing of turbans by Sikhs was expressly mentioned. However, Muslims would need to rest any claim of this nature upon their 'national' rather than their 'ethnic' origins, or else upon the basis of their 'race'. Hence in one case a Pakistani woman won a case against a department store which was found to have indirectly discriminated against her by refusing to employ her unless she wore their regulation knee-length skirt, contrary to her religious and cultural traditions. To succeed, she relied not on her Muslim faith but on her Pakistani national origins. In other cases Muslim employees have had to rely upon the fact that company rules barring them from taking time off work to celebrate Muslim festivals adversely affected them because such rules had a disproportionate impact on those of Asian 'race'.

However, these oblique approaches to the problem suffer from several defects. First, they do not help white or African-Caribbean British citizens who are converts to Islam. Second, they are also not effective for any other Muslims who comprise only a small minority within their 'racial' or 'national' group. Third, they run entirely counter to Muslim perspectives, for the worldwide Muslim community, the *Ummah*, is not divided along racial, ethnic or national lines.

For these three reasons it is deeply unsatisfactory for Muslims to be forced to rely upon their racial or national identity, when the discrimination which they suffer relates to lack of respect for specifically religious traditions. The current situation sends a clear message to Muslims that English law is not prepared to respect their religious affiliation and beliefs, even though it respects those of Jews and Sikhs.

There are four further reasons why the law should be reformed so that it explicitly prohibits religious discrimination in the areas covered by the Race Relations Act:

1. Religious discrimination is an inefficient business practice, for it denies jobs, promotion and other opportunities to well-qualified individuals, and allows prejudice to result in a waste of talent to the detriment of the public interest at large.

2. Enactment of the Fair Employment (Northern Ireland) Acts 1976 and 1989, while praiseworthy in itself, has created an embarrassing anomaly, with religious discrimination in the employment sphere being unlawful in only one part of the UK.

3. Anti-discrimination laws represent key markers of public policy, and to put religion on a par with race, sex and disability would convey the important message that religious identities are valued and respected throughout British society and that frequent proud assertions of a tradition of religious toleration in this country are buttressed by explicit legal safeguards.

4. Reform can be justified on the basis of moral arguments centred around current notions of equality, fairness and justice. The moral arguments can be fortified and particularised, at least to some extent, by reference to standards established in widely ratified international human rights treaties to which the UK is a contracting party.

For example, principles of religious freedom and guarantees of non-discrimination on grounds of religion are to be found in both the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. However, in relation to certain specific areas, such as refusal of employment in the private sector on religious grounds, mere incorporation of the ECHR into English law would be insufficient to render such a practice unlawful. A statutory reform would be required since the Convention does not precisely cover this point. Even so, the Government's recent undertaking to incorporate the ECHR is a most welcome development, for it will accord religious freedom the explicit status of a written principle in British law for the first time.

Possible objections

Several objections, certainly, can be raised to reforming anti-discrimination law. We believe, however, that they are outweighed by the arguments set out above.

One is that there is insufficient evidence of religious discrimination in England to warrant statutory intervention. However, clear proof of any form of discrimination is often hard to obtain since admissions by the perpetrators are rare. In view of the widespread Islamophobia which we have outlined in this report, and of patterns of economic disadvantage amongst many Muslim communities, there is ample evidence to justify legal reform.

A **second** objection is that there may be situations where it is entirely legitimate to discriminate on religious grounds and, for example, to offer jobs only to persons of a particular faith, or of a particular perspective or sect within a faith. But specific exceptions can readily be included in the legislation to deal with such cases. There is a profound difference between outlawing decisions based merely on prejudice or stereotypical assumptions on the one hand, and authorising selection on the basis of the real needs of a job on the other. Clearly there are posts for which membership of a particular faith is an inherent or essential requirement for the job concerned, for example those of ministers of religion, certain religious functionaries and some teachers in religious schools and colleges. Equally it is reasonable for such posts to require sympathy with a particular theological or sectarian outlook. Such 'discrimination' is allowed under the present law in Northern Ireland and would not be problematic in the rest of the United Kingdom any more than it is in Northern Ireland. In other instances, it would be legally justifiable to exclude members of a particular faith or sect from specific jobs where they are unwilling for religious reasons to perform certain essential tasks.

A **third** objection is that it would be impossible to define 'religion' adequately. We believe for our own part that this matter can safely be left to the courts. Other countries, after all, have not found this particularly complex. The failure to prohibit religious discrimination in Great Britain is in breach of international human rights standards, in particular Article 26 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which provides that "the law shall prohibit any discrimination on any grounds such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status." Many employers in Britain do already pledge formally in their policy documentation that they will not discriminate on grounds of religion, whether in recruitment or in the requirements they make of their staff. They have not experienced major difficulty in resolving tensions amicably and rationally.

A **fourth** objection is that certain minority practices which are currently illegal might become defensible on religious grounds. The instance of female circumcision is sometimes cited here. We acknowledge that tensions between the criminal law and minority practices do exist, and that some of the latter are sometimes justified by their supporters as religious. But we do not believe that the consequence of legislation against religious discrimination would be to make illegal practices any more defensible than they are at present. The criminal law would not be affected.

A **fifth** objection is that legislation outlawing religious discrimination might be socially divisive by promoting inter-faith and intra-faith rivalries, for various religious groups might go to court to criticise each other in public forums. However, it seems just as likely that such rivalries and tensions would be relieved by offering remedies and resolving disputes in a just manner. In a liberal democracy, litigation is an accepted mode of remedying injustice in a sober, peaceful and rational manner.

