Executive Summary

The long-term Policy Group on National and International Security is looking at issues relating to national cohesion because our collective safety cannot just depend upon our ability to take effective security measures against the enemies of our society, important as these are, but because ultimately it is our common loyalty and our shared desire to preserve our liberties which will keep us safe. Terrorism has made us conscious of our vulnerability and has frightened many. As the bombers intended, it has also undermined trust in fellow citizens. The Muslim communities, which are quite diverse in origin, have come under scrutiny as never before.

Considerable pressures are being exerted on Muslims in Britain. Propagators in the UK of political Islam, which exploits a contested version of belief for political ends, are active and influential in Muslim communities. In some instances they seek to overthrow the institutions of democracy to institute a state governed by Sharia law. More campaign to obtain changes in, and special exemptions from, British law for all Muslims here irrespective of whether individual Muslims want this and against the principle that the law should apply equally to all British citizens. Though a few of these people are violent, a much greater number are willing to use the processes of democracy to change its character in fundamental ways. They are active in some mosques, though not exclusively there. Combined with the resentment most Muslims in this country feel about events in the Middle East, the conflict of loyalties which competing pressures can set up for ordinary Muslims makes it significantly harder than it would otherwise be for them to integrate.

At the same time, and independently, centrifugal forces, resulting from successive and rapid changes at home, are rendering the majority community in this country less sure of its identity and less able to articulate and defend its values. Against this background, multiculturalism, which should allow diversity to flourish within an overall framework of unity, is tending to foster difference for its own sake and demands for special treatment. This prevents integration. Extremist voices from different parts of the political spectrum including the white racist far right are preying on different communities with the aim of driving people apart. Both must be combated if the bonds of society are not to loosen further. A new bargain must be struck whereby British identity is explicitly extended to include people of diverse ethnic origin and religious affiliation and all individuals uphold the liberal democratic values of this country on the basis of equality.

The report explores the position of Muslim communities in the UK; their leadership; and their social conditions, including in particular the position of women. The report assesses that a number of factors combine to set Muslim communities apart from the rest of society in ways which are unhelpful to the advancement of individuals and of Muslims generally. Muslim community organisations, of which there are many that do important social work, are nevertheless not offering the leadership they should at the top level. They act more as lobbies. Too many are concerned with promoting a particular brand of Islam, with conciliating internal differences or protecting their own status, allowing reactionary forces to retain control. As a result they do not effectively advance the declared aim of promoting inter-communal understanding. The Group takes the view that they should espouse integration and work vigorously for it. Government should use its patronage, including public monies, exclusively to foster this goal. A Conservative Administration should seek to establish direct relations with individual Muslim voters on the same basis as all other citizens.

Many Muslims suffer a handicap in obtaining good life chances because of the impoverished immigrant background of many of them and poor schools in their inner city neighbourhoods. They are pessimistic that they will get special help such as an Academy which they see as going to others. When given the chance of a good education, Muslim parents are as ambitious as any others for academic attainment. Among those who can afford it, some Muslim parents send their children to faith schools as a matter of active choice. Others do so because it is the only route available locally to a decent school even if the price, of which they may well be conscious, is greater separation from other communities. Improving the quality of schooling in the maintained sector would do more for integration than almost all other measures the Government could take.

Academic research shows that traditional habits such as arranging marriage to partners from rural backgrounds as well as traditional social structures and employment patterns, saddle Muslims with what has been termed an 'ethnic penalty'. The inferior status of women as compared with their men folk (as exemplified by continued, if declining, forced marriage) is a significant factor in the slower upward mobility of Muslims as compared with similar immigrant groups from the subcontinent. Muslim women are underrepresented in the workplace. The lot of those denied by their families the opportunity to work when they want to can be particularly unhappy. A change in attitudes on the part of Muslim men towards women's rights would considerably ease the path towards integration.

From pages 25-28 the report contains recommendations for action with three aims in mind:

- to counteract subversive activity and intercommunal tension
- to promote intercommunal understanding and integration
- to promote a shared British agenda and identity.

Our recommendations are directed at three main actors: an incoming Conservative Administration and the bodies and agencies which go to make up the public sector; communal bodies, which the government would seek to influence by the policies it pursued and the way it spent public monies and, third, the voluntary sector and the wider public.

Much needed action to combat misperceptions about the nature of Islam will become less difficult if the flow of propaganda hostile to democratic values is effectively impeded; understanding between communities will increase if common goals leading to integration are identified and actively worked for by everyone, especially by those in leadership positions, and this country would have more self belief and a greater chance of feeling united if we were better informed about our shared past and what we stand for now. In the end, it is society as a whole that has to want to stand together.

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I. Introduction

It may be asked why the national and international security long term policy group should be the one asked to report on the issues relating to national cohesion. The subject contains many strands which link our work with that of other Conservative Party policy groups - quality of life for instance - and we have not attempted to deal with all the aspects in equal depth. There is however one overpowering reason why it makes sense for national cohesion to be treated in the context of national security. Following 9/11, an effective counter terrorist strategy has been shown to be vital to our security. Equally, if we wish to remain a liberal society, it cannot be the central element of policy indefinitely. Our security has to rest on our freedom, not on its curtailment. Rather than turning to the state to protect each of us against the possible malevolence of the other, citizens must be able to trust each other. The ends of our democracy are best protected through vigorous exercise of its processes.

To secure our freedoms we have to do more than prevent terrorists wreaking destruction and sowing dissension. We need also to pay attention to the propagation in the UK of pernicious ideas by any group which avails itself of democratic freedoms in order to subvert democracy, as Soviet backed Communism once did. At present, there is no doubt that the principal such group is made up of some Muslim radicals who adopt this technique and, in the name of their version of their religion, seek also to deny the extension of democratic liberties to other Muslims in Britain. These people do not necessarily advocate violence as a way of gaining their ends. But they are enemies of the values this society stands for and which are shared by all other British Muslims.

Within what has come to be known conventionally[1] as 'Islamism' or 'Political Islam', it is possible to discern two groups and two lines of argument. There are those who believe that the state should be governed by Sharia law and who actively oppose secular democracy. Many also discourage participation in its processes. Such people often also preach hatred of non-believers, in which they frequently include Muslims who do not subscribe to their view. Secondly there are those who share the aim of changing the laws of this country to conform to their interpretation of Islamic religious beliefs but who are prepared to use democratic freedoms in order to establish either a parallel system, (or in some cases, an overriding system), of religiously-derived law. In this country they often argue that their political demands need to be met to prevent Muslims supporting more extreme people. The Group considers the last argument disingenuous and does not accept the implication that willingness to stay within the law legitimises goals which are destructive of a tolerant and liberal democracy and which are likely to increase general resentment of the very people in whose name the proponents purport to speak.

As with Soviet backed Communism, these ideas have to be combated without destroying our freedoms in the process. The views of the small number of British citizens, of whatever political stripe or creed, who disseminate racist based hatred against other groups including minorities and immigrants, must also be overcome: they too betray the freedoms they exploit.

Our democracy is resilient. We should exhibit our confidence in the balance that has been struck between the civil liberty of the individual and collective security by keeping new restrictions to the minimum strictly necessary to achieve security. Over the centuries this country has shown both the will and the ability to absorb waves of immigrants and there is no reason to suppose that we cannot succeed now. That said, there is little doubt that in the year since the Group was asked to report on this subject, political relations between different communities, especially Muslim communities and others, have deteriorated. The 7/7 bombings and the videos made by the bombers justifying their resort to terrorism have had their intended effect of sowing distrust.

In the wake of increased security measures, a growing number of Muslims feel increasingly picked on, while there is evidence of backlash in the majority community. The recent controversy unleashed in the media over the wearing of the veil has heightened the political temperature without resolving anything. Among Muslims it demonstrated that attitudes have been influenced by the growth in global Muslim consciousness and the identity politics to which this has given rise. In the majority community, it showed increased apprehensiveness about the extent to which values are shared across community lines. Some went a good deal further, considering the wearing of the veil to be a rejection of such values. Women displayed particular sensitivity, not just because they felt that the veil limited the prospects of individual Muslim women by isolating them, but also because some saw such practices as undermining the hard fought recent equality of women. Some people have argued that with the passage of time, and indigenisation of the generations, such sartorial issues will resolve themselves. Such comfortable predictions tend to ignore the radicalising influences being generated in this country as well as from abroad which show no signs of waning.

The Director General of the Security Service, Dame Eliza Manningham-Buller, has pointed to the recent rapid increase in

1. The term is in wide use, including by Muslim community leaders: 'They have united Muslim and Christian, Sunni and Shia, Islamist and secular,' Daoud Abdullah, Deputy Secretary General, Muslim Council of Britain, Socialist Worker, 5 August 2006

radicalisation of Muslim youth in the UK, noting the need to understand what drives this phenomenon in order to be able to counter it. She is right - which is why the foreign policy issues which extremists exploit cannot be left out of account. By ruling out discussion of foreign policy as a legitimate motivator of dissent by Muslims the Government undoubtedly intensifies the anger which a great many of them feel about it, including those whose views on other issues are mainstream. Moreover in consequence, the Government is less well placed than it could and should be effectively to challenge those leaders of Muslim organisations who have come close in public statements to taking the unacceptable line of condoning terrorism as an instrument of policy, if not in the UK then certainly in the Middle East. Lack of dialogue over foreign policy is not neutral in its effects. It is damaging.

Great and swift damage can be done to intercommunal relations by the single issue of terrorism and the fear of it. Getting integration, which we regard as the right goal (not just 'harmony' or improved intercommunal relations, important as these are), squarely back on track however takes time and demands action on a broad front of policy. Much of the existing policy base is valid and should be built on. That relating, for instance, to non discrimination and equal opportunity is sound and relevant. It does not need change but application. But there are other aspects where change is undoubtedly needed, which we detail below. Above all though, while the state needs to set the rules of the game, it is societies that integrate and it is in society that the will to integrate has to be manifest. It will be the many millions of individual acts on the part of private citizens over time which will determine our success. The government should not be the sole or even the main actor. We all have a stake in the unity of our country and none of us can afford to be inert in defence of values we want to see upheld.

These are difficult and sensitive issues which test tolerance and trust. The dangers of a widening divide are real and current trends need checking if integration of communities is not seriously to be set back. Faltering integration would have effects going beyond relations between Muslims and others in our society striking at the heart of our self belief and freedoms.

Evidence taken

The subject of national cohesion goes wider than the position of British Muslims. It concerns other ethnic minorities and migrants too. Indeed it is by definition important to all of us. But for obvious reasons, in this interim report we have given priority to investigation of issues especially affecting Muslims. Our recommendations reflect the point our thinking has reached which is likely to evolve further.

We have taken evidence from a wide range of individuals in different parts of the country. We were gratified by the welcome we received from Muslims to whom we talked and thank them for taking the trouble to do so. Our approach was as much to individuals as to organisations. Organisations certainly have their role in promoting the interests of those whom they claim to represent (provided they do) but they also develop agendas of their own and we wished to get past these in our discussions. Political inarticulacy among Muslims, some

of whom feel traduced if not betrayed by statements made and actions undertaken in their name, is a problem. Traditional patterns of authority do not foster open debate and discussion and much dissent inside Muslim communities is unspoken. This needs to change as it handicaps Muslims from being seen, as they should be, as fellow citizens unattached from the single identifier of 'Muslim' which masks their individuality. Many, though not all, members of Muslim communities, understand that some patterns of behaviour – for instance the position of women – are legitimate matters of comment on the part of non Muslims and see the need for change. The current political climate however induces a defensiveness which makes this harder while current social problems–violence, drunkenness, promiscuity and poor educational standards in society as a whole makes reform easier for paternalists to repudiate. The street needs to bear traffic in both directions.

Multiculturalism in Britain

This subject currently generates more argument than agreement. A disagreement has developed between those who hold, with Mayor Livingstone, that the essential thing society must recognise is the legitimacy of difference and the right to it and those who argue, with Trevor Phillips, now Chair of the Commission for Equality and Human Rights, that in practice this is leading to separation and is ultimately destructive of social cohesion. The Group agrees that dangers lie in elevating difference at the expense of cohesion. We do not think assimilation – the insistence on a single identity only for all citizens, on French lines – can be imported into the situation in the UK but do strongly hold to the view that there must be more to cohesion than different groups just rubbing along side by side. Integration need not be a zero sum game – more of my identity means less of yours. Nor in our view need it exclude multiple identities. This is already part of our life through membership of the European Union and devolution within the UK. But there is an important proviso: that, while cherishing distinctiveness, everyone is at the same time striving to create a united society based on a shared ethos. In Amartya Sen's phrase: the right involved is the right to be treated the same despite difference not differently because of it. The obligation is to contribute to creating and upholding common values.

This will not happen of its own accord and will need to be worked at. Nor will it happen if all the effort has to come from one part of the community. In an age of migration, the mental image of ourselves as a settled society to which incomers should conform without change or effort on our part is unhelpful. We do not need to see ourselves, as Americans do, as a nation made up of immigrants to accept that there is a new social bargain to be struck: a more explicit acceptance on the part of the majority community of the importance of helping minorities to integrate to be matched by minorities' willingness to equip themselves to be active participants in the general life of their new country. A part of this will be the development across the whole population of a shared understanding of what it is to be British.

II. Our General Approach

The aim of policy should be to draw support away from the extremes by building a solid consensus at the political centre about our identity and values as British citizens. This involves us being clear about what these are, about how we will support and promote them as well as taking action against those who seek to subvert them.

Our policy recommendations (summarised on pp 25-28) fall into broadly three groups:
- Those proposals which counteract subversive activity and intercommunal tension
- Those which promote intercommunal understanding and integration.
- Those which bind us together as British citizens.

