

Publisher's introduction

The Muslim Manifesto was published by the Muslim Institute at a conference on 'The Future of Muslims in Britain' held by in Logan Hall, the Institute of Education, London, on 14 July 1990. It was the result of several months of consultations with leading Muslim community figures in Britain, led by Dr. Kalim Siddiqui, Director of the Muslim Institute. It aimed to provide out "a common text defining the Muslim situation in Britain", and proposed the creation of a range of community institutions under a 'Council of British Muslims'. It was this proposal that led to the establishment of the Muslim Parliament of Great Britain, inaugurated in January 1992.

The writing of the Muslim Manifesto emerged from the Satanic Verses controversy, in which Dr. Siddiqui became a spokesman for the British Muslims' anger and frustration, and a defender of their position in the face of attacks from the literary and political establishments, and the mass media. From the outset of the controversy, while others were focused on the book and its author, Dr Siddiqui understood the broader implications for the position of Muslims in Britain, and sought to channel Muslim energies to constructive programs for the future benefit of the community.

The Muslim Parliament was still in its early stages at the time of Dr Siddiqui's death in 1996, and unfortunately did not long survive him. For more information on it, see <http://kalimsiddiqui.com/muslim-parliament>.

www.kalimsiddiqui.com
January 2016.

THE MUSLIM MANIFESTO

- a strategy for survival



THE MUSLIM INSTITUTE

INTRODUCTION

This manifesto is the outcome of a process of consultation, writing and revision over several months. It is now being offered for wider debate in the Muslim community. We hope that a number of regional consultation conferences will be held all over the country in the next few months. To set that process of consultation in motion, the Muslim Institute has arranged a one-day conference on “The Future of Muslims in Britain”. This conference will be held in the Logan Hall, the Institute of Education, 20 Bedford Way, London WC1, on 14 July 1990.

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THE HISTORICAL SITUATION

It is a matter of deep regret that the Government, all political parties and the mass media in Britain are now engaged in a relentless campaign to reduce Muslim citizens of this country to the status of a disparaged and oppressed minority. We have no alternative but to resist this invidious campaign. To do so Muslims in Britain must define their collective goals and move towards a consensus on major issues. The established network of 1,000 mosques and a wide range of organisations already serving the community must develop greater cohesion and dynamism. This manifesto attempts to provide a common text defining the Muslim situation in Britain. It also seeks to provide a framework for the healthy growth of all parts of the community as well as a common Muslim identity and purpose.

Maxim: Muslims will resist and fight all forms of oppression.

ASSUMPTIONS

Of all the major religions of the world, Islam is the most “politicised”. At its inception Islam created a political platform from which Muslims were to launch themselves on a global role as founders of great States, empires and a world civilisation and culture. Political and cultural subservience goes against their grain. Yet in Britain today Muslims are being asked to accept subservience and the total disintegration of their identity, culture and religion, as the only real options open to them.

This manifesto is based on the following assumptions:

1. that Muslims in Britain have to accept neither subservience as their inevitable and permanent condition nor the disintegration of their identity, culture and religion;
2. that, despite being a minority, Muslims here can define and pursue goals compatible with the goals of the global Ummah, the world community of Muslims, of which they are an integral part;
3. that Muslims in Britain need to create institutions and mobilise resources in pursuit of these goals;
4. that for Muslims this is also the only way to secure an honourable place in the wider British society;
5. that the option of “integration” and/or “assimilation” that is on offer as official policy in Britain must be firmly resisted and rejected.

Maxim: Muslims must develop their own identity and culture within Britain and as part of a global Muslim community, the Ummah.

THE FOUNDERS' COUNCIL

It is proposed that a Founders' Council is created to adopt and launch this manifesto. The composition of the Founders' Council will be announced in due course.