Enactment and enforcement

How should the new legislation which we are proposing be enacted and enforced? With regard to enactment, there are three main possibilities:

(a) an amendment to the Race Relations Act
(b) new legislation, for example a Religious Discrimination Act
(c) a new all-embracing Equal Treatment Act

If the first of these possibilities were adopted, the Commission for Racial Equality would presumably be the enforcement agency. If the second, there would need to be an additional enforcement agency. If the third, there would be a new Human Rights Commission. (Also there arguably needs to be a new Human Rights Commission if the ECHR is incorporated into UK law.[3]) This might absorb the tasks currently undertaken by other Commissions, or might be in addition to them. Either way we envisage that the tasks of the other Commissions would retain their distinctiveness. The complexities of creating an appropriate enforcement mechanism should not prevent the Government from making a declaration in principle that it wishes to make religious discrimination unlawful.

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3   Various options have been set out by, for example, the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) in their paper *A Human Rights Commission for the UK*, autumn 1996. In an article in *Q News*, June 1997, the director of IPPR's human rights programme, Sarah Spencer, set out the advantages for Muslims of a Human Rights Commission.

Action by the Government on religious discrimination, in short, is urgently required. **We recommend that discrimination on grounds of religion should be made unlawful.**

Other public bodies, however, need not wait. Nor need organisations in the private and voluntary sectors. Several local authorities informed us in this connection that they have incorporated a reference to religion in their equal opportunities statements and have given this a high profile in publicity and in staff training. Also a number of authorities (but not so many) have issued formal guidance to senior managers on how they should show respect for religious and cultural traditions amongst employees. We quote from such a document in Box 26. **We recc nmend that all organisations should incorp/rate respect for religious and cultural trad'.tions into their personnel policies, and that a'ι should incorporate a reference to religion into their equal opportunities statements.**

Box 26: code of practice for managers

The following extracts are from a document for managers issued by City of Bradford Metropolitan Council in 1995:

"The wearing of beards, turbans and religious or cultural dress or artefacts is allowable and must not be discouraged. Nor should these matters be allowed by managers to become the basis of insensitive ridicule or humour from their own staff. Managers should be aware that there are positive benefits for the public in being able to identify directly with our ethnic minority employees.

"Managers must make every reasonable effort to provide appropriate facilities when prayer facilities are sought by an employee or group of employees, for example the provision of a quiet room, site office, hut or other suitable accommodation. Managers are also responsible for ensuring that, if other employees are adversely affected by an individual's need to pray, a reasonable degree of respect and understanding exists amongst them. One way to achieve this would be for the manager to explain what is happening or is intended to happen.

"Management and staff should recognise the importance of fasting for the individual ... Managers should consider ... flexibility in relation to commencement/finishing time [and] the opportunity to work reduced lunch hours."

From **Code of Practice for Managers on Religious and Cultural Needs,** Bradford 1995.

Blasphemy and vilification

The law in England defines blasphemy in a special and narrow way, different from both popular and theological usage. The offence is only committed when writing is published which tends to vilify the Christian religion, this being defined as "God, Christ, the Bible or the doctrines and rituals of the established church [i.e. the Church of England]." In a test case arising out of the publication of Salman Rushdie's novel *The Satanic Verses,* the court made it clear that the law offers no protection against the vilification of non-Christian faiths. The law in this regard has been held not to violate the European Convention on Human Rights, for the right to freedom of religion under the ECHR does not extend to guaranteeing believers protection from offensive publications.

The discriminatory nature of the blasphemy law offends many people's sense of justice and fairness. For this reason alone they believe that it should either be extended or else rescinded.

Those who favour rescinding it cite three further points[4]:

- The offence of blasphemy is unusual in imposing liabilities on defendants regardless of their actual intentions. It is not necessary to prove that they had a specific intent to outrage other people's religious feelings, merely that they intended to publish. Hence there is no defence of ignorance or of artistic licence. Authors are not allowed to give evidence in court as to their motives, sincerity or purposes.
- There has been no public (as distinct from private) prosecution for blasphemy since 1922. This implies an official view that the law is no longer necessary or desirable. The rarity of prosecutions makes it uncertain from a practical standpoint.
- It is up to the jury in any one case to decide whether the words used were "scurrilous, abusive or offensive". These words contain a great deal of subjectivity, thus making the outcome of a case highly unpredictable.

Muslim organisations which wrote to us on this topic were of the view that the blasphemy law should be retained, but revised and improved, and extended to non-Christian faiths. This would preserve a distinctive sense of respect and reverence for what is sacred, and would indicate that people's religious feelings are worthy of special protection in a multi-faith society. Some of the problems mentioned above would nevertheless still remain, however well the new legislation were drafted. As a matter of principle, many Muslims do not ask for the repeal of the blasphemy law:

> "We do not support any call or recommendation for the repeal of this law. We covet no freedom to commit sacrilege against other faiths. It is not our position that if Islamic sanctities are not protected against sacrilege then the existing protection of the Anglican faith should also be removed. Muslims do not want to be a party to any such move. It would, apart from anything else, result in equality in indignity and in being open to vilification and abuse."

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4   The issues were fully reviewed in a report (working paper 79) by the Law Commission in 1981: *Offences against Religion and Public Worship,* published by HMSO. More recently, taking into account demographic changes and the views of British Muslims, there have been valuable reports published by UKACIA and the Commission for Racial Equality; full details of these are in the bibliography in Appendix D.

