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The resistible rise of Islamophobia

Anti-Muslim racism in the UK and Australia before 11 September 2001

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Abstract

This article compares the rise of anti-Muslim racism in Britain and Australia, from 1989 to 2001, as a foundation for assessing the extent to which the upsurge of Islamophobia after 11 September was a development of existing patterns of racism in these two countries. The respective histories of immigration and settlement by Muslim populations are outlined, along with the relevant immigration and 'ethnic affairs' policies and the resulting demographics. The article traces the ideologies of xenophobia that developed in Britain and Australia over this period. It records a transition from anti-Asian and anti-Arab racism to anti-Muslim racism, reflected in and responding to changes in the identities and cultural politics of the minority communities. It outlines instances of the racial and ethnic targeting by the state of the ethnic and religious minorities concerned, and postulates a causal relationship between this and the shifting patterns of acts of racial hatred, vilification and discrimination.

Keywords: anti-Muslim racism, Australia, Britain, Islamophobia

Like all ideology, the demonization of Islam perpetuated by the Western warriors of the 'clash of civilizations' (Huntington, 1997) has had profound material consequences. One of these is the surge in anti-Muslim racism in all hemispheres of the globe: north to south; east to west. This article focuses on the phenomenon in two nation-states: the United Kingdom and Australia. The first, as former colonial power, had a particular shape to its history of

racism, and the post-war immigration that inherited that history. The second, as a former 'white settlement colony', with its original racism of expropriation of land from indigenous people and foundational 'White Australia policy', combined that legacy with a quite different pattern of post-war immigration. There are, nonetheless, remarkable similarities, not least in the Islamophobia directed at peoples of quite diverse and different ethnic and national origins, which is the subject of this article. We are writing this article because we believe that the contemporary construction of the Muslim 'Other' in Western societies is crucial to the temper of these times. One of the contributions of sociology to current debate and to the historical record has been its attempts, from time to time, to encapsulate the mood of a period and its antecedents. This article is offered as a modest attempt towards capturing, through the cases here examined, the climate of Islamophobia which developed in Western societies in the decade or so leading up to 11 September 2001.

There is little doubt that the 'War on Terror' declared by the Bush government after 11 September 2001 is part of the consolidation of the new imperium, in a world order where the USA is the sole remaining superpower. The attacks of 9/11 have been said by some, amid much controversy, to be the 'chickens coming home to roost' of United States' foreign policy in the Middle East. According to this line of thinking, the attacks on the World Trade Centre and Pentagon were a 'boomerang' (Parenti, 2002: 10–19) effect of United States' policy in encouraging, arming and otherwise resourcing the guerrillas of Islamic fundamentalist insurgency against the USSR, primarily in Afghanistan in the 1980s (Saikal, 2003: 95–110). Other recently discovered manifestations of evil and unfreedom were induced by the USA's sponsorship and arming (along with British and other European arms producers) of Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq, to weaken Iran in their protracted war. Both the UK and Australia were drawn into the US-led Gulf War against Iraq in 1991, with drastic consequences for Muslims in these two allied countries, as in the US. An earlier 'boomerang' effect of US policy in the Middle East resulted from US installation and support, with British collaboration, of the Shah's murderous and torturing regime in Iran from 1953 (Saikal, 2003: 51–4, 69–88). It was in the revolution against this regime that the forces of Islamic fundamentalism came to the fore and triumphed after 1979.

As with previous empires, the new global hegemony has its racisms, which confirm ideologically its fitness to rule and the inferiority of those peoples and cultures that it subjugates in doing so. These racisms also have their echoes in the nation-states and their collectivities, which are minor partners in alliance with the empire's metropolis, and even with those peripheral vassal states which imagine themselves as regional deputy sheriffs. The United Kingdom and Australia are the cases examined in this article.

The echoes of these racisms are complex: they resonate differentially within distinct local and national cultures, conditioned by their disparate but intertwined histories. For example, 'Islamophobia' might be taken to mean much the same thing in the USA, the UK and Australia, but as lived and practised in each of these nation-states, it has been created out of different national histories of racism. In the UK, for instance, the figure of the so-called 'Paki' has been a key object of racial hatred for several generations, and this 'colours' contemporary, post-9/11 Islamophobia in a country where most Muslims, and the most recognizable Muslims, are of South Asian ancestry. In Australia, arguably over the last two decades the 'Arab Other' has been constructed as the pre-eminent racialized folk devil (Poynting et al., 2004), with moral panics over 'Lebanese crime gangs' (Collins et al., 2000) following on from earlier folk myths about the slaughtering of goats in suburban backyards (Blainey, 1984). In Australia, the majority of Muslims are indeed of Arab background, and most of these are immigrants of Lebanese descent, though there is a wide diversity of ethnicities and nationalities of origin. That these racisms have all been recruited in the globalized 'War on Terror' emanating from the United States, shows that there are underlying patterns of similarity and even simultaneity, yet also important differences. To identify both the patterns of commonality then, and also some key differences, in anti-Muslim racism in the UK and Australia, is the purpose of this comparative study. The first phase of this examines the frameworks already in place by 11 September 2001 in Britain and Australia, in order to explore the anti-Muslim racism in the two countries that was inherited and intensified from that date onwards. Of course, as Edward Said (1978) has eloquently pointed out, this form of orientalism has a long history. More recently Tahir Abbas (2005) has sketched its history in Britain, while Nahid Kabir's new (2004) book and Bilal Cleland's work (no date) records its background in Australia. This present article will confine itself to what we believe has been the pivotal period framing the rise of Islamophobia in these two countries – from the flashpoints of the 'Salman Rushdie affair' in 1989 and the (first) Gulf War soon after, through to 10 September 2001.[1]

In both of these countries, as indeed in the US and much of the 'West', the collapse of the Soviet bloc in the late 1980s saw the emergence of a new global figure of threat and enmity: with Muslim populations finding themselves increasingly encoded as the new 'evil other' (Kepel, 1997; Hadar, 1993; Huntington, 1993; Khan, 2000; Lewis, 1994). This discourse of deviant and enemy images of Muslims was perpetuated through the media, and manifested in a history of racist attacks ranging from property damage and verbal abuse to physical assault and worse, directed at Muslim communities, especially immigrants (Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission [HREOC], 1991; Muslim Women's League, 1996; O'Brien,

2000: 1–2). For many Arabs and Muslims, these ideologies represented ingrained racial ideologies stemming from ethnocentric 'European/Christian consciousness since the first Crusade' (O'Brien, 2000: 1).