The terrorist threat must be dealt with through robust and proportionate security measures. Some of these have been discussed in our interim security report issued on 18 December 2006. The willing cooperation of the Muslim population in the struggle against terrorists is vital – since the threat does not emerge ex nihilo. It rests on an ideology, defined in the Introduction, which requires all Muslims to reject many of the principles that underpin democratic life. We discuss this ideology in the next chapter. Since most Muslims, like most other people, have little time or inclination to take part in abstruse debate, ideological leaders aim to radicalise a wider audience through Islamic identity politics: by trying to persuade people that the way to protect their religion is to follow them. The arguments deployed are crude and shallow but nonetheless powerful. The same can be said of white racism though this lacks either the apparent sanction or rewards of religion or intellectual leadership. In each case the attractions of liberal democracy must appear sufficiently compelling to counteract extremism.

The Group does not believe that there is much motivational link between extremism and various forms of social deprivation. It is observable that the 7/7 bombers were not socially underprivileged. Promoting integration, and creating the context for worthwhile lives of opportunity and personal fulfilment however, is central to drawing support away from extremists. This means rejecting the approach of treating people differently or separately because of their difference. To take an example. We heard with dismay, from one Muslim witness, that whereas when he had been at school Muslim children had played in school teams alongside their schoolmates of other communities, there was now an increasing tendency for their children to form Muslim sporting teams to compete against teams made up of players from other groups. The parents disapproved. This is indeed the wrong way to be going. Gratuitous separation is not necessary to preserve identity and destroys the sense of shared destiny.

Integration is infinitely harder in the absence of social mobility especially upwards. We heard often during our evidence taking how much importance was attached by Muslim parents to the quality of their children's education. They rightly perceived this as the key to their children's future but there were frequent complaints about the quality of the education available in the public sector, especially in low income inner city areas where many Muslims live. While some parents preferred to send their children to faith schools, a significant number said that they had done so because it was the only way to obtain better education at affordable cost. Some said they had done so reluctantly. It was clear that a significant factor in reducing contact between Muslim and other children in their early years when patterns of behaviour are laid down was the lamentable educational standards obtained by so many maintained schools. Poor standards also reduce the children's life chances and upward mobility. Since minorities are likely to suffer disproportionately from this disadvantage, the effect is discriminatory. **By itself, improving the standards of education in state schools in deprived areas would make a significant contribution to the integration of individuals and communities.**

Since the publication of the Cantle Report in 2001, housing has often been regarded as a key issue limiting mobility and thus integration. Housing allocation by local authorities in some places has undoubtedly aggravated the tendency toward ghettoisation. We agree that this issue is important in certain parts of the country, notably in the North. Muslims we talked to pointed out to us however that taking action to counteract the effects of housing concentration is not easily done without creating other difficulties. Policies of deliberate dispersal would distance families from the very facilities which they had congregated together to create. We were not convinced that by itself this issue was as critical as some others in blocking integration. Many Muslims own their own homes, or rent them in the private sector and can move if they wish to. Lack of employment opportunities on the other hand can be a real bar to the natural process of movement that takes place over time in immigrant communities as they begin to create wealth. Here again, education is a key factor in improving the chances of individuals being able to take charge of their own futures.

III. Political Islam:
The International Background

For many of the world's Muslims, political Islam, which we define in paragraph 3 of the Introduction, is the most dynamic and successful political movement they know.

Quite evidently, not all Muslims follow this ideology, and even fewer espouse violence. But even those who eschew violence advocate concepts of political justice and a social order which are not compatible with modern western ideas of individual freedom, the equality of men and women, fundamental human rights and democratic government under the rule of law.

There have been two modern Sunni authorities of importance to the development of political Islam in the twentieth century: Syed Abul A'la Maudoodi, the Pakistani founder of the puritan Jemaat-e-Islami which has a following in the UK, and the Egyptian, Sayyed Qutb, principal ideologue of the Muslim Brotherhood. Maudoodi maintained that Western democracy was inferior to Islam because people, being unable to perceive their own true interests, should entrust government to God.[2] He advocated a totalitarian Islamic theocracy.[3] Maudoodi was not against Islamic revolution, but he thought it was possible to achieve his Islamic state in Pakistan through incremental political change. Qutb shared much of this theology: *'the basis of the Islamic message is that one should accept the Sharia without any question and reject all other laws, whatever their shape or form. This is Islam. There is no other meaning of Islam.'*[4]

In addition to positing a fundamentalist and theocratic state order, Qutb also issued the revolutionary message that Islam's political authority should be imposed by force.

The failure – and military defeat – of Arab nationalist regimes of the mid twentieth century tarnished the reputation of secular government in the Middle East. Support flowed towards fundamentalist alternatives. Brotherhood-linked organisations, led by Middle-Eastern Brotherhood activists, were created in many countries including the UK.[5] The ideology filled a need to explain failure and hold out a better prospect. Just as the Arab peoples had in the past established a great, powerful, virtuous and wealthy empire when they followed the Prophet's law so, Islamists argued, they could again do so provided they got rid of corrupt, weak, repressive secular governments and replaced them with a true Islamic polity. Like the Communist promise of the dictatorship of the proletariat, it is the

prescription of Islamic revival which carries such emotional force. Anger and frustration act as powerful drivers among followers.

In the 1980's radical Muslims from across the world went to Afghanistan for the jihad against the Soviet occupiers. Funding came from many sources, especially Saudi Arabia and the United States. Returnees from the campaign had now mixed their radicalism with fighting – and defeating – a superpower. They held that Arab despots were sustained in power by the United States and identified the supposed 'Zionist-Crusader' alliance as the force that kept the Muslim world down. In the 1990's a number of them, led by Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri went underground and the bombings that ensued culminated in 9/11. They exploited longstanding Muslim grievances about current conflicts in the broader Middle East. A potent instance is the charge of unequal treatment by Western governments of the Palestinians. This sharpens the edge of identity politics, is exploited to breed a sense of victimhood and used to convert genuine instances of Islamophobia into a continuous narrative of global Muslim subordination. Muslim consciousness is highly sensitised to perceptions of injustice to Muslims anywhere in the world and to indignity being offered to Islam. In the UK, even before the intervention in Iraq, a poll reported that 44 per cent of British Muslims agreed that 'the attacks by Al Qaeda and associated organisations are justified on the grounds that Muslims are being killed by America and its allies using American weapons.' The same poll showed that 17 per cent supported attacks on the United States and 8 per cent supported attacks on Britain.[6]

2. Maudoodi, Syed Abul A'la, The Islamic Law and Constitution, trans. Khurshid Ahmed, Lahore: 1969.

3. '[The Islamic State] cannot evidently restrict the scope of its activities. Its approach is universal and all-embracing. Its sphere of activity is coextensive with the whole of human life. It seeks to mould every aspect of life and activity in consonance with its moral norms and programme of social reform. In such a state no one can regard any field of his affairs as personal and private. Considered from this aspect the Islamic state bears a kind of resemblance to the Fascist and Communist states.' (Maudoodi, The Islamic Law and Constitution)

4. Qutb, Milestones, Indianapolis: American Trust Publications, 1990, p. 16.

5. The Muslim Association of Britain was founded by, among others, Azzam Tamimi, once of the Jordanian Islamic Action Front, and Mohammed Sawalha, once of Hamas.

6. ICM Poll of British Muslims, December 2002.

IV. Political Islam in the United Kingdom and Muslim Organisations

Over the last two decades in particular ideological influences have been and continue to be exerted on Muslims in the UK. An important instance is that of Yusuf al-Qaradawi, a modern follower of Qutb, who heads an organisation called the International Association of Muslim Scholars in Qatar and the European Council for Fatwa and Research based in Dublin. He was banned from entering Britain by Mr Michael Howard when Home Secretary but has been allowed to visit the UK subsequently at the insistence of Mayor Livingstone. He describes himself as 'mufti of the Muslim Brotherhood'[7] and is described by the Muslim Council of Britain as a 'greatly distinguished Muslim scholar' and 'a voice of reason and understanding'[8]. He is opposed to secularism; believes that all Muslims everywhere should live under Sharia law;[9] that relations between men and women should be restricted with wives subject to husbands;[11] that the penalty for homosexuality is death[12] and that no once Muslim territory should be relinquished.[13] He has issued a fatwa against Palestinian refugees accepting Israeli compensation for their land.[14] He is opposed to terrorism in Western countries, which he understands to be counterproductive. But he defends its use in Israel and Iraq.[15]

Many people date the inception in the UK of Islamic identity politics, which lumps Muslims together and expects them to take certain political positions because of their group identity, to 1989, after the threats to the life of Salman Rushdie which followed the publication of his book The Satanic Verses in 1988. The census of 2001, which for the first time asked a question about religious affiliation, has helped consolidate Islamic identity politics.

In the decades since Muslims began to live in Britain in appreciable numbers, a myriad of Islamic organisations has emerged, some religious, others welfare, and some primarily political in nature. Few have national reach. Among those which have, regardless of what their mission statements may say, three characteristics common to most of them emerge. First, they are more concerned with their own preservation, internal unity or with the promotion of the particular belief or practice that they profess than with the promotion of understanding between communities and faiths; secondly, a significant number of them are keener to promote ideology than the totality of the communities they claim to represent and, thirdly, their political influence greatly exceeds the extent to which British Muslims feel represented by them. Their effect, if anything, is to drain energy from individuals. See Annex I (pp 29-31) for a detailed discussion of a number of the prominent organisations.

There are exceptions. The late Sheikh Zaki Badawi's Muslim College made invaluable contributions to communal and interfaith understanding. The newly created (2006) Sufi Muslim Council opposes Islamism and eschews identity politics. It remains to be seen how the Council will develop over the longer term.

The leading umbrella organisation, the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB), which claims the allegiance of several hundred affiliates, was set up in the 1990's with government encouragement to represent the views of all Muslims – which, given the highly varied composition of the communities, is virtually impossible. Its hard line members, who promulgate the teachings of Maudoodi and Qutb, tend to dominate policy and crowd out more moderate and varied voices. As a result, The MCB's claim to 'foster good community relations and work for the good of society as a whole' is hard to reconcile with some of the positions it has taken. It has argued that the Government should 'change foreign policy' in a direction with which the terrorists would agree in order to deny them a cause,[16] and assisted by the Government, had a near success in its efforts significantly to curtail free speech in the context of the Racial and Religious Hatred bill. It lobbies rather than leads.

7. Muslim Brotherhood English Website, (muslimbrotherhood.co.uk), 5 September 2006.
8. MCB Press Release, 7 July 2004.
9. 'It goes without saying that it is the responsibility of every Muslim to lead his life in an Islamic state governed by the Qur'an and Sunnah and in a society that is established on the Shari'ah. This involves that the law of the state be derived from the Islamic Shari'ah and all people there be judged according to the stipulations of Islam.' (IslamOnline Fatwa Bank, 10 July 2004)
10. 'As Islam has prohibited sex outside marriage, it has also prohibited anything which leads to it or makes it attractive, such as seductive clothing, private meetings and casual mixing between men and women, the depiction of nudity, pornographic literature, obscene songs, and so on.'(Qaradawi, Yusuf, The Lawful and Prohibited in Islam)
11. 'The man is the head of the house and of the family. He is entitled to the obedience and cooperation of his wife, and accordingly it is not permissible for her to rebel against his authority, causing disruption.' (ibid.)
12. 'I should stress here that Muslim jurists have held differing opinions concerning the punishment for this abominable practice. Should it be the same as the punishment for fornication, or should both the active and passive participants be put to death? While such punishments may seem cruel, they have been suggested to maintain the purity of the Islamic society and to keep it clean of perverted elements.' (IslamOnline Fatwa Bank, 6 December 2003)
13. 'No Muslim, be he in authority or not, is allowed to abandon any of the lands of Muslims. The land of the Islamic world is not the property of any president, prince, minister or group of people. It is not up to anyone therefore to relinquish it under any circumstances.' (Qaradawi, Yusuf, Defending Jerusalem: a Sacred Duty, IslamOnline, 8 September 2004)
14. 'we have issued a Fatwa indicating that it is unlawful for all homeless Palestinian refugees to accept damages in return for their lost land, even if they amount to billions. The land of Islam is not for sale.' (ibid.)
15. I consider this type of martyrdom operation as indication of justice of Allah almighty. Allah is just. Through his infinite wisdom he has given the weak what the strong do not possess and that is the ability to turn their bodies into bombs like the Palestinians do.' (Newsnight, 8 July 2004) and 'If the Iraqis can confront the enemy, there is no need for these acts of martyrdom. If they don't have the means, acts of martyrdom are allowed. I didn't say that the Iraqis cannot, it depends on their need.' (ibid.)
16. We urge the Prime Minister to redouble his efforts to tackle terror and extremism and change our foreign policy to show the world that we value the lives of civilians wherever they live and whatever their religion. Such a move would make us all safer.' (MCB Open Letter, 12 August 2006).

The Federation of Islamic Student Societies (FOSIS), which claims on its website to have 90,000 members, is directed by ideologues whose views they share and with whom they cooperate. On its website it claims that Muslims in Britain are persecuted, a manifest falsehood which can nonetheless exercise powerful influence over impressionable minds.