THE COUNCIL OF BRITISH MUSLIMS (CBM)

Muslims in Britain need a platform to debate issues vital to them as citizens of this country. They also need a platform where all shades of opinion can be freely expressed. Above all, Muslims need a body that can speak with authority on their behalf. A process of debate and deliberation to guide Muslim opinion towards a consensus requires a “house of representatives”. However, the mechanism for achieving an “elected” house does not at present exist. Community-wide institutionalisation and organisation will have to reach a very advanced stage before an “electoral” process can be introduced. It is possible for a carefully selected, balanced and “invited” house to be “representative of the Muslim community in Britain. This is the only practical option open to us at present. This body will be known as The Council of British Muslims (CBM). It will act as a “Muslim parliament” in Britain.

Maxim: Consultation and consensus is our method.

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MUSLIMS IN BRITAIN

Once The Council of British Muslims has been set up, steps will be taken to create a General Assembly of Muslims in Britain. The General Assembly may consist of up to 500 members. The membership of the General Assembly will be by invitation. It will consist of individuals and representatives of organisations, including those catering for the specialised needs of women, youth, students, businessmen, professionals and academics, etc. The General Assembly will be so constituted as to reflect the full spectrum of Muslim life in Britain.

Every effort will be made to invite a large number of women to be members of the General Assembly. The General Assembly will meet once a year.

THE COUNCIL OF MUSLIM WOMEN IN BRITAIN

Muslim women have to play a crucial part in securing the future of Muslims in Britain. Muslim women in Britain are going into higher education and their numbers in the professions are rapidly expanding. But, ironically, women are more oppressed and exploited in the allegedly sexually “liberated” and “emancipated” west today than was the case in the traditional Islamic, or even non- Islamic, societies of Asia and Africa. Western-style “liberation” and “emancipation” does not meet the needs of Muslim women living in Britain. A sea-change in the lifestyle and social role of Muslim women is inevitable and desirable. It is for Muslim women themselves to develop an Islamic lifestyle in the context of the needs of the Muslim community in Britain. It is also for Muslim women to play a major part in the public life of the Muslim community in Britain.

The position of women has long been the target of a vicious hate campaign directed against Islam itself. The west’s jaundiced view of women in Islam has gained strength by the attempt of women from some westernised Muslim families to feign a bogus “liberated” lifestyle. The fact is that a Muslim woman cannot be a western woman. Neither is the social role or lifestyle of Muslim women merely a question relating to modes of dress and hijab. The position of women in a Muslim community goes deeper than hijab, education, career, right to work, property, divorce, etc.

Muslim women in Britain are in a unique position to develop a comprehensive lifestyle all their own in which they can develop their talents and achieve their ambitions to the full,

always guided by Islam. However, this will only happen if Muslim women have a platform of their own.

We propose the setting up of The Council of Muslim Women in Britain (CMWB).

Maxim: Muslim women have a higher and nobler place in society than the so-called “emancipated” women have in the west.

THE CONGRESS OF MUSLIM YOUTH AND STUDENTS IN BRITAIN

The public commitment of the Muslim youth in Britain to Islam and their Muslim culture and identity has been a major revelation of The Satanic Verses affair. There is clearly no “generation gap” between the first generation Muslim immigrants and their children born and brought up in Britain. What is more, our youth is largely uncontaminated by the culture of alcoholism, drugs, sexual promiscuity and other forms of delinquency that is rampant among the youth of mainstream British society. Studies have shown that Muslim children are among those groups who have performed way above average in schools, colleges and universities. The young Muslims, men and women, must be well represented in all the new and old Muslim institutions and organisations.

“Islamic societies” have long been established in British universities, polytechnics and colleges of higher and further education. However, so far their activities have been limited to arranging Friday prayers and mixing a little Islamic culture with their secular education. Few Islamic societies have ever attempted to improve their members’ understanding of the Islamic philosophy of science or the wider questions of epistemology. Education for the sake of a secular career and lifestyle has remained unaffected by the existence of Islamic societies.

We must now develop a specialised body to help the Muslim youth and students to fashion a lifestyle committed to the attainment of the wider and long-term goals of Islam and the Muslim community in Britain.

