

Justifying Islamophobia: A Post-9/11 Consideration of the European Union and British Contexts

Christopher Allen

Abstract

Immediately prior to the events of 9/11, the United Nations (UN) officially recognized the proliferating climate of anti-Muslim and anti-Islamic prejudice, discrimination, and hatred – Islamophobia – as being as equally repellent and unwanted as anti-Semitism and other global discriminatory phenomena. The 9/11 tragedy, however, somewhat overshadowed this recognition, resulting in the continued proliferation of anti-Muslim and anti-Islamic sentiment and expression.

This study explores how and why Islamophobia was manifested following 9/11, contextualizes how elite voices across British and European societies have considered Islamophobia to be fair and justified. In considering the wider findings of the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia’s monitoring of Islamophobia, this study explores how “visual identifiers” have underpinned changes in attitude and reactions to Muslims across the fifteen European Union (EU) member nations at a largely pan-European level.

The second section develops these ideas, analyzing three of the report’s primary themes – Muslim visibility, political landscapes

Christopher Allen is currently finalizing his doctoral studies at the University of Birmingham, where he is researching the phenomenon and discourse of Islamophobia in Britain. He was coauthor of the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia’s “Summary Report into Islamophobia in the EU after 11 September 2001,” and has since written widely on Islamophobia and British Muslims. He has several publications forthcoming and is chairman of the Religions in Britain Research Organisation (RIBRO).

(incorporating institutional political elites as well as grassroots politics), and the media – each one approached from the perspective of the United Kingdom. This study concludes by suggesting that 9/11 has made Islamophobia more acceptable, which has enabled its expressions, inferences, and manifestations to locate a newer and possibly more prevalent societal resonance and acceptability. Ultimately, this new development goes some way to justifying Islamophobia and negating the UN's recognition of this problem.

Introduction

Just a few days before 9/11, an event occurred that has since been lost in the fog of urgent history and the rhetoric of hyperbolic overstatement: The UN's formal recognition of Islamophobia, thereby establishing anti-Muslim and anti-Islamic prejudice, discrimination, and hatred and placing it alongside other equally discriminatory and exclusionary phenomena, such as anti-Semitism and anti-Roma.¹ Therefore, prior to 9/11, Islamophobia was considered a growing global phenomenon that required immediate action to combat its spread. As the conference proceedings note, accepting anti-Muslim and anti-Islamic sentiments and attitudes was now being seen as normal.² Consequently, and against the supposed norm of common perceptions today, anti-Muslim and anti-Islamic expression and hostility were as much a distinctly pre-9/11 phenomenon as a post-9/11 phenomenon. As such, much of what has been identified and recorded since that day was in evidence both before and after 9/11, albeit in varying degrees and manifestations. How official recognition of Islamophobia and various governmental and transglobal processes would have responded and fought such a growing climate of anti-Muslimism – a cancer, as one British politician has described it³ – can only now, in a completely different global context and order, be imagined.

In an attempt to further contextualize and balance current ideas and understandings of Islamophobia, this study asks how and why Islamophobia was manifested after 9/11 before contextualizing this in ways that consider how Islamophobia has, despite formal UN recognition, been seen to be fair and justified across different sectors of society. Split broadly into three interrelated sections, the first section focuses upon the research undertaken by the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) and its *Summary Report on Islamophobia in the EU after 11 September 2001*.⁴

Beginning with an overview of the report, this study highlights and considers its most relevant findings and conclusions gleaned from the fifteen EU member nations. Across the EU's breadth, a vast difference of experience and manifestation became apparent, for there was no entirely homogenous "European" response to Muslims. However, since the research program was, and indeed remains, the largest project analyzing Islamophobia anywhere in the world, its findings are very relevant to identifying the phenomenon's causes. The second section analyzes three of the report's main themes, considered in terms of a mini-case study from a British perspective. The first explores Muslim visibility. The second analyzes political landscapes, incorporating institutional political elites as well as grassroots and street politics, before concluding briefly with an overview of the media. The middle section, therefore, considers how the macro-themes identified at a pan-European level translate into the micro-themes and manifestations in the national context.

The concluding section asks to what extent 9/11 has afforded Islamophobia a greater societal weight, whereby such expressions have located newer and a possibly more resonant societal acceptability. Ultimately, though, the conclusion answers whether Islamophobia has become increasingly justified since 9/11 and, if so, how. In this context, *justify* is employed in a literal way: that ideas, expressions, and attitudes are presented in ways that are seen to be just, right, or reasonable. As such, the question underpinning this section is: Has 9/11 – the event, its aftermath, and its legacy (i.e., understanding, interpretation, and response) – made expressions of anti-Muslim and anti-Islamic sentiment appear to be right and reasonable in a post-9/11 world? It is hoped that by doing so, the arguments supporting this study will provide the necessary clarity required to better frame the topic of Islamophobia in a post-9/11 world and stimulate further debate.

The *EUMC Report*

The *EUMC Report* was the synthesis of 75 nationally focused reports, five from each EU member state, that closely monitored reactions against, and any changes of attitude toward, Muslims following the 9/11 attacks. Of these reports, the first 15 were commissioned within 24 hours of the attacks, putting in place the necessary mechanisms to closely track the situation faced by Muslims across each EU member state. The project ended at the end of the 2001 calendar year. As there was little, if any, concrete evidence

at the beginning of the project's implementation of any changes in attitude or anti-Muslim backlash, the immediacy of this response points to a sense of expectation, or even inevitability, that such a reaction would ensue.

In recognizing the response of the various European presidents and prime ministers who took immediate action to stress that neither "Islam" nor "Muslims" *per se* had perpetrated the attacks, the report noted an almost unspoken acknowledgement that a clear and unequivocal preemptive response was required.⁵ Unfortunately, despite the attempts by some of Europe's political elite to diffuse the situation, the summary report concluded that "Muslims became indiscriminate victims of an upsurge of both verbal and physical attacks following the events of 11 September."⁶ From its findings, a new dynamism emanating directly from the 9/11 attacks saw manifestations of anti-Muslim and anti-Islamic expression become more extreme, explicit, and widely tolerated.

