

DEBUNKING THE 'ISLAMISATION' MYTH



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Why Britain Will Not Become an Islamic State

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PREFACE

I am an atheist, a secularist, and an anti-fascist. I have no interest in defending Islamic religious beliefs, nor the Qur'an (quite the opposite, in fact). I also have no time for those who seek to 'understand' Islamism or downplay the abhorrent nature of religious fascism. That said, I am also committed to a rational and just approach to my fellow human beings, seeking to treat them in the same way, regardless of nationality, ethnicity, religious affiliation, and so on. To think Islam as a set of beliefs is false and potentially dangerous is not the same thing at all as thinking that all Muslims are inherently dangerous or that I should view them as qualitatively different to other human beings.

In the post-9/11 West, we have seen the worrying growth of a paranoid, bigoted approach to Muslims which increasingly views them as an undifferentiated mass, as an inherent Other, and as a powerful fifth column conspiring to destroy the West and enslave it to Sharia law. This approach to Muslims shares much in common with the approach to Jews found amongst those who believe the Protocols of Zion is an authentic document, and the 'Islamisation' myth is increasingly looking like a Muslim-themed variant of Protocols belief.

In Britain, militant anti-Muslim bigotry has now reared its head in the form of the English Defence League, an organisation founded with the explicit aim of combating 'Islamisation'. The EDL is an organisation that has been set up to fight a mythical enemy and, in failing to find this enemy, it seems inevitable that the next phase of the campaign will be to target Muslims as a whole, and there are strong indications that this is already happening. The 'Islamisation' myth, then, urgently needs debunking, and this report is my contribution to that effort.

INTRODUCTION

Islam has invaded our culture, Muslims are on the verge of taking over Britain and creating an Islamic State. 'Islamisation' surrounds us, creeping Sharia is upon us. For many people today, such notions form an integral part of their world-view, but are they grounded in reality?

In this text, I shall seek to counter the arguments of the proponents of the notion of 'Islamisation' by comparing these messages of doom with the reality of the situation in Britain today. The 'Islamisation' myth is a myth precisely because it is simply isn't based on credible evidence. The idea that Britain is being 'Islamised' is the latest in a long line of Western narratives of cultural decline. It is a dangerous myth for reasons I shall outline below, and a myth that must be repudiated if we are to develop as a nation and articulate a positive vision for the future.

I CULTURAL PESSIMISM AND THE 'ISLAMISATION' MYTH

Cultural pessimism has a long history and is perhaps most clearly represented today in the 'Islamisation' myth. A good example of contemporary cultural pessimism is found in the work of Melanie Phillips. Phillips writes of a 'world turned upside down', the West 'taking leave of its senses',¹ and an 'age of irrationality'² in which the West is 'sleepwalking into Islamisation'.³ She, and other writers with a similar outlook, are self-styled 'defenders of national identity and traditional morality';⁴ voices crying in the wilderness of a civilisation in decline.

Such narratives of doom are persuasive because they offer easy explanations for the very real problems we face in modern society, yet they do so not by laying out a positive vision for the improvement of Western civilisation, but rather through a relentless condemnation of modernity as a degenerate negation of an imagined ideal culture of old. Such doom-laden assessments of the world have always been popular. Pessimism sells, and always has done. It is almost as though human beings thrive on fear and despair. As nothing is new about this, contemporary narratives of 'Islamisation' and Western decay have many historical antecedents. In the early Twentieth Century, Oswald Spengler wrote his influential text on 'The Decline of the West'; today, Patrick Buchanan writes of 'The Death of West' and 'How Dying Populations and Immigrant Invasions Imperil Our Culture'.

In a CATO policy report paper, Tyler Cowen offers the following brief history of cultural pessimism:

Cultural pessimism has been around as long as culture. Pessimistic attacks have been leveled for centuries, although the target has changed frequently. Many moralists and philosophers, including Plato, criticized theater and poetry for their corrupting influence. Books became a target after the onset of publishing. Eighteenth-century pessimists accused novels of preventing readers from thinking, preaching disobedience to parents (note the contradictory charges), undermining women's sense of subservience, breaking down class distinctions, and making readers sick. Libraries, especially privately run circulating libraries, were another target. Edward Mangin remarked in 1808, 'There is scarcely a street of the metropolis, or a village in the country, in which a circulating library may not be found: nor is there a corner of the empire, where the English language is understood, that has not suffered from the effects of this institution'.

In the 18th and 19th centuries the targets included epistolary romances, newspapers, opera, the music hall, photography, and instrumental virtuosi, such as Liszt and Paganini. The 20th century brought the scapegoats of radio, movies, modern art, professional sports, the automobile, television, rhythm and blues, rock 'n' roll, comic books, MTV music videos, and rap music. Each new medium or genre has been accused of corrupting youth and promoting excess sensuality, political subversion, and moral relativism.⁵

Narratives of national and civilisational decline were widespread in the Nineteenth Century, as the rapid changes brought about by industrialisation and the growth of democracy invoked fears that a traditional, morally and culturally pure order was under attack. In 1892, Max Nordau's book *Degeneration*⁶ was published and found a wide readership. For Nordau, modern art and the culture of the Fin de siècle were evidence of 'the end of an established order, which for thousands of years

has satisfied logic, fettered depravity, and in every art matured something of beauty'. Nordau believed that:

One epoch of history is unmistakably in its decline, and another is announcing its approach. There is a sound of rending in every tradition, and it is as though the morrow would not link itself with to-day. Things as they are totter and plunge, and they are suffered to reel and foil, because man is weary, and there is no faith that it is worth an effort to up-hold them. Views that have hitherto governed minds are dead or driven hence like disenthroned kings, and for their inheritance they that hold the titles and they that would usurp are locked in struggle.

Many Nineteenth Century narratives of decline focussed on race. Anti-Semitic conspiracy theories arose to explain the supposed degeneration of the West, with Jews presented as a 'hidden hand', an alien and parasitic force conspiring to destroy all that was good and pure. Such theories eventually reached their apotheosis in Nazi anti-Semitism and its pseudo-religious desire to exterminate the supposed root of Western decline.

While Nineteenth Century race theorists and anti-Semites were often intellectuals who wrote for an elite audience, narratives of racial dissolution were also found in popular literature. Harry Brown writes of the popular American 'Frontier Novels' of the period:

As these romances are confronted and confounded by the specter of miscegenation, they drift... into the nightmare world of the 'gothic', where racial hybridity is manifested not exactly as 'silence' but more sharply as madness, degeneracy, and horror. Within these novels we find an intersection of science and sensationalism as the widely-held racial theory of 'diminishing fertility' manifests itself in the romance as insanity or living death, the inevitable 'curse' invoked by the 'unnatural' mingling of white and Indian blood. The presence of miscegenated women and 'half-breed' figures confounds the foundational categories of the national identity imagined by these romances – white and red, civilisation and nature, future and past – and consequently these figures are represented as irrational, perverse, or doomed, the recurring 'nightmare' invading America's dream of itself.⁷

Such fantasies of decline based on race are no longer seen as credible, but new narratives of decline have arisen in their place. The 'Islamisation' myth is merely the newest manifestation of a long-running tradition of paranoid cultural pessimism. The Right is not alone in succumbing to paranoia about the modern world, and contemporary Leftist narratives of decline and apocalypse centre on globalisation and ecological catastrophe.