In following its corporatist instincts to pursue a policy of seeking dialogue partners, sometimes on an exclusive basis, with such bodies as the MCB, the Government has not served the interests of either Muslims in this country or those of the wider community. Some real disadvantages are now beginning to emerge. The integration of Muslims in wider society is less far forward than it might have been while the impression given of special handling gives rise to backlash- and not just among whites. There is resentment among other minorities such as Sikhs and Hindus. As Muslim communities enter the third generation of settlement in this country and in circumstances where a rapidly rising proportion have been educated here, it is anomalous and patronising to individuals to treat them indirectly as members of a group and not directly as citizens in their own individual right on a par with other voters. **Political ghettoisation is the wrong route. We recommend that an incoming Conservative Government moves in the opposite direction: to bring as many Muslims as possible as rapidly as possible into the mainstream of British life on an individual basis equal with that of their fellow non Muslim citizens.**

V. The Battle for the Allegiance of British Muslims

Islam has ancient traditions which are much more compatible with democracy than the version preached by Islamists. Mohammed Ali Jinnah, founder of Pakistan, said:
'Islam and its idealism have taught democracy. Islam has taught equality, justice, and fair play for everybody. What reason is there for anyone to fear democracy, equality, freedom and the highest standard of integrity on the basis of fair play and justice for everybody.'[17]

Jinnah is far from the only Muslim to have opposed this narrow ideological view of Islam. He stood for Islam's liberal, rationalistic traditions responsible for many of the most important advances in human knowledge that occurred during the height of the Muslim world's greatness and for preserving the learning of ancient Greece and Rome after it had been forgotten in Europe. In this tradition, Islam is understood as a spiritual and ethical religion but does not prescribe a particular political or legal system. It has a sound theological basis. According to Bassam Tibi, Professor of International Relations at the University of Goettingen, the concept of an Islamic political order, and the understanding of Sharia as legal system, were developed long after the Qur'an was revealed.

'The sharia is a post-Qur'anic construction. The term occurs only once in the Qur'an.' And 'On the basis of the Islamic doctrine of unity, contemporary Islamic fundamentalists construct a concept of an Islamic world order and they refer in this context to the city-state of medina as the foundation stone of a universal political order to be ruled by Islam. To be sure, this is a modern construction, not an Islamic teaching.'[18]

Mona Siddiqui, Professor of Islamic Law at Glasgow University supports this: 'the Koran may well speak of submission to God and life of faith but in no way draws out any description of theocracy, democracy or monarchy.'[19]

The importance of the argument goes well beyond the classroom. It influences the ease with which Muslims feel able to integrate into British life. Many British Muslims practice a faith that is totally compatible with a liberal, democratic and multi-ethnic society. To the Group they expressed a strong desire to overcome communal divisions and ghettoisation, and were critical of the trend towards greater separation.

'I don't think there is much mixing with other communities. In East London in Stepney Green Boys school they're all Bangladeshis (My husband was a school governor there) I don't know what could be done. It's dangerous to separate

people. There's not a single white or even an Indian boy there. That is so wrong. There should be networks and schemes and mothers should be encouraged to use out-of-school hours.'

They believed that it was important for Muslims to adapt to the surrounding society as well as for the surrounding society to accept Muslims.

'Integration is a two-way street. You've got to be careful when you get the Muslims to integrate, in case you get the backs of the other communities up'

And they thought it was important for Britain's children to learn about world civilisation and global cultures, of which Islamic civilisation was one but by no means the most superior. As one Muslim businesswoman told us:
'Yes there should be a wider choice of languages available. When I was growing up there was only French. It should include culture as well as language — belly dancing. We need to be able to respect cultures and traditions; African, Middle Eastern, Greek…'

The strongest statement of the compatibility of British and Muslim beliefs and identity was from one young Muslim woman:
'Being British, for me, means having the freedom to choose what I do in my life, and being British allows me to combine being Muslim, being Pakistani and to have a balance. Being in this country has allowed me to do that. If I was in Pakistan, I would not have had the same opportunities.'

Ministers have sought to argue that radical Islam is a perversion of the faith misleading Muslims down the road of challenging democratic values. While we agree that Islamist thinking is indeed hostile to democratic values, we do not pretend to judge the theological merits of different versions of the faith and in any case doubt this is a winning argument. What is observable is that extremist influences do at present find fertile ground on which to fall and that in the current political climate, their voices can receive high level Muslim endorsement. The radicals' claim to superior piety combined with Muslim resentment about foreign policy makes it harder for Muslims adhering to more liberal and tolerant versions of Islam to claim equal religious validity and prestige. These traditions find themselves pushed onto the defensive.

The effect on individuals is to make many of them feel divided within themselves. One and the same person will express a

17. Speech to the Karachi Bar Association, 25 January 1948
18. Tibi, Bassam, Islam Between Culture and Politcs, London, 2005 (2nd.ed).
19. Siddiqui, Mona, 'Islam — Pluralism and Political Authority' Political Theology Vol 7(3), 2006. 'If we look to the text of the Qur'an itself, the idea of political institutions and political authority in terms of administering peoples and resources and legislating a socio-political order, came not from the Qur'an as from the experience of the faithful in the early Medinan communities.' (ibid)

genuine desire to integrate into and be accepted by mainstream British society, but at the same time, irrespective of the tradition from which the family comes, find persuasive the combination of identity politics and the claim that Muslims deserve special treatment peddled by extremists. A battle is thus under way for the allegiance of British Muslims between an ideological movement which challenges democratic values and also tries to squeeze out more liberal Islamic traditions, and the values of broader British society which has shown itself to be unsure of how to express its own basic tenets.

The evidence we took illustrated how torn some witnesses felt. The views expressed and the claims made below were from people whose professions of desire to belong to British society were perfectly genuine. Their very wish made them more resentful than they might otherwise have been about the discrimination they felt they suffered as Muslims:
'If a Muslim says certain things, they become fundamentalists, but everyone else is simply expressing their views'.

This anger was linked to a feeling of political impotence:
'Nick Griffin getting off – but Abu Hamza [being convicted] – it's that kind of double standard we see in an everyday world. Every time I see a mass arrest, I'd like to see how many were actually charged and how many apologised to.' And *'the way the anti-terror laws have been applied is fuelling a lot of problems – stop and search. Muslims are reluctant to help the police. There has been a 300 per cent increase in the number of Pakistanis and Bangladeshis stopped and searched. You can't even complain to anyone. There are no checks and balances.'*[20]

The veil debate elicited similar comments like this one from a young bare headed woman:
'Its like telling a Goth how to dress – it shouldn't be an international news story'.

The lack of dialogue with Muslims over foreign policy means that the Government gets less credit than it might otherwise for its actions. A reaction to a challenge from the Group went as follows:
'I didn't support the action in Kosovo. He (Blair) didn't do anything there. If he was trying to save Muslim lives, he would have done something in Lebanon.

A prominent business man said to us:
'The reality is that Osama bin Laden – a lot of his political ambitions we agree with. He says that Americans should get out of the Arabian Peninsula. Should there be foreign troops in Afghanistan? The Palestinian refugees – should they get their land back? A lot of Muslims would agree with what he wants – but it's the means we disagree with. Young Muslims think they don't understand the political process; [one of them] sees his friends stopped and searched; he sees images on television.'

It is an environment in which distortion also finds ready, if unwitting, acceptance. The Group was told a story in two widely separated towns of the alleged suppression by mainstream media, on anti Islamic grounds, of the discovery of a BNP chemical weapons factory. This had been manufactured from four separate reports over the space of a month in different local newspapers. The story began with a report of a BNP member being charged with possession 'of chemical components which could be used to make explosives'.[21] It ended, despite there being no new facts, with the claim of the discovery of 'chemical weapons'.[22]

At play in this battle of ideas is a competition between different Islamic traditions and their respective relationships with democratic values as practised in the UK. The radicals have every interest in making the contrast between the two as sharp as possible and the incompatibility as clear as possible. They must not be allowed to win. Combating them is a joint task of Muslims and non Muslims alike.

20. According to the Guardian, 25 September 2005, stops and searches of Asians rose 12-fold while those of whites only rose five-fold in the month after 7/7.
21. Burnley Citizen, 4 October 2006.
22. IslamOnline, 2 November 2006.

VI. Attitudes among the Non-Muslim Majority

British non Muslims are extremely worried about Islamist terrorism which colours their attitude to Muslims in general. According to recent polls, 73 per cent agree that 'we are in a world war against Islamic terrorists who threaten our way of life'[23] and more than half believe that the terrorists are fighting to spread an extremist version of Islam across the globe. This is twice as many as those who think that terrorists fight to right wrongs they perceive in the Middle East.[24] And in successive polls, the public has supported making foreign policy more aggressive in response.[25]

At the same time, polls of the whole population show that they believe they are, individually, tolerant of Muslims, with 63 per cent stating they hold a 'favourable' view of Muslims.[26] 60 per cent of them say however that they think their fellow citizens view Muslims with suspicion.[27] Individual belief in personal tolerance of Muslims in general also coexists with hostile attitudes towards Islam as a religion: with about half believing that it treats women as inferior to men,[28] and that 'Islam' (not Islamic fundamentalism) poses a threat to western democracy,[29] a widely held misconception which needs to be vigorously countered. Fear of terrorism heightens the atmosphere and generates genuine apprehension. This apprehension finds expression in three ways: fears about security; the perception that alien political ideas are being infiltrated into Britain by a religious minority; and that the country's traditional liberties are being abridged in the name of certain group rights which they find abhorrent.

Large majorities (of about three quarters) think that Muslim women have the right to wear the veil, and even claim to understand why some Muslim women wear it. People support this right despite believing (though in smaller numbers) that it is a visible statement of separation and difference and will damage race relations. But three fifths oppose Muslim women wearing the veil in a public capacity (as teachers, newsreaders or policewomen), and just under half do so 'strongly'.[30] There is support for the rights of Muslims to practice their religion as a private matter (despite disapproval of some its doctrines) but also strong opposition to any public role for the religion.

And the public does not think it reasonable for British Muslims to be angry with the Government. Only 9 per cent of Londoners (who are more pro-Muslim than people living outside the capital) think that the Government has treated Muslims unfairly. 57 per cent thought the Government treats them fairly, while 23 per cent think they get 'better outcomes than they deserve.[31]'

The British National Party exploits anti-Muslim feeling that derives from the impression, which it sedulously fosters, that minorities succeed in being bought off with, for instance, improved housing, rather than being penalised for troublemaking. Since 9/11, its campaigning has taken on a specifically anti-Islamic hue. Internal BNP literature explains why the party has decided to campaign against Islam per se, rather than merely against extremist Islam.[32] Support for this attitude is not confined to the extreme right. One of our witnesses, who advised mainstream political parties in the past, explained:

'One of [the issues on which we focus] is the Muslim Problem. The terrorist problem in the UK is mainly a Muslim problem. It's a fifth column.' 'If you believe [the surveys and polls] 20 per cent are sympathetic to the 7/7 bombings, that is 50,000 including females…and what is more those two communities are increasing, the Pakistani by 50 per cent and the Bangladeshis by 75 per cent every ten years.'

Another group – quite widespread – fears that the liberal traditions of the country are being sacrificed. As one of our witnesses saw it:

'Sharia is developing. The running is being made by people who do want sharia law. The Inland Revenue is considering altering rules of inheritance tax. If you develop a parallel system of financial governance you create a separate system and segregations…I am told that if you teach religion you teach it in a secular context – you teach the bible in terms of the society that produced it but people who teach Islam are being intimidated into teaching Koran as a matter of fact. If they try and teach it objectively they are being held up by heads of department.'

The desire to find a way out of the tension which people sense is increasing produces strange bedfellows. The anti war coalitions that emerge to demonstrate are one example. The radicals cleverly suggest that others do not need to accept their

23. YougGov, July 2006.
24. YouGov, August 2006.
25. YouGov, July 2006, August 2006.
26. Pew Research Centre for the People and the Press, Spring 2006.
27. Populus, June 2006.
28. Populus, June 2006.
29. YouGov, July 2006.
30. Mori 17 October 2006.
31. Mori 20 October 2006.
32. The Nationalist [BNP Members' Newsletter], October 2001.

viewpoint (for instance to withdraw from Iraq) for them nevertheless to agree that because radicalism feeds off such an issue, policy should change for this reason, since changing policy would diminish radicalism. The sincerity of those advancing this insidious form of intellectual entryism is certainly open to doubt, but it has widespread appeal. Major conferences have been organised to promote this line of argument which is taken up, to serve their own agendas, by such figures as George Galloway and Respect as well as by Mayor Livingstone. It has found its way into MCB representations to government, endorsed by Members of Parliament (see Annex I pp 29-31). Respectability is thus gained for the attack on democratic values.

As recent Dutch experience, and the surge of opinion following Mr Straw's remarks on the veil have shown, all this is potent stuff capable of uniting large numbers of people against third parties despite other significant differences of interest. Attitudes are not yet so set as to be irretrievable and answers to opinion polls suggest that ground of agreement can be found. Against the background however of fear generated by terrorist incidents, the anti-democratic aims of extremists, and misconceptions on the part of many non Muslims of the threatening nature of Islam, real effort will be required from all quarters to increase inter communal understanding and unquestioning acceptance of Muslims as people as entitled as any others to equal status as fellow citizens.

VII. The Social Condition of British Muslims

Demographics

In discussing the social status of, and the progress made by, Britain's Muslims it is important to recall that most Muslims come from families that have arrived relatively recently. As a Jewish community leader remarked:

'the sort of institutions that developed in the Jewish community developed over a very long time and we sometimes expect too much from other more recently arrived communities.'

According to the 2001 census, there were 1.6 million Muslims in Britain (2.8 per cent of the population).[33] In April 2001, 34 per cent of Muslims were under fifteen (compared to 20 per cent of the population as a whole), and 71 per cent were under 34 (compared to 45 per cent of the population as a whole). 38 per cent of Muslims live in London, 13 per cent in the West Midlands, 12 per cent in Yorkshire and Humberside and 10 percent in the North West.

The British Muslim population is not only younger than the UK average, it is also diverse and it is misleading to describe it as a single 'community.' 47 per cent of British Muslims were born in the UK, of whom 9 per cent originated in each of Bangladesh and Africa, 18 per cent in Pakistan and 3 per cent in India.[34] Most Pakistani immigrants to Britain have come from rural Mirpur in Kashmir, while most Bangladeshis are from rural Sylhet. Some African Muslims are ethnic Asians who arrived after being expelled by Idi Amin, while others are black Africans, many of whom have moved here more recently. Of these, Somalis are the largest group.

