



Common Sense

**The official Islamic
Party Newsreport**

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General Election Issues

Common Sense has been absent for a while: not just as the publication of the Islamic Party of Britain, but also in the real world. The large-scale burning of carcasses of both healthy and diseased animals must be a clear sign to future historians that we have finally lost our balance completely. Would you kill all of your family because grandpa had the flue and might die from it? Foot and Mouth disease is an entirely curable infection, and it tends to afflict mainly weak animals.

Destroying all livestock does not eliminate the causes, however. One large contributing factor has been intensive farming methods resulting in depleted soil, unnatural feeding practices (which also gave us BSE) and over-bred animals with low resistance. As the wholesale replacement of livestock will push small farmers out of business and favour large corporations, the problem will have been made worse rather than better.

For our single-minded politicians (punching Prescott comes to mind) such matters do not give them sleepless nights, and all eyes now turn to the forthcoming election. Even though common sense was suddenly re-invented by the Conservative Party, there is little sense in the manifestos of any of the contesters. No amount of bickering over who should pay how much tax on what will disguise the fact the Britons have been, and will be, ripped off no matter who occupies 10 Downing Street. The interest on the accumulated national debt alone amounts to an annual 40 billion

pound. This is money taken from everybody's hard work and given to the banks in addition to the fees they charge their customers. It is money given to them for having created, by government permission, the money supply of the country: out of thin air, backed by nothing but the country's capability to produce wealth. If the government created its own money without an interest charge attached (as it does on a very small scale in the form of what is known as the M0 aggregate), we could be saved these horrendous penalty payments, and the country would prosper. However, no government will try, for they know they would be sacked: not by the British people, but by their masters, the banks.

This is why the Tories probably won't win the next election, even though everybody is disillusioned with New Labour (an old story now). The banks want European-wide control, and British autonomy as advocated by some "Keep-the-Pound"-Tories does not suit the equation. Polling day

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will probably see some redistribution between Labour and Liberals. The print and broadcast media, paid by the same financial institutions, will see to that. And whilst the BBC is meant to be independent (paid for by the licence fees of people who don't even watch its programmes or simply want to play their own video tapes on their own video machine – talk about extortion), you will be hard pressed to find a genuine discussion of our monetary system on any of its programmes. Who creates our money and why? is the big taboo question of our age. Money is power, and Rip-off Britain must continue undisturbed.

We thought, therefore, it was time for another issue of Common Sense, even though we now prefer to use our web site (www.islamicparty.com) for the dissemination of information. It allows for a quicker response to events and creates less overheads than a print copy, although we know there are "Luddites" in our

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General Election

ranks who do not want to embrace the new medium. This issue is intended to raise some of the issues parliamentary candidates should be confronted with when coming to rake in our votes.

Other organisations have published material for the election. Some, like the Muslim Council of Britain's "Electing to Listen" document, stick safely with education and health (and the weather?). Others have tried the root of appeasement, rubbing shoulders with those in office. At a recent (government-sponsored) award dinner organised by The Muslim News, those present were flattered that the prime minister honoured them with his presence and grand smile and intimated to them that he had read from a chapter called "The Cattle" in the Qur'an. However convenient a reference at the time of the Foot and Mouth crisis this might have been, it also showed that he had a lot more reading to do: seeing that The Cattle is only the second chapter of the Qur'an. More mature Muslims should judge politicians by what they do, not by what they claim to read.

We have held busy negotiations with a number of constituencies with regard to putting up Islamic Party candidates during this election. In the end we decided not to. The political landscape has changed as far as Muslims are concerned: there is now a desire to challenge the sitting MPs who have for too long taken the Muslim vote for granted. However, there is still not enough confidence within the communities to tackle an election campaign, and for the time being political energy should probably best be channelled into individual campaigns, for example, the boycott of Marks and Spencer due to the company's overt support for Zionism, to mention a particular laudable cause. Come the next election in four years' time (when things can

The Tax Debacle: MPs and their genius for ineptitude

With a few notable exceptions, Tony Ben, Brian Gould, Austin Mitchell, David Chater, Sir Richard Body, and one or two more, most MPs are ignorant (or feign ignorance) of the real purpose of taxation, suffering from that malady, which Bob Beckman, diagnosed in Margaret Thatcher as a: "genius for ineptitude."