While immigration to both countries has occurred within a framework of racist discourse, as we will explore below, arguably the term 'Islamophobia' gained its strongest currency in the aftermath of the *Satanic Verses* affair. This refers to the reaction of British Muslims and Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini declaring a *fatwa* against Salman Rushdie for offence caused by his novel, *The Satanic Verses* (Runnymede Trust, 1990, 1997). Here the 'boomerang effect' of the preceding Empire compounds that of the new one. The bloody legacy of the British Empire in the partition of India, itself the accumulation of a colonial history of divide and rule, is inherited in communal tension on the Indian subcontinent today, a reality provocatively addressed by Rushdie in his novel. Both the tension, and resentment against cultural imperialism, came into play in the Rushdie affair in Britain in 1989. It is here that we begin our background to contemporary anti-Muslim racism in the UK, but we must first sketch the relevant history of post-war immigration.

End of the old empire – Muslim immigration to Britain

The 2001 census in the United Kingdom enumerated 1,558,890 Muslims living in Great Britain, or 2.8 percent of the population (bearing in mind that 7.8% did not state a religion or 'no religion') (National Statistics, 2001). The vast majority of these Muslims are of South Asian, East African and Middle Eastern origin; some two-thirds originate from Pakistan, Bangladesh and India (Khan, 2000: 38; Lewis, 1994: 13–16; Peach, 2005: 20). These communities have historically been located in the 'urban heartland' of Britain in areas such as London and the cities and big towns of the Midlands and the north of England (Khan, 2000: 38; Peach, 2005: 28). Approximately half of these Muslims were born in the United Kingdom (Smyth, 1996). The Arab population within Britain is much smaller, numbering around 200,000–300,000 people, with approximately half of this community living in and around the London area (Nagel, 2002: 267).

Much of the immigration of Muslims and Arabs to Britain occurred as part of the broader large-scale immigration to Britain as a result of post-Second World War reconstruction and the eventual long boom, coinciding with the decolonization of the erstwhile British Empire. In 1948, legislation enabled the people formerly regarded as subjects of the British Empire to become citizens of the Commonwealth, granting them full rights to take up British residency (Kepel, 1997: 99). However, following the mass immigration that flowed from this, and increasing xenophobia within Britain – exemplified in Enoch Powell's notorious 1968 'Rivers of Blood' speech[2] – the system

was replaced in stages by the 1962 Commonwealth Immigrants Bill, the 1968 Commonwealth Immigrants Act and the 1971 Immigration Act (Heffer, 2001: 14–15; Kepel, 1997: 100). These Acts effectively racialized the basis of the immigration system. While formally based on country of birth of the applicant and the applicant's parent(s), the intention was quite clearly to enable the exclusion of targeted applicants of non-white 'races'. British citizenship and national belonging were thus inscribed in immigration policy as *racial* belonging. The Acts separated citizens into 'patrials' or 'native born' British: English, Scottish, Welsh or Northern Irish, and their descendants and those born within the Commonwealth but outside the borders of the United Kingdom, with the latter subject to entry restrictions into Britain (Kepel, 1997: 98–100).

All such immigrants were granted full citizenship and all the rights associated with this, in marked contrast to policies of other countries within Europe (Castles et al., 1984). However, the importance of the distinction made between 'patrials' and 'non-patrials' lay in the fact that this delineation resulted in the entire migration experience for many communities being framed within a racialized context (Kepel, 1997: 98–102). As Mark Israel has noted:

> … particular forms of 'signification' and processes of 'rationalisation' and especially 'racialisation', have meant that while the state did not formally restrict colonial and ex-colonial migration through any publicly articulated immigration policy, between 1945 and 1961 it did construct an 'imagined community' … of Britishness within which beliefs about belonging and national identity were reconstructed around race. … Non-white people were signified as 'alien races' whose settlement in the United Kingdom would present a threat to the traditional British way of life. 'Race' became a lens through which people experienced and made sense of their everyday lives. (1999: 92–3)

From this foundation, the experiences of migration and settlement of Muslims and Arabs in Britain were shaped by exclusion from belonging and by institutional racism (Nagel, 2002: 272). While a 1966 speech by the British Home Secretary Roy Jenkins was regarded as heralding multiculturalism as a policy within the UK, the latter did not assume significant currency until the 1970s (Brah, 1996: 229). Although multiculturalism as a policy made some significant gains in redressing the inequities of assimilation, the paradigm of the 'other' was already firmly established within the UK by this time, and British multiculturalism ultimately carried with it what Avtar Brah called the 'baggage of being part of a "minoritising impulse" … the term has been used as a synonym for "minority cultures". It is essentially a discourse about the "Ethnic Other" ' (1996: 229–30).

As the composition of migration to Britain continued to change, moreover, as Aziz Al-Azmeh and others have pointed out, the discourse of othering became one based on 'representation in terms of difference', increasingly extending from race to ethnicity, culture and religion (Al-Azmeh, 1993: 5).[3]

With this exclusionary experience structuring the everyday lives of Muslims in Britain, underlying tensions concerning race, religion, identity and belonging between Muslim communities and the wider British community simmered below the surface, bound to explode in a period of crisis with a trigger event. The Rushdie affair was to be the first notable one, as we shall see below.

Australian post-war immigration and multiculturalism

The infamous 'White Australia Policy' was embodied into law when the Australian states federated in 1901, and the policy informally remained even until the mid to late 1960s, when it finally became untenable. At the end of the Second World War, therefore, the overwhelming majority of the Australian population were of British and Irish background. In 1947, when the population was only 7.5 million, just under 10 percent were born overseas, while the Aboriginal population was estimated at about 1 percent (Collins, 1991: 20). Of the overseas-born, some three-quarters were born in the UK and Ireland, with another 44,000 born in New Zealand. Immigrants born in non-English-speaking countries comprised the remaining 156,000, the vast majority being European (Collins, 1991: 20–2).

The period from 1947 to the end of the 'Long Boom', however, saw Australia undertake the largest immigration intake, per capita of population, in the world's history, with the singular exception of Israel. This was to provide labour for the post-war economic expansion, and under the catchcry of 'populate or perish', create a population base that would make the nation defensible. State planners looked primarily to the British Isles, then to Northern and then Eastern Europe. Here they wished to find immigrants who would be phenotypically and culturally similar enough to the population mainstream in Australia to maintain the predominantly white status quo. When these sources proved insufficient, the great bulk of immigrants were sought from southern Europe, notably Italy and Greece. Only when the demand for labour power could not be met from white, European, Christian countries of origin, did the mass immigration programme turn to Turkey and Lebanon, as well as Latin America and other non-European countries.

