

THE MUSLIM COUNCIL OF BRITAIN

A step towards greater consultation, cooperation and coordination on Muslim Affairs in the UK.

Muslim Council of Britain Weekly E-Newsletter

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MCBDirect Fundraising dinner

CRE Chair Trevor Phillips is among the guests attending a dinner and auction organised by the MCB on Saturday 5 July at the Porchester Hall in Bayswater, West London. The programme includes a recital of Rumi's poetry, a performance by the group 'Ashik-e-rasool' and other features. Tickets are £40 (adult). Please refer to the online booking form at www.mcb.org.uk/mcbdirect/booking.pdf

The objective of MCBDirect is to provide a community information service that will respond in a professional way to the large number of telephone enquiries, emails and letters that the MCB receives from schools, researchers, local government - seeking information on Islam and British Muslims. The service will also serve as a referral point for enquiries from Muslim - for example providing details of social service providers.

For further information email mcbdirect@mcb.org.uk or view www.mcb.org.uk/mcbdirect

2003 Asian Jewel Awards

The Secretary General of the MCB, Iqbal Sacranie, is one of the four finalists nominated for the prestigious Southern Region Asian Jewel Awards 2003 for The Social and Community Excellence Award. The Awards, to be held on 8 July 2003 in a ceremony at London's Grosvenor House Hotel, will celebrate a half-century of ongoing endeavour and achievement in the UK's Asian communities and will recognize twelve individual 'Asian Jewels' in particular amongst the many worthy nominees from businesses and organizations across the South of Britain.

The remaining finalists include Lord Bikhu Parekh, a Labour member of the House of Lords, centennial professor at the London School of Economics and Professor of Political Philosophy at the University of Westminster. Lord Parekh was deputy chair of the Commission for Racial Equality for five years and chair of the Runnymede Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain, whose report was published in 2000. Lord Navnit Dholakia was appointed Baron Dholakia of Waltham Brooks in 1997 and serves as front bench spokesman on Home Affairs for the Liberal Democrats. He has also been Chairman of the National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (NACRO). Shailesh Vara, vice chairman of the Conservative Party, has been described as a "future leader" of his party and delivered the "rising star" speech at the Party conference in 2000. Previously a solicitor, Shailesh is also responsible for Conservative Future and vice president of the Small Business Bureau.

Heads of Islamic centres and Imams in Europe conference

Between 13 and 15 June 2003, a conference held by the Heads of Islamic Centres & Imams in Europe

took place in Graz, Austria. This official conference was supported by the European Council, the Austrian government, OIC, ISESCO and the European Community. Amongst those in attendance were Dr Benita Ferrero Waldner, Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs; Professor Anas Schakfeh, President of the Islamic Community and Dr Mustafa Ef Ceric, Rais al-Ulema of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Imam Abdul Jalil Sajid attended on behalf of the MCB and met with a number of representatives from Europe, introducing the works of the MCB.

The conference served as a forum to discuss the Graz Declaration which was adopted and covered aspects such as the awareness of religious identity and human rights. The Graz Declaration made recommendations to set up an expert commission for the formulation of Islamic requests for consideration by the European Union. It further recommended the establishment of an Islamic liaison office in Brussels, along with a permanent council of imams and Islamic spiritual advisers and an Islamic Centre in Graz.

Soul of Europe meeting

On Wednesday 11 June, Secretary General of the MCB, Iqbal Sacranie, attended a meeting with the Rev Dr Donald Reeves, the founder of the Soul of Europe project. The Secretary General was briefed on the various initiatives undertaken by Dr Reeves and his colleagues to bring about better understanding between Christians and Muslims. They are also working on a major project which will restore the historic mosques which were destroyed during the war in Bosnia.

MCB training

The MCB is launching an innovative pilot training programme to develop leadership capacity within the community. The programme will have residential modules and single days, and be based in Central London. It comprises:

- Two three-day residential modules (Friday to Sunday)
- Four single days around specific themes
- A follow-up day six months later to evaluate progress

All participants will be expected to attend the residential modules and single days. In addition to skills training, the emphasis of the course is on self-development, systems thinking and imbuing a spirit of social enterprise. It will further develop participants' understanding of the diversity and dynamics of British Muslim community.

In the first instance this pilot programme is designed for a maximum of 15 participants, in the 25-40

age range. Further information on the course has been sent to all CWC members and committee chairs and vice-chairs. They are requested to recommend suitable participants.