Violence, Aggression, and Identified Changes in Attitude

Insofar as violence, aggression, and changes in attitude, the report concluded that across the EU spectrum, incidents involving a negative or discriminatory act against Muslims or a material entity associated with Islam were identified. Numerous mosques, cultural centers, and Islamic schools were either targeted or threatened. Probably the most distasteful incident occurred in Exeter, where seven pig heads were impaled on spikes outside of a mosque and what was purported to be pigs' blood was smeared over its outside and entrance. What emerged across the EU, however, was that irrespective of the identified and documented levels of violence and aggression, the underlying causes were, as the report termed it, "visual identifiers" of either Muslims or Islam, or both.⁷ While these were not necessarily the reason for such changes or attacks, they were the single most predominant factor in determining who or what became the foci for any retaliatory action or reaction. The visual identifiers provided a seemingly societal stimulant that offered an outlet for the venting of rage, revenge, or any other denigratory sentiment or action.

It is no surprise, therefore, that when these visual identifiers held such primacy in determining who or what became targets for discrimination, abuse, violence, and aggression, Muslim women in particular – possibly the most visually identifiable religious adherents in contemporary Europe – became the primary target. In Britain, an 18-year-old Muslim woman in Slough was beaten by men wielding baseball bats for apparently no other

reason than being identified as a Muslim. At the same time, the British press was reporting that many women wearing hijab or other traditional Muslim attire had been spat upon and verbally abused.

The report also stated that other Islamophobic incidents could be identified in Denmark, where a Muslim woman was thrown from a moving taxi; in Germany, where Muslim women had their hijabs torn off; and in Italy, where a bus driver repeatedly shut the bus' doors on a Muslim woman, much to the amusement of an onlooking and cheering crowd. Many similar instances were recorded elsewhere. Interestingly, in those countries where Muslim women rarely wear traditional attire (e.g., Luxembourg), no incidents were reported as being targeted toward women. In this particular setting, however, the focus shifted toward Islam's more physical visual identifiers. For example, Luxembourg's sole Islamic center was vandalized and attacked.

Nor were Muslim men exempted from this process. In line with the heavy media rotation of images of Usama bin Laden and the Taliban, turban-wearing men became indiscriminate targets, as people identified – somewhat inaccurately – turbans as a visual identifier of Muslims. As a result, the number of reported attacks against Sikh men rose. However, this can only be attributed to ignorance and misinterpretation, rather than any rise in anti-Sikh behavior or attitudes. Similarly, bearded men, again including Sikhs, were also attacked, although to a much lesser degree than other forms of targeting. Indeed, these are the everyday visual symbols across society that normally would be ignored or unnoticed. However, in the immediate aftermath of 9/11, a London taxi driver who had some Islamic motifs in his car was hospitalized following a horrific attack by some of his passengers. Apparently, they visually identified and subsequently associated him with the 9/11 tragedy.

The last aspect relating to visual identifiers was the attacks on Islam's physical entities (e.g., mosques, schools, cultural centers). Included in this were general threats, vandalism and material damage, and more serious concerns, such as bomb and death threats. Across Britain, as indeed elsewhere, many Islamic schools closed for several days due to the fear of threats being carried out or the possibility of spontaneous attack. At times of prayer also, many mosques increased security and many local police authorities agreed to increase patrols in response to requests from some Muslim communities that had received threats of violence and worse.

In conclusion, the report stated that prejudice and distrust appeared to extend to all individuals who somehow looked like Muslims, irrespective

of whether or not they were indeed Muslim. Consequently, the role of such visual aspects of Islam and Muslims cannot be overlooked, because embodied within the now readily recognized and acknowledged common identifiers is an underlying view that uni-dimensionalizes all Muslims through the common denominator of Islam. Moreover, this view simultaneously infers that all Muslims bear some form of collective and homogenous responsibility. One way of elaborating upon this, if somewhat coarsely, is to consider the old British racist adage that “all blacks *look* the same.” In the contemporary setting now emerging from the discourses and processes of this greater receptivity to Islamophobia, that same adage might more appropriately be reworded as: “All Muslims *are* the same.”⁸

Measures of Anti-Islamic Actions and Reaction

The post-9/11 period in Europe also saw an upsurge in ethnic xenophobia, especially those that were either historical or preexistent to 9/11, as well as those that were either nationally or regionally constrained.⁹ Although this happened across the EU spectrum, different manifestations were identified in different settings based upon the Muslim communities themselves and their particular histories, nationalities, status, and ethnic backgrounds. As the report put it, 9/11 provided a catalyst of fear that sought to reaffirm and renew old – and, indeed, enhance new – prejudices that exaggerated the potential of the perceived “enemy within.” The impetus of a greater awareness, a previously unacknowledged vulnerability, and a fear and dread of both old and new enemies, all of which were being supported and reiterated in both the media and political spheres, contributed to and compounded the problem. The report, however, suggested that both latent and active prejudices found a catalytic reinvigoration.¹⁰ So in Spain, for example, the widespread survival in Spanish folklore of “el Moro”¹¹ found greater credence, where a greater emphasis on “el Moro’s” Muslimness became readily apparent. Similarly in Greece, centuries old enemies that were previously described as either Turkish or Albanian were being described as Turkish Muslims or Albanian Muslims.

The distinctions between religion and ethnicity, therefore, became increasingly blurred, and the primacy of an enemy’s Muslimness, whether relevant or not, was stressed in order to reinvigorate and reaffirm historical foes, albeit in a contemporary frame of reference and understanding. Thus, these types of xenophobia were not anything new and were distinctly pre-9/11 phenomena. However, through the overlapping of Muslimness and the

previously racialized or ethnicized “Otherness” that such enemies previously had, those existing fears and attributes were subsequently reinforced and, transitionally, found an increased resonance through a seeming confirmation of those previous fears and beliefs, albeit somewhat inactive or suppressed. The atavistic stereotypes of historical enemies – the historical “Others” that much of Europe and European society had defined itself in opposition to – that were deeply embedded in the experience and culture of various races, nationalities, and communities were being reinvigorated, and possibly rejustified, by contemporary events.

Reactions by Opinion Leaders

As mentioned previously, most European leaders sought to preempt an expected anti-Muslim backlash in the immediate aftermath of the 9/11 tragedy. Most assumed a high profile, especially the Irish Taoiseach Bertie Aherne, and the British and German prime ministers, Tony Blair and Gerhard Schroeder, respectively. Many were keen to stress that while Muslims had seemingly perpetrated the terrorist acts, those Muslims did not reflect or represent the peaceful nature of “true” Islam.¹² Only one political leader, Italy’s Silvio Berlusconi, declared, but later retracted, his affirmation of western culture’s supremacy over its Islamic equivalent. Many of these same political leaders, among them President Bush, also emphasized that any retaliatory attack or the ensuing “war against terror” was neither a war against Islam nor a war against Muslims *per se*.