In the light of this massive immigration, the White Australia Policy was formally abandoned in favour of an official settlement and ethnic affairs policy of assimilation. This policy, of migrants 'assimilating' to the dominant culture within Australia was 'generally seen as a one way process involving little more than learning English, getting a job, and abandoning an irrelevant past' (Lack and Templeton, 1995: 77). Running through this ideology of assimilation, moreover, and underpinned by assumptions of the superiority, and the sheer taken-for-grantedness of Anglo-Australian culture, was

a strong undercurrent of discrimination against those maintaining their difference or 'otherness'. In the early 1970s, as assimilation was ultimately recognized as unsustainable as a policy, it was replaced by 'multiculturalism'. This ideology and set of policies always had both egalitarian and social control moments; the emphasis on equal access and social justice of its egalitarian moment was probably stronger than the similarly named policy in the UK. Both major political parties in Australia supported multiculturalism until the mid-1990s: the Labor Party in more egalitarian form, and the conservative Liberal Party tending towards state support for ethnic community organizations under conservative and beholden leadership, though both parties adopted and combined both aspects. A concerted right-wing attack on multiculturalism as 'political correctness', and the populist playing of the 'race card', however, saw this bipartisan support break down in the 1996 election campaign.

Muslims and Arabs in Australia

Muslim contact with the Australian landmass began with Macassan trepang fishermen, as early as the 17th century (Kabir, 2004; Pinkstone, 1992). A few Muslims were officially recorded among convicts and settlers as early as 1802, but the first significant settlement of Muslims occurred in the 1860s, with the immigration of Afghan cameleers and their families. Even by 1947, however, Muslims numbered only 0.04 percent of the population (Kabir, 2004: 5–6). By the 1996 census, Lebanese-born individuals comprised 14 percent of the Muslim population of Australia, and Turkish-born 11 percent; these were the largest nation-of-origin groups after the Australian-born, at 36 percent (Kabir, 2004: 6).

Arab migration to Australia has spanned over 100 years, and by 2001, Australia's census indicated that around 200,000 of the 20-odd million Australians speak Arabic, and almost 250,000 indicated Arab background. The most common country of origin was Lebanon, followed by Egypt, Iraq and Syria. There were 70,000 Lebanese-born Australians; and almost 90,000 more had a Lebanese-born parent. Some 45 percent of Lebanese-born Australians are Muslim (HREOC, 2004). Most of the earlier Lebanese immigrants were Christians; many came originally as hawkers, eventually becoming influential in the drapery trade, with shops throughout the towns of the eastern states. From around 1975, with refugees from the civil war and hostilities with Israel, a quite different cohort of Lebanese immigrants arrived, mainly through chain migration, the majority of whom were Muslims. Many of these found employment in factories, though small business often provided a livelihood for many whose employment opportunities were blocked by racism (Collins et al., 2000).

The 2001 census also enumerated over 280,000 Australian Muslims: around 1.5 percent of the population. They live predominantly in capital

cities, especially Australia's two largest and most ethnically diverse cities, the New South Wales and Victorian capitals of Sydney and Melbourne, with 48 percent and 31 percent of Australian Muslims respectively (HREOC, 2004). Of the 102,566 Australian-born Muslims, about 30 percent recorded Lebanese ancestry and about 18 percent Turkish ancestry (HREOC, 2004). Some 36 percent of Australian Muslims were born in Australia; 28 percent in the Middle East or North Africa, 16 percent in Asia, 9 percent in Europe, 4 percent in Africa (excluding North Africa) and 3 percent in Oceania (excluding Australia). Their language backgrounds include, in addition to English: Arabic, Turkish, Persian (Farsi), Bosnian, Indonesian, Bengali, Malay, Dari, Albanian, Hindi, Kurdish and Pashto (HREOC, 2004).

Those *Satanic Verses*

In 1989, an incident occurred in Britain, which was swiftly televised around the globe, creating an international furore and ultimately compounding the Islamophobia that had arisen in the wake of the 1979 Iranian Revolution. An angry protest against ridicule of the Prophet Mohammed in Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* resulted in Muslim protesters in Bradford burning copies of the novel and effigies of Rushdie. While the protesters had hoped to gain support for their outrage at the book through their actions, as the images of effigies and burning books were shown across the world, the result was quite the opposite. As Kepel notes, the result instead was to evoke 'images of Nazism or the Inquisition' (Kepel, 1997: 138). The protest, which Tariq Modood (2005: 106) points out was mirrored in Johannesburg, Bombay and Islamabad, arose mainly among South Asian Muslims and arrived late in Tehran, then took on new significance when Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khomeini, issued a *fatwa* (or directive) to the global Muslim *Ummah* (community) calling for the death of Rushdie. In the shock at what many in the West saw as an attack upon basic freedom of speech, the incident brought to the surface, and polarized, race and religious relations within Britain and, indeed, globally (Abbas, 2005: 13–14; Kepel, 1997: 138–43). As an example, well-known author Conor Cruise O'Brien wrote during the furore that 'Muslim society looks profoundly repulsive, because it is repulsive from the point of Western post enlightenment values', and Lord Jenkins commented that 'in retrospect we might have been more cautious about allowing the creation in the 1950s of substantial Muslim communities here' (Cruise O'Brien cited in Khan, 2000: 30; Jenkins cited in Lewis, 1994: 4). To many Muslims, however, *The Satanic Verses* incident demonstrated that:

> … western societies were not interested in understanding why they [Muslims] were so deeply offended by its publication. Rather, the political establishment went so far as to inform Muslims that they lived in a civilized society and should behave accordingly by following its norms and expectations. (Khan, 2000: 34)

While the Rushdie affair was indicative of the position and attitudes of mainstream British society regarding Muslims (Khan, 2000: 31) it served as a watershed moment for framing the Muslim 'other' as a threat – the 'stranger within' and possible 'fifth column' under the influence of the Ayatollah Khomeini – framed by the West in the wake of the Islamic Revolution as the epitome of evil. We saw a recent echo of similar processes in 2005, with the provocativeness of, and the violent demonstrations against, the global publication of cartoons ridiculing and vilifying the Prophet Mohammed. This took place under the looming presence of another of the West's spectres of evil, Osama Bin Laden, and amid fear of those attracted by his cause.