Rather than extend the law on blasphemy, it would in principle be possible in the United Kingdom to introduce legislation on group defamation similar to Section 319 of the Canadian criminal code or the Anti-discrimination (Racial Vilification) Amendment Act 1989 adopted in New South Wales, Australia. **We recommend that the law on blasphemy in Britain should be reviewed, and that reports on how relevant legislation in other countries works in practice should be explored, and proposals made.**

Incitement to religious hatred

Broadly, the difference between the offences of blasphemy and incitement is that the first is an outrage to people's sensibilities whereas the second is a danger to their material and physical interests. At present, incitement to racial hatred is an offence under the Public Order Act 1986. Inciting others to hate Muslims, however, is not a crime since Muslims are not members of a 'racial' group and the Act does not cover the stirring up of religious hatred. The law reflects the view that it is legitimate in a democratic society to interfere with freedom of expression in cases where the publication of threatening, abusive or insulting material may not only offend certain people's sensitivities but also may have a directly harmful effect on their interests. An extension of this law to cover religious groups as well as 'racial' or ethnic groups would give Muslims equal treatment with Jews and Sikhs, and would give them reassurance that their interests are sufficiently respected to warrant protecting them from religious hatred. **We recommend that the Public Order Act 1986 should be amended, to outlaw incitement to religious hatred.**

A second justification for reform may be found in article 20(2) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which declares that "any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence shall be prohibited." The UK is not technically bound to introduce new legislation to implement this provision, since it has attached a 'reservation' in respect of this article. It is desirable, however, that general international human rights standards should be strictly adhered to. This is particularly important in view of the increased levels of Islamophobia which we have described in this report.

There is an understandable anxiety that an amendment to the Public Order Act might mean that vigorous criticism of religious values, beliefs and practices, perhaps expressed in rather provocative and tendentious language, would be unfairly penalised. Many people would regard trenchant critiques of certain aspects of a religion to be a vital part of their right to free speech. It is important to bear in mind in this context that the focus is on conduct which should be punishable under the criminal law by means of fines or imprisonment. It is not on insensitive or undesirable behaviour, nor on whether certain people feel offended or distressed. For an offence to have been committed under the current law, two stringent tests have to be satisfied. Not only must the words or behaviour be "threatening, abusive or insulting" but the stirring up of hatred must also have been intended, or have been likely in all the circumstances of the case. If that test were still not considered strict enough, the requirements could be altered to require *both* that the defendant intended to stir up hatred *and* that such hatred was likely to be stirred up in all the circumstances of the case.

It is important not to have unduly high expectations of what such a new law might accomplish. There have been very few successful prosecutions either under the current law[5] or under the religious hatred law which exists in Northern Ireland. Under the current law it is necessary that all prosecutions should be approved by the Attorney General. A similar requirement would need to be part of any new law. The Attorney General bears in mind, amongst other things, the need to avoid creating public martyrs out of petty bigots.

Concluding note

"The law," said Martin Luther King, "does not change the heart. But it does restrain the heartless." And it does signal to everyone certain standards and values, and it states basic terms of debate. In this way it shapes, as also it gives expression to, moral opinions and outlooks. The legal changes we have recommended in this chapter are essential, to help crystallise a new climate of opinion and to bring religion into the terms of debate. Until and unless such changes have been introduced, Britain cannot claim to be an inclusive society.

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5   In the four-year period 1986-1990 the Commission for Racial Equality received 494 complaints about printed material and recommended prosecution in 55 cases. Fewer than 20 prosecutions, however, took place.

Chapter 10: Conclusion
Vision, key ideas and practical next steps

"I am deeply concerned," wrote one of our correspondents, "about the corrosive effect of Islamophobia on interpersonal, community and international relations."

She went on to mention that she frequently works professionally in Pakistan and that the more she works there the more she is reminded that "the West has blocked itself off time and again from understanding the dynamics and struggles of many Muslims against autocracy and theocracy." She wrote also that "the European dread of Islam should be acknowledged as being an essential and vital oppositional force with a long and atavistic history. It is time for it to be pulled out of the anti-racist locker so that we can examine it minutely, identify its distinctive characteristics, and then re-locate it in the panoply of prejudices, discrimination and harassment which shape our 'culture'."

That is the outlook – the striving to stem "the corrosive effect of Islamophobia on interpersonal, community and international relations", to re-examine and enlarge anti-racism, and to address a range of prejudices, discrimination and harassment shaping British culture – which has formed the vision underlying this whole report.

Vision

If "the corrosive effect of Islamophobia on interpersonal, community and international relations" is successfully addressed over the coming years, much of society will be different. In Box 27 we summarise what the main differences will be. The list is in effect a list of the features of a truly inclusive society, and a summary of the vision which we have glimpsed and tried to share in the

writing of this report – and which, it follows, we hope others will glimpse in the reading of it and seek to make a reality. It is a list of the effects which our report will have, this is by way of saying, if it is heeded and acted on. Together with Box 2 on page 5, Box 27 is the most important summary in this whole report.

Key ideas into the future

In order to take first steps in the long journey towards the realisation of the vision sketched in Box 27 Britain needs to be guided, we suggest, by five main key ideas.

1. A sense of urgency. Islamophobia is a serious and dangerous feature of contemporary affairs and culture. It is urgent that substantial measures should be adopted to confront it and reduce it.

2. The role of opinion leaders. Opinion leaders have significant roles to play, both nationally and locally, and in individual organisations and institutions as well as in public forums. They include politicians, journalists, leaders, managers and policy-makers in a wide range of fields, including:

- government and politics, both national and local
- education
- the media, both print and electronic, both local and national
- the judiciary and the police service
- employers in the public, private and voluntary sectors
- health care organisations
- non-Muslim faith communities, in particular Jewish, Christian and Hindu communities as well as others
- Muslim communities

Box 27: our vision

1 Islamophobic discourse will be recognised as unacceptable and will no longer be tolerated in public. Whenever it occurs people in positions of leadership and influence will speak out and condemn it.