While some might suggest that such changes in attitude toward Muslims and any Islamophobic backlash against their communities across the EU might have been heightened by such circumstances, or indeed may need to be contextualized by the growing urgency of military retaliation, such arguments need to be countered by the numerous and quite categorical denials by political leaders of all nationalities and political persuasions to reassure Muslims and non-Muslims that any retaliation was not a “war” against either. Across much of the EU, public sentiment was largely against military action, so any suggestion that the context of war might have sought to justify Islamophobia during this period must be balanced by the leaders’ rhetoric and guidance at the time.

This positive situation immediately following 9/11, however, gradually changed as the unequivocal support for indigenous Muslim communities appeared to waiver when several mainstream political groups sought to exploit the climate of increased fear and mistrust for political gain. In

Denmark, the general elections that shortly followed the attacks focused on immigration and the role of “foreigners.” Due to the increasing acceptance in Denmark that the descriptors “Muslim” and “foreigner” were largely synonymous, the resulting situation was one of political rhetoric characterized by increasing Islamophobia, where anti-Muslim campaigning became rooted in the growing popularity of a societal need to protect Danish identity and culture. One consequence was that the Dansk Folkeparti was reported to the police for hate speech crimes. Similarly, in The Netherlands – and outside the remit of the *EUMC Report* – the assassinated Pim Fortuyn found posthumous political success largely by campaigning on the threat that Muslims posed to the Dutch not only because of their monolithically perceived collective responsibility for 9/11, but also because of the threat to the liberal Dutch lifestyles that Islamic culture was alleged to present.

While considering the role of opinion leaders, the report also noted the inroads that far-right and neo-Nazi groups made following 9/11 and their resulting influence on the shaping of political ideas and issues. While it is necessary to differentiate between the role of “street” political groups, such as in Spain, where loosely described political “skins” undertook “Muslim-bashings” as part of their racist ideology, other groups that were neither mainstream nor “street” found unprecedented success. The British National Party (BNP) is a particularly good example, for it emerged largely from the remnants of a disillusioned street political group: the NF. Over the past few years, however, it has attempted to shed that image in order to re-present itself in terms of a quasi-legitimate political force, particularly since 9/11. Its evolution and Islamophobic campaigns are considered later in this study.

Nonetheless, across the entire EU, far-right groups from “street” through “quasi-legitimate” to “mainstream” found a greater platform from which to publicize their views, messages, and arguments. A recurrent image in this resurgence was the suggestion that Europe’s “Christian” identity and heritage were being replaced by a far more covert Islamic one: Muslims were an internal threat who, through high birth rates, asylum seekers, and proliferating immigration, were insidiously attempting to infiltrate and conquer Europe. Trying to prove this, some groups began to use Berlusconi iconically as the only European leader brave enough to speak the truth about Muslims. Much of this was presented via the Internet and other electronic communicative mediums, where a dramatic rise in anti-Muslim, far-right-inspired activity was noted. As the report concluded, evidence suggested that the distance between the acceptability of the mainstream and the previous unacceptability of the more extreme far-right was decreasing, and that those

same highly inciting and dangerous anti-Muslim messages were finding a more consensual and sympathetic ear in many European societies.

The media were also included in the report's discussion on opinion leaders, due to their contribution to the processes that shape and determine common opinions and ideas. Without providing too much depth, given that this research area has seen some excellent research over the past few years,¹³ the role of the media remains both contentious and highly debatable. The report itself, however, duly concluded that there was very little evidence that the media had a largely positive or negative impact, or any impact whatsoever. None of the 75 reports submitted clearly suggested that the media either directly or indirectly caused, or were responsible for, any reported or identified act of aggression or significant change in attitude.

However, and in spite of this, the media's role should not be devalued, for they play a very important role in formulating and establishing popular perceptions and conceptions in the public sphere. This has been documented quite extensively in more detailed expositions of the media. So when certain media represent Muslims negatively or stereotypically – sometimes as an almost necessary and integral part of their coverage – in a climate that is already volatile and fraught with fear, issues of responsibility and accountability should be called to the fore. The report concluded that while no evidence suggested that the media was influentially causal, neither could it be completely dismissed nor removed from the equation.

Concluding the EUMC Report

When identifying the *EUMC Report*'s broad findings, it is imperative to note that while the report was the culmination of the largest-ever monitoring project of Islamophobia, it did have its failings. One of these may have been the exclusion of the context and setting provided by the then-emerging backdrop of the "war on terror." However, while this is a valid observation, for the purpose of this study the focus is restricted solely to the report's findings. While this means that some areas of identified concern and weakness will remain outside this study, it is hoped that the debates and concerns acknowledged here about Islamophobia, as well as its existing subjectivities and discourse, will be aired and responded to in greater detail elsewhere. Nonetheless, the report did highlight and pick out some very pertinent trends and themes that must be considered further in order to achieve a better understanding of the processes and manifestations of anti-Muslim and anti-Islamic sentiment and expression. This recognition underlies the second part of this paper.

The British Context

In the British context, some interesting correlations and considerations can be explored to assess the extent to which 9/11 has justified Islamophobia. In doing so, three particular themes emerge: visibility, political rhetoric, and the media.

They're All the Same

In reflecting the wider European landscape, Muslim communities are the second largest faith community in Britain as well the most visually recognizable, for traditional Islamic attire is readily identifiable in most towns and cities.¹⁴ As has been noted elsewhere, this visual difference has caused a wider demarcation of difference that embodies a sense of otherness and inferiority to emerge¹⁵: more precisely, an otherness and an inferiority to the “norms” of British society. At the same time, the socioreligious icons of Islam and Muslims with which this visual identification has evolved have also acquired a far greater immediacy of recognition, one that is contextualized and understood in almost entirely negative and detrimental frames. So, with the catalytic impetus of 9/11, this situation intensified and deteriorated simultaneously: intensifying because this same visual identification came under greater scrutiny at the same time as becoming increasingly recognizable, while simultaneously deteriorating because this same visual difference also became the focus underpinning the denigratory and violent attitudes and acts that began to manifest themselves. Such a process, therefore, would appear to both reinforce and, to some extent, perpetuate each phenomenon.

Those post-9/11 reificationary processes have both “newly established” and “reestablished” Muslims as chimerical “Others,” drawing upon recent events as well as the legacy of anti-Muslimism endemic to the wider European setting. Consequently, since 9/11 British Muslims have found themselves increasingly identified in predetermined and bipolar ways, and, more dangerously, have to do the same in terms of self-definition as well. As Ziauddin Sardar has suggested, Muslims are now identified as either “terrorists” warring against the West or “apologetics” defending Islam as a peaceful religion.¹⁶ However, society’s populist and widespread monolithic and negative immediacy of visual recognition of Muslims, in addition to the subsequent demarcation of difference that this recognition entails, has led to the following situation: Both types of Muslim in the post-9/11 climate have, through this uni-dimensional lens of acknowledgement and recognition,

become increasingly non-differentiated visually. As a result, the two poles have become virtually identical. Consequently, all Muslims are characterized by the same negative and stereotypical attributes of the first bipolar definition: All Muslims have the capability to either be terrorists or, at least, be supportive of terrorism.

