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Reference: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2008/feb/26/conservatives.race>

From: Sabrina Rahman <bird-on-a-wire@hotmail.co.uk>

Subject: Multiculturalism

To: "Hasanat Husain" <hasanathusain@yahoo.co.uk>

Date: Sunday, 6 February, 2011, 0:39

Uncle,

I am a little distressed at what David Cameron has said today. What are your thoughts as to what he has said? I feel there is a greater chance of victimising and stereotyping Muslims.

Love,

Connie.

(Sabrina Rahman, VFJ member from Manchester, UK)

6 February 2011

Dear Connie,

Multiculturalism has not failed.

It has made United Kingdom a wonderful multirace, multifaith, multilingual Great Britain - mature, liberal, tolerant and democratic.

Multiculturalism has in fact strengthened the national identity, our Britishness - that encourages integration rather than separatism, believes in universal human rights, in equality, in democracy and in the right of people to elect own Govt.

Multiculturalism makes us stronger in unison and in finding commonality and common grounds.

Also, as the PM suggested; we as British Muslims, need to take tougher stance on groups promoting extremism, any kind of extremism in Islam or in any other religion, sect or group...'

More later. Keep well and please do keep in touch.

(Also visit our website : <http://www.voiceforjustice.org> to see our link 'In solidarity with the Egyptian people'.

Please feel free to comment and let me know.)

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Hasanat Husain MBE
Convenor, Voice For Justice World Forum.
Former Head of Bilingualism and Bilingual Support Services,
Directorate of Education,
London Borough of Tower Hamlets

6 February, 2011
Melbourne, Australia

Hasanat,

I agree too, Hasanat. Multiculturalism is what makes us stronger, broadens our horizons and perspectives and makes us stronger in considering other viewpoints, differences and similarities rather than feeling threatened and led to separatist senses of identity and acts of extremism.

The world doesn't need to be a melting pot, I guess, but more like a flower with many different petals and parts that make a whole. I like the way you refer to "common grounds" in the plural sense. Always more than one way to bring us together.

I've just read some of your posts on Egypt. I would like to find out more about this too. Rageh Omar is about to go there and do some investigative journalism. He always seems to have a well thought out and calm way of presenting Islamic tensions and troubles.'

Michelle Rowe, VfJ Convenor, Melbourne, Australia

From: ezajur.rahman@q8.com
To: hasanathusain@yahoo.co.uk
Date: Sun, 6 Feb 2011 13:17:30 +0300
Subject: RE: Multiculturalism

Multiculturalism has not failed and those who say it has are only doing so as a knee jerk response to extremely isolated incidents of suspected terrorism. If there was no such suspected terrorism then no one would be commenting. People who don't like us will never like us but their thoughts would have no echo in British public life.

I don't recall huge demonstrations by my father's generation demanding any unique rights and demanding the promotion of multiculturalism. The right wing likes to say the liberals promoted multiculturalism. But the truth is every government left immigrants to fend for themselves. The natural and universal tendency for immigrants to stick together has also been very convenient for every government. And we should be clear – if we are to say that multiculturalism has failed then is a

failure of both the immigrant and the host society. Blame must be equally shared. We should also be clear that integration cannot mean a total obliteration of roots within merely two generations. It would be nice to go to the governments of the past and ask them what they did to promote to integration.

There are also indigenous problems that are finding false answers in multiculturalism. The English have a unique identity problem with the British identity that they themselves created. Its easier to talk about Englishness in terms relative to immigrants but that is just the dog barking up the wrong tree. We know deep in our hearts that the English have so much to be proud about. We know they have every right to assert that national identity in their own country. But its their role to establish their own identity in the sincerest way possible – and that means without clobbering us. I'm not English. I don't want to be English. They don't want me to be English. And it's okay. It's not like the Welsh and the Scots and the Irish have been nicely fully integrated!

On top of that, the middle class has no recollection of recent Empire. And Britain owes its cultural mix as much to the legacy of Empire as to any wrong policy on immigration. There is no way the British Empire was going to end without waves of immigrants from the colonies. The relationship post Independence was still, naturally, very close with the old Imperial Britain. Our parents didn't come illegally in the 50's, 60's and 70's. Immigration in recent times has very different roots to the immigration of the past.

I am fiercely proud to be British. Britishness permeates every cell in my body, every thought in my brain. I feel I can defend Britain intellectually a well as any Englishman. I often tell my English friends that just because we don't drink and don't encourage promiscuity doesn't mean you know what is in our hearts. More people give up alcohol everyday – or drink less. The whole country is beginning to reel from the effects of promiscuity. And Britain , in its own way, was a billion times more conservative in the 50's than it is today. I tell my English friends that if only Britain faced the same challenge as it did from Hitler in 1939, then they could measure our loyalty simply by the number of our men who would join the Armed Forces to defend these fair islands. My Dad would have joined the Home Guard.

Perhaps, until the day the British people face such a threat, and loyalty can be simply shown by a uniform or an act of courage, we are doomed to live apart in ways that make some people uncomfortable.

And yet, hasn't that always been one of the very finest British traditions? To live and let live. We have to do much better of course – we have to demonstrate our Britishness more.

It was pretty disgusting to see the huge billboard at the Sylhet Bridge urging young Brits forced into marriage to call the Embassy! Anyway, those who are expecting me to prove my Britishness on a Friday by getting drunk with them have a long wait ahead.

I've done it. And there is only so much Coca Cola you can drink in three hours!