Certainly, when listening to the likes of Tony Blair, Gordon Brown, Alistair Darling, William Hague, Michael Portillo, or Charles Kennedy, speaking on the subject, it is clear that they are either completely inept or know the truth and are prepared to lie with impunity to keep their jobs and be immortalised in the annals of British History.

Surely, it is time to wake up to their complicity in the great British – now global – deception: that taxation is not used primarily to fund public works or provide funding for the NHS. The public should be made aware that the first call on our taxes is to pay the interest on money borrowed by successive governments since 1694; money which could have been created, free of interest, by any competent Chancellor via the Treasury – by extending the use of the aggregate we now call M0. That is cash in the form of notes and coins or any other form of money be it in the form of cheques or any reliable electronic format. In a nutshell we are still paying interest on the loans to William of Orange. King Billy's £1.2 million pound debt, to Dutch bankers, was levied on the British people till the Day of Judgement at 8%. The sum has since accumulated to being in the region of some £400,000,000,000. Each year, as the sum grows, we pay ever-increasing amounts of interest. In recent years this has been

running at around £35,000,000,000 per annum which would cover most of what we spend on housing, education and law and order, or a sizeable portion of what we spend annually on the NHS. Gordon Brown boasts of having just paid-off some of King William's National Debt but he did not create the £35 or so billion he handed over to his masters in the City of London, to whom he also handed over the last financial lever held by Westminster, that of setting the minimum rate of interest, he used taxpayers money, which could have been put to better use in any of the cash starved sectors of our Public Services. This ratified the compact between New Labour and *The City* to be allowed into office on the condition that they abandon Clause 4. It came as no surprise to the "Conspiracy Theorists" who knew that following John Smith's and Gordon Brown's attendance at the Bilderberg meeting, at Baden-Baden between the 6th and the 9th of June 1991, the decision to abandon Clause 4 would allow "New Labour" to become "electable" as they were now no different to the Old Tories. The replacements to Thatcher and Lawson, or Thatcher and Clark, were now alias Smith and Brown who ushered in what Thatcher had failed to achieve: a land slide for the City of London, on the backs of genuine Labour, and disaffected Conservative and Lib-Dem voters. The only thing that changed at the General Election, which swept "New Labour" into office, was a change of Day shift to Night shift - not a change of management. The rest, as they say, is his *Tory*.

"only get better" because the government of the day – no matter what persuasion – will have made them worse), and maybe the time will have come to take the Islamic alternative to the streets.

Missing the Agenda

*Why the message should be more important than the votes
by Sahib Mustaqim Bleher (previously published in The Muslim News)*

So we have eventually learnt that New Labour is no more Muslim-friendly than the Old Conservatives were. This might be taken as a big leap in Muslim political awareness, considering that we used to follow the working class party like a poodle for decades. At least, party politicians now see the need to woo our approval with minor concessions and invitations to big events. But does it change much?

We might learn a lesson from the black lobby. Public bodies may now have to incorporate a race relations committee, made up of almost exclusively white members albeit appropriately trained, who watch over the organisations equal opportunity policies, ensure that there is no overt racial discrimination, and if there is, find the necessary explanations and excuses. Race has become an industry, but this has not made decision-making in Britain any less a white middle-class prerogative. Do we want the commercialisation of Islam?

It seems we have lost the big picture. Thinking on true minority lines, we either protest "I am not playing your game" (Hizb ut-Tahrir/Muhajiroon style) or plead "Please let me play with you" (Muslim Council of Britain fashion). Either way, we follow the agenda set for us, instead of leading the way. My vision for Muslims is that they are the avant-garde of progress, as they used to be in the days of the blessed prophet. This, however, requires that we have more concern for humanity than for ourselves.

We live in the midst of a society fast losing its way. We know it, and they know it. Yet, we are no better than the rest; we just want to keep our own dry, and so we totally miss the point: When the government has re-introduced student fees and made education once again elitist, will a few state-approved Muslim schools make a substantial difference? When British farm animals are disease-ridden (susceptible to infection due to intensive farming

methods), how can we silently watch the mass slaughter of both ill and healthy beasts and then voice our concern about halal food provision in schools? Does Muslim participation on public bodies change their remit any more than a few "halal" mortgages by Islamic banks (at slightly higher interest rates than on the high street) change the disastrous economic and monetary system of the country? Does rubbing shoulders with the powerful take some of their power off them, or does it simply make them feel even more important?