Such narratives – of both Right and Left – are powerful not because they are entirely fictional, but rather because they mix factual elements (the integration of Muslims into Western culture is a process which *has* turned out to be far from easy, globalisation *does* have its losers, the natural environment *is* being damaged) with an overarching sense of despair about it all. What such narratives tend to do is exaggerate problems and fail to see that there are many good things about the modern world, and many opportunities for its improvement. The 'Islamisation' myth offers no hope of integrating immigrant communities, globalisation critiques often fail to acknowledge the many benefits of globalisation, environmental hysteria assumes there will be no scientific advances which will help us to adjust to a changing climate, and that a changing climate is a universally bad thing.

The 'Islamisation' myth tells us more about Western insecurity than it does about Muslim power. As I hope to demonstrate in this text, the notion of the 'Islamisation' of the West, or even of the world, is simply not borne out by the facts. Given this, why has it gained such popularity?

In part, the answer lies in the highly selective and sometimes dishonest way in which the popular media (in particular the tabloids) have presented the contemporary situation regarding immigration and Muslims. When *The Daily Star*, a British tabloid with a large circulation, invites its readers to take part in a telephone poll on the question 'Is Islam taking over Britain?',⁸ it is easy to see why many readers would assume that perhaps it actually is.

In part, the answer also lies in the rise of the Internet. Should an individual be so inclined, they can subscribe to any number of blogs and websites providing them with a daily diet of 'evidence' that Britain and the West are being 'Islamised', insulating them from facts and arguments that provide a different picture.

But, over and above all of these, there seems to be a widespread *desire* to believe in the 'Islamisation' myth, just as there was a desire in previous generations to believe in the evil influence of technology, or the destructive nature of miscegenation, or the notion of degeneration. The 'Islamisation' myth says less about the actual power of Muslims and Islam in the West and more about the willingness of people to believe in powerful forces beyond their control that 'explain' the perceived ongoing decline of Western civilisation. Scapegoats are always popular – the Jews are destroying the West, the blacks are destroying the West, gays, feminists, modern artists, 'Frankenstein foods', computer games, pop music, reality TV, corporations, George Bush, Marilyn Manson, atheists, 'evolutionists', Fox News, and on, and on, are all destroying the West.

Pinning perceived Western decline on a myth of 'Islamisation' is simply the latest and most popular in a long line of 'explanations' for modern maladies, but it is also a dangerous myth. It is dangerous because it makes sensible criticism of Islamism appear to be just another manifestation of bigotry and paranoia, and it is dangerous because it is contributing to an increasing vilification of *all* Muslims, which can have serious and violent consequences.

A 2010 University of Exeter report on anti-Muslim hate crimes found that 'perpetrators of hate-crimes against Muslims are invariably motivated by a negative view of Muslims acquired from mainstream or extremist nationalist media reports or commentaries'.⁹ The kind of comments found beneath articles on tabloid newspapers' websites are becoming increasingly vicious and bigoted. When David Cameron appointed Baroness Warsi to the Cabinet, *Sun* readers' comments included 'This is the first step towards Britain becoming a Muslim state', 'This is the real beginning of the end for Britain', and 'they [Muslims] should have nothing to do with running our country!'¹⁰ The *Daily Mail* is happy to publish letters claiming that 'we seem to be letting Muslims take over this country'.¹¹ The English Defence League have taken to the streets to oppose this mythical enemy, screaming slogans about 'Islamisation' and spoiling for a fight.

The 'Islamisation' myth is based on exaggerated fears and apocalyptic prophecies of doom. It hinders a rational approach to the integration of Muslims and the criticism of Islamism, and is a myth that trades in paranoia rather than rationality.

II THE MYTH OF INTERNATIONAL MUSLIM POWER

In order for an ideology to overtake a country, there must be either a willingness on the part of the majority of the population to embrace that ideology (for example, Nazism in Germany), an inability for the majority of the population to resist that ideology (for example, in North Korea today), or an invasion by an economically and militarily superior foreign power. The spread of Communism was feared in the past because of the military power of the USSR, yet Islamists have no such international power-base through which they could hope to ‘conquer’ the West for Islam. I shall examine the fallacious arguments related to demography and conversion later, but it is worth examining the state of the largest majority Muslim nations in order that a sense of proportion about the global power of Islam is gained.

The ten majority Muslim countries with the largest Muslim populations are weak economically, in terms of literacy, human development, and the happiness of their populations

GDP

The ten majority Muslim countries with the largest Muslim populations¹² are as follows:

1. Indonesia
2. Pakistan
3. Bangladesh
4. Nigeria
5. Egypt
6. Turkey
7. Iran
8. Sudan
9. Algeria
10. Afghanistan

According to World Bank data,¹³ the top 10 countries ranked by GDP are:

1. United States
2. Japan
3. China
4. Germany
5. France
6. United Kingdom
7. Italy
8. Brazil
9. Spain
10. Canada

The first majority Muslim countries to enter the list are Turkey at 17 and Indonesia at 18. Only four majority Muslim countries make it into the top 30 (Saudi Arabia is at 25 and Iran at 26). There

are currently 48 majority Muslim countries and of these only 12 are found in the top 59 countries ranked by GDP.

Literacy

Comparing the top 10 largest majority Muslim countries with 2007 United Nations figures¹⁴ for adult literacy, only Indonesia is found in the top 100:

Indonesia – 88
Pakistan – 163
Bangladesh – 164
Nigeria – 139
Egypt – 148
Turkey – 105
Iran – 121
Sudan – 156
Algeria – 132
Afghanistan – N/A

Human Development

The aforementioned UN data ranks countries according to human development, placing them into the categories ‘very high’, ‘high’, ‘medium’, and ‘low’. Out of the 38 countries in the ‘very high’ category, only four are majority Muslim countries, and none of these are in the top 20:

Brunei – 30
Kuwait – 31
Qatar – 33
United Arab Emirates – 35

Happiness in Majority Muslim Countries

In July 2010, researchers at Gallup World Poll published the results of a five year international survey of human happiness,¹⁵ and presented these results in a list which began with the happiest country at number 1. The top 10 majority Muslim countries appeared in the list as follows:

Indonesia – 85
Pakistan – 58
Bangladesh – 91
Nigeria – 85
Egypt – 115
Turkey – 103
Iran – 81
Sudan – 130
Algeria – 85
Afghanistan – 115

Not one majority Muslim country is found in the top 50 countries ranked by the happiness of their populations.

The largest currently existing Islamic States remain weak

The top 5 Islamic States ranked by the size of their Muslim populations are as follows:

1. Pakistan
2. Iran
3. Afghanistan
4. Saudi Arabia
5. Yemen

Looking at data for these countries, we find:

Pakistan

GDP ranking: 45

Literacy ranking: 163

Iran

GDP ranking: 26

Literacy ranking: 121

Afghanistan

GDP ranking: 117

Literacy ranking: N/A

Saudi Arabia

GDP ranking: 25

Literacy ranking: 116

Yemen

GDP ranking: 86

Literacy ranking: 158

Out of the top 5 Islamic States, only Iran and Saudi Arabia make it into the top 30 for GDP and none of them are found in the top 100 for adult literacy.

According to OPEC:

Saudi Arabia possesses 20 per cent of the world's proven petroleum reserves and ranks as the largest exporter of petroleum. The petroleum sector accounts for roughly 75 per cent of budget revenues, 45 per cent of gross domestic product, and 90 per cent of export earnings. Apart from petroleum, the Kingdom's other natural resources include natural gas, iron ore, gold, and copper.¹⁶

According to the Institute for Intelligence Studies, Iran has 'the second largest proven oil reserves

in the entire world, [and] oil is Iran's largest source of income, accounting for over 80 percent of all export revenue'.¹⁷

Therefore, despite Saudi Arabia and Iran's relatively high placing in global GDP rankings, they are heavily dependent on oil reserves, and without these reserves their GDP rankings would drop significantly.