To achieve this goal and to provide youth and students a platform for the growth and development of their own potential, steps will be taken to set up a Congress of Muslim Youth and Students in Britain.

Maxim: Muslim youth must participate fully in shaping the future of Muslims in Britain.

RELATIONSHIP WITH THE BRITISH AUTHORITIES

1. Islam allows Muslims to accept protection of life, property, and liberty from non-Muslim rulers and their political systems. Muslims placed in this situation may also pay taxes and other dues to a non-Muslim State.
2. Muslims living under the protection of a non-Muslim State must obey the laws of that State, so long as such obedience does not conflict with their commitment to Islam and the Ummah. Other minorities in Britain, notably Jews and Roman Catholics, do the same.
3. There are laws on the British Statute Book that are in direct conflict with the laws of Allah; these relate to such matters as usury, abortion, homosexuality, gambling, sale and consumption of alcohol, and the abolition of capital punishment; Muslims can neither agree with nor condone any part of a legal and social agenda which so flagrantly violates the laws of nature as well as of God.
4. Muslims will co-operate with the appropriate authorities for the maintenance of law and order and the promotion of peaceful and wholesome conditions for all our fellow citizens...
5. Muslims will insist, and continue to insist for as long as it may be necessary, that the British State provide them, their religion and culture protection from gratuitous insult, obscenity and abuse...
6. Muslims make it clear to the State, and all sections of British society, that they do not expect to be and will not

tolerate being insulted and abused on grounds of their religion, culture and traditions.

Maxim: We are Muslims first and last.

GOALS OF THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY IN BRITAIN

1. To perform the Qur'anic requirement of "enjoining right conduct and forbidding indecency".¹
2. To consolidate the Muslim population in Britain into an organised community in pursuit of the goals set by Islam...
3. To achieve the highest possible level of collective taqwa and all-round moral and material excellence...
4. To develop the Muslim community as an island of peace, harmony and moral excellence, free of promiscuity, sexually transmitted diseases, drinking, gambling, drug-addiction, fornication and the related social and moral disorders which plague our age...
5. To create and develop institutions capable of serving the Muslim community in such specialised fields as education, health, research, publishing, the arts, trade and investment...
6. To develop and microcosm of unity in the Ummah across the cultural, ethnic and theological diversity that is found in the Muslim community in Britain...
7. To create, where such do not already exist, specialised bodies for Muslims in the major professions, e.g., medicine, engineering, law, accountancy, teaching, etc...

¹ Al-Qur'an, Surah Luqman: 17.

8. To secure for Muslim men and women at work or children in schools the right to worship, the right to halal food and the right to dress in the proper Islamic manner...
9. To develop community and family based support for the less fortunate – widows, orphans, old, sick, infirm, disabled and the unemployed...

Maxim: Muslims will pursue moral excellence under all circumstances.

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR THE LIFE OF THE MUSLIM INDIVIDUAL IN BRITAIN

1. Every Muslim, man or woman, must practice Islam in all its dimensions in order to achieve the greatest possible degree of taqwa in his/her private, personal, family, social and professional life...
2. Every Muslim must pursue excellence in all departments of life, especially in the acquisition of all-round knowledge...
3. Every Muslim must ensure that his/her and his/her family's private and public life be committed to the pursuit of Allah's good pleasure alone...
4. Every Muslim must ensure that his/her lifestyle does not absorb the moral laxity prevalent in the secular culture of modern Britain today...
5. Every Muslim must live within the Statute Laws of the United Kingdom...
6. Every Muslim should seek to develop an identity in terms of the goals of Islam and participate in the struggle of the global Islamic movement toward these goals...
7. Jihad is a basic requirement of Islam and living in Britain or having British nationality by birth or naturalisation does not absolve the Muslim from his or her duty to participate in jihad: this participation can be active service in armed struggle abroad and/or the provision of material

and moral support to those engaged in such struggle anywhere in the world...¹

8. Every Muslim must contribute a regular proportion of his or her income to the Islamic movement instead of the habit of giving small or insignificant amounts only when faced with a “collection box”...²
9. Every Muslim must pursue his or her personal goals within the framework of the Muslim community in Britain, of the Ummah, and of the global Islamic movement...