Britain in the 1991 Gulf War

The fall-out of the *Satanic Verses* incident for Muslims within Britain was then compounded by the events of the 1991 Gulf War (Lewis, 1994: 5). For the conflict presented a situation whereby the British government was part of an 'allied' war effort against a Muslim and Arab country. While the role of Britain was in coalition (albeit US-led) with other Arab and Muslim countries and the effort was ostensibly directed at liberating an Arab Muslim country, just as the Gulf War created enormous divisions within the Middle East, it created enormous divisions within the British population (Lewis, 1994: 5). As British forces headed to the Gulf, members of the Arab and Muslim communities in the UK were asked to 'demonstrate' their allegiance – to prove whether their 'loyalty' lay with their country of origin or Britain (for Arabs) or with Britain or their Muslim brethren (in the case of Muslims broadly). Exactly the same occurred in Australia. Within such a framework, any anti-war sentiment became coloured by the ethnicity or religion of those expressing it. What this meant was that, while the protest of white Britons against the war was regarded as legitimate anti-war protest, protest by Arab or Muslim Britons was encoded as anti-British. As the demonizing of Arabs and Muslims as the dangerous 'other' and 'stranger within' who were a possible 'fifth column' became increasingly entrenched, Arabs and Muslims were subjected to vilification and attacks across Britain, and Europe more widely (Abou Jahjah, no date; Lewis, 1994: 5).

Demonstrating this encoding of Arabs and Muslims as the 'stranger within' was the imprisonment during the conflict of 77 Iraqis and Palestinians living in Britain on the grounds of their being a threat to national security (Buchanan, *c.* 2002). Those imprisoned were held for between three to seven weeks in prisons across the UK. Many of those detained were Iraqi students, a number of whom were studying in Britain on scholarships provided by the Iraqi military – which must be read within the context of broad Western support for Saddam prior to the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait – and as a result they were held at a Salisbury camp (Buchanan, *c.* 2002). Another detainee was Abbas Shiblak, a prominent Palestinian whose politics were

clearly anti-Saddam. Shiblak had lived in Britain for 16 years and his children had been born in the UK (Buchanan, *c.* 2002). Michael Buchanan revealed the insidiousness – and ridiculousness – of many of the detentions:

> The detained did have the opportunity to plead their innocence to a committee of three wise men, chaired by an appeal court judge, but as they were never told why they'd been arrested, the hearings were described by opponents as fishing expeditions by the authorities. ... The arrests were based on intelligence reports, that were found to be years out of date. The information held by the security services was so good in fact that no one was ever charged with any offence at the end of the war. Sabah Muktar, an Iraqi lawyer who helped some of those detained says ... 'I think it was a most counter-productive exercise. It did not protect Britain against any threat, it did not achieve anything and it left a great deal of ill-feeling and bitterness among people.' (Buchanan, *c.* 2002)

The Gulf in Australia

While no such internment process was instituted in Australia during the Gulf conflict, there were certainly right-wing nationalist calls for it. Interlocutors on radio talk-back programmes demanded internment of all Muslims (Hage, 1991: 11) and letters to the editor of major newspapers included numerous rants that Arab-Australians were 'an alien fifth column and should be interned' (cited in Asmar, 1992: 65). Security and police forces were also highly active in surveillance of Arab and Muslim communities – a particularly ironic experience for those Iraqi refugees and immigrants who had themselves fled Saddam Hussein's regime, and who had been trying for years to draw attention in the 'West' to its atrocities (Hage, 2003).

On talk-back radio, Arab and Muslim Australians were accused by announcers of 'importing into Australia their fanatical, irrational beliefs and hatreds ... [advised to] go back and be there [with Saddam]' and told 'If you don't like it, rack off' (John Laws and Alan Jones respectively, cited in Asmar, 1992: 68). Callers to such talk-back shows threatened the burning of mosques in the event of the death of an Australian serviceman in the Gulf (Hage, 1991: 11) and hate mail sent to Assad Abdi, from the Committee of Arab-Australians, included the following vitriol:

> If everything is better in Arab countries, why do you people wish to live here? Australians would gladly pay your fares so that you can go back.... the message to all Arabs here is – GO home as soon as you can. You are not wanted. From 'A Decent Australian' (Committee on Discrimination Against Arab Australians, 1990)

Bruce Ruxton, the consistently and controversially outspoken Victorian Branch President of the conservative Returned and Services League, commented, at the height of the conflict: 'everyone knows that Iraq in the main is the garbage heap of humanity in the Middle East and how these people were allowed into this country in the first place is beyond me ...' (cited in Asmar, 1992: 66).

Even the usually liberal founder and former leader of 'middle-of-the-road' Australian Democrats Party, Don Chipp, pronounced:

> This does not inhibit them, in our own country, to use (or is it abuse) our laws of freedom of speech to champion the despot and demean, revile and vilify our own democratically elected government. As I saw them demonstrating and shouting their disgusting slogans at us last week, I momentarily entertained the tempting thought: 'Arrest the bastards and ship them off to their beloved homeland.' (Committee on Discrimination Against Arab Australians, 1990)

The popular media, especially commercial radio and television, were persistent with demands for ethnic and religious leaders from Arab and Muslim communities to demonstrate their allegiance to the Australian nation, its laws and its values (Asmar, 1992) and both to denounce, yet somehow accept blame for, the evils of Saddam Hussein (HREOC, 1991; Poynting, 2002). As in the UK, there was a strong assumption that anyone identifying as or appearing to be Muslim or Arab was potentially disloyal and even dangerous until proven otherwise: an 'enemy within'. In fact, no amount of declaration of commitment to Australia and its values would allay this suspicion. When the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils announced that Saddam Hussein's 'call for Jihad' had no validity in Sharia law and that it would be ignored, Jennifer Byrne, a reporter on the current affairs program *60 Minutes*, refused to accept this, saying 'Let's be honest … a command is a command' (Asmar, 1992: 69). Furthermore, those ethnic and religious figureheads from the targeted communities, who, anxious to win respectability and simply peace and quiet for their constituents, acquiesced in pledging their loyalty for the microphones and cameras, unintentionally submitted to the ongoing logic of this being continually demanded yet never sufficient. It was as if, as Ghassan Hage has recently observed, there were now numerous 'borders' internal to the nation rather than around its edges, to be patrolled against the dangerous and potentially evil non-Christian, non-Western, 'Third-World looking' outsiders who might endanger the good life from within (Hage, 1998, 2002).