Humanitarian Aid

Out of the top 5 Islamic States, Saudi Arabia is the only country not to have received foreign aid from non-Muslim countries in the last ten years.

Pakistan is a major recipient of US and UK foreign aid money and has also received further humanitarian aid following the 2010 floods. Pakistan also receives assistance from the European Union (for example, millions of Euros were provided in 2000–2001¹⁸).

In 2003, President Bush directed Treasury Secretary Snow and State Department Secretary Powell to ease restrictions to assist humanitarian relief activities for earthquake victims in Iran.¹⁹

Afghanistan is a major recipient of US and UK foreign aid and the European Union also makes major aid contributions to the country. For decades prior to the fall of the Taliban, Western humanitarian organisations such as International Assistance Mission and Shelter Now were working in Afghanistan, and continue to work there today.

Yemen is also a significant recipient of foreign aid. For example, the European Commission provided €10 million in humanitarian aid to the country in July 2010.²⁰

Happiness in Islamic States

The 2010 Gallup World Poll on human happiness ranks the top 5 Islamic States as follows:

Pakistan – 58
Iran – 81
Afghanistan – 115
Saudi Arabia – 58
Yemen – 96

None of these countries, therefore, made it into the top 50 countries ranked by the happiness of their citizens.

The 'Muslim world' is inferior to the West economically, militarily, in terms of education, and in terms of the happiness of its citizens. As such, it is in fact comparatively weak and poses no credible threat whatsoever to the security and hegemony of non-Muslim Capitalist nations.

III THE MYTH OF MUSLIM POWER IN BRITAIN

Anyone looking for evidence that British Muslims have the potential to ‘Islamise’ Britain should first examine how much influence they have over the nation’s economy, its press, and its education system. When these centres of power are examined, the idea that Muslims have any real level of power in Britain immediately evaporates.

The richest and most influential people in Britain are all non-Muslims

There are no Muslims in the Sunday Times Rich List 2010 top 20

According to the Sunday Times Rich List,²¹ the twenty wealthiest people in Britain are as follows:

1. Lakshmi Mittal
2. Roman Abramovich
3. Duke of Westminster
4. Ernesto and Kirsty Bertarelli
5. David and Simon Reuben
6. Alisher Usmanov
7. Galen and George Weston
8. Charlene and Michel de Carvalho
9. Sir Philip and Lady Green
10. Anil Agarwal
11. Hans Rausing
12. Joseph Lau
13. Kirsten and Jorn Rausing
14. Vladimir Kim
15. Leonard Blavatnik
16. John Fredriksen
17. Joe Lewis
18. Richard Branson
19. Earl Cadogan
20. Alan Parker

Not one of these people is a Muslim. The only minority religions found amongst Britain’s richest are Hinduism and Judaism.

The Boards of Directors of Britain’s top 5 companies are entirely non-Muslim

According to the 2009 Forbes’ Global 2000,²² the five top-ranking UK companies are as follows:

1. BP
2. HSBC Holdings
3. Vodafone
4. Tesco
5. Barclays

The Boards of Directors of Britain's five leading companies are as follows:

1. *BP*: Carl-Henric Svanberg, Tony Hayward, Iain Conn, Robert Dudley, Byron Grote, Andy Inglis, Paul Anderson, Antony Burgmans, Cynthia Carroll, William Castell, George David, Ian Davis, Douglas Flint, DeAnne Julius.²³
2. *HSBC Holdings*: SK Green, MF Geoghegan, SA Catz, VHC Cheng, MKT Cheung, JD Coombe, RA Fairhead, DJ Flint, AA Flockhart, ST Gulliver, JWJ Hughes-Hallett, WSH Laidlaw, JR Lomax, G Morgan, NRN Murthy, Simon Robertson, JL Thornton, Brian Williamson.²⁴
3. *Vodafone*: John Buchanan, Andy Halford, Michel Combes, Alan Jebson, Samuel Jonah, Nick Land, Anne Lauvergeon, Stephen Pusey, Luc Vandeveld, Tony Watson, Philip Yea.²⁵
4. *Tesco*: David Reid, Patrick Cescau, Terry Leahy, Richard Brasher, Philip Clarke, Andrew Higginson, Tim Mason, Laurie McIlwee, Lucy Neville-Rolfe, David Potts, Gareth Bullock, Stuart Chambers, Karen Cook, Ken Hanna, Ken Hydon, Jacqueline Tammenoms Bakker, Jonathan Lloyd.²⁶
5. *Barclays*: Marcus Agius, John Varley, Robert E Diamond Jr, Chris Lucas, David Booth, Richard Broadbent, Leigh Clifford, Fulvio Conti, Andrew Likierman, Michael Rake, John Sunderland, Simon Fraser, Reuben Jeffery III, Dambisa Moyo, Alison Carnwath.²⁷

Not one of these people is a Muslim.

The Boards of Directors of the companies which own Britain's ten best-selling newspapers are entirely non-Muslim

According to ABC Newspaper Circulation Figures,²⁸ Britain's most widely read newspapers (and their owners) are as follows:

1. The Sun – News Corporation
2. Daily Mail – Daily Mail and General Trust
3. Daily Mirror – Trinity Mirror
4. Daily Star – Northern & Shell
5. Daily Telegraph – Telegraph Media Group
6. Daily Express – Northern & Shell
7. The Times – News Corporation
8. Financial Times – Pearson PLC
9. Daily Record – Trinity Mirror
10. The Guardian – Guardian Media Group

The Boards of Directors of these newspaper-owning companies are as follows:

News Corporation: Rupert Murdoch, José María Aznar, Natalie Bancroft, Peter Barnes, Chase Carey, Kenneth E. Cowley, David F. DeVoe, Viet Dinh, Rod Eddington, Mark Hurd, Andrew S.B. Knight, James Murdoch, Lachlan Murdoch, Thomas J. Perkins, Arthur M. Siskind, John L. Thornton, Stanley S. Shuman.²⁹

Daily Mail and General Trust: Lord Rothermere, Martin Morgan, Peter Williams, John

Hemingway, David Dutton, Paul Dacre, Padraic Fallon, Charles Dunstone, Francisco Balsemão, Tom Gillespie, David Verey, Kevin Beatty, Nicholas Berry, David Nelson, Nicholas Jennings.³⁰

Trinity Mirror: Ian Gibson, Sly Bailey, Vijay Vaghela, Paul Vickers Gary Hoffman, Laura Wade-Gery, Kathleen O' Donovan, Jane Lighting.³¹

Northern & Shell: Richard Desmond, Stanley Myerson, Martin Ellice, Robert Sanderson, Paul Ashford.³²

Pearson PLC: Glen Moreno, Marjorie Scardino, David Bell, Will Ethridge, Rona Fairhead, Robin Freestone, John Makinson, David Arculus, Terry Burns, Patrick Cescau, Susan Fuhrman, Ken Hydon, CK Prahalad.³³

Telegraph Media Group: Murdoch MacLennan, John Bryant, William Lewis, Niamh O'Donnell-Keenan, David King.³⁴

Guardian Media Group: Amelia Fawcett, Carolyn McCall, Alan Rusbridger, Nick Castro, Tim Brooks, Mark Dodson, Stuart Taylor, John Bartle, Nick Backhouse, Judy Gibbons, Brent Hoberman, Phil Boardman.³⁵

Not one of these people is a Muslim.