Until we answer these and many similar questions, there is little point in trying to sell our vote to the highest bidder. It is illusionary to think that our votes count when we don't have a coherent message. In other words, we are starting from the wrong position and, therefore, can't possibly win the race: We must target the population with policies, not the politicians with perceived voting power. Else, we simply contribute to their list of unkept promises.

Election, then, should be seen as an opportunity for debate. We should view it as our chance to get our message across. We should engage in meaningful dialogue about the future of our country. Nor should this process be restricted to election time. We should have a regular involvement in the affairs of the wider community. We should be known, and respected, for having the courage to raise issues others don't dare at a time of political correctness. Not having the privilege of being in a position where

power corrupts, we should be fearless in becoming the voice of the people. Anything short of that we will be failing both our contemporaries and Allah, who has described Muslims as the best of mankind because they invite to what is right and forbid what is wrong, not so that they could proudly rest on their laurels. Where they turn away from this task, He has promised to replace them by others.

Almost everywhere in the world today Muslims have missed the opportunity to provide an alternative to the "global" agenda. As a slowly emerging factor on the British (and European) arena, we still have this chance. We can still demonstrate that Islam is more than an imported culture. Should we fail to grasp the nettle now, we should not be surprised if in ten years time, in spite of plentiful Muslim minority representation on public committees, we won't appeal for support of Muslims in Palestine, Kashmir, Chechnya, etc. any more: Subjugated by the logical extension of the new anti-terrorist laws we will only be able to pray that somewhere else on the globe people will be running an appeal in aid of the oppressed Muslims of Britain.

The choice is, as always, our own. We do not only have a vote (every four years), we have a duty to envisage and map out our own future and that of our surroundings. We are ultimately responsible for our own destiny. The key question for election time and beyond must be: are we still people with a message for all mankind.

Not The Brains Of A Sheep

A reflection by Alexander Baron, even more poignant after the mass burning at the stakes of innocent cows and sheep...

A perennial favourite of the "meat is murder" lobby is the alleged barbarism of ritual slaughter. Jews have long been targeted by the lunatic fringe for the supposedly barbaric practice of shechita; (1) in recent years Moslems have come in for the same sort of criticism, sometimes by the well-meaning but gullible, at others by the bigoted whose interest in "animal rights" is a smokescreen for other things. The latter are easily recognised; the former have to be not only recognised but refuted. After all, surely it can't be humane to slaughter a harmless animal in a "barbaric" manner, slitting its throat while it is still conscious and allowing the blood to run out while the poor creature gasps for air, and all for the sake of a religious ritual?

People who make such observations seldom consider the full ramifications of what they are saying. Yes, it is not "humane" to slit an animal's throat while it is fully conscious, but it is not "humane" to slit its throat *per se* and eat it, or to kill it in any other manner either. Does anyone really believe that it is more "humane" to shoot a bolt into a sheep's brain, or to ring a chicken's neck, than it is to slit a cow's throat? If you want your roast beef and Yorkshire pudding, that is the price you will have to pay.

Animals do not have "rights" in the same way that human beings have rights. As philosopher Roger Scruton points out: "Anybody who thinks about the concept of a right will know that animals cannot have rights without also having duties and that this means that it must be possible to blame them, punish them, reward them and also hold them guilty for their violations of others' rights. In which case whole species, like the eagle and the lion, would have to be condemned as inexorable violators of the right of others to life." (2)

Clearly this is absurd. The concept of animal rights is a fallacy; animal welfare though is a different issue. The idea that animals should not be bru-

talised unnecessarily, that they should not be tortured or caused unnecessary distress or suffering is a very different concept from that of extending them "rights". Nowhere in the "Koran" to my limited knowledge does it say that animals should be tortured, nor in any other holy book save perhaps in one published by some obscure offshoot of Satanism.