2 Legal sanctions against religious discrimination, violence and incitement to hatred will be on the statute book.

3 British Muslims will participate fully and confidently at all levels in the political, cultural, social and economic life of the country.

4 The voices of British Muslims will be fully heard and held in the same respect as the voices of other communities and groups. Their individual and collective contributions to wider society will be acknowledged and celebrated.

5 The state system of education will include a number of Muslim schools, and all mainstream state schools will provide effectively for the pastoral, religious and cultural needs of their Muslim pupils. The academic attainment of Muslim pupils will be on a par with that of other pupils.

6 The need of young British Muslims to develop their religious and cultural identity in a British context will be accepted and supported.

7 Measures to tackle social and economic deprivation, unemployment and urban decline will be of benefit to Muslims as to all other communities.

8 All employers and service providers will ensure that, in addition to compliance with legal requirements on non-discrimination, they demonstrate high value for religious, cultural and ethnic diversity.

The Runnymede Trust Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia, 1997

3. An essential distinction. A distinction must be drawn, both by Muslims and non-Muslims, between open views of Islam on the one hand and closed views on the other. We introduced this key idea in Box 2 and have stressed it frequently in these pages. Open views are a prerequisite of mutual trust and understanding, for respectful disagreements and debates, and for the building of just relationships.

4. The international dimension. Islamophobia within Britain is affected by trends and events elsewhere. So also, within Britain, are Muslim perceptions of events and affairs. The international dimension needs to be borne in mind. But that is no excuse for failing to tackle Islamophobia within Britain with great urgency.

5. The need for a concerted programme and a sense of shared challenge and responsibility. Many kinds of action are required. No one measure will be sufficient in itself. Changes in the law on discrimination, for example, are definitely required. But so also are less tangible and less visible measures relating to the general climate of opinion and perception, and to building and sustaining mutual trust and respect. Box 28 is a checklist of recommendations from earlier pages of this report. It in effect stresses that everyone has a significant and substantial part to play. *Everyone*. Islamophobia is a challenge to us all.

Box 28: checklist of recommendations

This list draws together all the recommendations made in the main body of the report. A page reference, in each instance, indicates the original context. The points are grouped under three broad headings: (a) for central and national government (b) for regional and local authorities and (c) for private and voluntary bodies. Within each heading the topics are arranged in alphabetical order.

A Government departments, bodies and agencies

All

1 Review equal opportunities policies in employment, service delivery and public consultation, and ensure that these refer explicitly to religion as well as to ethnicity, race and culture *(page 59)*.

Education

2 Collect, collate and publish data on the ethnic origins and attainment of pupils in all schools, including independent and grant-maintained schools as well as locally maintained schools *(page 45)*.

3 Collect, collate and publish data on the religious affiliations of pupils in all schools *(page 45)*.

4 Review and if necessary modify the criteria and procedures for providing state funding to religiously-based schools, to ensure that they do not discriminate unfairly against Muslim bodies *(page 49)*.

5 Make the criteria and procedures for providing state funding to religiously-based schools more transparent, and permit appeals against decisions of the Secretary of State. *(page 49)*.

6 Ensure Muslim educationists, as also educationists from other faith communities, are involved in discussions of education for citizenship *(page 45)*.

7 Conduct a review of good practice in the use of Section 11 funding for English language teaching in schools, and be prepared to permit or encourage greater flexibility in the conditions attached to this funding *(page 45)*.

8 Issue formally a set of principles for teaching about religion and citizenship in a multi-faith and multi-ethnic society *(page 45)*.

9 Develop similar principles about the teaching of history, for example with regard to what pupils learn about the Crusades, and about the spread of Islam over the centuries *(page 45)*.

10 Give guidance to registered inspectors on points to look for when reporting on the arrangements which schools make for the pastoral, cultural and religious needs of Muslim pupils *(page 46)*.

11 Encourage more Muslims to train as teachers, including but not only for the teaching of religious education *(page 45)*.

Employment

12 Issue guidelines on good employment practice on matters affecting Muslim employees *(page 31)*.

Health

13 Develop guidelines on good practice in health care relating to religious and cultural needs, including the following:

    employment and use of non-Christian chaplains; religious observance; diet and food;

respect for cultural and religious norms and injunctions relating to modesty, for example to do with mixed-sex wards and the examination of female patients by male doctors; consultation and contacts with local faith communities; advocacy and befriending services; and general pastoral care in multi-faith settings *(pages 36-37)*.

Law

14 Make discrimination on religious grounds unlawful *(page 59)*.

15 Ensure that proposed new legislation on racial violence makes reference to religion *(page 40)*.

16 When sentencing offenders for crimes of violence or harassment, treat evidence of religious hatred as an aggravating factor, as already with racial violence *(page 40)*.

17 Amend the Public Order Act 1986 to make incitement to religious hatred unlawful *(page 60)*.

18 Review legislation on blasphemy, and include in this a study of relevant legislation in other countries *(page 60)*.

Monitoring and statistics

19 Give a clear lead on ethnic monitoring, aimed at developing coherence in policy, collection, analysis and use, and spreading the best practice which already exists at many local levels *(page 33)*.

20 Give a clear lead on the monitoring of racial and religious violence, such that there is greater comparability between the records of different police districts and monitoring groups *(page 40)*.

21 Ensure that there is a question about religion in the 2001 census *(page 32)*.

22 Ensure that the 2001 census of population contains a question which enables reliable estimates to be made of the size and demographic features not only of Bangladeshi-background and Pakistani-background communities (as in 1991) but also – amongst others – of Bosnian, Middle Eastern, North African, Somali and Turkish communities *(page 32)*.