The Vice-Chancellors of Britain's top ten universities are all non-Muslims

The Guardian's 2010 university league table³⁶ names the following institutions as Britain's top universities:

1. Oxford (Vice-Chancellor: Andrew Hamilton)³⁷
2. Cambridge (Vice-Chancellor: Alison Richard)³⁸
3. Warwick (Vice-Chancellor: Nigel Thrift)³⁹
4. St Andrews (Principal and Vice-Chancellor: Louise Richardson)⁴⁰
5. UCL (President and Provost: Malcolm Grant)⁴¹
6. Lancaster (Vice-Chancellor: Paul Wellings)⁴²
7. Imperial College (Rector: Keith O'Nions)⁴³
8. LSE (Director: Howard Davies)⁴⁴
9. Loughborough (Vice-Chancellor and President: Shirley Pearce)⁴⁵
10. York (Vice-Chancellor: Brian Cantor)⁴⁶

The majority of British Muslims are unemployed

The richest and most influential people in Britain are all non-Muslims, whereas, according to 2009 Gallup poll data, 62% of British Muslims are unemployed.⁴⁷

Local Authorities with the largest Muslim populations are amongst the poorest and most deprived in Britain

The Local Authorities with the largest concentration of Muslim residents are amongst the poorest in the country. According to 2001 Census data, the five Local Authorities in the UK with the highest concentration of Muslim residents are Tower Hamlets, Newham, Blackburn with Darwen,

Bradford, and Waltham Forest.⁴⁸

Information on living conditions in these areas makes for grim reading:

Tower Hamlets

End Child Poverty:

Tower Hamlets has the highest rate of child poverty in London. It is the second most deprived borough in London and is the third most deprived borough nationally.

Particular issues that Tower Hamlets faces include high levels of unemployment, disadvantage in income, health, housing and crime as well as recording one of the highest population densities in London.⁴⁹

BBC News:

London has an ‘appalling’ rate of child poverty with about 50% of children in 16 boroughs living in or on the brink of destitution, a report claims.

The Campaign to End Child Poverty says 79% of children in Tower Hamlets, east London, are in families classed as ‘struggling’ – 42,850 children.

The campaign classes households as being in poverty if they are living on under £10 per person per day...

According to the report, Tower Hamlets wards Bethnal Green South and St Dunstan’s and Stepney Green have very high levels of child poverty, with 87% of children classed as ‘struggling’.⁵⁰

Newham

End Child Poverty:

The borough is the 6th most deprived in the UK.

69% of Newham’s children live in struggling, low income families where parents are receiving key in or out of work benefits, with 55.7% living below the poverty line. At 50,690 this means Newham has a larger number of children growing up in struggling families than any other London borough.

As evidenced by London’s Poverty Profile the borough sits within the four worst of all London boroughs on social indicators such as: Working age benefit reciprocity; children in families in receipt of key out-of-work benefits; low pay by residency; infant mortality; premature death (under 65); working-age people with a limiting long standing illness and newly homeless households.⁵¹

Blackburn with Darwen

Association of Public Health Observatories:

The health of people in Blackburn with Darwen is generally worse than the England average... Deprivation levels are high and the rate of incapacity benefit claimants for mental illness is among the worst in England.⁵²

Burnley Citizen:

A new report has revealed the Ribble Valley is the second best place in the country to grow up – but just down the road children in other districts and towns in our area are lagging far behind.

Five of the area's six boroughs have been placed in the bottom half of the Government's Local Index of Child Wellbeing (CWI) 2009.

Council chiefs have vowed to tackle the issue of childhood deprivation and poverty following the report.

Bottom of the pile is Burnley which is ranked 323 out of 354, closely followed by Blackburn with Darwen at 301 and Pendle at 300.⁵³

Traditional religious and cultural practices adversely affect health in British Muslim communities

Infant deaths linked to congenital anomalies resulting from 'cousin marriages'

According to 2001 Census data, Bradford has the fourth largest concentration of Muslim residents in Britain. The infant mortality rate in Bradford is significantly higher than the national average, and in 2004 the Bradford District Infant Mortality Commission was set up to investigate the reasons behind this. While poverty contributed to a higher than average infant mortality rate across the board, the Commission also found rates were higher in Bradford's Pakistani Muslim community than amongst other ethnic and cultural groups.

An Infant Mortality Rate Commission paper entitled 'Causes of Bradford Infant Mortality – Investigation with particular attention to effect of ethnicity' made the following observations:

Bradford's high infant mortality is at least partly caused by an excess of deaths from congenital anomalies. Babies in an equivalently deprived but predominantly white British area outside Bradford are less than half as likely to die from congenital anomalies.

As a minimum some of Bradford's excess infant mortality can be attributed to autosomal recessive inheritance, and therefore, based on published literature, to consanguinity (colloquially 'cousin marriage'). Bradford babies were more than 5 times more likely to die from autosomal recessively inherited diseases than those born in an equivalently deprived and predominantly white British area.⁵⁴

A 2003 study into the impact of genetic risk on UK Pakistani families included the following findings:

The research has found that, for many UK Pakistanis, the very idea of 'genetic' disease is unfamiliar, and competes with social, environmental and spiritual understandings of the causes of illness. It has also found that families understand probabilistic risk information not in abstract terms, but according to the social context and circumstances of their lives. Where a recessive disorder is diagnosed, the one in four recurrence risk is interpreted in very different ways by different couples. Their interpretations reflect their prior experiences of fertility and disability, the expectations and experiences of other family members such as siblings and senior kin, their marital and family circumstances, and the social environment of contemporary Britain.

Social considerations and religious beliefs also influence the ways in which individuals and couples negotiate the practical ethical issues associated with prenatal diagnosis. A desire for scientific knowledge and good medical care coexists with considerable ambivalence about the use of modern medical technology, especially with respect to termination of pregnancy.

The research also shows that genetic risk information is not necessarily communicated easily or readily with other members of the family. Some couples who have suffered the death of an infant or who are preoccupied with caring for babies or children affected with recessive genetic disorders do not wish to discuss their own carrier status and recurrence risk with other family members, for this is a painful and private matter. Some such couples do not realise that their unaffected siblings or children may also be carriers, while others who try to discuss genetic risk with other members of the family may be greeted with scepticism.⁵⁵

According to the BBC: 'It is estimated that at least 55% of British Pakistanis are married to first cousins and the tradition is also common among some other South Asian communities and in some Middle Eastern countries'.⁵⁶

Where a religious community is relatively small and socially isolated, such marriages are far more common than in wider society. In the future, both 'traditional' Muslims and more fanatical Islamists could increasingly be adversely affected by their self-chosen isolation from the wider gene pool of Britain. In the long run, a greater prevalence of infant death and disability in these communities seems likely, and may begin to mirror the serious problems with genetic disorders found in America's Amish communities.⁵⁷ Research data already indicates that British Asians are almost four times more likely to suffer profound deafness and almost twice as likely to suffer cerebral palsy as other Britons,⁵⁸ and that Muslims are also more vulnerable to long-term illness.⁵⁹

Various medical problems linked to the wearing of veils and traditional Muslim clothing

According to 2001 Census data, Blackburn with Darwen is the third most heavily Muslim populated Local Authority in Britain. Between 2003 and 2005, 56 cases of rickets were discovered in this Local Authority, and Dr Ellis Friedman, director of public health for East Lancashire Primary Care Trust stated:

Once you exclude a number of vary rare cases where there is some other underlying condition,

virtually every case is someone from the Asian community. It is caused by a combination of skin colouration, diet and dress, not poverty. We don't, for example, find rickets in deprived white communities.⁶⁰

These cases of rickets were linked to vitamin D deficiency, a problem found internationally amongst Muslims, in particular amongst Muslim women who wear traditional Islamic dress.