During the conflict, the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) reported that 'media portrayals were seen as demonstrating fundamental ignorance of Islam and as perpetuating negative and destructive stereotypes' (1991: 364). In one such instance, an editorial in the Sydney Arabic newspaper *Al-Bairak* criticizing Australian involvement in the war was reported by the *Daily Telegraph* as 'Australia is now the enemy in the eyes of the majority of its 300 000 Middle Eastern migrants, according to Sydney's leading Lebanese and Arab newspaper' (cited in Asmar, 1992: 68). In another hysterical *Bulletin* report entitled 'Fears of a Fifth Column' (cited in Asmar, 1992: 62) the article discussed the 'threat' posed by 'Islamic terrorists' and then swapped seamlessly to talking about 'local Arab fanatics'. As HREOC noted, such media representation 'was having the effect of raising

tensions in the community and may have been contributing to an increase in acts of racial hostility and violence against Arabs and Muslims' (1991: 364–5). As Barry Cohen, former minister in the Hawke Labor government, noted at the time:

> … there seems to have been a media competition to see who can win the prize for being the most offensive to those of Arab descent. … I am appalled at the lack of sensitivity of some Australian journalists. What we have witnessed … has been a mixture of arrogance, ignorance and outright racism. … One waits expectantly for the … media to do shock horror stories of attacks on the Arab community which they, more than anyone, will have helped promote. (cited in Committee on Discrimination Against Arab Australians, 1990)

When television news footage showed Australian troops bound for the Gulf War aboard a navy ship, larking about with towels tied around their heads, presumably in mockery of the Arab enemy, few Arab-Australians were in doubt that they were included in the derision. Indeed, 'towel-head' or 'rag-head' had become a widespread popular term of racist abuse for Arabs and Muslims generally, especially women who wore the *hijab*. On the Australian street in general during the conflict there was little discernment in classifying who was now considered the 'enemy'. The boundaries between the categories of Iraqi/Arab/Muslim/terrorist were conflated, resulting in an upsurge of racially based attacks on residents of 'Middle Eastern appearance' or of Islamic faith (Asmar, 1992; Hage, 1991; HREOC, 1991). Numerous Muslim women wearing their *hijab* were abused and assaulted in public spaces, with strangers, often but not always men, trying to tear their headscarf away. Most of the victims were not Iraqi; some were not even of Arab, but rather of South-East Asian background; but such confusions of the object of racial hatred are not unusual in the history of Australian racism. In some cases, even Sikh men were subjected to harassment, presumably mistaken for Arabs or Muslims because of their turbans (HREOC, 1991). There were many incidents of people in traditional Muslim clothes or of 'Middle Eastern appearance' being spat at or more violently assaulted in the street, of menacing, harassment, vandalism – even arson – and other racist attacks directed by everyday vigilantes of the cultural 'mainstream' against these recently diabolized enemies within. A number of people were forced to move house, and there was at least one death (HREOC, 1991).

In attempting to defuse communal tensions, Labor Prime Minister Bob Hawke called for tolerance towards Arab and Muslim communities; this neatly underlined which citizens were in a position to tolerate and which might be graciously tolerated – or not (Hage, 1991). The exhortation, in any case, was merely gestural: neither federal nor state governments did much to legislate more effectively against religious-racial vilification, nor to act decisively against racist violence. Coming in December 1990, this was also

seen by many Arab and Muslim Australians as being too little too late (Asmar, 1992: 71–2). In 1991, evidence to HREOC 'showed Arab-Australians to be one of the four most vilified groups in Australia, along with Aboriginal, Asian and Jewish communities' (Hage and Jureidini, 2002: 176).

The 'riots' in Bradford, Burnley and Oldham

In Britain the period following the Gulf conflict included the 1993 race-killing of black British youth Stephen Lawrence (Human Rights Watch, 1997; Khan, 2000: 35),[4] which brought broader race-issues in Britain to boiling point. This period also saw the divisive 'Muslim school debate' (Kepel, 1997: 111, 118–21; Khan, 2000: 31).[5] These events further opened up the chasm between 'mainstream' British society and Arab and Islamic communities. A central element in this disintegration of 'race relations' during the 1990s, shared moreover with countries across Europe such as France, Germany, Austria, Spain and the Netherlands, was the growing power of, and support for, racist far-right politics and groupings. In Britain, the ongoing economic malaise that increasingly gripped the country from the 1980s meant that extreme right-wing groups found fertile ground – particularly among disaffected white British youth facing large-scale unemployment and few prospects for the future – to garner support for their racist agendas (Khan, 2000: 41). This was especially so as jobs dramatically declined in the cotton industry of the northern conurbations, where many Pakistani immigrants had sought affordable housing and found unskilled shift-work jobs from the 1960s: a decline well under way by the time of the mid-1960s 'Paki-bashing' disturbances analysed by Geoff Pearson (1976).

A generation on, however, the younger cohort of British Muslims – often mistakenly (Amin, 2003; Nagel, 2002) seen as somehow trapped between the cultures of their parents and the dominant culture of Britain – had become more confident and assertive than their parents' generation, and rejected the need to behave like polite and grateful guests. This generation became increasingly alienated as a result of factors such as institutional racism in housing, education, employment, policing and the media, and therefore high unemployment, general lack of opportunities and a feeling that no amount of 'fitting in' with the dominant culture was ever enough. This saw increasing numbers of young people turn to orthodox religion for answers, or possibly as a means of resistance, often becoming more orthodox than their parents. Omar Bakri Mohamad explained the roots of this disaffection:

> In the Sixties … when Muslims first arrived in the country, they came here for financial reasons. They were economic migrants. Their children, in the Seventies and Eighties and Nineties, did their best to integrate. They went to university. In the home they were known as Akbar. At university they called themselves Bob.

> They found white friends. And danced with them. And drank with them. And slept with them. And took drugs with them. But at the end of the day someone would call them a Paki. (cited in Wazir, 2002: 32)

This timeframe was thus marked by racial attacks and violence, as outlined by a 1997 Human Rights Watch report on violence in the United Kingdom, which concluded that:

> Racially motivated violence and harassment in the United Kingdom is a very serious problem and available figures show it is getting worse, not better.… the United Kingdom has one of the highest levels of such incidents anywhere in Western Europe. Between 1989 and 1996 the number [of racist attacks reported to the police] rose by more than 275 percent.… these already high figures, however, represent only a fraction of the actual level because many victims do not report crimes against them to the police. (Human Rights Watch, 1997)

This history of racism and a developing collective refusal to put up with it was manifested in the communal disturbances between South Asian and white communities in 2001 in cities and towns in the Midlands and the north of England including Bradford, Oldham and Burnley (BBC News, 2001; Smyth, 2002: 25). Bradford had already seen three days of disturbances in June 1995, when a crowd of some 300, mainly young men of Pakistani background, fought street battles against police and inflicted widespread property damage, after heavy-handed police intervention over a street football game. The subsequent Bradford Commission found the police to be ignorant of the local community and its concerns, but criticized protesters for exceeding the bounds of proper protest, and community leaders for failure to understand the necessity of appropriate police actions (Macey, 2002: 29–30).