For some people though there is no salvation. In its May 8, 1998 issue the "Daily Mail" reported on the case of 47 year old Mrs Stella Marsden and her "rescue" of Robin the ram. Apparently she was befriended by this creature when out walking her dogs. Then one day she learned from a local shepherd that her erstwhile companion was "destined for an horrific fate - being bled to death in a traditional halal slaughter for the Moslem meat market in France." (3). Terrible, isn't it? And of course Robin the ram would have been so much happier if instead he'd ended up on the "a la carte" tray at the London "Savoy" where he could have been devoured in a civilised manner by well-bred English Christians with roast potatoes and mint sauce.

Mrs Marsden wasn't having any of that either, so she had a whip-round at a coffee morning and purchased the black-faced ram from the

farmer. Now domiciled in a stable, Robin the ram has become a family pet. And his gallant rescuer has had him castrated into the bargain. I'm glad she didn't "rescue" me!

Notes And References

(1) See for example "The Legalised Cruelty of Shechita: The Jewish Method of Cattle-Slaughter", by Arnold Leese, self-published, Guildford, (1940). Leese was a distinguished veterinary surgeon who became perhaps the most notorious anti-Semite this country has ever produced. His writings are still going the rounds with the lunatic fringe to this day.

(2) "The Abolition of Thought", The Lantern Lecture, delivered by Professor Roger Scruton, October 24, 1995, published by B.H.L. Publications, London, (c1995), page 4.

(3) "The ram raiders", published in the "Daily Mail", May 8, 1998, page 24.

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THE NEW TERRORISM ACT: A means to terrorise Muslims

Blackburn is the constituency of Home Secretary Jack Straw. It is a town with a sizeable Muslim population, and to reward them for their support, Adam Patel, the key contributor to the Labour Party in Blackburn was made a member of the House of Lords. The rest of Muslims might, however, not be as pleased. In spite of Lord Patel's launch of the "Forum Against Islamophobia and Racism (FAIR)" with Jack Straw as the Chief Guest, the home secretary's record is could be described as one of anti-Islamic prejudice. In February the new Terrorism Act came into force, and the list of organizations branded as terrorist which accompanies the legislation is almost exclusively made up of Muslims. Supporting any allegedly terrorist organization, if only by fund-raising or publicly speaking in their favour, could land you with a custodial sentence of up to 10 years.

In line with the media portrayal of Muslims as fundamentalists and terrorists, this law now gives the state the instrument to arrest anybody whom they consider undesirable. The legislation is phrased so open-ended that any activity by anybody can easily be made to fit the bill. Simply being acquainted with somebody said to be supporting a proscribed organisation might be sufficient to warrant your arrest. Even to express support for an organisation like Hamas by wearing their logo on a piece of clothing will be a breach of the new legislation. And if you do not cooperate with the police in cracking down on such a "criminal" individual, that is illegal too. Because terrorism is a serious charge, anybody so accused will inevitably spend at least a year in prison before the case even comes to trial.

The new legislation has not been used extensively yet, but it is there on the statue books, ready to be used when required. If the Bosnian experience were engineered to be ignited here in Britain, this law would give the police a carte blanche. Discussion of the bill before it became law has been very limited. As hardly anyone considers themselves to be terrorists, the erosion of civil liberties implied in the law and the slippery slope to-

wards a police state have been completely missed by most.

It is important to remember that the definition of terrorism is extremely vague: the term is used politically to discredit groups and individuals seen as detrimental to the aims of those in power. As power constellations change, the definition may change, too. The most striking example is in the Middle East of today, where both Israel and the Palestinian Authority are headed by individuals once branded terrorists by Britain: Ariel Sharon and Yasser Arafat, respectively. Both are now accorded the status of respectable statesmen.

Little wonder then that state-sponsored terrorism, like the bombing of Sudan by the US in 1998, or the starving to death of hundreds of thousands of children in Iraq by the so-called world community, or the oppression of innocent people in Chechnya by Russia or the unlawful annexation of Kashmir by India or, indeed, the apartheid system imposed by Israel on Palestinians do not fall within the definition of terrorism as seen by the new legislation.