23 Provide a breakdown of the broad category 'ethnic minority' in Civil Service monitoring reports and reports on the composition of public bodies, and conduct internal reviews to check whether the South Asian members of the Civil Service and of public bodies appear to include an equitable proportion of Muslims *(page 34)*.

24 Continue to monitor the composition of the prison population according to the religious affiliations of offenders *(page 37)*.

25 Monitor and evaluate immigration and asylum policy according to religion as well as to race and nationality *(page 37)*.

The Prime Minister's Office

26 Propose the appointment of Muslims to the House of Lords *(page 34)*.

Social exclusion

27 Scrutinise measures and programmes aimed at reducing poverty and inequality, for example through the Social Exclusion Unit and the Single Regeneration Budget, with regard to their impact on Muslim communities *(page 35)*.

28 Ensure that measures and programmes aimed at reducing poverty and inequality involve Muslims, as appropriate, at the early planning stages *(page 35)*.

B Local and regional statutory bodies

All

29 Review their equal opportunities policies in employment, service delivery and public consultation, and ensure that these refer explicitly to religion as well as to ethnicity, race and culture *(page 59)*.

30 In programmes of grants to voluntary organisations, be sensitive to religious and ethical concerns about the use of National Lottery funds *(page 31)*.

Education (local education authorities and schools)

31 Use their influence to ensure that local Muslim communities are appropriately represented on schools' governing bodies, particularly schools which have substantial proportions of Muslim pupils *(page 45)*.

32 Encourage mentoring schemes, particularly in secondary schools, which will provide role models for Muslim pupils *(page 45)*.

33 Review the definitions of racial harassment used in their policy documentation and programmes of activities, and ensure that there is an explicit reference to religion *(page 42)*.

34 Develop written guidelines on meeting the pastoral, religious and cultural needs of Muslim pupils *(page 46)*.

35 Encourage more Muslims to train as teachers, including but not only as teachers of religious education *(page 45)*.

Housing authorities

36 Review the definitions of 'racial harassment' in their policy documentation, and ensure that there is an explicit reference to religion *(page 42)*.

Health care organisations

37 Develop guidelines on good practice in health care relating to religious and cultural needs, including topics such as the following: employment and use of non-Christian chaplains; religious observance; diet and food; respect for cultural and religious norms and injunctions relating to modesty, for example to do with mixed-sex wards and the examination of female patients by male doctors; consultation and contacts with local faith communities; advocacy and befriending services; and general pastoral care in multi-faith settings *(pages 36-37)*.

Police forces

38 When recording acts of violence and harassment which appear to be racially motivated, note acts which have a specifically religious dimension, for example desecration of places of worship, violence accompanied by abuse of religious beliefs and practices, and violence against people wearing distinctively religious dress or symbols *(page 40)*.

C Voluntary and private bodies

Employers, employers' organisations and unions

39 Include references to religion in their equal opportunities statements and policies, and state their opposition to discrimination on religious grounds, both in recruitment and in general personnel management *(page 31)*.

Funding organisations

40 In programmes of grants to voluntary organisations, be sensitive to religious and ethical concerns about the use of charitable and National Lottery funds *(page 31)*.

National Union of Journalists

41 Complement its statement and guidelines on race reporting with a statement and guidelines about reporting on culture and religion *(page 20)*.

Muslim organisations

42 Discuss this report and identify the recommendations on which they themselves can take immediate initiatives *(page 18)*.

43 Both locally and nationally, press for the implementation of the recommendations in this report *(page 18)*.

44 Routinely complain to the Press Complaints Commission and to the newspapers concerned when they consider that coverage of Islam or of Muslims has been inaccurate, misleading or distorted *(page 20)*.

45 Draw up action plans on media relations, and provide awareness-raising sessions and seminars for journalists *(page 20)*.

46 Make common cause with non-Muslim organisations to secular bodies, at local as well as national levels *(page 52)*.

Non-Muslim faith communities

47 Leaders to accept that they have a major responsibility for reducing Islamophobia, and for in no way giving encouragement to it *(page 52)*.

48 Routinely complain to the Press Complaints Commission and to the newspapers concerned when they consider that coverage of Islam or of Muslims has been inaccurate, misleading or distorted *(page 52)*.

49 Appoint officers, at a range of appropriate levels, to be responsible for inter-faith relations, and give them relevant administrative, financial and institutional support *(page 52)*.

50 Discuss Islamophobia directly and to incorporate reference to Islamophobia into their guidelines and policy documents *(page 52)*.

51 Make common cause with Muslim organisations to secular bodies, at local as well as national levels *(page 52)*.

Political parties

52 Take measures to increase the likelihood of Muslim candidates being selected in winnable seats at the next general election *(pages 33-34)*.

53 Propose the appointment of Muslims to the House of Lords *(page 34)*.

54 Use their influence to increase the representation of British Muslims on public bodies and commissions *(page 34)*.

Press Complaints Commission

55 Review the wording of its code of practice, and consider modifying and strengthening the statement about avoiding racial and religious discrimination *(page 20)*.

Race equality organisations and monitoring groups

56 Address Islamophobia in their programmes of action, for example by advocating and lobbying for the policy and procedural changes included in this list of recommendations *(page 31)*.

57 Review the definitions of 'racial harassment' used in their policy documentation, and ensure that there is an explicit reference to religion *(page 42)*.

58 Routinely complain to the Press Complaints Commission and to the newspapers concerned when they consider that coverage of Islam or of Muslims has been inaccurate, misleading or distorted *(page 20)*.