Mr. Ezajur Rahman,
VFJ Convenor, Kuwait

From: Taj Hashmi <taj_hashmi@hotmail.com>
Subject: RE: Multiculturalism
To: ezajur.rahman@q8.com, "Hasanat PFC" <hasanathusain@yahoo.co.uk>
Date: Sunday, 6 February, 2011, 18:23

Dear All:

There is absolutely no evidence if American "Melting Pot" or "Salad Bowl" system is better than British or Canadian multiculturalism in preventing marginalization of people leading to their getting indoctrinated by radical extremism or terrorism. After the July 7 2005 suicide attacks in London, people in America were complacent about their "immunity" to such home-grown terrorist attacks due to their Salad Bowl policy. This was almost the consensus among big wigs in security studies at my work place (APCSS) in Honolulu until America started experiencing Underwear and Time Square Bombing attempts and Major Nidal Hassan's killing his fellow soldiers.

Having said this, I personally feel that the so-called Multiculturalism in Britain, Canada and Australia is full of hypocrisy. As a Canadian I know how hollow is this condescending multiculturalism could be. Canada had a ethnic Chinese Governor General immediately before the present one, a Black Haitian lady. Believe me I only recall their faces ((as I saw them on TV and newspapers), not their names, as they are just symbols of tokenism, as insignificant as Zakit Hussain, Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed and Abdul Kalam (Muslim Presidents of India). Promoting someone from the minority to the highest pedestal (without having any power) is pure and simple tokenism. And hypocrisy is another name of tokenism. Although I despise American foreign policy, domestically America is the epitome of justice and equal opportunity to all since the Civil Rights were granted to Black Americans. Private employers in America still have prejudice against non-White minorities (on a much smaller scale than in Australia, UK and Canada), but the Federal and state governments, universities, think tanks adhere to equal opportunity. As an immigrant from the Third World, I feel more comfortable in North America, including Canada, despite its racial bias and hypocrisy in the name of multiculturalism, as unlike Britain, Germany, France or any other nation-state in Europe or elsewhere, US and Canada and Australia-New Zealand are not nation-states but artificial countries, occupied territories. This gives everybody in the world to live in these countries without having any inferiority complex or feeling of alienation as everybody has equal right to settle in territories or God's Kingdoms. I believe immigrants in nation-states have lesser sense of belonging to their adopted homeland hence alienation and inferiority complex of "foreigners". I personally met so many Syleti "Londoners" who call themselves "Bideshi" and consider Bangladesh their Desh or homeland. The way Europe is going -- becoming very Islamophobic, especially France and Germany -- in the long run Muslims will have problem of integration, especially because Islamist terrorism is just crossing its threshold.

Take care.

Taj Hashmi
Hawaii, USA

From: Abdul Khan <akhan_bd@yahoo.com>
Subject: Re: Multiculturalism
To: pfc1966@googlegroups.com
Cc: "Hasanat Husain" <dr.hasanathusain@yahoo.co.uk>
Date: Monday, 7 February, 2011, 15:45

Quite some while ago, Angela Merkel already said that efforts towards multiculturalism had failed in Germany. May be, many of you did not note this, as Germany is not quite in the centre of the modern world. Now the British PM makes it louder. My understanding is that this will be systematically orchestrated by the top leadership of the world over the next few years or so.

Frankly speaking, we probably have to acknowledge the current socio-economic reality of the Globe that multiculturalism between the west and the "poor east" is not really working! For Hasanat's attention, when we first went to "Bilat" more than 42 years ago, the issues were totally different, I, in fact, used to live in the comfort of a "very warm Guest Status", but time has changed since then. Instead of the world going into a melting pot ("world citizen" was a popular theme those days), diversities have manifested in the reverse order along with growing economic strife!!! But the track number to watch now (like when we watch sports events on the Telly) is the new dynamics in Europe, that is, integration of the poorer Eastern Europe with the West ! Although this has not fully surfaced yet, (neither the leaders are making this explicit, though surely realizing this full well) this will probably be the new lump in the "Western Throat", far more difficult to swallow than "what" is being discussed now as the bone of contention.

Forgive me for thinking a little ahead of time, rightly or wrongly....

Cheers!

Moyeen

Dr. Moyeen Khan, VFJ Convenor from Dhaka, Former Minister of Planning, Science and Technology, Govt. of Bangladesh

Mohammed Akram (London, UK)

9 Feb. 2011

All that you said sir it is our core fundamentals of our existence in Britain, from the beginning our slogan was we live in a multicultural society and Britain is the most multicultural society in Europe we are proud of it and we would like to keep it that way.

As regards to the comments of our prime minister against multiculturalisms is purely political. It is not new it has happen again and again any leader when they make any political stuns, embark in to a wrong move in their policy thus they lose popularity, they have to attacks ethnic minorities policy, sentiments, or in this case also Islam wish is a burning issue in this day and age in the western world in order maximise the his or her popularity. One survey suggest that Cameroons popularity has dropped in voters as well as Nick Cleggs due to their hasty decision on cutting tuition fees school college grants EMA and thousands of job cuts and cuts in proving local

governments grants etc, are coming in great speed. On the other hand surprisingly, Ed Milibands popularity has risen.

I was listing to LBC the Nick Ferrari live phone in Show, the comments were coming thick and fast in favour of our prime minister so you see Sir it works for him, but for us you correctly said we have to hold onto the thought that multiculturalism is here to stay.

Michele Rowe (Melbourne, USA)

9 Feb. 2011

It makes you wonder how much they endeavour beyond the ivory towers of Westminster and really deep into the streets of London ~ beyond escorted visits. Then they would really see the colourful diversity that beats in the heart of London from the ex-colonies and Eastern Europe in the multi-cultural global diaspora that has always brought and brings colour to these Isles.