When Rechavam Ze'evi, a minister in Ariel Sharon's government and former army major general asks for all 3 million Palestinians to be expelled from

the West Bank and Gaza, this is not openly supporting terrorism, nor is Menachem Begin's statement that Palestinians are "beasts walking on two legs". Who knows, however, the Bible might be outlawed as a terrorist training manual for containing texts like these: "Woe to you Ariel, Ariel, the city where David settled" warns the prophet Isaiah "Suddenly, in an instant, the Lord Almighty will come with thunder and earthquake and great noise, with windstorm and tempest and flames of a devouring fire." [Ariel was the original name for Jerusalem].

So when your candidate comes round knocking your door, don't bother asking him/her about obtaining a sponsored place in a Muslim school or free circumcision on the NHS. Let them declare their stance on real issues which must include foreign policy on Chechnya, Kashmir, Iraq, Palestine etc. Ask whether they will lend their voice to demands to renounce this new terrorism act. Else you might soon not have a voice yourself and – to recall the experience of Sinn Fein – anybody trying to speak up on your behalf might have to be quoted using an actor's voiceover.

Rape of Dulcinea

by Israel Shamir

This beautifully crafted reflection on the Jewish claim to Jerusalem is worth re-printing (author's permission obtained)

The touching words of Elie Wiesel (Jerusalem in My Heart, NYT 1/25/2001) painted a beautiful portrait of the Jewish people, yearning for Jerusalem, loving and praying for it over the centuries and cherishing its name from generation to generation.

This potent image reminded me, an Israeli writer from Jaffa, of something familiar yet elusive. I finally made the connection by revisiting my well-thumbed volume of Don Quixote. Wiesel's evocative article is so wonderfully reminiscent of the immortal love of the Knight of Sad Visage to his belle Dulcinea de Toboso. Don Quixote travelled all over Spain proclaiming her name. He performed formidable feats, defeated giants, who turned out to be windmills, brought justice to the oppressed, and so much more for the sake of his beloved. When he decided that his achievements made him worthy, he sent his arms bearer, Sancho Panza, to his Dame with a message of adoration.

Now I find myself in the somewhat embarrassing position of Sancho Panza. I have to inform my master, Don Wiesel Quixote, that his Dulcinea is well. She is happily married, has a bunch of kids, and she is quite busy with laundry and other domestic chores. While he fought brigands and restored governors, somebody else took care of his beloved, fed her, provided her with food, made love to her, made her a mother and grandmother. Do not rush, dear knight, to Toboso, or it would break your heart.

Elie, the Jerusalem that you write of so movingly is not now and never has been desolate. She has lived happily across the centuries in the embrace of another people, the Palestinians of Jerusalem, who have taken good care

of her. They made her the beautiful city she is, adorned her with a magnificent piece of jewelry, the Golden Dome of Al Haram Al Sharif, built their houses with pointed arches and wide porches and planted cypresses and palm trees.

They do not mind if the knight-errant visits their beloved city on his way from New York to Saragosa. But be reasonable, old man. Stay within the frame of the story and within the bounds of common decency. Don Quixote did not drive on his jeep into Toboso to rape his old flame. OK, you loved her, and thought about her, but it does not give you the right to kill her children, bulldoze her rose garden and put your boots on her dining room table. All your words just prove that you confuse your desires with reality.

If you must continue to ask why the Palestinians want Jerusalem? Because she belongs to them, because they live there and it is their hometown. Granted, you dreamed about her in your remote Transylvania. So did many people around the world. She is so wonderful and certainly worth dreaming about.

Elie, many people have adored this city across the ages. Swedish farmers left their villages and moved there to build the lovely American Colony together with the Vesters, a devout Christian family from Chicago. You can read about it in the works of Selma Lagerlof, another Nobel Prize winner. On the slopes of the Mount of Olives, the Russians built the dainty church of Mary

Magdalene. Ethiopians erected their Resurrection monastery amid the ruins left by the Crusaders. The British died for her and left as their architectural legacy the St George Cathedral and St Andrew's. The Germans built

the lovely German Colony and nursed the city's sick in the Schneller Hospital. My devout great-grandfather moved into the protection of her thick walls in 1870s from a Lithuanian Jewish village and threw his lot with the hospitable Jerusalemites. He found his eternal rest until the day of Resurrection on the slopes of Mount of Olives. None of them thought to rape their Dulcinea. They just left bouquets of architectural flowers as testament of their adoration.