A 2005 Middle East Online article⁶¹ notes the findings of two scientific studies:

A study published last month by Dr Aljouni's centre [the National Centre for Diabetes, Endocrinology and Genetics in Jordan] showed that 73.7 per cent of Jordanian women older than 25 suffer from vitamin D deficiency, while 22 per cent of men are also deficient. The study surveyed more than 5,600 people from all the kingdom's governorates last year.

"The results are alarming," Dr Ajlouni said. "There is a link between vitamin D deficiency and bone health, coronary artery disease, different cancers, high blood pressure ... infections," he said.

According to the June 2007 issue of the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, vitamin D deficiency was highly prevalent among Arab and East Indian women living in the UAE [United Arab Emirates]. In the study that surveyed 90 lactating women, and 88 who had never given birth before, only two women – one in each group – were not vitamin D deficient.

The article concludes:

Ninety per cent of a person's daily requirement of vitamin D comes from sun exposure but lifestyle and traditional clothing in parts of the Arab world mean people do not get enough sunlight.

Patients suffering from the deficiency exhibit symptoms such as muscle aches, back pain, fatigue and susceptibility to fractures.

A 2002 article published in The Medical Journal of Australia reported on the results of a study which looked at '146 women living in an urban community in south-western Sydney with adequate opportunities for sun exposure'. The study found that '[i]n a cohort of "healthy" Muslim women living in an urban Sydney community, we found severe vitamin D deficiency in 68%, hyperparathyroidism in 38.6% and high bone turnover in 46%'.⁶²

In 2007, the British National Health Service launched a campaign aimed at Muslim women, particularly Bangladeshis, Pakistanis, and Somalis, to encourage them to increase their vitamin D intake.⁶³ A Department of Health spokesman said:

For ethnic groups there is an increased risk of vitamin D deficiency as people with dark and pigmented skin are less efficient at making vitamin D in their skin.

They need to spend longer outside to make similar amounts and those who wear concealing clothing are unlikely to make enough.

Studies have shown low vitamin D levels in Asian women in the UK – particularly among those who cover most of their skin for cultural reasons.

A Government spokeswoman warned of the risks posed to mothers and infants by vitamin D deficiency, stating: ‘Breastfeeding is recommended for all babies, however a baby may be at risk if breast-fed and the mother has a low vitamin D level herself’.

A 2010 article on vitamin D deficiency and breast feeding notes:

Vitamin D deficiency in children, adults and in pregnancy can result in rickets in children, thin brittle, misshapen bones and osteomalacia in adults. It has also been connected with cardiovascular health, multiple sclerosis (Lucas, Ponsonby, Pasco & Morley, 2008), brain development in the fetus during pregnancy, (Levenson & Figueiroa, 2008), increased risk of schizophrenia (McGrath, Selten & Chant 2002), poor immune function and chronic disease risk later in life and soon after birth (Hollis & Wagner 2006).⁶⁴

Given veiling and the wearing of concealing clothing is most prevalent amongst very traditional Muslim women and Islamist women, they are likely to disproportionately suffer from vitamin D deficiency and its associated illnesses. Likewise, the children of very traditional Muslim and Islamist women are more likely to suffer from various serious illnesses than children from non-Muslim and moderate Muslim backgrounds.

Consequences of cultural and religious practices found in traditional Muslim and Islamist communities

The marriage practices and clothing worn by women in both traditional and Islamist communities have direct health implications for those communities. Both communities face a significantly higher risk of developing a number of serious illnesses and disabilities, as well as an increased risk of infant deaths. As a sickly community is inevitably a weak community, the evidence suggests that those Muslims who reject the lifestyle of the majority of Britons will remain socially and politically marginal and trapped in poverty. Muslims who integrate and reject strict interpretations of Islam are more likely to be healthy and, as a result, more likely to be successful and financially comfortable. The idea that the traditional Muslim and Islamist communities will be able at some point to ‘take over’ Britain is absurd, given the social marginalisation and health issues associated with strict religious adherence of this sort. Likewise, the idea that any but an insignificant minority of non-Muslim Britons will choose to adopt such lifestyles is completely unrealistic.

The myth of Islamist political power in Britain

Those looking for evidence of the ‘Islamisation’ of British politics will quickly find themselves disappointed. Of course, there have indeed been cases in which Islamists have been found to be wielding political influence, and the continuing furore surrounding alleged infiltration of Tower Hamlets Council by Islamic Forum Europe (IFE) activists is probably one of the best known.

Supporters of the IFE, an Islamist organisation that would like Britain to become an Islamic State, have apparently been involved in all sorts of scams, including signing up large numbers of people to the Labour Party in order that IFE sympathiser Lutfur Rahman can take control of Tower Hamlets

politics. A February 2010 Telegraph report quotes Abjol Miah, an IFE activist and Tower Hamlets councillor, as saying: 'We've consolidated ourselves now. We've got a lot of influence and power in the council, councillors, politicians'.⁶⁵

However, how the Islamists in Tower Hamlets have made use of their 'power' and 'influence' has included getting a 'limited' and 'one-dimensional' IFE supporter a job at Tower Hamlets Council:

After Mr Rahman became leader, Tower Hamlets appointed a new assistant chief executive, Lutfur Ali, who – the investigation established – has links to the IFE. In 2006 Mr Ali set up a group called the Centre for Muslim Affairs. The other directors were trustees of the IFE or directors of other organisations closely connected to it.

Mr Ali got the £125,000 job even though council-appointed headhunters described him as 'rather limited', 'one-dimensional' and 'superficial'. They said he might 'struggle with the intellectual challenges [of] a highly strategic role'.⁶⁶

This, of course, is hardly a wise move.

Lutfur Rahman has now been chosen as Labour candidate for mayor of Tower Hamlets by the local membership – hardly a difficult job, given the number of IFE supporting Muslims who have suddenly signed up to the Labour Party (allegedly with a little help from Mr Rahman⁶⁷).

Before panic sets in, however, the reality of the place in which the IFE have supposedly gained 'a lot of influence and power' is that it is the second most deprived borough in London and is the third most deprived borough nationally. Tower Hamlets is an area of poverty and high unemployment, not a political and financial centre of national importance. If this is the Islamists' idea of gaining 'power' then there isn't much to worry about on a national level. The whole scenario becomes even more pathetic when the following information from a Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust report is taken into consideration:

In particular, it is widely suggested that extended family and kinship networks, frequently with their origins in settlement patterns in Pakistan and Bangladesh, are mobilised to secure the support of up to several hundred electors, effectively constituting a 'block vote'. In areas such as the London Borough of Tower Hamlets, such practices are frequently referred to as 'village politics', in light of the direct lines of connection between aspects of local party politics and tribal elders in Bangladesh.⁶⁸

That elections in Tower Hamlets are influenced by 'kinship networks' and 'tribal elders' says everything about how irrelevant such elections are to the wider politics and economy of Britain. It should also be remembered that the BNP currently have 24 elected councillors,⁶⁹ but this makes no difference whatsoever on the national level.

Extremists gaining any sort of power in any part of Britain should be exposed and opposed, but a sense of proportion needs to be maintained. Islamists in Britain have no real political power, nor will they gain any. That Tower Hamlets Council should be seen as the jewel in the crown of British Islamism clearly indicates that Islamism cannot be taken seriously as a political force in Britain.