Maxim: Islam is our guide in all situations.

¹ Al-Qur'an, Surah Taubah: 86, 88.

² Al-Qur'an, Surah Hadid: 7, 10.

A STRATEGY FOR SURVIVAL

Recent events have made it clear that Muslims in Britain, indeed throughout Europe and North America, will have to make a conscious effort if they are to survive. The time-honoured assumption that the generally liberal, open and tolerant ethos of the west would guarantee the survival of Islam and Muslims is a thesis no longer tenable. Muslims are faced with a vicious assault on their identity. Recent statements by leading figures in British Government and public life have made it clear that they expect, demand and will not be satisfied with anything less than our total “assimilation”. Essentially their attitude towards Islam has not changed since the Crusades; their strategy remains the same, only their tactics have changed. Muslims living in the west have to adjust to an environment that is far more hostile than had been assumed.

Muslim communities in the west now need a comprehensive strategy for survival. The Council of British Muslims will debate and develop a comprehensive STRATEGY FOR SURVIVAL as a matter of urgency, made more, not less, urgent by every day that passes.

Maxim: Survive we must, live we may.

HISTORY – THE BRITISH OBSESSION

The history that is immediately relevant to the Muslim situation in Britain relates largely to British colonialism. The British colonial mind is the immediate source of their fear of Muslims. Muslims in Britain are viewed as “ex-colonials” who have received the additional favour of having been allowed to settle in mainland Britain. Britain as a colonial power, having “civilised” its possessions and then “granted” them freedom, now feels entitled to expect the ex-colonials to become British like the British. Any assertion of the superiority of Islam or Islamic culture or civilisation on British soil is not to be tolerated. The British State sees it as its duty to achieve total assimilation.

Moreover, as the controversy over The Satanic Verses has revealed, the British also want Muslims to accept their view of all religions, including Islam. That is that all religious beliefs are a throwback to the Dark Ages of ignorance and superstition and therefore unacceptable in this day and age of reason, science and technology. Those who want to retain religious convictions must exercise them in the sphere of private conscience. No religion, least of all Islam, can be allowed a place in public affairs, even those affairs that affect Muslims themselves. Public policy cannot therefore take into account Islam or the Islamic sensibilities of Muslims. It is for Muslims to “grow up” and join the mainstream of western civilisation.

Maxim: The British view of Islam and Muslims is rooted in colonial history.

HISTORY – THE MUSLIM RESPONSE

The relevant Muslim response to the British view of Islam and Muslims is more complex but also determined in large part by the colonial experience. Among us there is the truly “ex-colonial” fringe that accepts the British view of Islam and Muslims and is offended by what it calls the Islam of the mullahs and the “ignorant” masses. This is the “modernist” position. They pay lip-service to Islam but are embarrassed by such strong assertion of our faith as has been visible in the Muslim campaign against The Satanic Verses. In today’s Britain these modernist, apologetic Muslims want to keep “politics” out of mosques and maintain a submissive posture towards the British government. In their role as a colonial power the British used the modernists to deflect and abort Muslim opposition to their rule; they promoted an emasculated form of Islam from which the component of jihad was subtracted. They are now attempting to do the same in dealing with Muslims living in Britain. The same language (“moderates”) is used to describe these individuals and the regimes that promote and support them.