Those who love Jerusalem are legion. It is disingenuous of Elie Wiesel to reduce the struggle for this city as a tug of war between Muslims and Jews. It is a question of coveting property versus having the deed of ownership. The resolution of this case should be based on the 10th commandment, observed by our fathers. They knew that veneration does not amount to the right of ownership. Millions of Protestants venerate the Catholic-owned Gethsemane Garden, but it does not transfer the garden into their hands. Millions of Catholics visit the Tomb of Mary, but it still belongs to the Eastern Church. For generations, the Muslims have come to kneel at the birthplace of Jesus in Bethlehem, but the church remains Christian forever.

What water did to Gremlins in Spielberg's movies, Zionism has inflicted on the jolly Jewish folk of Eastern Europe. It caused them to carry out the ethnic clearing of Gentiles in West Jerusalem, to convert Schneller hospital and church into a military base and to build a Holiday Inn on top of the venerated shrine of Sheik Bader. The Israeli State forbids the Christians of Bethlehem to pray in the Holy Sepul-

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Jerusalem

cher and bans Muslims below the age of 40 from attending Friday prayers at Al Aqsa mosque. These changes of the city by the Israeli government amount to her rape.

In order to justify this rape, you invoke the names of King Solomon and Jeremiah, quote the Koran and the Bible. Let me tell you a Jewish Hassidic tale, one you might have heard in your childhood. A Jewish midrash, a legend, mentions that Abraham had a daughter. A simple-minded Hassid asked his Rabbi, why Abraham did not wed his daughter and his son Isaac. The Rabbi responded that Abraham did not want to marry a real son to a legendary daughter.

The legends are the stuff the dreams are made of. Some are charming, some are horrible, and none is valid as a deed to the land or as a political platform. Elie, you certainly would not like to lose your private home in New York because of a few verses written in the Book of Mormon. This game is rather irrelevant, but I will play one more round with you for the entertainment of the crowd. As every archaeologist will tell you, King Solomon and his temple belong to the fantasy realm of Abraham's daughter. Moreover, and not that it matters, but the name of Jerusalem is not mentioned even once in the Jewish Holy Book, the Torah.

Elie, you want to play some more games? I'll tell you more. The Jews are not even mentioned in the Jewish Bible. Get that thick book off of your shelf and check it. None of the great and legendary men you named, from King David to the prophets, were called 'the Jews'. This ethnonym appears the first and only time in the Bible in the Persian story of the very late Book of Esther. The self-identification of the Jews with the tribes of Israel and with the heroes of the Bible is as valid as the story of Rome being

founded by the Trojan prince Aeneas. If the modern Turks, who call themselves 'the descendants of Troy' would conquer Rome, dynamite Borromini's baroque masterpieces and expel her inhabitants in order to re-establish the legacy of Aeneas, they would just be repeating the folly of the Zionists.

Our ancestors, the humble East European folk of Yids, whose language was Yiddish, had a tradition of adorning themselves with the impressive heraldic lions of Biblical heroes. Their claim of descent from these legends was as valid as the claims of Thomas Hardy's ambitious farmer girl Tess. But even the fictional Tess did not conspire to evict the lords from their castle and claim the manor for herself.

Once, walking with the Christian pilgrims to the great Church of the Holy Sepulcher, I was stopped by a Hassidic Jew. He inquired whether my companions were Jews, and, receiving a negative reply, exclaimed in amazement: "What are these Goyyim (Gentiles) looking for in the holy city?" He had never heard of the Passion of Jesus Christ, whose name he used as a swear word. I

am equally amazed that a Jewish professor from Boston University is as ignorant as the simple-minded Hassidic Jew. Jerusalem is holy to billions of believers: Catholic, Protestant, and Eastern Christians, Sunni and Shia Muslims, to thousands of Hassidic and Sephardic Jews. Still, as a city, Jerusalem is not different from any place in the world; she belongs to her citizens.

Twenty more years of Zionist control of this ancient city would turn her into just another Milwaukee and forever ruin her charm. Jerusalem needs to be restored to its inhabitants. The seized properties in Talbieh and Lifta, Katamon and Malcha should be returned to their owners. Professor Wiesel, respect the Gentile property rights as you would like Gentiles to respect your right to your lovely house. The holy sites of Jerusalem are regulated by the 150 years old international statute (Status Quo) that should not be tampered with. Last attempt to touch it caused the siege of Sevastopol and the charge of the light brigade at Balaclava. Next attempt could cause the nuclear war.