The Runnymede Trust

59 Ensure that the recommendations in this report are brought to the attention of all relevant bodies *(page 3)*.

60 Ensure that actions over the years to implement the recommendations in this report are closely monitored *(page 3)*.

Appendices

Appendix A: the Muslim population of Britain

We estimate that the current Muslim population of Britain is somewhere between 1.2 million and 1.4 million. We are aware that other publications mention a figure of two million or more but consider this to be an overestimate. The basis for our estimate is the 1991 census, as interpreted by academic specialists.

The census did not include a question on religious affiliation. Therefore the answers to other questions have to be used as proxies. It can safely be assumed that virtually all of the people who described themselves as Bangladeshi or Pakistani are Muslims. It can be calculated on this basis that there were at least 476,000 Muslims of Pakistani background in Britain in 1991 and at least 162,000 from Bangladesh. There is greater uncertainty with regard to those who described themselves as Indian. It is known that there are many Muslims in India but it is difficult to calculate how many Indian people in Britain are likely to be Muslim. Estimates in this regard range between 15 and 20 per cent, thus between 125,000 and 160,000 Indian Muslims in 1991.

Some demographers believe that there was an under-enumeration of Pakistanis in the 1991 census of about five per cent. For this reason, and as a consequence of the birth rate exceeding the death rate, it has been estimated that the number of Pakistanis in Britain had grown to 609,543 by 1996, and that this total will grow to 729,042 by the year 2001.

Similarly the sizes of other communities could be up to 20 per cent larger now than shown in the 1991 census.

The census asked about country of birth as well as about ethnicity. From answers to this question it has been calculated that in 1991 there were up to 360,000 people in Britain who had been born in a range of Muslim countries in the Middle East and North Africa, including Algeria, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia and Turkey and up to 115,000 Muslims from other countries, including Malaysia, Nigeria and Somalia. However, some of the people born in Muslim countries would have been 'white' in terms of ethnicity, and others would have been 'Muslims in Britain' rather than 'British Muslims', i.e. temporary visitors as students and businesspeople rather than citizens or long-term residents.

Since 1991 the UK Somali population has grown substantially, with 13,845 applications for refugee status made in the period 1992-96. These applications included dependants, and the current estimate for the Somali community as a whole is about 60,000. There are also now considerably more Bosnians and Kurds than in 1991. The Bosnian community is probably about 15,000 and similarly there are about 15,000 Turkish Kurds. Also the longstanding Yemeni community is thought to have about 15,000 members. There are about 32,000 Iranians and about 40,000 Turkish Cypriots.

Higher academic estimates lead to the conclusion that now in the late 1990s there are up to 1.5 million Muslims in Britain altogether. According to lower estimates, however, the total is currently somewhere between one million and 1.2 million. Our own view, as mentioned above, is that there are at least 1.2 million Muslims in Britain but probably no more than 1.4 million. Either way we estimate that between 65 and 75 per cent of all Muslims in Britain are from a South Asian background. The broad range of academic estimates is shown in Table 10.

Table 10: Academic estimates of the Muslim population in Britain, late 1990s

Country or region of origin	lower estimates	higher estimates
Bangladesh	180,000	200,000
India	120,000	160,000
Pakistan	520,000	610,000
Middle East and North Africa	230,000	350,000
Other	150,000	180,000
Totals	c.1.2 million	c.1.5 million

Sources

In compiling this appendix, we have consulted the following academic papers by specialists:

- Muhammad Anwar, 'Muslims in Britain: 1991 census and other statistical sources', *CSIC Papers Europe,* no 9, September 1993, Centre for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations, University of Birmingham;
- Muhammad Anwar, 'Pakistanis in Britain and Birmingham' in *Pakistanis in Britain,* edited by Jawaid Akhtar, Pakistan Forum 1996;
- Ceri Peach, 'The Muslim Population of Great Britain', *Ethnic and Racial Studies,* vol 13 no 3, pages 414–19, 1990;
- Ceri Peach and Günther Glebe, 'Muslim Minorities in Western Europe', *Ethnic and Racial Studies,* vol 18 no 1, pages 26–45, 1995;
- chapters in *Ethnicity in the 1991 Census: the ethnic populations of Great Britain,* edited by Ceri Peach, HMSO 1996.

Estimates for Bosnians, Turkish Kurds and Somalis are based on figures provided by the Refugee Council.

Comparisons

The UK Christian Handbook 1995 gives an estimate of 1.2 million Muslims in Britain. This compares with 26.2 million Anglicans, 5.7 million Roman Catholics, 2.6 million Presbyterians and 1.3 million Methodists; also with 500,000 Sikhs, 400,000 Hindus and 300,000 Jews. All these figures refer to nominal attachment and general cultural background, not to active observance and membership. The recent Policy Studies Institute research (Modood et al, 1997) showed that Muslims are considerably more observant than, for example, Anglicans.

Appendix B: the consultation process

Letters, submissions and assistance were received from the following organisations and individuals.