But the Muslim masses living in Britain today have seen through the game. The British design to destroy Islam and assimilate Muslims, in partnership with the modernist “Islamic lobby”, has been exposed by The Satanic Verses affair. Their plan to deflect and render ineffectual Muslim anger over The Satanic Verses was defeated by Imam Khomeini’s fatwa on February 14, 1989. Even before the fatwa, ulama in Britain had played a major role in mobilising opinion against The Satanic Verses. It was this initial awakening created by the ulama in Britain that made the total endorsement of that fatwa by the Muslim masses in Britain

possible. The Satanic Verses affair has also exposed the insincerity of most Muslim governments, including the Saudi regime, towards issues that are vital for the defence of Islam and the honour of the Prophet of Islam, upon whom be peace.

The new historical situation demands a new and comprehensive Strategy for Survival.

Maxim: Muslims will not surrender to cultural blackmail.

WHAT IS SURVIVAL?

Survival does not mean physical “safety”, or a set of guarantees in such matters as “equal opportunities”, or the verbiage put out by the Race Relations industry, as Islam does not fit into any of their neat categories. Equally, British law does not, and cannot be expected to, provide an adequate framework for our survival. Recent events should leave no one in any doubt that the British Government is prepared to use the law against us as an instrument of oppression. The only survival kit that will work is the one that is entirely community based and integrated with a global Islamic movement that protects us in the way France or Russia once claimed to be the “protectors” of Christian communities in the Middle East. The shield of Islam is our only protection under all circumstances. Survival within Islam is the only form of survival that has any meaning. If we protect Islam, Islam will protect us. If we weaken our links with Islam we shall be swallowed up.

Maxim: Only Islam can protect Muslims.

MOSQUES IN BRITAIN

The creation of a network of about 1,000 mosques in Britain is one of the great achievements of the first generation of Muslim migrants to this country. In financial terms (at 1990 values), these mosques represent an investment of perhaps as much as £200 million. These mosques have to be developed into major foci of Muslim community life. The part played by the mosques in The Satanic Verses affair has shown that at times of crises Muslims turn to the mosque for guidance. However, so far the full potential of these mosques has not been realised. Among the first steps we should take is to put the khateeb and imams of mosques on financial terms compatible with their status and role in society. As a first step their salaries should be raised to £20,000 per annum. The management of the mosques should also begin to attract the attention and talents of Muslims born and educated in Britain. The mosques should begin to develop in the role of problem-solving resource centres. The ulama should cease to be mere employees. They should be offered membership of restructured committee structures. A new partnership will have to develop between the original founders and trustees, the ulama, and the younger generation of Muslims. New committees should begin to emerge in all mosques to chalk out a new and dynamic role for mosques in Britain.

Maxim: Mosques are the primary institutions of Islam.

ULAMA IN BRITAIN

The ulama will always remain one of our major resources and a pool for leadership and knowledge. In a society where the bulk of available education is likely to be secular, the role of ulama as teachers, guides and leaders will be of paramount importance. The Satanic Verses affair has shown the leadership potential of the ulama, but the ulama will have to develop a wider range of capabilities over the whole range of social and political issues that confront the Muslims in Britain. This should include a better command of the English language and an understanding of the social, political and administrative systems and procedures of Government. Some of these roles can be undertaken with the help of Muslims who are doctors, civil servants, solicitors, policemen, probation officers, etc.

Similarly, the ulama should begin to use their weekly wa'z (speech preceding khutba on Fridays) to inform the community of major changes that may be taking place, either in Britain or in the world of Islam as a whole. Every mosque should become part of the Islamic movement in its widest sense.

Maxim: Ulama must come forward in leadership roles.

ROLE OF TRUSTEES OF MOSQUES

The founders of mosques and their trustees have performed a great service to the Muslims in Britain. Without their commitment and sacrifice we would not have the network of mosques that we have today. For their sacrifice and service the founders and trustees of mosques have secured them an honourable place in our society, for which they will be generously rewarded in the Hereafter, insha'Allah.