The hyperbolic climate of fear and threat posed by 9/11 caused Muslims to be characterized, according to the same demarcation of difference, in terms of “them” and “us,” where a distinct lack of differentiation was allowed to permeate “them.” So, when the media reported the alleged threat posed by “sleepers” or “fifth columnists,” all Muslims were seen, due to their homogeneously attributed “Otherness,” as both realistically and conceptually capable of posing such threats. This only exacerbated the climate of fear and suspicion. In fact, this occurred not only with the local proximity of British Muslims, but also with respect to the international scene with global proximity, where the largely external global perceived threat of the “green menace” or the “axis of evil” became as equally understandable and indistinguishable in the localized setting of Britain. Hence, Muslim men who resembled Usama bin Laden however insignificantly (i.e., having a beard or wearing a turban), were attacked thousands of miles away from his presumed location because that same visual difference transcended geographical boundaries and proximities. As a result, all Muslims, along with the visual identifiers of Islam, were transformed into legitimate targets for hatred and abuse.

In an attempt to offer some theoretical framework, I refer to Martin Barker’s authoritative work on “new racism.”⁷⁷ Following the legislative protection afforded to minority communities and ethnic groups in the early 1980s – protection that is still not afforded to British Muslims because various governments have failed to close the anomaly in a law that does not accommodate multiethnic religious communities – people such as Barker began to acknowledge a shifting of foci away from the more traditional markers of race to the newer and legislatively unprotected markers based upon cultural and religious difference. This demarcation of difference has now attained an immediacy of recognition. However, unlike older forms of racism, this new racism sought to elaborate upon the differences identified in much less explicit ways. In other words, the markers of difference do not underpin explicit hatred and hostility; rather, they implicitly infer and establish direct challenges and threats, where “difference” challenges and threatens “our way of life.” This demarcation of difference, therefore, appears to be underpinned by differences that are either unacceptable or incompatible

with the “norms” of society, the norms relating to “us” and definitely not to “them.”

The evolution of such a theoretical understanding can be seen in the post-9/11 period, where the visibility of Islam and Muslims has been clearly presented in terms of being incompatible with the norms of “our” society and “our way of life.” In today’s populist understanding, the “threat” that Muslims are seen to present – not just in terms of terrorism or the widely convoluted “clash of civilizations” theory – is one that has myriad manifestations. As such, questions about state Islamic schools, freedom of speech, the role of women, radicalism or “bin Ladenism,” as such a phenomenon has recently been described,¹⁸ and community cohesion are now just a few of the issues that have caused the Muslim “difference” to be seen as threatening, or at least as challenging, the “British way of life.” Given that 9/11 has cast a vast shadow over these issues, and indeed continues to fog and confuse these and other situations, the seriousness of the British Muslims’ situation can be readily acknowledged.

The markers of difference that are seen as challenging the British way of life are also the same markers of difference that demarcate Muslims. As such, that which is different is also problematic, and that which is problematic is also challenging: a self-perpetuating and self-reinforcing cycle. Therefore, the impact of 9/11 has both heightened awareness of these differences or problems, depending upon one’s particular perspective, and has subsequently intensified the issues many times over. And so as the threats and challenges are now seen to be much greater than ever before, a sense of justification emerges, one that suggests that rather than Islamophobia being a sentiment of unfounded hostility, such anti-Muslim and anti-Islamic hostility and hatred are now an informed reality. So when anti-Muslimism is disseminated in the public domain, a greater receptivity to such ideas not only means that they have become increasingly normalized, but also that a greater rationalism has emerged. And with rationalism comes the understanding that such rationalism is founded upon beliefs and attitudes that appear to be correct.

I.S.L.A.M.: Intolerance, Slaughter, Looting, Arson, and Molestation of Women

Similar processes can be identified elsewhere, for ever since 9/11 the BNP has sought to bolster its own racist views and to acquire societal legitimacy. Both of these have been undertaken on the back of an increasing recep-

tivity to Islamophobia in the British, particularly English, domain. Much of this has consisted of such highly inciting behavior as encouraging insult, provocation, and abuse, as well as employing language and images that encourage and invigorate hatred. However, the BNP has always stressed the legality of its actions, referring to the legislative anomaly that allows a window of opportunity for explicit anti-Muslimism without prosecution.

Under its most successful political campaign, entitled “Islam out of Britain,” the BNP declared its clearest goal of exposing “the threat Islam and Muslims pose to Britain and British society” by publishing a leaflet entitled “The truth about I.S.L.A.M.” In this leaflet, “I.S.L.A.M.” was employed as an acronym for “Intolerance, Slaughter, Looting, Arson, and Molestation of Women.”¹⁹ Widely distributed, it used highly inflammatory reasons for justifying hatred toward Muslims, suggesting that “to find out what Islam really stands for, all you have to do is look at a copy of the Koran, and see for yourself ... Islam really does stand for Intolerance, Slaughter, Looting, Arson, and Molestation of Women.” Dismissing those apologetics that Sardar identified as one-half of the bipolar representative Muslims, the BNP selectively quoted the Qur’an in order to paint the most despicable picture of Muslims, adding – in clear new racist rhetoric – that “no-one dares to tell the truth about Islam and the way that it threatens our democracy, traditional freedoms and identity.”

The BNP went on to suggest that understanding the Qur’an could provide a context for both the 2001 Bradford disturbances in the north of England²⁰ and 9/11, two events that it stressed were inextricably linked. By clearly linking these events – the local and the global – the differences that were seen in one context became attributed to all. In addition, as with the globally and locally perceived threats that the BNP suggested that Muslims were posing to British norms and that were already being increasingly rationalized across society, as acknowledged by the *EUMC Report*, any differentiation became even more blurred.

The BNP also rooted this “problem” into the context of Islamic theology, where an “anti-kafir” framework sought to both reinforce and codify the demarcation of difference between “Muslims” and “kafirs” – in more simplistic terms, “them” and “us” – as being rather more derivative of Muslims or Islam than it was of the BNP. This shifting of focus was such that the BNP could suggest that this “them and us” dichotomy did not come from them or non-Muslims, but from the Muslims themselves. For the BNP, Islam caused the problems; the BNP was merely highlighting it for the benefit and well-being of British society. The functional capability of

“new racist” forms to focus on differences that allegedly challenge and pose threats as cover and smokescreens to actually perpetuate and encourage hostilities and hatreds, thus become clear.