The myth of Muslim power in Britain is largely fuelled by sensationalist and inaccurate media reports

Disproportionate coverage of marginal extremists creates a false impression of British Muslims

Reading British tabloid newspapers, it is not hard to see why many people now fear the ‘Islamisation’ of Britain is under way. One way in which such an impression is given is through the seemingly endless column inches devoted to the pronouncements of Anjem Choudary and his al-Muhajiroun organisation (which has also gone by names including Al Ghurabaa, The Saviour Sect, and Islam4UK). At the risk of boring the reader, all of the following tabloid reports relate to Choudary and his tiny group:

The Mail:

‘Merchants of Hatred: On the anniversary of 9/11 this terrifying investigation reveals the hatred of Britain’s enemies within’.⁷⁰

“Have more babies and Muslims can take over the UK” hate fanatic says, as warning comes that “next 9/11 will be in UK”.⁷¹

‘Banned militant Islamist sect “is recruiting young Muslims”’.⁷²

“Christmas is the pathway to hell”: Muslim lawyer’s extraordinary rant at “evil” celebration’.⁷³

‘All homosexuals should be stoned to death, says Muslim preacher of hate’.⁷⁴

‘The shocking picture of a white boy aged 11 being “converted” to Islam by radical preacher’.⁷⁵

‘The Jihad fanatic peddling a message of hate to 11-year-old Londoners (funded by the taxpayer)’.⁷⁶

‘It’s Burkh-ingham Palace: Hate preacher calls for the Queen to wear full Muslim dress’.⁷⁷

‘War march fanatic Anjem Choudary runs secret sharia “weddings”’.⁷⁸

The Express:

‘Vile fanatics say our boys are cowards’.⁷⁹

“Make every woman wear a burkha”.⁸⁰

‘Hate preacher: I want Sharia law in Britain’.⁸¹

‘Muslim preacher attacks Easter’.⁸²

‘Muslim cleric: Sebastian Faulks should face Sharia justice’.⁸³

‘Buckingham Mosque ... what fanatics want to call the Palace’.⁸⁴

‘Uproar as fanatics go on march for sharia law in UK’.⁸⁵

“British soldiers are going to hell”.⁸⁶

“British soldiers are like Nazis”, says hate cleric’.⁸⁷

‘Uni pays for banned cleric to preach hate’.⁸⁸

‘Hate cleric’s free trip to foster Sharia law’.⁸⁹

The Daily Star:

‘Vile hate preacher insults our poppies’.⁹⁰

‘Mad Mullah rants: Ban evil Xmas’.⁹¹

‘Mullah slams festivities as a “pathway to hell”’.⁹²

‘Muslim nuts brand Jesus a terrorist!’⁹³

‘Make Southall the UK capital’.⁹⁴

‘EXCLUSIVE: St Valentine’s day massacre’.⁹⁵

‘Lashed orders’.⁹⁶

‘Hate preacher gets OK to run Sharia law demo’.⁹⁷

‘Protest of hate praised’.⁹⁸

‘Hate preacher: I’ve found God’.⁹⁹

‘Hate Preacher: We’d hang Mandy for being gay’.¹⁰⁰

‘Choudary: I’ll be a prison martyr’.¹⁰¹

‘Rant preacher opens jihad summer school’.¹⁰²

‘Ranting mullah: Carla is a whore’.¹⁰³

‘Muslims in march riot fear’.¹⁰⁴

‘Troops “in hell”’.¹⁰⁵

‘Sick taunts at families’.¹⁰⁶

‘Evil preacher Choudary: We won’t go away’.¹⁰⁷

‘Hate preacher says UK will be new Bosnia’.¹⁰⁸

‘Anjem Choudary says journalists “legitimate targets” for Taliban attacks’.¹⁰⁹

‘Hate preacher Anjem Choudary vows to establish Sharia law across Europe’.¹¹⁰

‘Crazy plan for Sharia law in Britain’.¹¹¹

‘Muslim extremists ban followers from wearing Manchester United shirts’.¹¹²

The media attention given to Choudary is completely unwarranted given the extreme and marginal nature of his group, which is rejected by the vast majority of British Muslims. Particularly dishonest and irresponsible is the way in which headlines accompanying stories related to Choudary sometimes give the impression that his group is representative of most British Muslims. In October 2009, for example, an Express front page headline read: ‘Now Muslims Demand: GIVE US FULL SHARIA LAW’. Of course, the demand wasn’t from ‘Muslims’, but rather from Choudary’s organisation,¹¹³ but anyone who causally glanced at the Express that day could have concluded that British Muslims as a unified group were calling for Sharia law to be introduced in Britain.

Inaccurate coverage of Islam-related stories creates a false impression of Muslim power in Britain

In many cases, media scare stories about Muslims and ‘Islamisation’ turn out on closer investigation to be either entirely bogus or based on misrepresentation too blatant to be accidental.

False claim that non-Muslim school children were forced to ‘dress up as Muslims’

In May 2010, The Express ran a front page headline which screamed: ‘BRANDED: Schoolgirl who refused to dress up as Muslim’ (the story also appeared in The Sun and The Daily Mail). The truth behind this story is simply that girls were asked to wear head scarves while visiting a mosque on a school trip.¹¹⁴ The only time they were asked to cover their hair was while they were inside the mosque.

Such requests are far from unique to Muslims. For example, visitors to Neasden Hindu Temple are asked not to wear shorts or skirts shorter than knee length and to remove their shoes while inside the building. Visitors wearing shorts or skirts shorter than knee length are told to ‘ask security for a sarong’.¹¹⁵ For some reason, this doesn’t provoke tabloid ‘outrage’ about children being forced to ‘dress up as Hindus’.

False claim that public money had funded ‘Muslim-only toilets’

On July 20 2010, a Daily Star front page headline announced: ‘MUSLIM-ONLY PUBLIC LOOS: Council wastes YOUR money on hole-in-ground toilets’. In reality, the toilets are not ‘Muslim-only’ and not a penny of taxpayers’ money went towards them.¹¹⁶ A shopping centre had decided to install ‘squat’ toilets alongside conventional toilets because it thought this would draw in more ethnic minority customers. This was a decision based purely on making money and had nothing to do with the supposed public funding of ‘Islamisation’. It should also be noted that there is no such thing as a ‘Muslim toilet’.

False claim that schools are being instructed to serve halal meat

The Daily Star’s August 6 2010 front page headline fumed: ‘BRIT KIDS FORCED TO EAT HALAL SCHOOL DINNERS’. The Daily Mail ran with ‘Parents’ outrage over halal-only school dinners planned for primary schools’. The truth behind the headlines was simply that schools had been given the option of using the services of Harrison Catering Services, a halal catering firm.¹¹⁷

The Star report claimed that ‘all high schools in the London borough of Harrow have been told to provide only halal meat on menus’, when in reality, as Harrow councillor Brian Gate pointed out, ‘it would be the choice of individual schools ... The decision about whether to use an individual provider is for schools to make, as the funding is delegated to them’. Even The Mail had to admit that, at the time of writing, only two schools had signed up for Harrison’s services.

The myth of Muslim power in Britain is also fuelled by the actions of patronising politically correct white liberals

We’ve all read the stories – Christmas has been ‘banned’ in case it offends Muslims, the Three Little Pigs story has been banned from classes in case it offends Muslims, and so on. In many cases, such ‘banning’ stories turn out to have nothing to do with Muslim ‘demands’ and everything to do with the paranoia of white liberals, who presume to know what ‘Muslims’ think and want. Such

attempts at being 'sensitive' and 'politically correct' are not only manifestly stupid, but they also feed the 'Islamisation' myth by implanting the idea that British Muslims *en masse* are demanding a radical upheaval of British society. Even conservative Muslim organisations such as the Muslim Council of Britain are unimpressed by these attempts at 'inclusiveness'.