From April to July 2001, Oldham, Burnley and Bradford experienced clashes between second- and third-generation Pakistani and Bangladeshi immigrant youth and police, provoked by racist gang attacks on their neighbourhoods and the failure of the police to protect their communities (Kundnani, 2001). Indeed, the initial police response to the first violent rampage of white racist youths in Oldham had been to arrive in riot gear, arrest the attacked Asians, and turn on the gathering crowds of the angered community (Evans, 2005; Kundnani, 2001: 109). Similar events took place in Burnley, then Bradford, where some 200 police were injured over three days of disturbances. Sivanandan (2001: 5) asks, rhetorically, in castigating New Labour:

> No economic infrastructures or hope of socialisation through work. … Locked into their degradation and defeat by a racist police force, vilified by a racist press and violated, finally, by the true fascists. What were the youth to do but break out in violence, self-destructive, reactive violence, the violence of choicelessness, the violence of the violated?

The government responded with populist law-and-order rhetoric about 'thugs'; the media blamed the minority communities for unwillingness to

integrate, and community leaders for failing to control their youth. Community leaders, for their part, cited lack of discipline among the young, a decline in Muslim values and the damaging effect of Western values (Kundnani, 2001: 109–10).

As Amin (2003: 462) comments:

> The Asian youths have unsettled those who want to keep them in their own minority paces [sic], as well as the majority opinion that minorities should behave in a certain way in public (essentially by giving up all but their folkloristic cultural practices). It is the rejection of a racialized coding of British civic and public culture that made these riots so politically charged.

In refuting the charge of 'failure to integrate', Amin cautions perceptively against the 'caught-between-cultures' explanations of such events, which are too often advanced by academic, as well as popular and journalistic accounts:

> There is a cultural complexity to the 'rioters' in 2001 that cannot be reduced to the stereotypes of Islam, non-western values, gang trouble, the idea of entrapment between two cultures. These are young people who have grown up routinely mixing 'eastern' and 'western' markers of identity, through language, bodily expression, music and consumer habits, and who are not confused about their identities as cultural 'hybrids'. Their frustration and public anger cannot be detached from their identities as a new generation of British Asians claiming the right to own Oldham or Burnley *and* the nation, but whose Britishness includes Islam, halal meat, family honour and cultural resources located in diaspora networks. (Amin, 2003: 462)

In the aftermath of the 2001 riots, British Home Secretary David Blunkett proposed an oath of allegiance and tests of English proficiency for immigrants. Borrowing right-wing rhetoric from the USA, to the approbation of the *Daily Mail* and the *Daily Telegraph*, he diagnosed 'moral relativism' in the supposed over-emphasis on cultural pluralism that he saw at the heart of the current problems (Kundnani, 2002). The same rhetoric was to be raised in Australia in the contemporaneous attack on multiculturalism.

Lebanese youth 'out of control' in Australia

From the mid to late 1990s onwards, urban Australia experienced a series of moral panics about 'crime gangs', especially in the most populous and ethnically diverse state capitals, Sydney and Melbourne (Collins et al., 2000; White et al., 1999). Both 'Middle Eastern' and 'Asian' (meaning, in the Australian context, South-East Asian or North Asian, largely Indo-Chinese or Chinese) gangs were focused upon in these media-driven cycles of fear.

Collins et al. (2000) trace the 'criminalisation of ethnicity and the ethnicisation of crime' in the moral panic which arose when teenager, Edward Lee, was fatally stabbed in a Sydney street in 1998, in a suburb with a large Lebanese immigrant population. Police immediately announced they were

looking for a group of male youths of 'Middle Eastern appearance', and a thoroughgoing moral panic developed. Hundreds of people of 'Middle Eastern appearance' in the culturally diverse Bankstown area were stopped and searched and interrogated on the streets (Poynting, 1999). Both the New South Wales Premier and the Police Commissioner blamed 'Lebanese gangs', and accused the Arabic-speaking community of harbouring them. Tabloids and talkback radio repeated the message. Mounted police and the dog squad patrolled the suburbs in a high-profile and aggressive 'zero tolerance' campaign. Much community anger and resentment was provoked, and gunshots were fired through the windows of the nearby Lakemba police station.[6] The media blamed this on 'Lebanese gangs' and trumpeted about immigrant 'youth out of control'. Of course there had been media-fuelled moral panics about working-class young men in Australia since the 19th century; the point here is the extent of the popular racialization involved and its coinciding with the construction of the Arab/Muslim Other as folk demon.

As in the UK 'riots' of 2001, mortified conservative religious leaders from the Muslim community blamed the loss of traditional culture and the lack of discipline (Stevenson, 1998: 33). The Mufti of Australia, in his role as ethnic leader, attempted to divert blame from the Lebanese community for the killing of Edward Lee and the attack on the police station, since: 'They are born in Australia; they have Australian hearts, Australian brains and Australian culture; what they watch on television is Australian; their education is Australian; the only thing Lebanese about them is their name' (Stevenson, 1998: 32).

Many second-generation immigrant young people, labelled along with the perpetrators, did not see themselves this way. They asserted their right to be recognized as Australian, and identified, depending on context, more or less strongly with their Lebanese heritage, while also valuing the aspects of their lives that they saw as their Australian culture (Noble et al., 1999). They are not, as well-meaning journalist Andrew Stevenson (1998: 32) put it, 'caught between two cultures', 'caught in the middle, belonging neither to the world of their parents nor the world of their peers'.

Another spiral of such 'ethnic crime-gang' panic occurred in 2001. Front-page tabloid stories, from a period of a fortnight in August 2001, included 'Gangland' (McDougall et al., 2001: 1), then a story about 'ethnic gang rape', 'Women Told to Beware' (Gee, 2001a: 1), and 'Gang Force: 240 Police to Fight Crime' (Gee, 2001b: 1). Then came 'How One Family's Campaign Paralysed a Police Station' (Miranda, 2001a: 1), which vilified as vexatious and criminal an entire Lebanese Australian family whose members had complained about police harassment. Other sensationalist headlines included: 'Guns for Hire: Red Army Soldiers Recruited to City Gangs' (Miranda, 2001b: 1) and 'Gangs Steal Kids' Future' (Wood, 2001: 1). Aspects of this moral panic included themes of importing crime; an attack

on multicultural 'political correctness', including blaming this for sup-
posed official reticence to identify ethnic crime as such, and the associated
failure to record ethnicity-based crime statistics; the related supposed
indulgence towards the civil rights of ethnic minorities and criminals mak-
ing the job of policing impossible; the need for tough policing and crack-
downs on (ethnic) gangs; and an attack on ethnic leaders for refusing to
accept responsibility for, and to remedy, the alleged criminality of their
communities.