The founders and trustees of mosques must, however, realise that the role of the mosques must evolve to keep pace with changes in the Muslim society. Already more than half the Muslim population in Britain consists of people born here. The trustees largely belong to a generation from a different background. It is high time for trustees to start to bring in the younger generation as partners in the management of the mosques. The first step may be the creation or appointment of "management committees" comprising members of the younger generation. The mosques ought to begin to change in directions desired by the new generation, guided and advised by their elders. Unless this transition be conscientiously undertaken and sensitively managed, our mosques run the risk of becoming obsolete monuments to the religious practices of first-generation migrants. Were this to take place, our children and grandchildren would sell the mosques to the highest bidders in much the same way as lapsed Christians have sold their churches to us. The disused churches were fortunate to become mosques; the disused mosques of the future may be less fortunate.

The founders and trustees of mosques labour under a greater obligation to future generations than to the first generation of

migrants. The mosques were built to secure the future of our children, not to stand as monuments to our past piety.

Maxim: Trustees of mosques must seek partnership with the younger generation brought up in Britain.

THE MUSLIM AGENDA

In this section an attempt has been made to identify key areas that will occupy Muslim attention in the immediate future.

1. The Satanic Verses

This is a major conflict with implications for most aspects of our future in Britain; it also encapsulates the whole range of issues that are likely to dominate Islam's relations with the west for a long time to come. The British Government refuses to acknowledge the validity of the Muslim position. In this conflict rational argument has come up against a blank wall of colonial and cultural presuppositions. The only alternative is for Muslims to extend their agitation to a point where the social, political and economic cost of keeping The Satanic Verses in circulation becomes prohibitive. At some stage we may have to engage in a campaign of civil disobedience¹ in Britain. The Satanic Verses is not an ordinary "book", it amounts to a declaration of war on Islam and Muslims. The circumstantial evidence, e.g., the size of the advance paid to the author, and the media and literary hype that accompanied its publication, leaves us in no doubt that The Satanic Verses is the result of a conspiracy. This means, above all, that Muslims have to fight a prolonged campaign to defeat the designs of the conspirators and their supporters.

The obvious solution to The Satanic Verses affair is for this book to be unconditionally withdrawn by the author and his publishers. We realise that withdrawal cannot mean the recall of all copies. However, withdrawal must mean (a) an undertaking that existing stocks in shops and warehouses will be pulped, (b) no further editions will be published in any shape or form, (c) the book will be removed from public

¹ See Alan Ryan's article, "The Right to Disobey", in The Times, April 4, 1990, and Tony Benn's article, "When Principle is above the Law", in The Guardian, April 4, 1990. Both Alan Ryan and Tony Benn would of course deny that their arguments can be used by Muslims. In our view we can and we must.

libraries, and (d) anyone who wants to return his copy will receive a full refund. In addition, the author and publishers will pay an agreed sum to relieve the suffering of those, mainly in India, Kashmir, Pakistan and Bangladesh, who have been bereaved, maimed or injured in protests against The Satanic Verses. Muslims in Britain will continue to pursue the author and publishers of The Satanic Verses until this conflict is satisfactorily resolved. We are a law-abiding community seeking a peaceful settlement of a dangerous conflict. Such conflicts, unless peacefully settled, often lead to violence.

The Satanic Verses is not acceptable now and will not become acceptable at any time in the future.

2. Islam in Britain

Muslims in Britain need to undertake a close examination of what, if any, legal and/or constitutional position could be secured for Islam in Britain, bearing in mind that a number of European States have accorded Islam the status of an “official religion”. This will include the question of laws against blasphemy to protect all religions. We must note that the existing laws against blasphemy have failed to prevent grossly obscene and sacrilegious attacks on the person of Jesus Christ, upon whom be peace, so much so that influential opinion within the Church of England, whose creed alone is protected, now supports the abolition of blasphemy as a criminal offence. The penetration of the secular creed into Anglican thought is a matter of deep regret. The operation of existing laws against blasphemy shows that their extension to protect Islam as well is unlikely to prevent the kind of attacks on religion that the “liberal” lobby claims is its right. The Muslim community may have to define “no go” areas where the exercise of “freedom of speech” against Islam will not be tolerated. It is only by taking a firm position now that Muslims in Britain may in the long term succeed in defining a common cause within a secular society. The one thing we must not do is to surrender to the demands of rampant, immoral secularism.