Patterns of Migration

In recent years the meaning of migration has changed. Thanks to modern communications it is possible for migrants to keep in much closer touch with their country of origin than in earlier eras. A migrant from Sylhet can now visit his village several times a year:

'This completely transforms your capacity to think of yourself as a visitor not as a settler. When Jews came here [from Russia] there was no going back – it was physically impossible and someone had moved onto your farm'

Much South Asian Muslim immigration into Britain has been for economic reasons. The Bangladeshi migration has created in Sylhet a class known as 'Londonis': families that have greatly increased their standard of living thanks to remittances. This, together with the practice of marrying first cousins has helped Pakistani and Bangladeshi families maintain deep ties across continents. Bringing a member of a family from 'back home' (perhaps by arranging for them to take a British husband or wife) is seen as doing a good deed for the family. It is possible to conclude as a witness who is senior in the race relations field told us:

'a spectrum between immigration and settlement is developing. There could be said to be four categories: visit, short stay, settlement, and citizenship, and we will have to make distinctions between four things. I think you will see quite a lot more settlement from the third world. There will be much more visit and short stay from closer to home.'

Education

Overall, British Muslims' educational attainment is low. Although most religious minorities are better educated than the average, Muslims are not (see table 1). Some of the deficit is the result of the low level of education of Muslim immigrants to the UK. While 17 per cent of British born Muslims have a degree (the average for all British born people is also 17 per cent) only 10.5 per cent of foreign born Muslims have one (the average for all foreign born people is 21 per cent).

Nonetheless, overall statistics can disguise regional variation. As a Muslim parent from Manchester told us:

'My kids have all been through the Muslim prep school and on to Altrincham [Grammar] [and have had] no problems. There is a danger of taking general statistics and forgetting the details on the ground. Recent immigrants to Britain come from the most deprived areas of Pakistan and Bangladesh. The success stories come from Punjab. The majority of Manchester immigrants come from Punjab. ...When you look at the majority it looks bad – but when you look at the details, the picture is more complicated.'

It has been suggested that there may be cultural explanations for Pakistanis' and Bangladeshis' poor attainment. A British Pakistani businessman told us:

'The Indians have the backing of their parents; allow their kids to be educated, tell them to do their homework; while the Pakistani shops send their Pakistanis to help in the shop. I [though Pakistani] had the support of my family. And I don't think this is changing for the better. The older generation are going back to Kashmir. A culture of ambition is not being developed.'

33. 8.6 million said they had no religion, while 4.4 million did not state a religion.
34. Office of National Statistics, Annual Population Survey, 2004.

Table 1: Highest Qualification by Religion

Great Britain (Percentages)						
	Degree or equivalent	Higher education2	GCE A or equivalent	GCE A-C equivalent	Other qualification	No qualification
Christian	16.3	9.0	24.2	23.2	12.0	15.3
Buddhist	29.8	8.6	15.1	9.5	20.0	17.0
Hindu	29.0	5.4	15.1	10.8	25.0	14.7
Jewish	43.7	7.5	20.0	12.4	9.1	7.3
Muslim	12.4	3.7	13.4	14.8	23.0	32.7
Sikh	19.9	5.6	18.2	16.0	19.8	20.5
Any other religion	23.2	9.4	20.5	19.7	14.3	12.9
No religion	22.3	7.4	22.9	22.4	10.9	14.1
Total	17.6	8.5	23.4	22.5	12.4	15.7

(Office of National Statistics Annual Population Survey, January-December 2004)

These effects can create a vicious circle because, as another witness said:
'In terms of ethnic capital, what matters is not just your parents – nor what you alone achieve – but also what the other people in your group achieve, particularly if living patterns are tightly knit. This is peer pressure. If you've got a group with lower than average qualification levels that will have a negative impact.'

It has also been suggested that poor command of English has frequently held children back. This thesis, if valid, should be generally true of all children born in non-English-speaking countries and should not affect those born here. In one or two cases we heard however that the school had not caught up with the fact that most of the Asian children in its classes had been born to English speaking parents in this country and was teaching on the basis of misinformed assumptions. One mother born in Birmingham recalled being told by her son's teacher that he was being deliberately taught to 'a lower attainment level' on the mistaken premise that his first language was not English. The mother in question will have been more than able to sort the teacher out but teaching down evidently takes place and seems to be entirely the wrong approach.

It became clear in the course of taking evidence that the single biggest factor in low rates of attainment was quite simply the poor quality of state education provided in the less affluent inner-city areas where many Muslims live. One prominent Muslim businessman despaired at the collapse in the last quarter of a century of the educational standards of his school – leaving employees:
'I employ about 100 people in the Muslim community. I recruit school leavers and there's a clear distinction between people in the educational system in the 80's compared with what's happening now. I have to put in a lot of effort with literacy and speaking. In the inner city schools…they can hardly speak English. Mathematics? I can't give people basic arithmetic [to do]. I see a real poor level of attainment as an employer. Whereas before I could take a school leaver: you could slot them in, now there's so much pre-training that I have to do'

Muslim parents we spoke to feel betrayed by this decline. One even said that:
'The whole reason they came [to Britain] was to give their kids a better education;'

another said that:
'education is the key and in this area, state school education is regarded very poorly.'

Faith Schools

In the majority community there is concern about and some opposition to Muslim faith schools. People worry that Muslim children are being indoctrinated with hardline forms of Islam that predispose them to hate the society in which they are being brought up. Given this fear, it is not surprising that our Muslim witnesses exhibited some defensiveness about faith schools. They were keen to point out that they were simply schools that happened to be Muslim, just like Jewish or Catholic faith schools, and that they were not religious seminaries. One, who ran a faith school, told us:
'When we talk about an Islamic faith school they're not just teaching Islamic subjects. It's the English curriculum plus the Islamic subjects and the Koran'. Another said that 'somehow the media push the issue of faith schools whenever there is instability.'

Many Muslims we spoke thought that Muslim faith schools ought to exist:
'It's about choice and equality – if there are Jewish or Catholic schools – if you do one thing there should be equality for all.'

Even those who took this view did not necessarily want to send their children to a faith school. Most of the parents we spoke to were happy to educate their children in Islam at weekends or in the evening:
'My children go to private school but I worry they won't get a Muslim ethic, so I give them Saturday school and evening classes.'

Some said in terms that they did not want to send their children to a faith school:

'I'd like to see an improvement in the general state education rather than faith schools…there's a place for faith schools, but you need to listen to the wider audience. I want my kids to integrate and go mainstream. It never did me any harm.' For another: *'it was very important to go to mixed schools,'* while even a mufti told us that *'the need for a faith school only arises when state schools fail to meet the requirements.'*

At one meeting we held, there was a universal desire to get their children into the local grammar school rather than a faith school. Not, granted, a scientific sample. The two striking characteristics about the evidence taken however were first, the importance attached to a good education (no parental indifference was shown on this score) and secondly, the extent to which the views expressed mirrored those of parents everywhere who take the education of their children seriously.

One father, of Pakistani origin, and a keen supporter of cultural mixing, explained the dilemma he had faced:

'I've got four kids – I agree with everyone else about the general secondary schools – they're absolutely atrocious. I made a decision that I don't want to send my son to the state sector – but I'm lucky I could pay the fees. But he twisted my arm – we bowed to his pressure, and he was sent to the local school. It's a predominantly Asian crowd that he tends to move with, and that's not a good idea I don't think. With my daughter, I chose to send her to a faith school. It teaches a predominantly national curricula bent, but with certain Islamic teaching. Girls always normally do better than boys, but my daughter is over-performing, more disciplined, whereas my son is the opposite. Discipline, order, organisation is all important for me. It's a higher plane. My son – I'd think about moving him, but was given advice to keep him there. Generally, I've got two other kids – there's no way I'd send them to the state school.'

Madrassas and Religious Education

The topic of madrassas also elicited defensiveness from many of our Muslim witnesses. They were very keen to explain that they did not think they contributed to radicalisation. However, some witnesses criticised some madrassas for being too old-fashioned:

'You've got children at different levels mixed together – so there's no grading,'

but another said that:

'there isn't choice in a low income area, but equally you don't want them not to get the ethos of their religion.'

A Muslim community worker in Manchester complained that there was not enough monitoring of madrassas for child protection purposes and that discipline could be harsh. One witness described how parents often had difficulty juggling the demands of practical and religious life, and how one girl had not been allowed to leave her religious classes to attend a dentist's appointment. Although her parents had wanted to send her to the dentist, they had not felt able to go against the wishes of the religious authorities in the local madrassa. Other witnesses, however, were less intimidated and thought the

madrassas generally did a good job. The Group formed the view that practice varied across the country.

There was also fear that the majority community might try and control the madrassas too much:

'The last thing I'd want would be a PC version of Islam being taught to my kids. You might start off with the correct intentions, but 5/10 years down the line you'd end up with a very watered down version of Islam.'

There was suspicion too of any proposals to increase Arabic teaching in schools. Some thought it would look too like special treatment, something which many of our Muslim witnesses were keen to avoid and to be seen to avoid:

'the media is going to jump on it – I'd be very cautious if that came from David Cameron,' and *'I don't want it to be seen as a question of positive discrimination,'*

Others thought it made more sense to learn European languages.

Imams

Our Muslim witnesses shared the majority community's concern about imams, not so much because it was thought they were likely to be a dangerous influence as because they were too often incompetent and, brought from abroad, unable to relate to their audience:

'Back home [Bangladesh] there is this thing that you have five sons, the one who is less academic – you make him an imam. The least clever child is becoming the imam. Now this imam comes to England and whatever he teaches is taken to be the Bible. I'm not against Islamic schools as long as they follow the curriculum because then we can train imams who understand religion but also understand the culture here.'

This witness also thought it made sense to require sermons in mosques to be delivered in English. However, another witness, the trustee of a mosque, told us that it was almost impossible to find British imams, because few born in this country had an incentive to be one. Another Muslim witness said that there was a silver lining to be found in the excessive traditionalism of mosques in that this also prevented extremists from taking more of them over:

'The mosque system is failing because we have very stubborn despots at the mosque who get involved in activities – but the flipside is that they're blocking extremists as well. A nice ripple. But then the students will simply go elsewhere, to the Islamic groups.'

Life Chances

To produce successful outcomes, educational success needs to be converted into progress towards higher status and more remunerative employment. But the record of Pakistanis and Bangladeshis falls short in this respect– their rates of unemployment are high and their presence in the professional and managerial occupations less than should result from their educational qualifications. A researcher in this area told us that her work revealed:

'The Pakistani and the Bangladeshi groups show the opposite

pattern [to the Indians]. They experience less social class success than even their heavy concentration in the working classes of the migrant generation might lead one to expect. Either their underlying class position is weaker than that of other minority groups, or they are subject to additional barriers or obstacles to progress... The effect for Pakistanis and Bangladeshis becomes stronger…once education is included [in the analysis] indicating that their chances of professional managerial success are substantially worse than their white non migrant peers at the same level of education.'

The research further revealed that the ethnic penalty[35] for highly qualified and unskilled Pakistanis (the sample of Bangladeshis was too small to generate statistically significant results but the indicative results were similar) was lower than for those with intermediate levels of qualification. These results were derived from research of which the following table is a part. A model had been created which compared the chances of members of migrant groups getting a job in a social class higher than that of their parents with those of the white non-migrant majority. (A positive figure indicates they were likely to better themselves, a negative figure the opposite.). The model shows a large negative 'ethnic penalty' for Pakistanis (the one for Bangladeshis is also negative but not statistically significant). When the effects of education have been taken into account, the results demonstrate that most migrant groups' improvement of status relative to that of their parents is the result of improved education, but that education has a statistically negative effect on Pakistanis' and Bangladeshis' chances of improvement. This apparently perverse finding may be because, compared to white non-migrants, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis suffer least disadvantage when they are either highly qualified (entering meritocratic professional occupations) or totally unqualified (going into traditional occupations in the restaurant or taxi trades). The disadvantage suffered by Pakistanis and Bangladeshis with intermediate qualifications would appear statistically to outweigh the advantage obtained by the relatively few well-educated.

Table 2: Social Mobility and Ethnic Penalties.[36]

Ethnic Group	Mobility	Mobility once education has been taken into account
Caribbean	.306	-.037
Black African	.469	-.001
Indian	.460	.105
Pakistani	-.525	-.792
Bangladeshi	-.274	-.465
Chinese and other	.491	.078
White migrant	.318	.142

Academic sociological research has not yet been able to explain this anomaly but the Group's qualitative research may be able to shed some light. As might be expected, the life chances of first and even second generation immigrants seem to be quite dependent on the class origin, educational level and

attitudes of their parents. Family support was (hardly surprisingly) held to be important. A woman doctor told us:
'My father has always been very easy with it all – I would play like the other kids, etc. And he always emphasised the importance of education. And gave me a drive to be the best, etc. I got prizes and distinctions at medical school, and they pushed me to do that'

But, she said, her experience had been relatively rare:
'There is a group who are immobile and quite stuck, and they're sort of living in Pakistan, and that's the extreme, and they don't get the level of education. Even amongst those who are educated, there are certain careers that are accepted and encouraged and there are those that are looked down on (law, accountancy, are seen as OK, but not the arts, geology, etc.) after you've set in your career, there's an expectation that you ought to get married before a certain age, although there's never been that case with me. My parents have seen the struggle in Pakistan, and seen the opportunities here.'

Prejudice

There was a perception among a number of our Muslim witnesses of prejudice against Muslims in the job market. One witness described how:
'one Muslim lady said that she went to 10 job interviews, 8 with a headscarf and two without. Without a headscarf she got the job.' Another said that *'Since 9/11 there is a perception that Muslims are having difficulties getting jobs, particularly with girls in hijabs'* A community worker said that *'people think they'll be looked at badly because they're wearing the hijab etc. and we need to change their perception.'*

However, other Muslim witnesses said that Muslims were creating difficulties for themselves:
'We overburden our employers with things that are not special needs, but special desires. Just before Ramadan, a special article was published about Muslim behaviour during Ramadan – for God's sake.'