In the case of councils supposedly 'banning' Christmas as 'offensive' to Muslims, a spokesman from the MCB stated: 'I find it bizarre to suggest that Muslims will be offended. This is a Christian country, and we take heart from the fact that this country is labelled a faith country. I wish all Christians a Merry Christmas'.¹¹⁸

When it was reported that Christmas had been 'banned in Oxford by a council-owned charity', Sabir Hussain Mirza, chairman of the Muslim Council of Oxford, said: 'I am really upset about this. Christians, Muslims and other religions all look forward to Christmas'.¹¹⁹

When a hospital manager reportedly 'banned' hot cross buns in case they offended someone, Abdul Hamid Qureshi of the Council of Mosques said: 'We have absolutely no problem with hot cross buns. There is no offence whatsoever. Any Muslim could eat them and I actually eat them myself'.¹²⁰

When a school apparently 'banned' the Three Little Pigs story 'in case it offends Muslims', Inayat Bunglawala of the MCB stated: 'This is bizarre, there is nothing to stop children reading about pigs. The ban is simply on the consumption of pork and pig products'.¹²¹

Such 'banning' stories are not evidence of Muslim power in Britain, nor of 'Islamisation', but rather of the bizarre mentality of some on the liberal-Left.

IV THE MYTH OF A ‘DEMOGRAPHIC TIME BOMB’

Poll data and population estimates demonstrate that the introduction of Sharia law in Britain will not happen

In July 2005, just over a week after the 7/7 terrorist attacks, YouGov conducted an online poll of 526 British Muslims. When asked if they agreed with the statement ‘Western society is decadent and immoral, and Muslims should seek to bring it to an end’, only 32% agreed.¹²²

A January 2007 Policy Exchange survey of more than 1,000 British Muslims found that only 28% said they would prefer to live under Sharia law.¹²³

2008 Labour Force Survey figures placed the number of British Muslims at 2,422,000.¹²⁴ Office for National Statistics estimates for the same year put the overall British population at 61,383,000,¹²⁵ meaning that in 2008 Muslims made up approximately 3.95% of the British population. Assuming population estimates and polling data are broadly accurate, this means that out of the entire British population, around 1% profess a desire to live under Sharia law. Given the most hard-line elements promoting Sharia law for Britain - groups such as Hizb ut-Tahrir and al-Muhajiroun - instruct their followers that participation in elections is forbidden by Islam, many Sharia advocates have no political outlet through which to promote the introduction of Sharia law.

This tiny minority faces a serious challenge if it wishes to create an Islamic State in Britain and introduce Sharia law, especially given a 2007 MORI poll found that, out of the general British population, only 27% agree that ‘people need religious teachings in order to understand what is right and wrong’ and only 22% agree that ‘religious beliefs are needed for a complete understanding of the universe’.¹²⁶

Even if British Muslims eventually constitute 25% of the entire British population, the vast majority of the rest of British citizens would reject any notion of legislation based on religious teachings. Assuming 25%, and assuming current trends in the British Muslim community stayed roughly the same, that would still mean that only 8% or so of the British population favoured the introduction of Sharia law.

Demographic projections for the year 2051: Flawed interpretations and flawed assumptions

In July 2010, researchers at the University of Leeds published demographic projections for the year 2051,¹²⁷ which were interpreted by various popular tabloid newspapers (and far-right groups) as indicating that Britain will be a 25% non-white nation 40 years from now. The Daily Express, for example, published a front page story on the projections with the headline ‘ONE IN 5 BRITONS WILL BE ETHNICS’, and the story was illustrated on its website with a picture of two burka-clad women, thereby giving the entirely false impression that 25% of the population will be strict or Islamist Muslims.¹²⁸

What the projections actually state is that researchers believe that while the ‘white British’ population will decline, ‘the Other White group is projected to grow the fastest, driven by

immigration from Europe, the US and Australasia'. When the data are examined, we find projections of the total white population in Britain (White British and Other White) of 79% to 84%, and the other largest growing group being mixed ethnicity.¹²⁹ While the research team predicts that '[t]raditional immigrant groups of south Asian origin (India, Pakistan and Bangladesh) will also grow rapidly in size', it also believes that 'ethnic minorities will shift out of deprived inner city areas to more affluent areas'.

These projections are flawed in many ways, in particular in regard to the assumption of large ethnic minority population growth combined with ethnic minority affluence, for the two directly contradict each other. In order for such a shift to occur, Muslim families in particular will have to adjust to a less 'traditional' way of life. For example, self-imposed ghettoisation on religious and cultural lines will have to be rejected, as will the current practices of only males working and the raising of large numbers of children. While South Asian numbers *may* grow rapidly, if they do then it is unlikely that many South Asians will be able to raise themselves out of poverty, given British society is increasingly based on both parents working and on relatively small families. The trend of career women putting off having children until later in life is alien to the social norms of many poor South Asian communities in Britain, but a failure to accommodate to such modern practices will inevitably result in the continuing marginal status of South Asian communities, amongst which we find a large proportion of Britain's Muslims.

It should also be noted that the University of Leeds researchers themselves acknowledge that '[i]t is impossible to predict exactly how people will move into, out of and within the country the coming decades as all of these trends are influenced by a whole range of socio-economic factors'.¹³⁰

The question of conversion

Assuming the demographic projections cited above are broadly correct, Britain looks set to remain a majority white nation. An objection that could be raised at this point is that the existence of a white majority, as well as large numbers of mixed-race Britons, should in no way be seen to automatically equate to a majority non-Muslim Britain, as Islam is a religion, not a race, and large numbers of conversions to Islam could result in a majority white nation that is nonetheless a majority Muslim nation. However, there is no credible evidence to suggest that such mass conversion will take place, in particular regarding conversion to the kind of Islam that seeks to create an Islamic State.

Converts to radical Islam are socially marginal and have no power

There are some radical Islamists who explicitly promote the idea that Britain will become an Islamic State through mass conversion. For example, both Anjem Choudary and Yusuf al-Qaradawi¹³¹ have argued that conversion holds the key to Muslims 'conquering' the West. Choudary suggests that an Islamic State in Britain could be brought into existence by a dual process of radical Muslims having large families and through conversion. In 2008, he stated:

The Home Office say there are 1.5million Muslims but there were 1.5million ten years ago. Since then our brothers in Bethnal Green, Whitechapel and other places have had eight or nine children each. Eight children here, ten children, 15 children. There must be at least six million people.

It may be by pure conversion that Britain will become an Islamic state. We may never need to conquer it from the outside.¹³²

These two statements can be seen to complement each other, although they could be seen to be mutually contradictory. Is it to be by high birthrates or conversion that Britain supposedly becomes an Islamic State? Or both?

Choudary's claims about creating an Islamic State through having large numbers of children are weak. The fact that children are brought up in a certain ideological environment is far from a guarantee that those children will go on to espouse exactly the same views as their parents. Indeed, a daughter of Omar Bakri Muhammad (Choudary's mentor) has gone on to become a glamour model¹³³ and pole dancer.¹³⁴

The idea of Britain becoming an Islamic State of the kind espoused by Islamists like Choudary – the idea most feared by proponents of the 'Islamisation' myth – via conversion is also unrealistic. It is true that conversion is taking place in Britain,¹³⁵ but not on a massive scale, and not predominantly to the aggressive Islam that seeks 'Islamisation' and the creation of an Islamic State.