An application form is available from <http://www.mcb.org.uk/training>

This application form would need to be completed and sent to the MCB office by 30th July 2003. A three-person committee drawn from the MCB's Finance & General Purpose (F&GP) committee will make the selection of participants from the applications received. In processing these, selection criteria will be used to ensure that successful participants are absolutely committed to put in the time and effort to benefit from the programme. It will also ensure that there is a mix of individuals of different background, age, gender and potentialities. Applicants will be interviewed to assess that they fulfil the criteria. The F&GP committee is in the process of raising funds to subsidise the course fees for as many participants as possible who are unable to obtain external sponsorship. All participants however will be asked to contribute a minimum of £300. Such initiatives are essential for the Muslim community to realise its full potential in participating in and contributing to the mainstream society.

New Government Race Equality advisory panel

A new Government advisory panel, to put race equality at the heart of policy making was launched on 26 June by the Home Secretary, David Blunkett. A panel of 25 key representatives of the minority ethnic communities in Britain will be on call to advise the Home Office at Ministerial or official level - helping them to take into account the needs of different communities. The panel aims to help develop the Home Office's strategy on race equality, advise on implementing and delivering existing policies/programmes, provide ad hoc advice on specific topics and provide a link to communities.

Muslim members of the panel include Iqbal Sacranie, MCB Secretary General; Mr Rumman Ahmed, Community Relations Adviser, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea; Miss Haseena Lockhat, Child Clinical Psychologist, North Warwickshire NHS Trust; Ms Zahida Manzoor CBE, Co-Founder and Marketing Director, Intellisys Ltd.; Ms Naznin Coker, Chair of Refugee Council and Mr Anis Rahman, Barrister and Magistrate.

Mr Blunkett said, "British society has its strength in the diversity of its communities. It is essential that we listen to their views, and value their opinions, when we are developing policies and making decisions.

We must continually strive after race equality, and I am looking forward to working with the Panel."

Fabian Society lecture

The Inaugural Fabian Society Annual Lecture was given by the Prime Minister, Tony Blair MP, at the Old Vic theatre in London on 17 June 2003. In his opening speech he states that "By rectifying what is wrong with Britain we create the means to succeed economically and socially in the new century. To prosper, we must overcome the social divisions, the class distinctions, the cultural barriers that have prevented us from reaching our true potential." The lecture was then followed by a reception, both of

which were attended by MCB Secretary General, Iqbal Sacranie.

Family Fun Day

MCB Affiliate, Noor ul Islam, organised a family fun day on 22 June 2003. Proceeds were donated to the MCBDirect project. Professor Aziz Sheikh, MCB Research & Documentation chair, spoke on the subject of the soon to be launched MCBDirect at the event which was held in Leyton, London.

Islam & Muslims in Europe

Imam Abdul Jalil Sajid has recently visited a number of European cities, delivering his speech on "Islam and Muslims in Europe", at which the MCB Secretary General's message was conveyed.

Dr Sajid's speech and other material can be found online at www.mcb.org.uk/jalil-sajid.html

Committees Update

Media Committee (MC)

Letters to Glasgow Herald

On 18 June 2003, Inayat Bunglawala, Secretary of the MCB Media Committee, wrote to the editor of the Glasgow Herald regarding a letter by correspondents Mark Boyle and Brian Finch on the subject of the conviction of Sean Ratcliffe for breaking the Football Offences Act of 1991. Mr Bunglawala notes that "We know there are those - especially in the far right - who deliberately want to set sections of the British people against each other, as we so shockingly witnessed in the summer of 2001 in the towns of Oldham, Bradford and Burnley. Let us work together to make sure they cannot succeed." The full text can be found online at the media section, www.mcb.org.uk

Visit To The Times Newspaper Offices

A delegation from the MCB's media committee visited the offices of The Times newspaper on Thursday 12th June 2003 to meet with its editor, Robert Thomson and senior staff over its recent coverage related to Islam and Muslims. It was a very positive encounter and the MCB expressed appreciation for some improvements in The Times' coverage over the past year and pointed out other areas where coverage could be improved. The MCB delegates were Iqbal Sacranie, MCB Secretary-General, Inayat Bunglawala, Secretary of the Media committee and Ahmed Versi, consultant to the Media committee.