As a direct consequence of the inroads made by the far-right and society’s deepening receptivity to anti-Muslim ideas and expressions, and in identifying how visual markers of difference were being used in the contemporary climate, Muslims were targeted by other minority communities. Following anecdotal evidence that youth groups of Indian descent in Manchester were adopting an overtly Hindu identity to deflect any potential anti-Muslim backlash, the BNP capitalized upon this and exploited intra-“Asian” tensions by issuing an audio resource entitled Islam: “A Threat to Us All.”²¹ This venture, undertaken in conjunction with fringe Sikh and Hindu organizations, was set up to provide “insider” validation (by which one must assume this means “Asian”) of both its own skewed view of Islam and the need to rid Britain of Muslims. As the press release stated, it sought to:

Give the lie to those who falsely claim that we are “racists” or “haters.” We sympathise and identify with every people in the world who want to secure or preserve a homeland for themselves, their traditions and their posterity. And we demand and strive for that same basic human right for the native English, Scots, Welsh, Irish and Ulster folk who together make up the British.²²

The markers of difference and the subsequent demarcation of Muslims from all others is both clearly present and in line with new racist theories, for in addition to focusing upon the differences that the BNP and others purport to be threatening “us” and “our way of life,” they also denounce any claims that they themselves are racists. The employment of new racist rhetoric and perspectives therefore allows disclaimers to be made that, initially, are difficult to refute. One way of seeing through this is to acknowledge that the BNP does not identify or include its Sikh and Hindu partners in what it defines to be “British.” Nonetheless, when communities that can be identified in terms of racialized markers unite to further demarcate Muslims, they highlight the hatred for Muslims that exists across contemporary British society while also locating an indicator to further suggest that an increasing receptivity toward Islamophobia is apparent.

Consequently, so great was the need to demarcate themselves from Muslims, that those Sikh and Hindu groups found adequate justification to join forces with an overtly racist organization that had, in very recent his-

tory, targeted Sikh and Hindu communities on the basis of their skin color, rather than their religion. So great was their unifying anti-Muslim hatred, a single common denominator, that other contentious and previously oppositional factors were ignored or overlooked. Islamophobia, therefore, whether from the perspective of the BNP, fringe Sikh or Hindu groups, or the growing numbers voting for the BNP, found within this anti-Muslim expression and rhetoric something that they felt was justified.

A justified Islamophobia in the post-9/11 period has been integral to the BNP's recent unprecedented growth and success. Emanating entirely from the success of their openly anti-Muslim campaigns in areas close to or with heavily Muslim populated areas in the north of England, the BNP has found a much wider quasi-legitimacy. As a result, its members have seen their party's popularity mushroom into one that seemingly presents a justified alternative and, more worryingly, an apparently real opportunity for success in local, national, and European elections. Targeting their seats directly and specifically, the BNP now has a total of 18 elected councillors across the United Kingdom, from Grays in the south, through Sandwell and Dudley in the Midlands, to its stronghold in Burnley in the north, where it holds eight seats on the local council. And on the back of these anti-Muslim successes, other far-right groups that previously had been largely ineffectual and primarily "street" focused have been reinvigorated. Consequently, such groups as the NF, Combat 18, the White Wolves, and the White Nationalist Party have developed similar anti-Muslim campaigns.

So, as the *EUMC Report* stated, the gap between the opposite poles of the extreme political right and the political left, at least when concerned with attitudes and perceptions of Muslims, appears to have become closer in the British context. With similar sentiments, the apparently center-left Home Secretary David Blunkett verbally attacked those young British Muslims in Bradford, who were campaigning peacefully against the harsh sentencing of their friends and family convicted of involvement in the 2001 disturbances, by openly calling them "whining maniacs."

In addition, Blunkett ensured widespread media coverage when he aired his endorsement of the more "rational" claims of the assassinated Pim Fortuyn, suggesting that Muslims should accept and assimilate into "our culture" and "our ways," and that immigrants and asylum seekers – a group that the *EUMC Report* suggested was becoming increasingly interchangeable and indistinguishable from Muslims in the post-9/11 period – were "swamping" our schools.²³ Echoing similar suggestions made by the then-Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher some 20 or so years earlier, this particu-

lar statement by Thatcher was deemed to be a formative moment in the development and transition of the “new racist” ideologies of the early 1980s.²⁴ Could Blunkett’s equivalent statement, therefore, be the precursor that confirms the phenomenon of anti-Muslimism as the “new” racist ideology emergent in the early twenty-first century?

Similar accusations of anti-Muslim rhetoric could be posited against other British politicians and politically evolved scenarios, including those such as Peter Hain MP, who suggested that it was the Muslim communities’ own isolationist behavior and customs that created the climate in which the far-right was able to expand and grow. Thus, the victims were responsible. Quite unprecedentedly, in this last statement Hain chose to describe Muslims as “immigrants,” despite their having been settled in Britain for at least the past three or four decades. It is also interesting that Blunkett used the descriptor of “immigrants” to refer to those communities that were “swamping” schools, possibly highlighting the interchange and ease of recognition of terminologies and identifiers now in circulation.

In addition, the British government’s post-9/11 Crime and Anti-Terrorism Bill 2001 has been used to instigate numerous unfounded, yet institutionally endorsed, dawn raids that have failed to produce results; overblow scares, including the uncertainty surrounding a ricin find; and agree to Muslims being imprisoned without trial in London’s Belmarsh prison and in Guantanamo. Furthermore, it has ensured that charges of a wider institutionalized and center-left-inspired anti-Muslim ideology have emerged in the British context. Conversely, however, some far-left political groups have found some unlikely bedfellows in several British Muslim groups that opposed the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and recently formed a political coalition under the banner of Respect.