'Rape Menace from the Melting Pot'

From August 2000 to August 2001, there were eight serious group sexual
assaults around Bankstown in south-west Sydney. This is an area with one
of the highest concentrations of Lebanese-background immigrants in
Australia, and the same one that had seen the panic over 'ethnic gangs' out-
lined above. Police sources advised the tabloid press that there were ethnic
factors and racial motivation involved in the gang rapes.

The ensuing spiral of hysteria and hyperbole in the tabloids soon saw
headlines like '70 Girls Attacked by Rape Gangs' (Kidman, 2001: 1). The
NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research issued a press statement to
counter this panic, stating that their statistics showed a stable rate of sex-
ual assault in Bankstown since 1995, less than 10 per month, with the only
deviation from this being a series of 70 offences in June 1999, being wilful
and obscene exposure offences, for which a (white) flasher had been con-
victed (Weatherburn, 2001).

Undeterred, anti-immigration One Nation party leader, Pauline Hanson
'blamed the problem on a lack of respect for Australian culture', saying,
'A lot of these people are Muslims, and they have no respect for the Christian
way of life that this country's based on' (Doherty and Jacobsen, 2001: 7).
She pronounced, 'You can't have gangs going around and committing these
offences … raping of women. White women on the streets because in their
opinion, white women are worth absolutely nothing to them, to their race,
their cultural background' (*Insight*, 2001). Pauline Hanson's 'One Nation'
party exploited the situation by calling a meeting in the Bankstown
Returned Services League Club on 'Rape in Bankstown – Ethnic Based
Crime – Law and Order' hosted by David Oldfield, the One Nation MP in
the NSW upper house (McDougall et al., 2001).

Anti-multiculturalist columnist Paul Sheehan asserted that ethnic gang
rape in fact emanates from Muslim and Arab culture, claiming that it was
a global phenomenon, because it had been perpetrated earlier in the year in
France by 'urban immigrant poor' from these backgrounds (Sheehan, 2001: 20).
The Australian made clear where the problem came from in its front-page head-
line, 'Rape Menace from the Melting Pot' (Chulov, 2001: 1). In this story,
the then NSW Police Commissioner Peter Ryan stated that 'a particularly

defined cultural group of attackers' were attacking 'a very clearly defined cultural group of victims'. The impression of white, British-background victims was simply false (Poynting et al., 2004). Of the seven victims of the rapes, two were of Italian and one of Greek immigrant background. Though the victims were often collectively designated as 'Caucasian', and sometimes as 'white', one was actually of Aboriginal parentage (Fickling, 2002). The suspected and later convicted rapists were repeatedly described as 'Lebanese', notwithstanding their Australian nationality, residency and country of upbringing. They were often referred to as 'Muslim' in contexts where this identity was contrasted with Australianness. No racially based motivation was ever proved (Poynting et al., 2004). In response to the focus on ethnicity in the attacks, the New South Wales Rape Crisis Centre pointed out that such horrendous crimes against women are perpetrated by men from all races, ethnicities and religions. The Centre further noted that gang rapes were an element of a larger situation of violence against women that had 'spiralled out of control' and that focusing on the ethnicity of those involved in the crimes was not helpful in preventing future such crimes (Duff, 2002).

There followed 'retributive' attacks on Muslim and Arab immigrants, including reported sexual assaults. Muslim community leaders reported that, after the Premier had blamed 'Lebanese gangs', there had been an increasing number of attacks on Muslim women, including the rape of an 18-year-old Muslim girl (Walker, 2001: 10). A member of the Supreme Islamic Council of NSW complained that women wearing the *hijab* 'had become targets' because of the reporting about the supposedly race-based sexual assaults being blamed on Muslim and Lebanese communities. She told how 'they are abusing them, they are threatening to rape them' (Morris, 2001: 6). The Vice-President of the Lebanese Muslim Association reported that an anonymous phone call to a western Sydney Islamic school had threatened to abduct and rape pupils (Kennedy, 2001). A caller to Sydney talk-back radio, a 'white working executive from the suburbs' was one of many speaking of vigilante style threats: 'We are not a soft touch, you can't rape our girls. There will be … massive vigilante reaction to that. ... I certainly would not like to be walking down the road as a girl in that headdress' (Fyfe, 2001: 4).

The ideology of the 'soft touch', and othering of Muslims and people from the Middle East would continue in the other moral panic which reached a crescendo in August 2001, over asylum seekers.

'Middle Eastern Boat People'

Throughout 2000 and up to August 2001, the media in Australia presented an apparently unceasing flow of asylum seekers usually described as 'Middle Eastern', or occasionally 'Muslim', arriving on the Australian western coast

or territorial islands. Actually, the numbers were well within Australia's planned immigration provision for refugee intake of 12,000 per annum (compare 11,180 granted refugee status, of 71,365 applicants, in the UK for 2001). Moral outrage was supposedly directed at their 'queue jumping' and at illegal 'people-smuggling' (Poynting, 2002). In this reporting on the 'boat people', the media were depending on and accepting information supplied by government ministers and officials (Stani, 2000). The reports focused on the illicit and predatory nature of 'people-smuggling', the supposed leapfrogging of presumed orderly queues of applicants for asylum, and the allegedly privileged background of those able to pay people-smugglers. They overwhelmingly used the language of fear and eschewed the standpoint of the asylum seekers (Stani, 2000).

This pattern of representation was amplified into a moral panic, peaking with the 'Tampa Crisis' from August 2001. Oppositional voices were effectively silenced or drowned out as politically correct liberal whining.

On 26 August 2001, a leaky ferry from Indonesia carrying over 430 asylum seekers, mainly from Afghanistan, began to sink in the Indian Ocean. Those on board were rescued by the *MV Tampa*, a Norwegian freighter, about 75 nautical miles from Australia's Christmas Island and almost four times that far from the Indonesian port of Merak (Marr and Wilkinson, 2004; Senate Select Committee on a Certain Maritime Incident, 2002). The Captain, Arne Rinnan, decided to head for Christmas Island, as many of the asylum seekers were ill and in poor condition; he radioed Australia for medical assistance, but none was forthcoming. On entering Australian territorial waters, Captain Rinnan was threatened by the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs with the sanctions designated for people-smugglers under the Migration Act – including the liability for enormous fines and impounding of his ship – if he did not turn around and sail towards Indonesia (Burnside, 2002; Marr and Wilkinson, 2004). With an election in the offing, the government had apparently resolved to make a point of preventing these asylum seekers from reaching Australian land. As Julian Burnside QC puts it, 'This odd decision has never been explained, except with the rhetoric of "sending a clear message to people-smugglers and queue jumpers that Australia is not a soft touch". ' Burnside infers that the Prime Minister was calculating that 'a show of toughness against helpless refugees would be electorally popular amongst the large number of Australians who had responded positively to aspects of Pauline Hanson's unattractive platform' (Burnside, 2002).