Incentives for criminality

There was concern among our Muslim witnesses that a get-rich-quick attitude associated with the drugs trade has been developing in Muslim communities, but that community leadership was unwilling to confront it:
'You were talking about role models – they just see drug dealers and their flashy cars. Muslim communities have made the issue worse by not talking about it. [There are] whole families becoming involved in drugs. The whole issue of shame is an issue.'

A businessman agreed:
'the role model thing: it's a get rich quick model. I get frustrated with new employees who want to earn big salaries immediately. If you have role models they look to see how you attain success, rather than the end product.'

35. 'The term 'ethnic penalty' is used to describe the adverse difference in social outcomes associated with different ethnic groups which cannot be explained by other factors.
36. Platt, Lucinda, Migration and Social Mobility: The life chances of Britain's minority ethnic communities, 2005. Only figures in bold print are statistically significant.

The desire to get rich quick through criminal activity is hardly confined to Muslims. Reliance on traditional communal leadership to solve such problems however shows the limitations of this approach.

One witness, who works in Bethnal Green, told us about the way in which some young Bangladeshis were developing patterns of behaviour similar to those of some other underprivileged youth:

'The second and third generation Bangladeshis are very like the second and third generation Caribbeans. The first generation took all the abuse but wanted to get ahead. The second generation said, "Hold on, I'm British, why do I take all this shit?" If they were afforded better life chances they wouldn't be so antagonistic.'

Our evidence taking showed that British Muslims are particularly hard-hit by the weakness of the state-education system in inner cities in two ways. Many new Muslim immigrants come from a background where education is scarce. This means that parents may not be aware of the need to give their children extra support to offset poor schooling or may well not be able to afford to do so. The children can suffer life long disadvantage as a result. Some relatively better off Muslim families have begun to send their children to private Muslim schools because they get better results. The price they may pay, of which many of them are aware, is in lower integration with the rest of society. Longer term, this could lead, but need not necessarily do so if the right action is taken, to a situation in which some of the most intellectually capable young Muslims are also those who have grown up in an environment least connected to wider society.

Perceptions that the state education system had failed them fed into the feeling widespread among the parents to whom we talked, that the political system as a whole excluded them. The remark made by one witness to the effect that while others might get the benefit of improved standards through, for instance, a City Academy, this was unlikely to come their way, revealed their underlying pessimism about fairness in society.

VIII. The Status of Women

While there are a considerable number of successful and independent Muslim women in Britain today, many Muslim women do not enjoy the rights and opportunities available to Muslim men and non-Muslim Women.

Summary of findings from officially published data[37]

- Similar numbers of Muslim women and men are educated to A-level, but lack of any qualifications at all was much more prevalent among women of Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin than among men of the same origin.
- Far more Muslim women are economically inactive than women from other religions. Women of Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin are ten times more likely than white women not to work once married (regardless of whether they have children).
- Almost two thirds of Pakistani and Bangladeshi immigrants have been admitted to Britain as spouses (husbands and wives) as compared with all nationalities, where just over a third come as spouses (about two thirds are wives). Last year almost no Bangladeshis and Pakistanis were admitted with work permits. Fewer Pakistanis and Bangladeshis came as children than the average for all nationalities.
- In total, from 2000 to 2005, some 83,650 Pakistanis and some 32,290 Bangladeshis have been granted settlement in Britain by marriage.

Traditional South Asian Family Structure

Traditional South Asian families are extended rather than nuclear. Family members have specific roles and it is considered very important that they complete their assigned duties. Men and women have very different roles. Women have status within their domain, but that domain is circumscribed. Marriage is an obligation on both men and women. On marriage, a woman joins her husband's extended family, which is led by her mother in law.[38] Obligations extend to older and younger generations. In many ways this arrangement, which is common among the Bangladeshi and Pakistani communities in Britain, is not very different from the family structure prevalent in the British working class of sixty years ago.

This social model, which has its strengths, nevertheless limits choice for women. Whereas men are permitted, indeed expected, to be active in the public sphere, women are not. The opportunities available for young women brought up in this

way and who wish, as most people would, to remain close to their families are restricted as compared with those available to their brothers and other young women in British society. This was how one woman described her childhood:

'Then I hit 13, and it was as if my gender had become something I should be ashamed of. My friends started organising social lives but my dad banned me from going to a single one of these events. I was not allowed out after school at all, not to the cinema, the youth club, and most definitely not to parties, where there would be a danger of me mixing with boys. So I never went to any of my friends' birthday parties, even though they were invariably overseen by their parents. Every time I was invited, my dad would rage about bad influences, boys, alcohol and permissive western ways…

'For Asian families, as I understand it, the honour of the family resides in female purity. A hint of misconduct, like being caught talking to a boy, leads to the family feeling disgraced. My "purdah" did not make me feel special. Instead, I felt burdened with family expectation to be good and angered by the double standards which operated, as I saw young Pakistani men drinking alcohol and heard they took white girlfriends. I felt ashamed of my femaleness.

'My dad told me it was a matter of pride for him that I should not need to earn my own living. This notion of "izzat" – women not working so as to not bring shame on the family – made me feel powerless.

'Typically in Muslim families, with a strict ban on sex before marriage, girls still experience the patriarchal side of Islam, in ways their brothers do not'

The same witness also said, that from what she had read *'there has been a bit of a backlash' from boys who don't like the progress that girls are now making.'*

Academic research backs up this picture:
'Most South Asian communities maintain their traditional cultural identity and place great importance on academic and economic success, the stigma attached to failure, the overriding authority of elders and an unquestioning compliance from the younger members. Such cultural attitudes place hard-to-meet expectations on Asian youth leading to increased pressure and stress. As South Asian female adolescents grow older, the rates of self-harm increase; particularly the rates of self-harm for Asian females aged 18–24 are significantly higher. This suggests that they come under more stress. The stress may relate to gender role

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37. Full figures in Annex 2 (pp 32-33).
38. See Young, Gavron and Dench et al, The New East End, London, 2005, for an exposition of this kind of family structure.

expectations, pressure for arranged marriage, individualisation and cultural conflict, which may precipitate attempts of self-harm.

A qualitative study of South Asian women in Manchester found that issues such as racism, stereotyping of Asian women, Asian communities, and the concept of "izzat" (honour) in Asian family life all led to increased mental distress. The women in this study saw self-harm as a way to cope with their mental distress.

The concept of izzat is a major influence in Asian family life. According to the women in the study, izzat was pervasive and internalised and it prevented other community members from listening and getting involved. The burden of izzat was unequally placed upon the women in Asian families and as a result this created hard-to-achieve high expectations of women as daughters, daughters-in-law, sisters, wives and mothers.

Furthermore, many Asian families are critical about the behaviour of women and it is very important whether this is seen as 'good' behaviour according to the community since it is essential in gaining status and prestige for the family. The women in the study reported that a community grapevine often develops in Asian communities in the UK due to this. This grapevine then results in a lack of privacy and space for women. Many women in the study felt as though they had nobody to trust and thus could not speak to anyone in the community. This leads to an increasing sense of isolation for Asian women'.[39]

Marriage

Patterns of marriage still prevalent in South Asian families living in the UK have direct and important consequences for Muslim women. When a woman gets married, she joins the larger collective enterprise of her husband's family rather than setting out with her husband to create a new unit. Indeed:
'one of the reasons why some Bangladeshi girls in London are happy to marry someone from Bangladesh is that they can hope to get a husband without acquiring a co-resident mother in law.'[40]

The duties involved often make it more difficult for her to continue her previous life unaltered. Even though she may not have children of her own, she will share in the care of other children in the extended family. This may explain why fewer Pakistani and Bangladeshi women are economically active, even when they do not have children. Serious personal distress and isolation can occur when the marriage – usually arranged in this instance – takes place with a spouse from the subcontinent and where the extended family is extremely unlike the one from which the woman has come and imposes limitations on her not shared by male relatives or white friends. The agony of a university graduate in such a situation can be acute.

The public debate that is framed as a contrast between forced marriage (bad) and arranged marriage (protected cultural practice) is thus inadequate. While forced marriage is anathema – even to leaders in Saudi Arabia who, according to the Foreign Office 'have recently issued statements condemning forced marriage,'[41] at issue are the social pressures exerted on women by the nature of the marriages they may enter into, whether arranged or otherwise, as well as their own expectations and those of the wider community as to how they will then conduct themselves in the context of that marriage.

Several of our female Muslim witnesses thought that late marriage was important to their success in life:
'[Marriage] was never an issue to my parents. But for other parents it is always a problem. There is pressure for marriage from parents, brothers. Particularly on girls, but also on boys. Things are changing now. The reason it's changing is because boys and girls are changing They see divorce rates going up and see that sons and daughters need to get married to the right person not the first person.'

One of our witnesses dismissed the suggestion that arranged marriages were acceptable to younger age men and women:
'Going to get married back home is never the girl's or boy's idea. It is normally the ideal of the parent. But boys and girls don't want to get divorced; they want to marry who they like. There are policies that have made it more difficult for people to come over once they have got married. Sometimes it takes three or four years for husband/wife to come over.'[42]

We were told that social change was beginning to make a difference. One witness, from London, told us that:
'Arranged marriage and the bringing in of relatives will die a natural death, gradually, because children can see examples of failure and these marriages ending in divorce and hopefully the parents' words will no longer be as strong as they used to be.'

Forced Marriage

Forced marriage remains a serious problem. About 200 new cases of forced marriage are reported every year in West Yorkshire alone. The FCO maintain a national database which deals with 'between 250 and 300 cases a year, most of which involve girls of school age. A witness, who works with the police, described the staff in the Pakistani consulates round the country as 'exceptionally helpful.' Many of these problems, he said, arise in the Mirpuri community where the replication in Britain of traditional living patterns exacerbates the problem. One extended family per street can make it harder for people to escape from domestic violence.

One witness, from the West Yorkshire police, described a disturbing practice whereby girls are taken out of school at 14; the parents telling social services and the Education Authority that she is going to live in Pakistan. She is then brought back into Britain a few weeks later, and imprisoned in a cellar or

39. Husain MI, Wahid W and Nusrat Husain, 'Self-harm in British South Asian women: psychosocial correlates and strategies for prevention' Annals of General Psychiatry, May 2006.
40. Young, Gavron, and Dench et al, The New East End, London, 2005.
41. Foreign & Commonwealth Office and Home Office, Forced Marriage: A Wrong not a Right.
42. Though in many cases, the wait can be as little as six to eight months.

attic. One case only came to the attention of the police when a girl's family attempted to forge documents for a visa for a husband to come from Pakistan. This witness advocated the creation of a database of children entering and leaving the country to prevent these girls being 'disappeared'.

A study by Bradford City Council, 'tracked 1,000 boys and 1,000 girls with Muslim names as they moved through school. At primary, for 1,000 boys on roll, there were 989 girls; by Secondary, the 1,000 boys were still around, but the number of girls had dwindled to 860. Across the report the analyst had written: "Where have all the girls gone?"'[43]

The following experience was typical of the cases brought to the attention of the police:
'a woman who had been living in Britain for ten years, and had children but did not have legal residency, was never allowed out. The in-laws always took the children to school. If her child called her 'Mum' she got hit and the child got hit too.'

One witness did not think that improvement in the social situation in Bradford was happening:
'I once took a lady from a family in the area in which a sergeant worked, and the father of the girl went to see him, and ranted to the chief inspector – and they were exactly the same words that I'd heard 15 years before…it's constant. No family will ever admit to forcing the daughter into marriage, they'll say she's a willing party'

It is hard to frame public policy in such areas. The acts involved in forced marriage (rape, kidnap, assault, intimidation, etc.) are already illegal, should be prevented and, when cases come to light, those responsible for them or for aiding and abetting them should be prosecuted. The difficulty is discovery: the wife may well be subjected to intimidation and even violence to ensure she does not enforce her rights. The position as regards arranged marriage is more intricate. Some would consider it as lying entirely outside the legitimate authority of the state. Or that, as with one of our witnesses, since arranged marriage will in due course die of its own accord, it can and should be left to become moribund. Others would say that this will take too long, especially with spouses continuing to come in from the subcontinent, and that in any case, the results for several hundred thousand of our fellow citizens can be so limiting and in some cases so damaging that the state cannot simply ignore the effects of a custom so much at variance with the mores of the society in which it takes place.

The Group takes the view that while marriage custom is not an appropriate area for legislation, conditions surrounding it and consequences of it are legitimate matters of public interest and therefore of policy. Government is entitled to and should make clear that in the UK, women have rights in marriage equal to those of men. This is a matter of parental education and we would like to see the Equality and Human Rights Commission work with community leadership and influential individuals to foster practical acceptance of the equality of women.

For such equality to have meaning, those involved must be competent to operate in the society they live in. Bringing

spouses in from the subcontinent, unable to communicate in English, additionally handicaps the resulting families in their ability to progress in British society. We agree with the Government's announcement that adequate grasp of the English language should become a condition of long term settlement here. We consider that those families which can afford to pay for marriage partners to come to the United Kingdom, should also be able, and should want, to finance their ability to lead active lives in the UK. They should learn English to the required standard before coming to the UK.

Unequal Access to the Labour Market

The limited access which young Muslim women often have to the labour market as the result of traditional family structures which can be oppressive curtails their personal life chances. Difficulties can be put in their way, such as unwillingness to facilitate the learning of English. 'Give them a bit of freedom and they will want more' is an attitude that is still all too prevalent. Conversely, the women's ability to deal effectively with their families and their chances of personal satisfaction and fulfilment are frequently strongly influenced by the extent to which they are able to gain experience in the market place and develop personal independence outside the family. The vast majority of women naturally want to be able to achieve this without a serious breach with their relatives.