The kind of people who are converting to al-Muhajiroun-style Islam and who seek to create an Islamic State are socially marginal, not simply because their beliefs are seen as so outlandish and unattractive by the vast majority of the British people, but socially marginal even prior to conversion.

Germaine Lindsay, the 7/7 Russell Square underground train bomber, was a former cannabis user and drug dealer, who sold heroin and crack cocaine despite being a carpet fitter by trade and a supposedly devout Muslim since the age of 15. Bizarrely, he would sell drugs while 'wearing his Islam outfit', carried out assaults, and proclaimed that 'all white people were trash and said he was going to get them all on drugs to kill them off'.¹³⁶ Lindsay was a common criminal, not a wealthy executive in a FTSE 100 company. People like Lindsay are social outsiders with no political or financial influence.

A 2004 Newsnight Special Report¹³⁷ on al-Muhajiroun featured white converts who had once embraced drinking and partying and now idolised Osama bin Laden and called the 9/11 attacks 'magnificent'. One convert, Simon Keeler, was formerly 'a party loving teenager' whose brother recalled taking his then unemployed sibling for nights out: 'I'd take him down the pub, nightclubbing, Brighton, Brixton, London, we used to go everywhere. Good night out'. Another convert who had taken the name 'Osama' also spoke of a former life of drinking and unemployment. Neither of these men had any social standing, and judging by Keeler's interview on the programme, he is far from intelligent.

Keeler, AKA Sulayman Keeler, became a leading figure in an extremely marginal Islamist group called 'Ahl ul-Sunnah Wa al-Jamma',¹³⁸ a group that went on to spark outrage¹³⁹ with its 2009 'protest' against British soldiers from the Royal Anglian Regiment in Luton.¹⁴⁰ In 2008, Keeler was found guilty of supporting terrorism.¹⁴¹

Converts such as these, who profess support for 'Islamisation' and the creation of an Islamic State in Britain are a criminal and unrepresentative tiny minority who have no influence in wider society

and no hope of ever seeing their fantasies come to fruition. Paranoia about ‘Islamisation’ based on the existence of such cranks is wholly unwarranted.

Conversion to mainstream Islam is happening, but converts are nonetheless a tiny minority and other religious changes are also taking place in Britain

In May 2010, The Times reported that there may be as many as 50,000 Muslim converts in the UK.¹⁴² This may seem like a significant trend and lend support to fears about the ‘Islamisation’ of Britain, but conversion is by no means a one-way street, and if these figures are accurate, converts still only make up around 0.08% of the entire British population. To give some context, while there may be 50,000 Muslim converts in Britain, the Glastonbury Festival is licensed for 177,500 revellers, and an estimated 40,000,000 people in Britain drink alcohol.¹⁴³ Even if all the Muslim converts in Britain gathered in Wembley Stadium, there would still be 40,000 empty seats. Nationally, Muslim converts in Britain are little more than a drop in the ocean.

There is evidence that while a small number of Britons are converting to Islam, conversions *from* Islam are also taking place. Due to threats from extremists, many converts from Islam to another faith or none do not publicly announce their conversion, making the numbers hard to gauge. Nonetheless, in 2007, the Barnabus Fund stated it knew of 3,000 converts from Islam to Christianity in Britain.¹⁴⁴ In France, the figures are dramatically larger, with an estimated 15,000 Muslims converting to Christianity each year.¹⁴⁵ Internationally, conversion is also taking place. Sheikh Ahmad Al Katani, President of The Companions Lighthouse for the Science of Islamic Law in Libya, has claimed in an Al-Jazeera interview that 6,000,000 African Muslims are converting to Christianity each year.¹⁴⁶

Immigration into Britain has not just brought a larger number of Muslims, but has also increased the number of church-attending Christians. African immigration has seen growth in Britain’s Pentecostal churches,¹⁴⁷ and immigration from Eastern Europe has significantly increased the number of Roman Catholic church-goers.¹⁴⁸ It is by no means solely Islam which has seen a growth in adherents in Britain.

The idea that conversion to Islam is happening in Britain at a dramatic rate is false. The idea the children brought up as Muslims will inevitably remain as strictly observant Muslims, or indeed as Muslims at all, is likewise false. And the idea that there will ever be enough converts to a radical Islam which seeks the creation of an Islamic State in Britain to bring about the existence of such an Islamic State is baseless.

CONCLUSION: AGAINST THE CULTURE OF DESPAIR

The widespread acceptance of the 'Islamisation' myth illustrates the ascendancy of cultural pessimism in the West, at a time in which we actually have more to be happy about than at any other period in history. In the past hundred years, overall living standards and wealth have increased greatly in the West. We no longer live in fear of diseases such as diphtheria, polio, and typhoid; tap water is safe to drink; good sanitation is the norm; cheap food is widely available; life expectancy has risen hugely from 45 years for males and 49 years for females in 1901;¹⁴⁹ all children receive an education; overseas travel is no longer something just for the rich. Yes, of course there are many problems in society, but at what period in human history has that ever not been the case? Each new generation seems to look back to its childhood as a better time, or to an idealised past in which things supposedly 'weren't so bad'. Yet, objectively speaking, no period in human history has been as good as the one we currently live in.

There will always be cultural pessimism, and there will always be those who want to turn back the clock. Indeed, we Brits seem to be experts at holding a gloomy view of the world. The 'Islamisation' myth is based in an outlook of despair, an almost apocalyptic fear that an old world is dying and a terrible new age is dawning, but in this there is nothing new. As noted earlier in this text, theatre, poetry, books, novels, newspapers, photography, the music hall, television, and so on, have all been seen by successive generations of pessimists as harbingers of doom.

Today's pessimists, when they're not engaged in attacking many of the same things that have been attacked for centuries, are busy working themselves into a frenzy about 'Islamisation' and the death of the West. Yet, as I hope I have demonstrated, such panic is not rationally grounded. Islam is not a powerful global force on the verge of 'taking over' Britain. Muslims are not a powerful group in society, or indeed in the world as a whole, and besides, the majority of Muslims in Britain have no interest in creating an Islamic State and imposing Sharia law, even if they *did* have the power to do so.

That the 'Islamisation' myth is growing in popularity should be of concern to those who seek a more rational world. It is not the irrationalism of Islam that poses the greatest threat (or even any significant threat) to Britain, but rather the growth of a culture of despair, for despair creates an environment in which the irrational, the violent, and the oppressive really can flourish. Undoubtedly, the pace at which change progresses is dizzying for many, and the collapse of some of the old institutions such as the Church that once gave society a unified narrative has created something of a void, as has a loss of faith in the political process.

However, the answer to a rapidly changing world is not to sink into despair and perversely comforting myths of grand conspiracies and inner enemies. Anyone with an awareness of Twentieth Century history should know where a society based on belief in hidden powers and scheming minorities can end up.

Through thousands of years of wars, plagues, and natural disasters, Britain has survived and stood tall. Despite losing more than a million of its citizens in two world wars, Britain has survived and prospered. Are we now to seriously believe that Britain is finished because a religious minority, many of whom are poor and powerless, and very few of whom are found at the heart of our economy and our political process, has arrived on our shores? And are we to seriously believe that

the majority of the population has a collective death wish and will idly sit by and allow a handful of religious fascists led by the likes of Anjem Choudary take over the country and create an Islamic State? Is this what we have come to?

The 'Islamisation' myth is fallacious, dangerous, and pathetic. Islam is not taking over Britain, nor will Britain ever be an Islamic State. The extremists can scream their mantra 'Islam will dominate the world' as much as they like, but in fact it can't, and it won't.

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