Organisations

Ahlul Bayt Institute for Research
  and Study,
Association of Christian Teachers,
Association of Directors of Social
  Services,
Association of Chief Police Officers,
Association of Muslim Schools of the
  UK and Eire,
Balham Mosque
Barbodian Muslim Welfare Society
  Bolton,
Bedfordshire County Council
Birmingham City Council
Board of Deputies of British Jews,
Bradford City Council
Bromley Racial Equality Council
Camden Borough Council
Catholic Bishops' Conference of
  England and Wales
Caucasia
Centre for the Study of Islam and
  Christian/Muslim Relations
Chesterfield and North East
  Derbyshire Council for Voluntary
  Service and Action
Churches' Commission for Inter-Faith
  Relations
City of Coventry Social Justice Policy
  Team
Confederation of Sunni Muslim
  Mosques Midlands
East London Mosque
Early Years Trainers Anti-Racist
  Network
Enfield Borough Council
Evangelical Christians for Racial
  Justice

Fife Racial Equality Council
Girlington Muslim Welfare
  Association Bradford
Halal Food Consumers Association
Haringey Borough Council
Hinckley Muslim Association
IQRA Trust
Islamic Academy
Islamic Concern
Islamic Council of Europe
Islamic Forum Europe
Islamic Foundation
Islamic Society of Britain
Ismaili Council for the United
  Kingdom
Justice
Kirklees Metropolitan Council
Kirklees Racial Equality Council
Lancashire Constabulary
Lincolnshire Police
London Central Mosque
London School of Islamics
Luton Borough Council
Manchester City Council
Manchester Muslim Education
  Council
Mapam/Meretz
Methodist Church
Milton Keynes Racial Equality Council
Muslim Education Coordinating
  Committee
Muslim Educational Trust
Muslim Family Association
Muslim Society Reform Group
  Liverpool
Muslim Solidarity Committee
Muslim Women's Helpline

Muslim World League London Office
National Association of Citizens
  Advice Bureaux
National Muslim Community
  Development Standing Conference
National Secular Society
National Union of Teachers
National Youth Agency
Newham Borough Council
Norfolk County Council
Popda Society Walsall
Poole Borough Council
Preston Borough Council
Reading Borough Council
Rochdale Metropolitan Council
Slough Borough Council
South London Islamic Centre
South Yorkshire Police
Staffordshire Police
Stoke-on-Trent Citizens Advice
  Bureau
Sussex Police
Tower Hamlets Borough Council
UK Action Committee on Islamic
  Affairs
UK Islamic Mission
UK Islamic Mission Ladies Section
Ummat un Wahidah Association for
  Islamic Solidarity
Wakefield Metropolitan District
  Council
Waltham Forest Borough Council
West Mercia Police
Wycombe Race Equality Council
Youth Adventure and Training

In addition we received correspondence from individuals associated with the following organisations:

British Broadcasting Corporation
  Pakistan
Centre for Intercultural Development
Centre for Mass Communication
  Research
Commission for Racial Equality
Godolphin and Latymer School
  London

Golden Hillock School Birmingham
Institute Européen Des Sciences
  Humaines Paris
Inter-Faith Network
Muslim Society Reform Group
  Liverpool
Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies
Policy Studies Institute

Q News
University of Cambridge
University of Glasgow
University of Greenwich
University of Nottingham
Wilton Park

Individuals
People who assisted or wrote to us in an individual capacity included:

Naseem Ahmad
Ishtiaq Ahmed
Javed Akhtar
Akbar Ali
Mehmet Ali
Kaushika Amin
Dr S Amin
M Anwar
Naseem Anwar
Jenny Attew
Nirmalya Bandopadhyay
Professor Y Bangash
Professor Michael Banton
Kenneth Barber
Dr M A Bari
Sir Nicholas Barrington
Fatima Begum
Keith Bell
Dr Abdul Bensiali
R C Bull
Dr David Browning
J M Butt

Madeleine Carritt
Patrick Castens
Nadu Chaaban
M D Chaudhry
Shirley Darlington
John Denza
Mina Dhami
Rokhsanna Fiaz
Dr Robin Fisher
Kate Gavron
Philip Giles
Dr H P Goddard
P L Gurney
C V Hewitt
Ray Honeyford
D A Hook
Asifa Hussain
M Ibrahim
Sharon Imtiaz
Dr Elinor Kelly
Dr A Z Khan
Manzoor Khan

Peter King
Stephen Lamport
Dr C W R Long
David Loveridge
Aiysha Malik
Lord McNair
Stella Mintz
Mr Mirza
Dr Tariq Modood
Samina Mungaye
Fuad Nahdi
Professor Jørgen Nielsen
Fred Olney
Brian Pearce
Elizabeth Poole
Peter and Sylvia Prager
Mohammed Atiq Quraishy
Yaqub Rachyal
Revd John Ray
Malcolm Robertson
D M Robinson
Aubrey Rose

Eric Rose
I Senior
Sahida Shabic
Faqir Hussain Shakir
Iftikhar Sheikh
Dr J Sherif
Balbir Singh
John Skoyles
Revd Dr David Thomas
Richard Thompson
John Twitchin
Chowdhury Mueen Uddin
John West
Dr D C Wilson
Tim Winter
Dr Kenneth Wolf
Angela Wood
C A Wood
Alam Zaidi.

Appendix C: members of the Commission

Gordon Conway *(chair)*
Vice-chancellor of the University of Sussex. Formerly director of the Ford Foundation, India, and before that professor of environmental technology at Imperial College. Has worked as a specialist in agricultural and environmental development in a range of countries in Africa, Asia and the Middle East.

Maqsood Ahmad
Director of Kirklees Racial Equality Council, and formerly on the staff of Rochdale Racial Equality Council. Has also worked in the private sector as a mechanical designer.

Akbar Ahmed
Fellow of Selwyn College, Cambridge, and visiting professor at Princeton and Harvard, United States. Council member of the Royal Anthropological Institute. Chief consultant for the BBC Television series *Living Islam*. Publications include *Discovering Islam: making sense of Muslim history and society* and *Postmodernism and Islam: predicament and promise.*

Zaki Badawi
Principal of the Muslim College, London. Chairman of the Imams and Mosques Council UK and the Muslim Law Council UK. Vice-chair of the World Congress of Faiths. Member of the High Council of Islamic Affairs, Egypt, the World Council for Islamic Call, Libya, and the Mu'tama Al Alam al Islami, Pakistan. Frequent broadcaster in Britain on Muslim affairs.