This is not an easy area for governmental action. A blind eye policy however is not adequate. Autonomous change will take a very long time. Action can be taken in a number of ways, starting with career advice to girls at school. There has been recent improvement here among a younger generation of girls at mainstream schools, but there is still a tendency for them to get restrictive and unimaginative advice. The Equal Opportunities Commission told us:
'We know that there's a new generation [of Bangladeshi and Pakistani women] who are coming in and who are skilled. But there are cases where career advisers tell them that they'll be getting married at the age of 18, so don't bother.'

A Muslim Sixth former to whom we spoke agreed that restrictive career advice was a problem.

Many Muslim women are still not fulfilling their career potential. This is the result of a combination of any of the following factors: limited education; or education, possibly to a high level including university followed however by a marriage which excludes either career development, or even any work at all. Sometimes it is simply a case of limited ambition on the part of the woman faced with family pressures to conform to traditional practice. An academic witness confirmed what another had told us – that a route taken out of the dilemma by some women was to postpone marriage:
'One of the reasons [Muslim] girls postpone marriage is that they get to go to university but still the highly qualified woman is less likely to go into the labour market.'

The Equal Opportunities Commission assess that:
'[Muslim] women are being employed at a lower level than

43. The Guardian education supplement, 10 October 2006.

they are qualified for. They're more likely to go into certain sectors. They may be training themselves as lawyers but they can't be absorbed into the labour market.'

Several Muslim women from whom we took evidence were scathing about the unhelpful record of the male-dominated community leadership, which did not offer practical benefits to women. One Muslim woman told us:
'The MCB has nothing for women. It is directed at youths. You can attend seminars on gender and development but there is no vocational training for Muslim women.'

Women witnesses also said that some organised programmes, although probably well-intentioned, could have negative consequences. One witness expressed her worry that the MCB had begun to use Muslim doctors to provide health services to the Muslim communities thus obviating the need for the women to visit their NHS GP. This was important because, as another witness, herself a Muslim GP, told us:
'I have had Muslim women with mental health issues which they've been unable to talk about with their families. Within the framework of the doctor-patient relationship they've been able to say a lot more.'

Another woman said:
'A lot of the times the man wants the woman to be in 'their place' at home looking after the children. And it's quite difficult for the woman. She will go into the kitchen and tell me (secretly) they want to get a job. These are women who have degrees and Masters'.

We were told that in order to change this:
'you need to target mosques, schools, media.'

But also that:
'A lot of Asian media is now getting the message across.'

IX. The Shared British Agenda

This report argues that momentum has to be injected into policies which promote integration. But integration into what? What are the values about which much is said, how are they to be inculcated and what should we do about the gap that seems to exist sometimes between what we profess and what actually happens? A sense of common identity is evidently a key part of successful integration. Modern Britain is lacking in this department.

Compared with many countries, the UK does little consciously to inculcate a sense of national identity and shared values. We do not, for instance, salute the flag in school. We prefer to absorb our identity subconsciously and subliminally. That is fine provided there is unifying substance to imbibe. But in recent years, many centrifugal forces have been at work. These include increased mobility throughout society, social liberalisation, decline in religious observance, continuing immigration and the growth of multiple identity among our citizens. There has been little centripetal counteraction. We seem remarkably ill informed about our own society. The bonds decline as diversity grows.

Devolution, if it has not actually contributed to the erosion of common national identity, has certainly brought it into the open. The English, who for long barely distinguished between their Englishness and their British identity, are now reacting to the consequences of transfers of power within the United Kingdom. Perceptions of unfairness have powerful negative effects, something which we should recognise is true of minority and majority communities alike and which pulls people apart. The sense of being British is declining as an expression of common identity among the majority population at the very time that ethnic minorities are being urged to espouse it. This is hardly a winning formula. How can minorities be expected to take seriously something the majority at best neglects and at worst rejects?

This report is especially concerned with those aspects of the British agenda which will help increase unity across communities without crushing ethnic diversity. We do not deal with the broader national issues, which are not within our remit, but we are clear that action taken in relation to one aspect of shared identity has to support and be consistent with action in relation to any other. We need to rebuild Britishness, in ways which do not breed shallow nationalism but do allow us to understand the contributions which all traditions, whether primarily ethnic or national, have made and are making to our collective identity and shared destiny.

There is an emerging consensus among policy makers and their advisers, that British values and identity need to be taught in schools and that this instruction needs to include all children, irrespective of ethnic background. The Group strongly agrees.

A range of reasons is adduced by proponents. Some argue simply that we need to enunciate some democratic principles around which to adhere as a people such as the rule of law and free speech. Others are more preoccupied with the need to inculcate the idea of a common past underpinning a common future by laying emphasis on knowledge of our history and geography.

The Group considers that both aspects are important and both need attention. British children should understand better than they do what their society stands for as this is part of what will unite them as adults and citizens. Many of them also seem remarkably ignorant of British history and geography which weakens their ability to understand what is special about this country or special about being British.

We hear much at present about the defects of our past: for instance the – undoubted – blemishes in our colonial record and our participation in the slave trade. Past wrongs should not be hidden. They should be known about, discussed and lessons should be drawn for the future. But there is another side to our history which should get more attention than it does. Outside this country the symbolism of the Mother of Parliaments is well known and understood. It is less clear that at home this is the case or that many children know how the freedoms we enjoy today were won over the centuries. A skein running through British history from early times is attachment to the rights of the individual in relation to the power of the state. Indeed, British history itself has played a central role in the development of the principles by which modern democracies round the world now live. This ought to part of our collective understanding of ourselves.

Shared identity underpins and is underpinned by social harmony. A striking feature of our discussions with Muslims was the importance they rightly attached to respect in personal behaviour and dealings which their own behaviour exemplified. This is not to ignore some traditional cultural patterns of behaviour within the family which need to be changed.

We were told by local Councillors in a number of places that race and ethnic relations were generally good. Our Muslim interlocutors did not dispute this directly nor make claims of active discrimination but it was clear that they did feel that on a daily basis they always were regarded as belonging or were treated by others as equals. They remarked on the disparaging way non Muslims often behaved towards them or talked to them, for instance, in shops.

Such incivility matters. It is not trivial in its consequences as it acts as a barrier to integration. The teaching of tolerance in citizenship classes will have little meaning if it has no effect on daily manners. We may not wish to return to deference, but we do need to revive respect. This is something which in the past parents as well as institutions like churches would have instilled and it is hard to know where to start in the absence of the instinct that this is important being widespread. We need to focus, as part of the meaning of shared values on the role they play in improving the quality of daily discourse between communities and individuals.

X. Policy Recommendations

Counteracting subversive activity and inter communal tension.

In a separate paper on foreign policy issued in December, the Group advocated the promotion of open societies in the broader Middle East as a central aim of foreign policy. In pursuit of this, the Group took the view that while it was right for those conducting British diplomacy to inform themselves about and to monitor the activities of Islamist organisations like the Muslim Brotherhood, it was mistaken, and against the public interest of the UK, for them to conduct business or take such organisations or members of them as dialogue partners, the effect of this being to give them status while diminishing that of organisations and individuals sharing our values. The Group considered that the current policy of the FCO in this regard was wrong.

The situation in the United Kingdom, where organisations and individuals allied to the Brotherhood and Jemaat-e-Islami are seeking to undermine support for the main tenets of our democracy and separate Muslim communities from their fellow citizens, reinforces the wisdom of the approach we advocate. **The chances of creating the conditions in the UK for the relaxation of inter communal tension are much reduced while extremism is being promoted from abroad, propagated in this country and is stimulating backlash. We should arrest this pattern and need consistency across the board in foreign and domestic policy to combat extremism and promote the forces of moderation and tolerance.**

The Government has recently passed laws to prevent the spread of racial hatred and the glorification of terrorism. It has objectionable features but as it is on the statute book, it should be used actively to combat the instances of abuse of tolerance and free speech which are known to occur or else it should be removed from the statute book. Dead letter legislation induces contempt for the law.

Government should:
- **combat the incorrect and damaging popular misconception, revealed in public opinion polls, that Islam as a religion per se is a threat to democracy;**
- **make clear its intention to protect the right of Muslims to freedom of worship on the same basis as other religions;**
- **show its determination to mobilise public policy to combat pernicious ideologies from whatever source which seek to undermine the democratic institutions of this country and the principles of equality and equal treatment they embody;**
- **be rather better informed than it appears to be about the activities or organisations to which it lends support:**

some which should not receive government patronage;
- **not lend its support to organisations or individuals promoting or preaching extreme ideology, including ideology which condemns participation by Muslims in the institutions of a democratic state;**
- **pursue a consistent and rigorous policy as regards the non admission to the UK of foreign preachers and scholars advocating the rejection of the institutions and values of democracy and should use its visa policy to exclude such people;**
- **make clear to foreign governments which either themselves fund, or in which individuals or institutions fund, the export to the UK of extremist material calculated to subvert democracy (in whatever form –printed, visual or electronic) that such destabilising activity is not compatible with friendly relations nor conducive to effective anti terrorist cooperation and which, for these reasons, is not acceptable and should be actively prevented by them;**
- **declare illegal the import of subversive material which HM Customs and Revenue should seize at the point of attempted entry;**
- **ban and seize as necessary publications produced in this country promoting racial hatred;**
- **increase international cooperation to ban and remove from web sites material advocating violent anti democratic extremism;**
- **initiate international cooperation to prevent the transmission by television of stations and programmes advocating violent anti democratic extremism.**

Promotion of inter communal understanding and integration

This is exceptionally important. By itself combating extremism is necessary but not sufficient. As noted at the beginning of this report, inter communal understanding is under threat and integration is slower than it should, and can, be. There are some very basic issues involved.

First, the Group's analysis reveals that many individuals within Muslim communities, and especially women, have yet to take full advantage of the rights they possess in the public sphere, in the work place and as citizens. Worse, their capacity to do so is in part being hindered by the Government's approach. The technique of giving status to community organisations, to speak to government in the name of Muslims on all matters, instead of it dealing directly, holds back the emergence of individual talent onto a wider stage.
- **It should be the aim of a Conservative Administration to help bring about the right conditions for a move from a**

collective approach led through community organisations to one in which individuals take responsibility for their role in society and participate fully in it. This is a key aspect of full integration.

Secondly, we noted in our discussions with Muslims that many felt trapped between pressures generated on them and their own desire to be at ease with the norms and ethos of this country. The challenge to them is a challenge to the whole of society and the response has to be shared. The prevailing political culture of this country is quite passive as compared, for instance, with the United States. There is much that public bodies and private individuals in the majority community can and should do to help. Action from outside will only bring fruitful results however if welcomed from within. This is an occasion when we need to get active. The immense capacity for self help which Muslim communities have shown and which is a great strength needs to be directed, by all those Muslims who want to integrate, to promoting that objective. The example set by prominent Muslims is important in this regard as will be the leadership given by Muslim organisations.

The MCB does not have as one of its aims, the integration of members of Muslim communities into the wider society of the UK. The Group believes however that it should view its existing commitment 'to foster better community relations and work for the good of society as a whole' with integration as the end goal and should invest effort in achieving this objective. We believe that integration should also be the objective of other Muslim leaders and organisations which have the best interests of Muslims at heart.

- **Public funding should as a matter of principle go to those bodies, and only those bodies, which actively commit themselves to fostering inter communal understanding with the aim of integration and should support only those projects which are directed at this end.**
- **Giving recognition to equality of the sexes, and fostering the career ambitions of girls, which reflect British norms, should be part of Muslim organisations' objectives and programmes.**

The preaching that takes place in mosques has become a matter of public concern as there is evidence of subversive - and illegal - teaching taking place in some mosques.

- **Instead of mosques being monitored to ensure observance of the law, which would be highly intrusive, it will be preferable - but also important - for community and mosques leaders themselves to ensure that to avoid prosecutions or expulsion of non citizen preachers, the preached word remains within the law and is consistent with the values of this society.**
- **The MCB has undertaken an initiative to introduce best practice into British mosques which, among other things, should mean that preaching of sermons should be in English. The initiative should be pursued with urgency and transparency.**

Building places of worship is a right of religious communities. Funding may come from many sources and the Group would not want to recommend that this is artificially restricted. It believes however that less reliance on overseas sources of finance is highly desirable, and should not be taken from

sources espousing extremism.

- **British Muslim communities should take advantage of the Islamic tradition of religious donation to raise funds to build mosques and other religious institutions from British resources, instead of accepting donations from foreign religious establishments which promote values antithetical to democracy.**

The lack of sufficient facilities to train imams in the UK, which leads to the perpetuation of a situation in which religious teachers are brought in from societies very different from the UK and unfamiliar with conditions here, needs urgent remedy. Those imams coming from abroad should be admitted on the same criteria as other skilled workers. More should however train here as soon as possible. The Group believes that religious leaders should be capable of commanding respect as role models not only within but beyond their own believers and that they should have appropriate and good educational qualifications. Imams should be encouraged to pursue studies at one of the degree courses in Islamic studies available in the UK which should as needed be expanded to make it less necessary than it now is for imams to go abroad fro training. Other universities should emulate the example of the joint venture between the Muslim College and Birkbeck College, London.

- **The initiative to expand the training of imams in this country to high standards should lie with Muslims but we recommend that a Conservative Government consider whether and how it might contribute matching funding from public sources for a temporary period, possibly in conjunction with an expansion of the teaching of Islamic studies at university level, to help such a programme get off the ground.**

Progress in integration will depend to a great extent on action taken at the local and voluntary level. It is daily discourse and mixing which fosters understanding and is much more readily achieved if begun at an early age. During the course of evidence taking, education emerged as a key issue. Because of the poor quality of many state schools more Muslim parents than would otherwise be the case elect to send their children to faith schools. Poor schools thus act as a barrier not only to upward mobility but also to integration.