To vote or not to vote

by Sahib Mustaqim Bleher (previously published in Q-News)

Florida now stands for a recent example to demonstrate that democracy is not what it pretends to be: the rule of the people. Everybody has a vote, but not everybody's vote counts. Moreover, even if all votes are counted, the result does not make much of a difference. Faces change, policies go on. A new administration simply means a change of shift whilst the management remains the same. British democracy isn't any different in this respect. The New Labour government has been able to push through measures the Conservatives could never have dreamt of getting away with. Like, for example the new arbitrary powers granted for the arrest of persons and confiscation of

their property on the mere suspicion that they support a "terrorist" cause. Or the abolition of the right to trial by jury. And, just as their predecessors, they excel at finding new ways of taxation to bring in the harvest for private banks underwriting the national debt. The added burden and worry for ordinary people also helps increase their political apathy and cynicism.

So what should Muslims do? Withdraw, participate, infiltrate? The discussion goes on forever. There is the idea that we could run a separate system parallel to the dominate one, Muslim Parliament style, for example. It is as

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exciting as the illusion in the head of the little child whom the captain of a large ship lets hold the steering wheel for a few moments and he imagines he is solely responsible for the voyage of the vessel through the sea. It is idealistic and illusionary, but certainly not mature. Neither is the fanatical "everything is haram until we have a caliph" approach of Hizb-ut-Tahrir or Al-Muhajirun. On the other side of the spectrum are those who, like the Muslim Council of Britain, attempt to get concessions by flirting with the powerful. But are two, three Muslim schools and a recognition of Eid as a public holiday going to make a substantial difference to the lives of two to three million Muslims in Britain? Are they going to make them feel less insecure economically, socially and vis-à-vis rising levels of prejudice and racism? And what about the rest of the population? Do we have no responsibility towards them whatsoever?

Power corrupts, it is said, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Yet, looking at Muslims in Britain, it seems, we are so corruptible that even the dream of power will do. If the government of the day wants to neutralise us and any potential opposition, it

just needs to form a committee and grant us a few seats. We will fight tooth and nail amongst each other to occupy them. The so-called nominating authority for prison visiting ministers was a fairly recent case of the scrambling of Muslim organisations and individuals to put themselves forward as representing Islam and Muslims. The promise of, albeit meagre, funding will intensify the competition. The Muslim constituents, represented vociferously by so many people they don't even know, hardly ever see a penny of it to improve their lot.

The Islamic Party of Britain has in the past been accused by both camps. On the one hand, we are said to be compromising by taking part in the electoral system. On the other, we are said to be wasting our chances by staying outside the mainstream arena of politics. The truth is, we do neither. We have a principled approach. We feel that the integrity of Islam demands of us Muslims living in the West to concern ourselves with the welfare of the whole of the society in which we live and on which we depend. Muslim participation in politics, therefore, must put forward meaningful alternatives which are viable for society at large, Muslims and non-Muslims alike, and improve the situation of both. It is the old task of Dawah by appropriating people's concerns and

showing them a way out of the disastrous consequences of abiding with a system built on falsehood, oppression and ignorance. For this reason, we have concentrated on the damaging effects of the interest-base financial system binding everybody, world-wide, in its yoke, causing suffering, waste, starvation and wars. British Muslims have a responsibility towards their third world brothers and sisters enslaved by a new, Zionist led, financial colonialism as well as a duty to liberate their non-Muslim compatriots from continuously serving the greed of bankers exploiting the resources of the world in their quest for total control. Election campaigns are one way of conveying this message, but they are not the only one.

Our call is for Muslims to re-examine their own status and activities with regard to whether we are serving Allah and the larger cause of humanity, or whether we are simply trying to feather our own nest or satisfy our own desires of self-importance on the back of Muslim issues. Once we have made up our mind on that, we just need to be consistent, election or no election. The remainder is a matter of strategy, on which we may differ, and unity of intent (brought about by tolerance and consultation, not control), without which we shall not succeed.

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