3. Da'wah

Performing da'wah, or inviting non-Muslims to accept Islam, is a basic duty of all Muslims. Muslims have come to live in the west in large numbers at a time when the western civilisation is beginning to develop disorders of the mind, body and soul as a direct consequence of unmitigated secularism. In this situation the role of da'wah is clear. However, the method of da'wah is often and unnecessarily contentious among Muslims. There are those who take the passive route, and there are those who believe in working through revolutionary change, beginning with Muslim societies and countries. In Britain, in the short-term, the great impact is likely to be achieved through the example of moral and material excellence set by Muslim individuals and families living in a post-Christian, largely pagan, society. The collective effort of the Muslim community in Britain to lead a muttaqi life in a corrupt environment is bound to play a major role in da'wah. Similarly, the taqwa of Muslim youth, the modesty of Muslim women, the stability of Muslim family life, the absence of drinks-, drugs- and sex-related crimes and the overall discipline of Muslims living in the west will itself send powerful signals to non-Muslims. But this will only happen if we succeed in arresting the "integration" and "assimilation" of Muslims themselves into the corrupt bogland of western culture and supposed "civilisation". The emergence of a distinctive Muslim presence, individual and collective, is an essential first step towards effective da'wah.

4. Existing Muslim or Islamic Organisations

These organisations have played important roles in the life of the Muslim community. They will continue to exist and develop. It is anticipated that most will accept the framework offered in this manifesto. They may indeed already be pursuing at least some of the goals of the community identified here. The role of the established organisations and the new structures and institutions that may be created will be complementary and cooperative. We cannot imagine a situation in which it may not be possible to find areas of mutual cooperation with existing organisations.

5. Education

A great deal of very useful work is already being done in this field by a number of groups and organisations. However, a common syllabus for the teaching of Islam to Muslim children in Britain is an urgent need of all of those engaged in education. A Muslim Education Commission (MEC) will be set up to examine all the relevant issues such as voluntary-aided schools, single sex education, provision of Muslim teachers as religious instructors, collective acts of worship in schools, Islamic dress, and alterations to the National Curriculum where it can be shown that the content of that curriculum is inimical to Islam. The report and recommendations of the MEC would then form the basis of negotiations with the Secretary of State for Education and Science and the LEAs in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

6. Muslim Personal Law

The vexed question of the application of Muslim Personal Law in such matters as marriage, divorce and inheritance needs a Law Commission comprising Muslim jurists and lawyers to examine the situation and make recommendations. So far all approaches to the British Government on this issue have been vague, ill formulated, largely emotional and incompetent. In the past British courts have recognised Muslim marriage, divorce and inheritance issues decided according to Muslim Personal Law outside Britain. This issue may well revolve around the creation of a Muslim legal framework to decide cases that may then be recognised as valid in British Law.

7. The Muslim Law Commission

The Muslim community needs a standing commission to keep the legislative programmes of Government and opposition parties constantly under review. Similarly, the Commission would monitor cases decided in law courts that may have implications for the Muslim community. The Commission could also submit written proposals to Government and opposition parties on major proposals in their legislative programmes. The Commission may also initiate debate in the Muslim Consultative Council and the General Assembly of Muslims in Britain in order to create informed public opinion on major legal issues.

8. Financing Higher Education

The financing of students in higher education in Britain is moving towards greater parental contributions and student loans. This is an area in which mosques are equipped to play a significant role. Most mosque trusts have surplus funds lying idle in the banks. Some of these funds can be used to set up loan (qard-i hasana) schemes for Muslim students in higher education. A major advantage of such schemes will be the goodwill for Islam that this will create among young Muslims during the most formative years of their lives. This experience will give them a further incentive to strengthen the institution of the mosque and to maintain their attachment to it.