Media Seminar At Leyton Mosque, London

The Secretary of the MCB's media committee, Inayat Bunglawala, was one of the invited guest speakers at a special seminar on the Media organised by the Radio Ummah team on Sunday 15th June 2003 at Noor-ul-Islam Mosque, Leyton, London. Inayat delivered a talk on 'Dealing With The Media' to an audience of over 150 brothers and sisters and emphasised the importance of UK Muslims engaging with the media to try and improve the distorted picture that is all too often painted of our faith. He also gave examples of where Muslim responses had led to improvements in media coverage.

Question Time in the House of Commons

Inayat Bunglawala, Secretary of the Media Committee, took part in a lively Question Time panel discussion in the House of Commons, about 'The aftermath of the war against Iraq and the ongoing War on Terror' organised by the London branch of the MCB-affiliate, the Islamic Society of Britain on Wednesday June 4th 2003. The other panelists included Alan Duncan MP (Conservative, Foreign Affairs spokesperson), Dame Shirley Williams (Liberal Democrat), Jeremy Corbyn MP (Labour) and Dr Julian Lewis MP (Conservative, Defence).

Media and the UK Muslims

Inayat Bunglawala, Secretary of the Media Committee, spoke about the above topic at a meeting of the charity Iqra International, in Whitechapel, London, on Sunday June 8th 2003. Other guests present included the Mayor of Tower Hamlets, Mr Abdul Aziz Sardar.

Research & Documentation Committee (ReDoc)

Census data meeting

A meeting on the 'Publication of Census Results for Ethnicity and Religion' was convened by Len Cook, UK Chief Statistician at the Office for National Statistics (ONS) on 3 June 2003. The MCB was represented by Dr J Sherif, Secretary of ReDoc. Other attendees included representatives of the Jewish, Hindu and Sikh communities, Census users from the Home Office and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and ONS staff. The meeting discussed the level of detail at which census data would be released and the implications on confidentiality and privacy.

Based on advice from two specialists, Prof Dave Gordon of the School of Policy Studies, University of Bristol and Prof M Anwar, University of Warwick, the MCB argued for the publication of ethnicity and religion data not just to local authority district (borough level), but also ward and sub-ward level. This was particularly important for the religion-ethnicity cross tabulation - that would provide for example the number of Indian, African or Caribbean Muslims. The MCB position was supported by representatives from the Home Office, who indicated that data at this level was essential for neighbourhood renewal programmes.

Information is now available for the first time on the ethnic composition of the faith communities in England and Wales. Tables published by the Office for National Statistics on 25 June 2003 indicate that 11.6% of Muslims describe their ethnicity as White and 6.9% as Black or Black British (74% are Asian or Asian British). Of persons of Indian origin, 13% described themselves as Muslim. The figures portray the multi-ethnic composition of the British Muslim community. Over 25% of those in the ethnic category 'Other' (excluding Chinese) were Muslims. This reflects a limitation in the ONS's ethnic categorisation, which lacked separate categories for persons of Arab, Persian and Turkish origin.

The religion question in the Census was voluntary, but it was completed by 94% of all Pakistanis and Bangladeshis. This confirms the widespread support for the question as was argued by the MCB in its six-year long campaign for the inclusion of the religion question.

The MCB submitted a note to the ONS calling on the religion question to be made compulsory in the next census. The MCB also requested the ONS to make available information on the characteristics of those who did not complete the religion question or stated 'no religion'. A better understanding of their ethnic composition and geographical location would help bodies such as the MCB in planning census awareness campaigns within the community.

For further details see <http://www.mcb.org.uk/indexcensus.htm>

Health & Medical Committee (HMC)

British Muslims oppose FAWC recommendation

On 10 June 2003, The MCB issued a press statement strongly opposing the recommendations made in the report of the Farm Animal Welfare Council (FAWC), entitled "Report on the Welfare of Farmed Animals at Slaughter or Killing" published on the same day. The report recommends that the

government introduce legislation to ban the provision for the religious slaughter of animals. This is unacceptable to British Muslims as it interferes with freedom to practice religion, enshrined in the Human Rights Act.

Dr Shuja Shafi, Chair of the MCB Health & Medical Committee has given a number of interviews on this subject to stations including Islamic Radio Nottingham and CNS News and CNN News.

Dr A Majid Katme, MCB spokesman on Halal Meat & Food, was interviewed on this issue by BBC Wales, BBC Radio 4, the Independent, Radio Midlands, the Jewish Chronicle, Scottish Farmers magazine, Al Jazeera TV, Time Magazine, Channel Islam International, the Sunday Mirror and Al Arab newspaper. He has also taken part in an online live dialogue on islamonline.net. Dr Katme has also attended a number of meetings including a meeting convened by Dr Al-Dubayan at the Islamic Cultural Centre, London and written to the Shadow Secretary of DEFRA regarding his letter in the Evening Standard defending religious slaughter.