The Rt Revd Richard Chartres
Bishop of London. Formerly Bishop of Stepney and before that professor of divinity at Gresham College, London. Board member of the East London Partnership, vice-president of Arbour Youth Centre, Stepney, council member of City University.

Ian Hargreaves
Editor of *New Statesman*. Previously editor of the *Independent* and before that deputy editor of the *Financial Times* and director of news and current affairs at the BBC. Started in journalism working for Bradford and District Newspapers.

Philip Lewis
Adviser on inter-faith issues to the Bishop of Bradford, and lecturer in the department of theology and religious studies at the University of Leeds. Previously worked for six years at the Christian Study Centre, Rawalpindi, Pakistan. Publications include *Islamic Britain: religion, politics and identity among British Muslims* (1994).

Zahida Manzoor
Chair of Bradford Health Authority. Previously a programme director of the Common Purpose Education Trust. Commissioner and latterly deputy-chair of the Commission for Racial Equality. Was a member of the board of governors of Sheffield Hallam University, and career has included work in information technology marketing, in nursing, midwifery and health visiting, and as deputy head of a health and care department in Saudi Arabia.

Rabbi Julia Neuberger
Chief executive of the King's Fund. Chancellor of the University of Ulster. Trustee of the Runnymede Trust, and member of the General Medical Council and the Medical Research Council. Frequent broadcaster. Publications include *Ethics and Healthcare* and *On Being Jewish*.

Trevor Phillips
Executive producer of factual programmes for London Weekend Television, director of Pepper Productions, and producer and presenter of a range of television current affairs programmes and documentaries. Before joining LWT in 1980 was president of the National Union of Students. Member of the Greenwich Millennium Trust and the London Arts Board. Chair of the Runnymede Trust since 1993.

Sebastian Poulter
Reader in law at the University of Southampton. Has been professor of law and visiting professor at the University of Lesotho. Author of a wide range of publications on the interaction between the English legal system and the traditions and values of ethnic minority communities, including *English Law and Ethnic Minority Customs* (1986), *Asian Traditions and English Law* (1990) and *Ethnicity, Law and Human Rights: the English experience* (1998).

Usha Prashar
Part-time civil service commissioner. Non-executive director of Channel Four, member of the Lord Chancellor's Advisory Committee on Legal Education and Conduct, the Arts Council of England, and the Energy Saving Trust. Previously director of the National Council for Voluntary Organisations and of the Runnymede Trust.

Hamid Qureshi
Director of the Lancashire Council of Mosques, and previously public relations officer for the Islamic Foundation, based in Leicester. Was the first president of Young Muslims UK and vice-chairman of the National Association of Muslim Youth. Executive member of the Interfaith Network UK, non-executive director of the East Lancashire Careers Service, steering committee member of Safer Cities, Blackburn.

Nasreen Rehman
Musicologist, and director of ADITI, the national association for South Asian Dance. Formerly Asian Arts coordinator for the London Borough of Newham and researcher at the School of African and Asian Studies. Trustee of the Runnymede Trust.

Saba Risaluddin
Founder and trustee of the Calamus Foundation. President of the World Conference on Religion and Peace, UK coordinator for the Interfaith Foundation. Author of a wide range of publications on Islam, Islamophobia and interfaith relations, also human rights, women's rights, food, and the art of gardening.

Imam Abduljalil Sajid
Director of the Sussex Muslim Society and imam at Brighton Islamic Centre and Mosque. Founding member of the Standing Conference of Jews, Christians and Muslims, secretary of the Ethnic Minorities Representative Council, Sussex, vice-chair of the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants, and formerly

assistant secretary-general of the Union of Muslim Organisations. Consultant to a range of statutory and voluntary agencies.

Richard Stone
Chair of the Jewish Council for Racial Equality. Founding member of the Black-Jewish Forum. Trustee of the Mangrove Trust, Notting Hill. Treasurer of the Maimonides Foundation, for Jewish-Muslim Relations, and charity funding adviser to the Commission for Racial Equality. Adviser to the Home Office inquiry into the death of Stephen Lawrence. Trustee of the Runnymede Trust.

The Revd John Webber
Adviser to the Bishop of Stepney on inter-faith issues, and parish priest of St Barnabas, Bethnal Green. Previously principal of St Andrews Theological College, Dhaka, Bangladesh. Trustee of Tower Hamlets Race Equality Council, committee member of Tower Hamlets Law Centre, lecturer on inter-faith issues on several ministerial training schemes.

Appendix D: references and bibliography

This is a checklist of books mentioned in the main text of our report. It mentions also a number of other books which we have found helpful and which we commend. All are published in London unless otherwise stated. Books published in the United States are available from the Islamic Foundation, Leicester.

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THE RUNNYMEDE TRUST

The Runnymede Trust, established in 1968, is an independent research and policy agency offering timely, practical and strategic thinking on race relations and cultural diversity in Britain and Europe. We are dedicated to the development of a successful and equal multi-ethnic society. The Runnymede Trust provides advice and assistance to policy makers involved in education, employment, health, law, media, politics and welfare.

In 1992 the Trust set up a commission to consider anti-Semitism in contemporary Britain. It was chaired by the **Rt Revd Richard Harries, Bishop of Oxford,** and its report entitled *A Very Light Sleeper* was published in 1994. One of its recommendations was that The Runnymede Trust should set up a broadly similar commission to consider Islamophobia.