- **The state could undertake no measure more important to advance easy and effective integration than to improve the quality of publicly funded education especially in inner cities where a high proportion of ethnic minority children live;**
- **Subject to the attainment of public education standards, the right of parents to choose the form of their children's education is a basic freedom. This includes, subject to the same condition, the right to send children to faith schools whether publicly or privately financed. The policy of the Conservative Party should be to ensure standards, not suppress choice.**

The Group has no quarrel with single sex education but believes that it should not result in effective segregation between either communities or sexes. The aim rather should be to equip children to enter the mainstream of society irrespective of religious background or sex.

- **Where schooling effectively separates children by community, religion or sex, local authorities and school**

Governors should ensure that sports, outdoor and other out of hours' activities are conducted in ways which enable children, of both sexes to meet and mix frequently with their peers, of the same and opposite sexes, in other communities.

We talked to many able and staunch Muslim women. Many of them had achieved their success against the odds and were all too aware of the obstacles that still lie in the path of other Muslim women of which they gave us graphic descriptions. The lack of independence and generally disadvantaged position of a significant number of women[44] tied to the home is probably the feature of British Muslim communities which most at variance with the norms of the rest of society. Quite apart from the loss to society which this curtailment of individual opportunity represents, it has two other negative effects. First, there is clear evidence of it leading in individual cases to serious mental depression. Secondly, patriarchal and enclosed group patterns of behaviour slow down the integration of Muslims in an avowedly equal opportunity society.

- **Muslim community organisations should encourage women to join their leadership and should make it an aim which they pursue with vigour to advance the exercise by women of their equal rights.**

Apart from forced marriage which is likely shortly to become an offence in its own right, and for which its perpetrators should be prosecuted, relatively few aspects of the social problems of Muslim women lend themselves to legal solutions. What is required is a change of attitude, especially on the part of the male members of the family. Prominent Muslims and Muslim organisations should give a lead and successful Muslim women use their influence as role models. The Group sympathised with some of the strictures passed by our witnesses on behaviour in contemporary British society, but does not consider them sufficient reason for denying the daughters and the wives of the family equal opportunity with the sons and husbands.

- **The ability of women to enter and progress in the workforce is key to greater independence. This starts with good career counselling at school. Mentoring of Muslim women in the workplace, who may well be shy of putting themselves forward, could be helpful.**
- **Professional and employers' federations and other organisations in positions of influence in the market place can do much to encourage applications for posts from Muslim women and then ensure that deserved advancement takes place.**
- **Competitive training bursaries directed at Muslim women would be helpful.**

The Shared British Agenda and British Identity.

The Government needs to take the lead and set the framework. Children are a major target.
- **In multi ethnic and multi national Britain, the fundamental principles of our democracy and of citizenship need to be restated and taught in school. A new syllabus, which should be compulsory and cover**

such issues as rule of law, free speech, liberty of the individual, sovereignty and the role of Parliament, accountability of the Executive and independence of the Judiciary, should be drawn up for the purpose.
- **Children need also to learn about the nature of equality: (equality before the law, the right to equal protection of the law and to equal opportunity) as well as about such matters as freedom of worship and the obligations of citizens to each other and to society as a whole. (Those applying for citizenship should also be conversant with the fundamentals).**
- **To give these principles context, history needs to return to the classroom as a compulsory subject. Old style constitutional history focussing essentially on England is no longer enough. It should still form a part of what is taught but a new broader syllabus is needed which traces the history of the various peoples who now inhabit these islands and gives children a proper sense of how we came to be as we now are and what we have in common. They should also know rather more about the geography of this country than many children appear to.**
- **Schools should arrange exchanges with each other. This is especially important in areas where there is a high level of ethnic separation in the class room. More local authorities should follow the lead of those already doing this.**
- **Command of English is an essential element in competent citizenship. The Government's announcement of this becoming a requirement for settlement should be implemented as quickly as possible.**

Beyond these formal and compulsory requirements, being British should be something we wish to rejoice in, celebrate and be proud of. We have few, if any, dates in the annual calendar when we can do this. We seem to depend upon the fortunate longevity of our monarch who has given us a number of jubilees to celebrate. We lack a National Day in the form celebrated by most countries. The nearest we get is The Queen's Birthday which is more celebrated by ordinary people abroad than in the UK itself.
- **The Group proposes that The Queen's Birthday should become a formal holiday for the whole population (and not just, as now, civil servants) and that celebration of it, such as firework displays, should be encouraged.**

Beyond the government, the Group thinks that leaders of all communities have an important role to play in showing the way forward on integration. This does not involve merging or abolishing identities but it does mean eradicating ignorance and prejudice and inculcating knowledge and respect.

Sports and the Arts seem to be two areas where our society can mix across community lines with ease and enjoyment.
- **Sporting federations have a big opportunity to be in the van of promoting mixing and integration in the context of personal physical prowess and achievement as well as building team spirit.**

Arts at all levels from the popular to the highbrow have huge potential to spread knowledge and understanding in way that bring much enjoyment.
- **The Notting Hill Carnival is an example of a festival**

which started as a minority ethnic event which has become a major interethnic occasion. There is room for variants of this, such as the Brick Lane festival, in other localities. This is a field for private enterprise, possibly with some seed corn local authority money.

- **The British Council should give increased priority to developing ethnic cultural programmes in this country which would illustrate the diversity and openness of modern Britain.**

- **Community organisations in liaison, where appropriate, with organisations like the Young Adult Trust, can run inter community summer camps where children and teenagers from different faiths can mix and get to know about each other.**

- **Religious leaders, already active, can cooperate further with each other in reaching out to faiths other than their own to promote knowledge and understanding, especially among children of other faiths and the cultures.**

- **Conversely public authorities should cease downgrading the celebration of Christian festivals in the name of non discrimination. Depriving one community of the symbols of its identity is resented, does not increase the sense of identity of any other nor does it increase respect.**

- **The wearing of religiously based dress or symbols should be a matter for the individual provided in the public sphere individual practices do not interfere with the proper performance of functions. Decisions on such issues should be kept as local as possible. Maturity, common sense, good will and refraining so far as possible from recourse to the law, with the inevitable rise in political temperature that will accompany this, should be the guidelines.**

XI. Annex I: Organisation of Political Islam in the United Kingdom

Definition of 'Political Islam', or 'Islamism'

There are two broad strategies and styles in this ideology, which is conventionally called 'Islamism' or 'Political Islam'. First there are those who believe in the establishment of a sharia law state and who are actively opposed to secular democracy and discourage participation by Muslims in it. Proponents of this view often preach hatred of non-believers, in which they often include Muslims who do not subscribe to this view.

Secondly there are those who believe that the laws of this country should be changed to conform to their interpretation of Islamic religious beliefs. These people use democratic freedoms to establish a parallel system, (or in some cases, an overriding system), of religiously-derived law. They often argue that their political demands need to be met in order to prevent Muslims supporting more extreme people.

According to opinion polls, Muslims do not believe that any single organisation represents them. Although more Muslims believe the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) represents them than does any other group, only 25 per cent thought it broadly representative of them,[45] while 27 per cent said they were 'not at all aware' of it.[46] Apathy is widespread: at least 40 per cent said they were 'quite unaware' or 'not at all aware' of the other community groups that purported to represent the community.[47] When asked which prominent Muslims made statements they 'generally agreed with', Yusuf Islam (Cat Stevens) was twice as popular as any British community leader.

Since arriving in Britain, British Muslims have set up myriad local organisations. Very few have national reach or political ambitions. Many of these organisations, some of them members of larger umbrella groups, such as the MCB, though not necessarily sharing its political line, do excellent work for the communities they serve. Some, such as the late Zaki Badawi's Muslim College have made an invaluable contribution to British Islamic life and mutual understanding between Muslims and non-Muslims. This annex is concerned however primarily with those which promote political Islam in the UK.

The Pakistan-based Islamist party, the Jemaat-e-Islami, has been active in Britain for decades, notably through the Islamic Foundation, which is in Leicester.[48] Islamic identity politics began in Britain in response to Rushdie's Satanic Verses in 1989. In the 1990s supporters of both strands of the ideology exploited the first Iraq war, the Chechen independence struggle, and the war in Bosnia to gain support. They helped create a climate in which the more radical positions held by the jihadi preachers who had made their exile in Britain in that decade seemed less outrageous.

In the 1990s the Government encouraged British Muslim community leaders to create a single body to represent their views to it. They responded by creating the Muslim Council of Britain, which now claims the allegiance of several hundred, mainly local, affiliates. Among the national organisations that follow Yusuf al-Qaradawi's doctrines, the Muslim Association of Britain and the Islamic Society of Britain are also affiliated. Although there are organisations affiliated to the MCB that propound neither identity politics nor the establishment of parallel norms for Muslims, the ideologues dominate the organisation's policy-making.

It is in the nature of non-political religious organisations that they rarely attract national attention, and there are hundreds of small, local Muslim organisations not affiliated to the MCB that are the backbone of their communities' life. Some national organisations that do not subscribe to an ideological approach to their faith include the British Muslim forum (a network of mosques), and the Sufi Muslim Council, which was set up in 2006. The SMC opposes the ideology and eschews identity politics. It remains to be seen how it develops.

Origins of the ideology in Britain

Many of the first generation Pakistani and Bangladeshi immigrants to Britain, while religious, had a ritualistic faith rather than one that depended on familiarity with Islamic jurisprudence. The ideological organisations have taken advantage of this ignorance in order to propagate their ideology to the younger generation, which they claim is the 'True Islam.'

The ideological version of the faith is attractive because it offers definite answers to virtually any question or dilemma. Religion, in this view, is not a spiritual guide to help individuals make their own decisions, but a detailed code of

45. Poll by Populus, December 2005.
46. Poll by Populus, December 2005.
47. The Muslim Association of Britain, the Muslim Council of Britain, Tabligh Jemaat, the Islamic Society of Britain, the Muslim Public Affairs Committee, the Islamic Human Rights Committee, the British Muslim Forum. Since the poll was conducted, the MAB has spun its political activity off into the British Muslim Initiative.
48. Vali Nasr, The Jemaat-e-Islami, London, 1994.

rules promulgated from heaven, which the believer must obey.[49] Although there is no official clerical hierarchy in Sunni Islam, most of the ideological organisations work according to a formalised network of religious authority centred on Yusuf al-Qaradawi.

Not exposed to an equivalent alternative, or to the rationalist, liberal tradition within Islam, a significant number of young Muslims swallow the ideologues' line, and become dependent on the organisations for guidance on how to live their daily lives. They rely on the rulings of ideologically-driven scholars for 'lines to take' not just on spiritual but also on political issues, and they are used as agents to project identity politics.

The British political Sunni movement is made up of a set of organisations that compete for adherents but share broad aims. They can be divided into three categories:

• Those linked with Jemaat-e-Islami and the Muslim Brotherhood. Their theological line is set by Yusuf al-Qaradawi. We shall call them 'Qaradawists'. They participate fully in politics and encourage their supporters to vote.
• Hizb-ut-Tahrir, which is still opposed to electoral politics, but has become involved in non-electoral political campaigning, particularly since the Government threatened to ban them.
• Jihadi fellow travellers (e.g. the Saviour Sect).

The Tabligh Jemaat, although not political, advocates a similarly austere version of Islam. Many jihadists have passed through its ranks.

The 'Qaradawist' Ideology

Both Ken Livingstone and George Galloway's Respect Party have sought to ally themselves with these groups to exploit Muslim identity politics to increase their political support.[50] The groups claim to represent the Muslim community as a whole, even though they represent only one point of view. They campaign to change foreign and domestic policy, and

have pursued an entryist strategy of putting people who support them in key positions as Islamic affairs advisers in government departments. The most notable instance of this was Mockbul Ali, who was Jack Straw's Islamic Affairs adviser.[51]

The Muslim Council of Britain is an umbrella organisation. Despite the range of diverse opinions within the MCB, its hardline members, who promulgate the teachings of Maudoodi and Qutb, tend to dominate policy and crowd out more moderate voices. Although the MCB claims to 'foster good community relations and work for the good of society as a whole'[52] this is difficult to reconcile with its approval of Yusuf al-Qaradawi or its refusal to participate in Holocaust Memorial Day (although some of its more moderate figures attended). The MCB's previous head, Sir Iqbal Sacranie, refused to attend Holocaust Memorial Day whereas he did attend a memorial service for the Hamas leader Sheikh Ahmed Yassin.[53] His successor, Dr Mohammed Abdul Bari, also fosters identity politics.[54]

The MCB uses identity politics to pursue a domestic and international policy agenda sympathetic to that of their ideological authorities. Thus, it argued that the Government should 'change foreign policy' in a direction with which the terrorists would agree in order to deny them a cause,[55] and very nearly succeeded in significantly curtailing free speech using the Racial and Religious Hatred Bill. It asserts that if concessions to its agenda of special treatment for Muslims are not made, more young Muslims will be driven into the arms of its more extreme ideological cousins.