The MCB will continue to work proactively on this issue. For further details please refer to the latest press releases and dossier found at www.mcb.org.uk and <http://www.mcb.org.uk/halal-report.html>

New on the MCB Website

- **'Committees' section** - Halal Meat Dossier updates <http://www.mcb.org.uk/halal-report.html>
- **'Library' section** - articles by Imam Abdul Jalil Sajid
- **Media/Letters to the Editor** - 16 June, letter to Glasgow Herald regarding racist chant sentencing by Inayat Bunglawala.
- **Check out**
<http://www.mcb.org.uk/mcbdirect> for fundraising dinner and job vacancy details and
<http://www.mcb.org.uk/tragedy.php> for emails to the MCB in the aftermath of the Iraq invasion and other recent developments

The Quest for Sanity

Letters of appreciation (cont'd)

I read with sincere interest "The Quest for Sanity". This book is, indeed, useful in encouraging mutual understanding and co-operation. I am sure this essay will stimulate inter faith dialogue and friendship between peoples which are necessary to ensure peace to our troubled world.

Prof. Paulo Costa, MEP

For the full listing of reviews please see the MCB website

To order copies of The Quest For Sanity (£12.75 each, plus P&P) please contact the MCB on 0208 432 0585/6 or order online at www.mcb.org.uk/books

Events

Event: MCB Fund Raising Dinner

Date: 5 July 2003

Held By: The Muslim Council of Britain

Venue: The Porchester Hall, Bayswater, London

Contact: email: redoc@mcb.org.uk

Information: Dinner to support the MCBDirect Project - a community information service and portal.

Event: British 10K Road Race

Date: Sunday 13 July 2003

Time: 9:30 am

Held By: Muslim Youth Helpline (MYH)

Venue: Central London

Contact: Muslim Youth Helpline - Tel: 020 8903 7534 (admin) – E-mail: info@myh.org.uk

Information: The Muslim Youth Helpline will be submitting a team of 12 runners to participate in this year's British 10K Road Race in London on July 13 2003. This event will seek to raise funds to pay for the expansion of the service this September and introduce a freephone number to increase access to the service for some of the most vulnerable youth of the Muslim community. To sponsor the team of runners, contact the helpline office on 020 8903 7534 or e-mail info@myh.org.uk. The Muslim Youth Helpline is a confidential counselling and befriending service for young Muslims in need. Opening Hours: Tuesdays 6pm-9pm & Saturdays 10am-10pm, Telephone: 020 8903 7534, Helpline: 020 8795 5321, E-mail: info@myh.org.uk (Admin) and help@myh.org.uk (Helpline), Fax: 020 8795 2066, Post: PO Box 659, Wembley, Middlesex, HA0 3WH

**Event: Conference for Palestinian Communities in Europe
in Defence of the Right of Return**

Date: Saturday 19 July 2003

Time: 3.00pm - 8.00pm

Held By: Palestinian Return Centre

Venue: Conway Hall, South Place Ethical Society, 25 Red Lion Square, London WC1R 4RL

Contact: Enquiries to PRC: Tel: 0208 453 0919, e-mail: info@prc.org.uk, Website: www.prc.org.uk

Information: Given the grave threats presently overshadowing the Palestinian right of return, the Palestinian Return Centre invites all Palestinians residing in Europe and Palestinian institutions to participate in a popular conference to reaffirm adherence to their individual and collective right of return. Guests include Dr. Haidar Abdul Shafi' A Palestinian Leader, Gaza; Dr. Salman Abu Sitta, President Palestinian Land Society UK; Prof. Naseer Aruri, Palestinian Academic, USA; Mr. Bilal al Hasan, Palestinian journalist, France; Dr. Muhammad Akram Adluni, Director, Al Quds International Institute, Lebanon

Event: Living Islam Family Camp

Date: 31 July - 3 August

Held By: The Islamic Society of Britain and The Young Muslims UK

Venue Lincolnshire Showground.

Contact: www.LivingIslam.co.uk

Information: Special Guest speakers will include Imran Khan and Jemima Khan along with several renowned Islamic scholars. The popular American nasheed group Native Deen will also be performing at the Camp, insha' Allah.