While some of these examples are far from being as explicit and inciting as those that the BNP and others have made on the opposite, far-right political pole, it is clear that while political allegiance is different, the motivations and ideas underpinning the rhetoric is not, for the demarcated difference of Muslims lies at the root of the perceived “problem.” Whether such claims of institutionalized Islamophobia are valid remains open to debate or, even to an extent, irrelevant, due to the immediacy of recognition and the acknowledgement of difference. With the growing receptivity to anti-Muslim ideas and expressions, and the sense of justification, in line with the success of the BNP, it appears that what is being played out, either rhetorically or legislatively, seems to fit into a wider and societally consensual understanding of a justified hostility and suspicion toward Muslims

and Islam. This observation appears to be confirmed by a poll, commissioned by the Islamic Society of Britain, that revealed that 84 percent of the British population was more suspicious of Muslims following 9/11.²⁵ Such a widespread acceptance of this suspicion, when contextualized by the growing popularity of the BNP's and similar claims, as well as the shifting rhetoric of the center-left government in a heightened climate of fear and mistrust, appears to suggest that such a view or belief would not be difficult to locate or to be something widely perceived as unjust, wrong, or unreasonable. On the contrary, many would suggest quite the opposite.

I Am an Islamophobe and Proud

The language, terminology, and ideas circulated in the public domain relating to Muslims did not emerge only from the political elites. However, as the *EUMC Report* suggested, the validity of the anti-Muslim messages that are disseminated through the media should not be underestimated. The contemporary representation of Muslims as largely monolithic and non-differentiated groups that stereotypically embody the same immediacies, differences, and demarcations as elsewhere, are quite relevant to how contemporary society views and understands them. Consequently, the media's role in the immediate post-9/11 era must be considered in order to understand how it possibly sought to influence and shape popular British perceptions.

Baroness Thatcher's condemnation of Muslim leaders in *The London Times*, for example, in which she insisted that all Muslims take responsibility for the attacks,²⁶ expanded upon Sardar's observation that all Muslims are interpreted in wholly bipolar understandings. For Thatcher, the assumption was that if you do not apologize, then you support terrorism, reflecting President Bush's you are either "for us" or "against us," and less explicitly, the "them" and "us" differentiation that the demarcation of Muslim difference embodies. Then, a few days later in the same newspaper, an article entitled "This war is not about terror, it's about Islam"²⁷ praised Thatcher's stance and confirmed that "Western" fears about Islam were justified because "some three quarters of the world's migrants in the last decade are said to have been Muslims," and that these "escapees, victims, scapegoats, malefactors and 'sleepers' are awaiting their moment."²⁸

Similarly, and in equally homogenous terms, it spoke of "the Islamic mind," explaining that while westerners were honorable, "Islamic" fighters were not, for they combine "crude weapons" with "appalling violence" and prefer "ambush, surprise, treachery and deceit."²⁹ Rooted in Huntington's

clash of civilizations thesis,³⁰ while simultaneously employing Crusader and Orientalist terminology, it described the perpetrators of 9/11 as “appearing suddenly out of empty space like their desert raider ancestors,” the descendants of “the horse riding raiders before Mohammed.” Not only did the writer stress the contemporary climate’s differences, but, in so doing, he also stressed the uniformity and absence of change throughout history. In short, he was drawing upon an eternalized narrative in which the threat that Muslims and Islam are purported to have posed to “us” historically is again being posed today – the contemporary being a mere recurrence of an ongoing history and, in opposition to the rhetoric of political leaders, a “war” against Islam.

Other sections of the media highlighted different avenues of thought, such as how Muslim difference presented challenges to “our” liberal ways of life. In the *Guardian*, Polly Toynbee reiterated her distaste for Islam and Muslims in her “Last chance to speak out.”³¹ Having previously aired her views in the *Independent* by declaring “I am an Islamophobe and proud,”³² Toynbee mirrored the BNP, despite being politically on the polar opposite, by providing highly selective Qur’anic verses to reinforce her arguments. Having noted what she described as the “blood curdling words of the Prophet,” she employed exactly the same Qur’anic references as the BNP did in its “I.S.L.A.M.” leaflet to support her views as to why Muslims should be seen as a threat. A similar situation arose in a *Daily Telegraph* editorial, which reiterated the exact phraseology of the BNP’s “Islam: A Threat to Us All” leaflet in order to dismiss Islamophobia when it set out to give “the lie to this imaginary Islamophobia” by extolling the virtues of the British, who were much more “Islamophilic” instead.³³

Yet one article highlights perfectly the interaction and interchange of the immediacy and negative understandings associated with the demarcated difference projected onto Muslims, the implicitness of mainstream political rhetoric to identify and make the same inferences about Muslims as the far-right, and the role that the media plays in disseminating such ideas in the public domain: in other words, the justification of Islamophobia in the contemporary setting. In a *Daily Telegraph* article written by Norman Lamont,³⁴ the former Conservative Chancellor of the Exchequer, he established that ongoing immigration was bringing about a loss of European identity, an assertion that he supported by praising the ideas of the assassinated Fortuyn.

Lamont then went on to deride Prime Minister Blair for carrying a Qur’an, due to the confusing impact that it had on the British about their own sense of identity. For Lamont, the Qur’an obviously did not fit into his con-

struct of what constitutes British identity, because, as he goes on to explain, “we are forced to accept that people living in Britain cannot adhere to the values of one community,” before adding that “individuals cannot be left alone in their chosen communities, if that involves forced marriages, polygamy, book-burning, supporting fatwas and even fighting against our armed forces.” He suggests that these obstacles – or demarcations of difference, to use terminology that has been used previously – are the stark dangers that certain communities pose to the British. In order to make his point absolutely clear, he states that it is not the “West Indians, Africans and Indians” that have failed in their part of building a successful multicultural society, nor is it these that are presenting a challenge to the “British way of life.” It is, instead, those communities that are left unnamed that Lamont clearly sees as being the primary threat and challenge to “our way of life.” Incidentally, Lamont does not specifically name Muslims or Islam once in this article.

Yet the article clearly refers to Muslims, for Lamont uses socioreligious icons – visual identifiers, for want of a better term – that are immediately recognizable in today’s society. Not surprisingly, they are also the same obstacles that are seen as presenting the challenges suggested by him. And while some might suggest that these icons could relate to Pakistani communities only, Lamont’s reference to the Qur’an and the other equally recognizable identifiers of “Muslims” and “Islam” insists that “Muslimness” is primary. And with that same “Muslimness” comes the homogenous and indistinguishable premise upon which contemporary understandings are founded. For Lamont, then, the failings and threat to “our” multicultural society are attributable to one community only: the Muslims, who challenge the very fabric of the British way of life.

Along with the lack of differentiation associated with populist perceptions of Muslims, Lamont’s article insists that all Muslims become incorporated into his particular frame of reference. Consequently, as was also the case with the BNP, the present government, and numerous other voices in the media, all Muslims become the problem not because Lamont has said so, but because of what he has not said. So immediate and embedded is the Muslims’ difference, as well as their homogeneity, that everything evolves from this very difference. The *EUMC Report* concluded that Muslim visibility did not explain why such individuals and communities became subject to prejudice, abuse, and violence, because of what is embedded and understood by this visual identification rooted in a demarcated difference. In fact, it is this same visibility and difference that underpins, rationalizes, and subsequently justifies such attitudes. The emergent line of thought is con-

sensual in both its premise and message, as well as in its means to substantiate its reasoning and justification.