The MCB frequently accuses its opponents of fomenting religious hatred. For example, in defending itself against the claims made by John Ware,[56] it charged him with 'a witch-hunt against British Muslims'.[57] The Racial and Religious Hatred Bill, originally part of the Serious and Organised Crime Bill (which ran out of time before the 2005 general election), was reintroduced in 2005 to fulfil a promise Labour made in its election manifesto.[58] It would have banned speech that was 'likely to be' heard 'by any person in whom it was likely to stir

49. 'What is required of a Muslim is simply to say, "We have heard and we shall obey.', Yusuf al-Qaradawi, The Lawful and Prohibited in Islam.
50. Livingstone at a rally organised by the British Muslim Initiative on 20 November 2006: 'We have to say quite clearly that actually there's been a completely cynical whipping up of Islamophobia to divert attention from the way that the war on terror has been fuelling terrorism.' Galloway at the 'Global Peace and Unity Event' : 'In truth, Mr Straw and all the other Labour ministers…who backed the Straw position were doing as they've been doing over these last few years: hey have been witch-hunting scapegoating, kicking Muslims at home to justify the catastrophic failure of their war against Muslims abroad. Law after law, anti-immigration, anti-asylum, so-called counter-terrorism, ID cards, extradition treaties, over and over again. Kick the Muslims, pick on the Muslims use the Muslims as the whipping point as a means of garnering cheap propaganda points in the Sun, the Express and the Daily Mail.'
51. Martin Bright, When Progressives Treat With Reactionaries, Policy Exchange 2006.
52. MCB Website.
53. John Ware, Panorama, 'A Question of Leadership,' 21 August 2005.
54. Speaking at a rally organised by the British Muslim Initiative on 20 November 2006, Dr Mohammed Abdul Bari said: 'There are [sic] a clique of Islamophobic journalists and columnists each with a sharp axe to grind who have desperately and repeatedly tried to malign mainstream Muslim organisations such as the MCB, MAB and other organisations. What they want is clearly to demonise the community and marginalise [it] so that Muslims remain in the political periphery.' The MCB also advertises training sessions given by MPAC.
55. 'As British Muslims we urge you to do more to fight against all those who target civilians with violence, whenever and wherever that happens. It is our view that current British government policy risks putting civilians at increased risk both in the UK and abroad. To combat terror the government has focused extensively on domestic legislation. While some of this will have an impact, the government must not ignore the role of its foreign policy.
The debacle of Iraq and now the failure to do more to secure an immediate end to the attacks on civilians in the Middle East not only increases the risk to ordinary people in that region, it is also ammunition to extremists who threaten us all. Attacking civilians is never justified. This message is a global one. We urge the Prime Minister to redouble his efforts to tackle terror and extremism and change our foreign policy to show the world that we value the lives of civilians wherever they live and whatever their religion. Such a move would make us all safer.' (12 August 2006)
56. Panorama, 'A Question of Leadership.' 21 August 2005.
57. MCB Press Release, 20 August 2005.
58. 'It remains our firm and clear intention to give people of all faiths the same protection against incitement to hatred on the basis of their religion. We will legislate to outlaw it and will continue the dialogue we have had with faith groups from all backgrounds about how best to balance protection, tolerance and free speech.' (Labour Manifesto, 2005) The provisions had originally been part of the Anti-Terrorism Crime and Security Act (2001) but were withdrawn.

up racial or religious hatred'[59] regardless of the speaker's intent. The prosecution would have had to prove only the likelihood that there might exist one person, however bigoted, who would be stirred up to hatred as a result for there to be a conviction. Anyone convicted would have been liable for up to seven years' imprisonment. Risk-averse broadcasting and newspaper lawyers would very quickly have imposed self-censorship which would have impeded critical examination of the political activities and programmes of religious and other community organisations. Writing in Muslim Weekly, the Government Minister Mike O'Brien admitted the Bill had been introduced in response to MCB lobbying.[60]

The House of Lords amended the Bill to require that the prosecution demonstrate intent to stir up religious hatred.[61] These amendments were carried, and though the Government tried to have them reversed in the Commons, it was defeated. The MCB said the Act 'perpetuated inequality.'[62]

The Federation of Student Islamic Societies is guided by the same religious ideology and has capitalised on identity politics. It argues that 'the persecution of Muslims in Britain began even before 9-11'[63] and that Islam is an inherently political religion which is now under attack.[64]

The **Muslim Association of Britain** (MAB) was founded by Middle-Eastern leaders of the Muslim brotherhood. Its more political activity has been hived off to another organisation, led by Anas al-Tikriti called the British Muslim Initiative. Both the MAB and BMI tend to be more strident than the MCB and the Islamic Society of Britain (ISB).

The **Islamic Society of Britain** is often described as a 'yuppie' organisation. Its leadership seeks to draw educated professionals into the ideological fold, and is less strident than, for example, the MAB. It runs children's camps and training courses to promote its version of the Muslim way of life. It describes Yusuf al-Qaradawi as 'possibly the foremost scholar of Islam today.'[65] Its youth wing is Young Muslims UK. Although several senior members of the MCB, including Inayat Bunglawala, began their political trajectory in the ISB, the majority of its members do not propound – whatever they may think – an ideologically driven agenda of Muslim exceptionalism.

The **Muslim Public Affairs Committee** puts pressure on Muslim community organisations (including the ones listed above) and Muslim politicians that deviate from the broader movement's ideological line. They deluge with emails those whom they wish to influence in standard pressure group

manner. The leader, Asghar Bukhari, also a former member of the Islamic Society of Britain, has used his influence to get money donated to David Irving, the Holocaust denier.[66]

Other Groups and Organisations

The **Islamic Human Rights Commission** claims to be a human rights pressure group raising awareness of human rights abuses committed against Muslims. It uses highly emotional language and imagery and makes no attempt to be impartial between Muslims and non-Muslims. It performs an important role in stimulating anger on 'Muslim identity' issues. It runs a competition for 'Islamophobia Awards' that has nominated for this award, among others, King Abdullah of Jordan and King Mohammed of Morocco.

Hizb-ut-Tahrir (HT) is an international pro-Caliphate organisation that was founded in Jerusalem and is strong in central Asia. It is relatively small but very media-savvy. Until recently it had refused to take part in democratic politics while also claiming that it eschewed violence. HT has now begun to participate in the non-electoral parts of politics, often through front organisations. For example, it signed a joint statement on the veil prepared at the instigation of the MCB.[67] Its representatives participate in media debates, have spoken at a meeting in the House of Commons organised by Clare Short,[68] and have begun to lobby politicians. Although banned by the National Union of Students from university campuses, HT recruits students clandestinely. HT is not the only body so engaged but it is one of the more important.

The **Tabligh Jemaat** is not a political organisation, but does indoctrinate its members into a very strict form of Islam. It is enormous. Its annual conference in Pakistan is the second-largest gathering of Muslims in the world after the Hajj. Many violent jihadists have passed through Tabligh mosques during their process of indoctrination. Its British headquarters is currently in Dewsbury, but it is hoping to build a large mosque in East London on the Olympic village site.

Britain no longer offers sanctuary to violent jihadists in the way that it did during the 1990s. Organisations on the fringe of terrorism, such as the Saviour Sect, still exist but have been proscribed. Ad-hoc gatherings of this kind of extremists are now generally organised through the internet.

59. Incitement to religious hatred bill.

60. 'But this is not the first and only time that [the] Labour Party has delivered for Muslims. When I was a Home Office Minister in 1997, the MCB lobbied me to introduce not only a new law which would increase sentences for racial violence and harassment but also to recognise the particular problems faced by Muslims. As a result we were able to amend the law to make religion a factor in any violence and harassment. Today, [a] new Crime Bill, announced in the Queens Speech is coming before Parliament to toughen the laws on incitement to religious hatred.

'The Muslim Council of Britain has been at the forefront of lobbying the Government on issues to help Muslims. Recently Iqbal Sacranie, the General Secretary of the Council, asked Tony Blair to declare that the Government would introduce a new law banning religious discrimination. Two weeks later, in the middle of his speech to the Labour Party Conference, Tony Blair promised that the next Labour Government would ban religious discrimination. It was a major victory for the Muslim Community in Britain. (10 December 2004)

61. House of Lords Hansard, 25 October 2005, Col. 1104.

62. MCB Press Release, 1 February 2006 'the amendments made by the House of Lords and adopted by the House of Commons last night, will still continue to perpetuate the inequality that has persisted under the application of existing legislation.'

63. FOSIS Website, (Justice Campaigns/Civil Liberties).

64. 'Now the agenda to attack Islam, its principles and values as well as its political system of shariah and khilafah [unity of religion and state under the caliphate] are under attack'. FOSIS Website, (Justice Campaigns/Civil Liberties)

65. Islamic Society of Britain, Islam and Terrorism: exploding the myths (available on ISB website).

66. He 'sent money to Irving and urged Islamic websites to ask visitors to make donations to his fighting fund.' The Observer, 19 November 2006.

67. Imran Waheed, from HT signed the statement on the Jack straw's comments on the veil that was organised by the MCB, 17 October 2006.

68. 1 March 2006.

XII. Annex II: Demographic Data for Muslim Women and Families

Almost two fifths (39 per cent) of Muslims in Britain were born in Asia. 54 per cent of Muslims in Britain were born outside the UK (compared with 63 per cent of Hindus and 44 per cent of Sikhs).[69]

Similar numbers of Muslim women and men are educated to A-level, but lack of any qualifications at all was much more prevalent among women of Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin than among men of the same origin. According to the Annual Population Survey:

Whereas in the general working age population, 44 per cent of women have qualifications at A-level or higher only 27 per cent of Muslim women do.[70] 55 per cent of all men and 32 per cent of Muslim men are similarly qualified. Some of this is could be because the Muslim population is younger, so Muslims have not had the time to acquire as many qualifications. This has been weighted by the proportion of Muslims aged between 16 and 64[71] to counteract this effect, which is small. If Muslims had the same age profile as the rest of the population, 33 per cent of men and 28 per cent of women would have A-levels or higher.

36 per cent of Muslim women and 30 per cent of Muslim men had no qualifications at all. However, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women are disproportionately poorly educated: 40 per cent of Pakistani women and 49 per cent of Bangladeshi women have no qualifications.'[72]

Far more Muslim women are economically inactive than women from other religions. Pakistani and Bangladeshi women are ten times as likely not to work once married, (even though they have no children) as white women. Official data show:

69 per cent of Muslim women in Britain are economically inactive (compared to 30 per cent of Muslim men) and 27 per cent of all women.[73]

Many women from all backgrounds leave the labour force to look after children but far more Pakistanis and Bangladeshis do so when they get married even though they have no children. 42 per cent of Pakistani and Bangladeshi women under 35 who had a partner but no children are economically inactive. This compares to 18 per cent of Indian women, 9 per cent of Black African women, 4 per cent of white women and 2 per cent of black Caribbean women.[74]

Almost two thirds of Pakistani and Bangladeshi immigrants were admitted to Britain as spouses (both husbands and wives). Across all nationalities, just over a third come as spouses (about two thirds of these are wives). Hardly any Bangladeshis and Pakistanis were admitted with work permits last year. Fewer Pakistanis and Bangladeshis came as children than the average for all nationalities.

In total, 83 650 Pakistanis and 32 290 Bangladeshis have been granted settlement in Britain by marriage between 2000 and 2005.[75] Their characteristics vary markedly from those of other nationalities.

1. Work Permits.
- A substantial proportion (15 per cent in 2006) of legal immigrants of all nationalities are awarded settlement through work permits.
- 27 per cent of Indians who settled here last year had work permits, but it was very rare for a Pakistani or Bangladeshi to have come here with a work permit. Just 595 out of 9185 Pakistanis and only 55 Bangladeshis out of 3085 were allowed to settle for four years on a work permit in 2005.[76]

2. Children.
- Between 2000 and 2005 22 per cent of all immigrants granted settlement were children but only 16 per cent of Pakistanis and 17 per cent of Bangladeshis were children.
- However, The Pakistani average conceals a difference between an average of 12 per cent between 2000 and 2003, and an average of 24 per cent for 2004-2005.

69. 2001 Census.
70. The figures for Sikhs and Hindus are 44 per cent and 50 per cent respectively. All figures from the Annual Population Survey, ONS, 2004 published by the Office of National Statistics.
71. Data from the 2001 census. This assumes the age distribution of men and women is the same (although it is not quite). Figures of those aged 18-64 would be better but were not available.
72. Office of National Statistics, Annual Population Survey, 2004.ONS, 2004'
73. ibid.ONS Annual Population Survey 2004'
74. 18 per cent of Indian, 9 per cent of black African and 4 per cent of white women with a partner but no children were economically inactive. Joanne Lindley and Angela Dale 'Ethnic differences win women's demographic family characteristics and economic activity profiles, 1992 to 2002', Labour Market Trends, April 2004.
75. Home Office, Control of Immigration Statistics 2000-2005
76. ibid.
77. Excluding EEA.

3. Spouses

	2000-2005	2000-2003	2003-2005
All Nationalities[77]	36	41	26
India	49	56	36
Pakistan	66	71	42
Bangladesh	61	71	42

Spouses granted settlement (per cent).[78]

• 36 per cent of all settlers were granted settlement through marriage. In the first period it was 41 per cent, but in the second it had fallen to 26 per cent
• The sharpest drop between the two periods occurred in relation to Pakistanis, but it coincided with the sharp increase in the number of Pakistani children admitted for settlement. In the first period, 83 per cent were spouses or children, whereas in the second this had fallen to 66 per cent. Without the increase in the number of children, this figure should have fallen to 54 per cent. It may well be that people who in earlier times would have been admitted as spouses are now being admitted as children, but there is no direct evidence for this.

4. Husband/Wife ratio.

The average for all nationalities is that roughly twice as many wives as husbands are granted settlement. This has stayed relatively stable over the past five years. The proportion of husbands for Indians is slightly lower: an average of four husbands for every ten wives between 2000 and 2005. It has also been stable.

It is well known that British boys of Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin are often wedded through an arranged marriage to a bride from 'back home.' Less well known, but also prevalent, is the practice of obtaining husbands from 'back home' as well.

In 2000, 2001 and 2002 nine Bangladeshi husbands had been admitted for every ten Bangladeshi wives. In 2005 this had fallen to just over seven, having declined steadily since 2002. The same is true of Pakistanis.

This indicates that there has been a fall in the number of Bangladeshi and Pakistani girls who have been able successfully to obtain husbands from 'back home.' It is not possible to tell from the available information whether this is because fewer want such husbands, or fewer are getting married at all. Although it has clearly become more difficult to gain settlement as a spouse of either sex (because of a change in the qualifying period)[79] this cannot explain the faster decline in husbands admitted than wives.

78. ibid.
79. Home Office, Control of Immigration Statistics 2003.