The *Tampa* was interdicted 4 miles from Christmas Island, boarded and taken over by Australian SAS forces in what Rinnan and others later called an act of piracy. From this point, in a deliberate strategy, communications were strictly limited by the Australian military. The refugees were not to be allowed to be seen in the Australian media as human beings, as individuals with life stories. Eventually the asylum seekers were transferred to an

Australian naval ship, for transportation to the impoverished Pacific island of Nauru, with which a multi-million dollar deal had been struck that they be incarcerated and assessed there, allowing the Prime Minister to keep his promise that the asylum seekers aboard the *Tampa* would not set foot on Australian soil. Some 208 of the refugees who were unaccompanied minors and families were accepted by New Zealand (UNHCR, 2005). As we write, three and a half years later, the last 80-odd are still held in Nauru. The Australian government's tough populist gesture immediately registered in the opinion polls and election campaign headlines began to reflect messages like 'Howard's *Tampa*-led Recovery' and 'Tough Time for Labor as Nation Rallies to PM'.

There followed the now infamous 'children overboard affair'. On 6 October, another unseaworthy vessel, a fishing trawler with 223 Middle Eastern asylum seekers was intercepted by an Australian naval frigate in territorial waters off the west coast. Shots were fired across its bows and it was boarded. Over the following day, navy personnel tried in vain to prevent the boat from sinking, so that it could be towed out of Australian waters. As it finally did sink, asylum seekers, including children, had to be rescued from the water. That very day, a Canberra bureaucrat told the People Smuggling Task Force that asylum seekers had thrown their children overboard in an attempt to prevent the navy turning their vessel back (Marr and Wilkinson, 2004). The assertion was repeated often publicly by the Defence Minister, the Prime Minister and those campaigning for them and it was dutifully echoed in tabloids and talkback. It has now been shown to be falsification (Senate Select Committee on a Certain Maritime Incident, 2002). It has been demonstrated that images from the video depicting children in the water, shown on national television by the Defence Minister during the election campaign, were cut down so as to excise the view of the boat sinking in the background, and were misrepresented as being of the previous day when the incident of throwing the children into the sea was claimed to have occurred (Senate Select Committee on a Certain Maritime Incident, 2002).

However, Prime Minister Howard still repeated, 'I don't want, in Australia, people who would throw their own children into the sea. I don't' (*Four Corners*, 2002). 'We' are civilized, good-hearted to a fault, and love our children, but 'they' are barbaric, manipulative and inhumanly uncaring, even for children. Commentator Hugh Mackay argues many Australians '*wanted* to believe the kids had been thrown overboard, because we had already been worked over by a slick propaganda machine that had created a "refugee crisis" out of a couple of hundred people rescued by the *Tampa*' (Mackay, 2002: 31).

Such was the timing and execution of the media manipulation, that newspaper headlines were only first able to denounce this decisive 'children

overboard' fabrication on the very morning of the election. By then, the 'War on Terror' dominated the news, and the media was instead exercised to connect ideologically the US foreign policy objectives of 'regime change' in Afghanistan and then Iraq with the terrorist attacks in the US and later in Bali and Madrid.

Conclusion

Here we have presented an account of everyday racism, institutional racism and upsurges of media and popular racist attacks against Muslim Britons and Australians in these two countries, which should be sufficient to demonstrate that, in this respect, the much-clichéd 'Day that Changed the World' in September 2001 did not actually see the world reinvented anew. We have demonstrated that the upsurge of anti-Arab racism and Islamophobia in the UK and Australia after 11 September 2001 arose, as did similar episodes during the 1991 Gulf War, from the exacerbation of existing tendencies, which have been manifest in everyday racism, both before 1991 and in the intervening period.

It is true that, after 11 September 2001, the representation of the Asian 'Other' in the UK increasingly undergoes a transformation from Asian or 'Pakistani' to Muslim, but this was already under way since the Rushdie affair in 1989, and arguably since the Iranian Revolution in 1979. In Australia, the analogous transition is from the Arab Other, or 'Leb', to Muslim Other. This was also well under way before 11 September, as evidenced in the ideological elements displayed in the moral panics over purported 'ethnic gang rape' and over 'boat people', culminating in the *Tampa* crisis in August 2001.

It is arguable that the 'othering' set out in this article, up to 10 September 2001, receives what Noble and Poynting (2003) call its 'ideological payout' after 9/11, both in the UK and Australia. Thus the opponents of cultural diversity call upon a sort of ideological 'I told you so' effect to legitimate their attacks on multiculturalism, especially with regard to non-Christian, non-Western cultures which they have represented as barbaric, uncivilized and incompatible with mainstream British and Australian culture.

Finally, we see before 11 September, and most saliently during the 1990–1 Gulf War, that upsurges in anti-Muslim racism in the media and in populist political rhetoric are accompanied by, and arguably encouraging of, outbreaks of anti-Muslim racism in everyday life in public spaces and institutions. That this pattern is repeated a fortiori after 9/11, strongly suggests that the empire's new clothes are being cut from existing cloth. It is important for sociologists to contextualize and to record these processes, and not to leave the story solely with the common sense emanating from the political and cultural spokespeople of the empire.

Acknowledgements

Notes

1 This periodization is necessarily somewhat arbitrary. Why not, for example, the Iranian Revolution in 1978–9? The main point is that the anti-Muslim racism currently experienced and practised in both countries predates '11 September' by several decades.
2 Powell's infamous speech in 1968 pushed for the setting up of voluntary repatriation of many immigrants in Britain, arguing that the vast numbers of immigrants made assimilation into broader British society unworkable.
3 As Tariq Modood (2005: 4, 122, 155–61) emphasizes, this transition took place in the way communities identified and constituted themselves, as well as in the terms of their othering or exclusion.
4 This involved the murder of a black Christian youth by a gang of white British youths and galvanized much of the non-white population in Britain for what they saw as a travesty of justice and police indifference on the basis of race.
5 The Muslim school debate involved the Muslim Educational Trust's push to make secular education more appropriate for Muslim students, the linked 'Honeyford affair' of the 1980s (so-named after a teacher who refused to implement recommendations concerning the education of Muslim students) and the intensive long-term campaign for government assistance for private Muslim schools, resulting in some success in 1998.
6 Some six and a half years later, Michael Kanaan and Wassim El Assaad were acquitted of these charges. The Crown case had relied on inconsistent and unreliable testimony of indemnified witnesses (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 2005).

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