Muslims, therefore, do not need to be named, but their difference does. Similarly, the *EUMC Report* indicates that the attacks occurred not because someone had to be Muslim or a building had to be Islamic, but merely because their visual identification – rooted in difference – suggested that they were. Thus, this difference neither explains nor justifies why Islamophobia occurred or occurs, but highlights how its embeddedness and receptivity affect understanding and recognition. Given this, Islamophobia – whether anti-Muslim, anti-Islamic or both – is not explained or better understood from this particular perspective. In fact, more theoretical deconstructions need to be undertaken in order to achieve this. However, it does offer an insight into the catalysts, processes, and motivations underlying and influencing such manifestations and attitudes.

Just, Right, and Reasonable

The situation since 9/11 is a complex one that cannot easily be conceptualized, one in which individual and group subjectivities continue to question, sometimes rightly, what might legitimately constitute Islamophobia and even whether such a thing as “Islamophobia” actually exists. Attitudes to the events themselves and their ongoing impact, however, quite clearly continue to catalytically underpin a climate of heightened tension, increased fear, and greater suspicion with the hyperbolic overstatement and overblown exaggeration that also continue to emerge from the metaphorical fog still rising from the Twin Towers and the ongoing military action and acts of terrorism.

The situation faced by European Muslims is such that they are increasingly under the spotlight, not only by the media and the political institutions, but also by the larger European community, especially in the wake of terrorist atrocities on the European mainland, irrespective of who is behind those and other attacks. Similar processes have also occurred in Britain, and Muslim communities have expressed their concern not only about the climate of hostility, but also about the way in which their lives and communities are increasingly framed in terms of problematization and criminalization. As was suggested following the disturbances in the north of England and the subsequent sentencing of those involved after the events of 9/11, many saw this as a clear illustration that Muslims and their communities were no longer going to be seen on purely equitable terms with other communities, and that everything connected to them would be dealt with in terms of law and order.³⁵

With Islamophobia already causing global concern prior to 9/11, following the overshadowing influence of the attacks themselves and the ever widening post-9/11 receptivity to such ideas, much of what has emerged since has merely codified and reinforced ideas and attitudes that were already pre-existent across British and other societies. For many, contrary to the pre-9/11 Runnymede report on Islamophobia, which authoritatively stated that the phenomenon was a “dread ... of all or most Muslims ... [an] unfounded hostility towards Islam,”³⁶ Islamophobia contemporarily would appear, at least in some ways, to be nothing of the sort. Rather, it was a hostility according to which the fears, dreads, and hostilities appear to be largely seen as both wholly founded and largely justified. So while this disparity in understanding with the report’s conclusions may have been in evidence prior to the catalyst provided by 9/11, it has been further exacerbated since. In this scenario, therefore, one might conclude that negative views, understandings, and attitudes toward Muslims and Islam – while not reaching the actual level of abuse and violence – were already evident in some circles and understandings. From this, it might be reasonable to suggest that Islamophobia was already being justified irrespective of 9/11 anyway.

With regard to the visuality of Islam and Muslims, alongside the identifiers highlighted in the *EUMC Report*, in Britain these same identifiers have become clearly established and interpreted in ways that demarcate not only difference but also differences that are in contention with the norms of British society, as was seen at the time of *The Satanic Verses* affair and the First Gulf War. The success of the BNP and its anti-Muslim campaigns, therefore, has not been countered by the mainstream political parties through highlighting the failings and inaccuracies of its message, but rather by the BNP’s continued movement toward a more hard-line, almost xenophobic perspective.

This negative perspective has seen such issues as immigration and asylum seeking – both comprising individuals and communities that overlap with representations and understandings of Muslim communities – become daily and oft-repeated news stories that continue to increase the fears, threats, and suspicions that both politicians and the media have exaggerated and sensationalized in equal measure. For example, the news media has reported heavily on the growth and vociferousness of fringe Muslim groups with anti-western and isolationist ideologies that, in turn, have gone some way to both shape and simultaneously reaffirm public fears and concerns that have been subsequently – and quite inappropriately – attributed to all Muslims without discrimination.

As mentioned earlier with regard to the media, so embedded and natural are the negative frames of reference within which Muslims and Islam are understood, portyated, and re-presented, that for many people in the media, grossly undifferentiated anti-Muslimism is in no way problematic. Across all of these spheres and domains in the British context – as indeed were identified across the broad spectrum of the EU too – the same messages and justifications underpin them: that it is Muslims, their inherent difference, uni-dimensionalism, and incompatibility with “normal” values and “normal” ways of life that are reason enough to view Islamophobia and anti-Muslimism as acceptable.

With greater receptivity comes greater acceptability and homogeneity, with greater acceptability and homogeneity comes normality across a wider sphere of understanding, with normality comes the recognition that something occurs naturally, and with issues of naturalization comes the commonsense adoption of such ideas as being the truth or reality. This truth then becomes universally diffused through society’s elites and across its diversity, sustained not only by the media and political rhetoric, as has been highlighted here, but also by the millions of daily speeches and acts that go far beyond the realms of this particular study. Reciprocally, this same embeddedness within society sees Muslim difference as natural and taken for granted, thereby normalizing Islamophobia. And, it is this normalization in the wider understanding that makes the continuation and suggestion of such anti-Muslim ideas and expressions acceptable. This acceptability of inherent difference then allows Muslims to be seen in entirely homogenous and uni-dimensional terms. Whichever way the process is observed, the result remains the same: Islamophobia embodies a distinct understanding of implicit justification.

Whether considered at the level of the UN, the EU, or at the more specifically localized level of the British context, the phenomenon of any post-9/11 Islamophobia appears to be consequentially problematic. Through 9/11’s occurrence, this one day became the rupture through which Islamophobia has become interpreted and framed, and has since been understood as the primary source of such sentiment – an understanding that has simultaneously sought to justify such sentiment, hostility, and hatred on this basis alone. This same rupture has also insisted that the acknowledgement and recognition given to this phenomena prior to 9/11’s tragic events be dismissed and overlooked, whereas the actions and undertakings of a few people have had highly detrimental consequences for all Muslims. Consequently, as the UN conference noted just days before 9/11,

Islamophobia was already a proliferating phenomenon that was harmful to all Muslims across the globe. At this time, though, this same proliferation would appear to be accepted an unchallenged.