9. Muslim Weekend Colleges

At present, only small children receive supplementary education in mosques in the evenings and at weekends. There is a need for more advanced classes for teenagers, youths and adults. A curriculum of courses on such subjects as the Seerah¹ of the Prophet (upon whom be peace), Tafsir², Qir'at³, Hifz⁴, Islamic history, Islamic civilisation and culture, Islamic art, the Islamic movement and Muslim political thought, etc., can be offered at a network of Muslim Weekend Colleges throughout the country. Wherever possible such colleges should operate within mosques. Most mosques have large unused space; carefully designed "folding" partitions can be erected to create smaller classrooms.

¹ Life.

² Exegesis of the Qur'an.

³ Recitation of the Qur'an.

⁴ Memorisation of the Qur'an.

10. The Islamic University

Prestigious institutions are symbols of the maturity and identity of a community. Muslims, though only a minority in Britain, belong to a global civilisation and culture. Moreover, the intellectual tradition of Islam is a major part of our inheritance. We have a different worldview to offer. We adhere to a different philosophy of life, philosophy of knowledge and philosophy of science.

After the collapse of communism, the intellectual encounter of the future is liable to be between the west and Islam. The obvious platform from which to conduct our debate and make our contribution is the Islamic University. However, the Islamic University we need must not be a cosmetic and hypocritical creation of the Saudi regime; just another western university under the banner of Islam. We suggest that the intellectual foundations laid by the pioneering work of The Muslim Institute in London over the last two decades could provide a solid foundation on which an International Islamic University (IIU) could be erected. So far as possible, the proposed Islamic University should be locally supported and financed. A planning committee could start work on this long-term project almost immediately.

11. The Muslim Ummah Fund

Experience tells us that financial freedom, indeed strength, must be an essential part of our strategy. Already we know of instances where Muslims in public service have either been reprimanded, dismissed or had other pressures put on them. Some Muslim organisations in receipt of grants from public funds have had them stopped. All this for expressing their views in The Satanic Verses affair. We must mobilise resources and raise funds within the Muslim community on a large scale. Substantial funds will be needed for the implementation of the programme outlined in this manifesto. For example, such proposals as the establishment of the Muslim Education Commission, the Muslim Law Commission, a Loan Fund for Students in Higher Education, Muslim Weekend Colleges, and eventually the Islamic University, are all capital intensive. Each of the commissions will require full-time research staff backed by secretarial and office facilities. Members serving on the various commissions will have to be reimbursed their travelling and other expenses. Some may also have to be paid professional fees.

We propose to launch The Muslim Ummah Fund (MUF) with an eventual target of about £5 million a year.

GLOSSARY

da'wah:	inviting non-Muslims to Islam.
fatwa:	a religious opinion or, if given by the head of an Islamic state, decree.
halal:	permitted.
hifz:	memorisation of the Qur'an.
hijab:	modesty of women's dress in public required by Islam. In particular, the wearing of a headscarf.
imam:	lit. leader. One who leads prayers. Also used for the leader of an Islamic state.
insha'Allah:	God willing.
jihad:	struggle (often armed) in the way of Allah.
khateeb:	one who gives the khutba, usually the imam.
khutba:	formal sermon before or after a congregational prayer.
mullah:	lit. master. Often used pejoratively for ulama.
muttaqi:	adjective from taqwa.
qard-i hasana:	lit. "beautiful loan". A loan which is returnable at the convenience of the borrower or not at all.
qir'at:	recitation of the Qur'an.
Seerah:	Life of the Prophet, upon whom be peace.
tafsir:	exegeses of the Qur'an.
taqwa:	moral excellence acceptable to Allah. Also fear of Allah, piety.

- ulama: persons learned in the sciences of Islam (pl. of alim).
- Ummah: world body of Muslims.
- wa'z: general speech or lecture given before or after a formal sermon at a prayer meeting.