Since the UN's declaration and the subsequent intensification of anti-Muslim and anti-Islamic phenomena, the situation has clearly, and some would say, continued to deteriorate. Whether at the level of the UN, the EU, or of individual nations, the phenomenon of Islamophobia and anti-Muslimism need to be addressed as much today as they did prior to the events of September 2001. Consequently, the recognition proffered by the UN just three years ago must not go unheeded or ignored. Until the phenomenon is engaged with seriously and openly while pursuing a clear objectivity, the levels of anti-Muslim and anti-Islamic inference, hostility, and hatred may become ever more homogeneously naturalized and normalized. Given that further acts of atrocity are likely, it is essential that action be taken across all levels of international, regional, and national governance, and that any future atrocity not be allowed to justify hinder, or detract from combating any form of prejudice, discrimination, or hatred. Indeed, it is essential that no form of prejudice, discrimination, or hatred be seen as right, reasonable, or just. Unfortunately, through the processes highlighted and the rupturing effect of global events, it would seem that Islamophobia – the prejudice, discrimination, and hatred of Muslims and Islam – is, in fact, starting to be seen as all of these.

Notes

1. "World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance," 31 August–8 September 2001, Durban, South Africa.
2. United Nations, *World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance: Declaration and Program of Action* (New York: United Nations, 2002).
3. John Denham MP, speaking at the "Understanding Islamophobia" conference, University of Westminster, 29 September 2001
4. Christopher Allen and Jorgen Nielsen, *Summary Report into Islamophobia in the EU Following 11 September 2001* (Vienna: EUMC, 2002). This report will be referred to from hereon as the *EUMC Report*.
5. *Ibid.*, 43
6. Taken from the EUMC's press release at the launch of the report's publication, 15 May 2002.
7. Allen and Nielsen, *EUMC Report*, 34-37.

8. Christopher Allen, "From Race to Religion: The New Face of Discrimination" in *British South Asian Muslims: A Post-September 11 Study*, ed. Tahir Abbas (London: Ashgate, forthcoming).
9. For a more detailed exposition of this section's findings, see Allen and Nielsen, *EUMC Report*, 40-41.
10. *Ibid.*, 40.
11. Nino Del Olmo Vicen, "The Muslim Community in Spain," in *Muslim Communities in the New Europe*, eds. Gerd Nonneman et al. (Reading: Ithaca, 303-14), 307.
12. For a good introductory analysis into the institutional employment of such as "true" Islam in the post-9/11 setting see, Laurent Bonnefoy, "Public Institutions and Islam: A New Stigmatization?" *ISIM Newsletter* no.13, (2003), 22-23.
13. See, for example, the work undertaken by Elizabeth Poole as regards the representation of Muslims in the British media. Elizabeth Poole, *Reporting Islam: Media Representations of British Muslims* (London: IB Tauris, 2002). See also the website of the Forum against Islamophobia and Racism (FAIR) for information about their media monitoring of the British press and production of a daily digest for all relevant coverage, both positive and negative.
14. At the time of the Census in 2001, the UK's Muslim population numbered 1,591,126, a total of 2.7 percent of the population. Thus, Muslims were the second largest religious population after Christians. For more information, see the Office of National Statistics website at www.statistics.gov.uk.
15. A good introduction to this area of research can be found in Pnina Werbner and Tariq Modood, eds. *Debating Cultural Hybridity: Multi-cultural Identities and the Politics of Anti-Racism* (London: Zed, 1997).
16. Ziauddin Sardar, "The Excluded Minority: British Muslim Identity after 11 September," in *Reclaiming Britishness*, eds. Phoebe Griffith and Mark Leonard (London: Foreign Policy Centre, DATE), 51-56.
17. Martin Barker, *The New Racism* (London: Junction, 1981).
18. A term first identified as being in common use and understanding at the "Islamophobie en Suisse? Eclairages europeens" colloquium at the University of Geneva, 18 October 2003.
19. This leaflet was widely distributed across parts of the UK, where there was a high percentage of Muslim communities from early 2001 through mid-2002. It was also available at the party's website, although it was removed once the BNP was reported to the House of Lords Select Committee on Religious Offences in October 2002. The BNP also removed all links to its "Islam out of Britain" campaign. In addition to this leaflet, a full range of other equally inciting literature was readily available at the website. At the beginning of 2004, the website contained several essays on "Islam" and "Muslims." See www.bnp.org.uk.

20. Throughout the summer of 2001, several disturbances erupted across the north of England. The instigators were primarily young Muslim men of South Asian descent. These events occurred primarily in Bradford, Burnley, and Oldham; smaller occurrences were also witnessed in Hanley and Leeds. Despite various official reports on the disturbances, the role of the far-right (including the BNP) was largely dismissed as irrelevant to the tensions that emerged. However, the BNP was actively campaigning in all of these areas during these disturbances, and BNP leader Nick Griffin had been addressing a meeting of supporters in Bradford the night before the Bradford disturbances. Incidentally, these were the worst disturbances of their kind in recent British history. For a fuller consideration of the Bradford disturbances and its aftermath, see Christopher Allen, *Fair Justice: The Bradford Disturbances, the Sentencing, and the Impact* (London: FAIR, 2003).
21. This resource was widely distributed to the media and received significant media coverage throughout 2001 and 2002. At the present time, though, and as with the earlier mentioned anti-Muslim literature, this resource is very difficult to obtain due to the BNP's actions following the House of Lords Select Committee.
22. BNP Press release, dated 22 December 2001 (London).
23. Allen, *Fair Justice*.
24. Barker, *The New Racism*.
25. "Attitudes towards British Muslims." This poll was conducted by YouGov on behalf of the Islamic Society of Britain (London), on 4 November 2002.
26. *The London Times*, 4 October 2001.
27. *Ibid.*, 7 October 2001.
28. *The London Times*, 4 October 2001.
29. In this war of civilizations, the West will prevail. *The Daily Telegraph*, 8 October 2001.
30. Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (London: Simon and Schuster, 1998).
31. *The Guardian*, 5 October 2001.
32. Cited in The Runnymede Trust, *Islamophobia: A Challenge for Us All* (London: Runnymede Trust, 1997), 12.
33. "Islamophilia," *The Daily Telegraph*, 12 October 2001.
34. "Down with Multiculturalism," *Ibid.*, 8 May 2002.
35. Allen, *Fair Justice*, 46.
36. The Runnymede Trust, *Islamophobia*, 1-4.