

Towards a New Humanism

**Or, An
Anatomy of Censorship**

The Gay & Lesbian Humanist Controversy

2nd Edition published January 2006

Preface

On 7 July 2005, more than fifty people were killed in a series of suicide bombings carried out by Islamic terrorists in London. On 19 July 2005, two teenage Iranians were publicly hanged for, it is widely thought, expressing sexual love for each other.

The Autumn 2005 issue of *Gay & Lesbian Humanist* magazine featured two pictures on its front page: one of the two teenagers about to be hanged, and one showing billboards telling of the London bombings.

Inside the magazine were several articles that mentioned Islam, because it is widely seen in both LGB and secular circles as a very real threat. This is not, of course, a reference to individual Muslims, but to a *belief system*, a *religion*, that is seen as the antithesis of freedom and a real danger to sexual minorities.

- The first article was the Page 2 'editorial'. This is a regular piece written by the magazine's editor, usually commenting on something in that quarter's issue and then going on to detail the content.
- The second was a news feature under the headline 'When absurdity leads to atrocity', written by the editor – but not with his editor's hat on, merely as the writer of that particular article in that particular issue (that feature has been written by several contributors in the past).
- The third piece was a news story based on a press release issued by the Gay and Lesbian Humanist Association (GALHA). It called for the homophobic Islamic cleric Yusuf al-Qaradawi to be banned from Britain by the home secretary.
- The fourth was the 'World Watch' column, which for several years has appeared under the name of GALHA's secretary, George Broadhead. In this issue, the column looked, among other things, at the use of the word 'Islamophobia' and the phrase 'moderate Muslim'.
- The fifth piece was a three-page article by Diesel Balaam entitled 'Towards a new Humanism'. This, it seems, has attracted the most criticism from mostly left-wing activists and from the committee of none

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other than GALHA itself, whose secretary put his name to one of the pieces mentioned.

Criticism came from the GALHA committee in the form of an emailed rant (see p. 11) from its then chair, Derek Lennard, which was an attachment to what we learned was the only communication that was *intended* to be sent, the email that carried it, which included a decree that, in future, all magazine contents should be approved both by it and the trustees of the Pink Triangle Trust (PTT), the magazine's publisher. Neither the email nor the attached rant provided any proof of racial prejudice (whether something is inflammatory, of course, is entirely subjective), and the committee did not consult the editorial team before issuing a press release dissociating itself from the magazine's contents (including, one must assume, the 'World Watch' column of the committee's own secretary, George Broadhead).

It is this that has led – not without a great deal of rancour – to the resignation of Andy Armitage as editor and Dean Braithwaite as assistant editor. They made their resignation implicit in a detailed rebuttal of the accusations against the magazine (which is printed in its entirety below in Chapter 3), but then entered a period of renegotiation, during which various *modi operandi* for the continued operation of the magazine were floated. These are detailed in Chapter 5 and later chapters. It also made the point that the magazine's publisher is the PTT, not the GALHA committee, but at one point the editorial team were told in an email from a GALHA committee member that the PTT chair, Roy Saich, who is also on the GALHA committee, had insisted in a GALHA committee meeting that the GALHA committee handle the situation. This would seem to be a case of his acting *ultra vires*.

Although at the time of updating, 3 January 2006, the PTT board of trustees has not met to discuss the issue (a meeting scheduled for 26 November 2005 did not take place), Saich, as its chair, has been dealing with the exchange of emails concerning the dispute over the magazine's contents.

This is a long dossier, longer than the first (obviously, because we have added material). Those who read the first will be able to navigate to the new sections of this one. Those who feel daunted by a long account of something that might have only peripherally affected them – or not at all – may find that chapter titling will help them to go to the parts that interest them most. And, of course, the articles themselves are appended.

The substantive changes to this Second Edition are at the bottom. A few changes have been made to typographical errors and for the sake of clarity, and we have made similar – but minor – changes to this Preface, rather than have an entire 'Preface to the Second Edition', which, for a dossier, is perhaps a little over the top! A new chapter has been added, 'Towards a New Magazine', and more evidence from Diesel Balaam is added as Appendix VII, indicating the concern that many observers – writing in a variety of newspapers of differing political hues – have that reflect those in his own article, 'Towards a new Humanism', which is the name taken for this dossier.

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We have also included a piece that Balaam wrote to be included in a long article that appeared in the December 2005 issue of the *Freethinker*, which he had emailed to Armitage before publication. This is Appendix VIII. Also, we've received a number of plaudits over the five years, some from GALHA committee members, one from a well-known writer and agony aunt, one from the executive director of the National Secular Society. We've reproduced a few of them as Appendix IX.

There are several internal references in the pages that follow. If you hover your cursor on the page numbers or a little below them (watch for a change in its appearance), you will find they are dynamic links to the pages referred to (pressing LEFT ARROW while holding down the ALT key will take you back to where you were, or you can use PREVIOUS VIEW in one of the submenus on the VIEW menu). You can also click on items in the Contents to take you to the chapter referred to.

The exchange of emails below has been linked with fairly straight-down-the-middle narrative to help the flow. Where there's been criticism of our actions, we've printed it. Comment from us is largely confined to this Preface – and it is here that we say unashamedly that we believe the article and subsequent debate have done more for free speech in the circles in which the magazine, the PTT and GALHA operate than obeying a narrow committee line would ever have achieved (not that the magazine's critics would see it like that, of course). It is a pity that much of the potential good has been stained by bad blood and some of the light has been dimmed by the ferocity of the pointless heat. If people had engaged with the arguments, as rationalists and freethinkers are *meant* to do, more good might have emerged. Instead, a few who think they have struck out against racism have clobbered free speech. The censorious GALHA committee have succeeded in bringing down ridicule on their corporate and individual heads by cowering under the withering glare of a few Marxists who conflate racism with healthy condemnation of the many dark aspects of religion. How embarrassing for them!

Many will have been reading their magazine under the mistaken impression that it was widely distributed. It was not. Five hundred copies were printed each quarter, and the last three issues were distributed from the then editorial base in West Wales – some 220-odd last time. They were to GALHA members. The rest were distributed to other subscribers and those who receive complimentary copies from GALHA's national office in Kenilworth, Warwickshire. There were always a fair number of copies left over.

Now that this dispute has found its way onto Internet bulletin boards and the *Pink Paper*, *Gay Times* and the *Guardian* (and perhaps moved wider afield by the time you read this), more people are asking about free expression in the LGB movement than was probably the case beforehand. It's no small thing when an editor resigns because he's being censored by small minds – even the editor of a magazine that goes out to fewer than 500 people.

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The former editorial team believes the GALHA committee has exhibited spinelessness in running scared of cries of 'Islamophobia' and 'racism' from the Left, as it will be shown to have done, instead of showing itself as a strong and *rational* organisation (its antipathy to religion and other forms of superstition suggests it should be this above all else, but that is now open to question). Far from showing support, the GALHA committee and a couple of members of the board of trustees of the PTT (who are also on the GALHA committee) sought to censor the editors to prevent challenging and stimulating material from appearing again. Indeed, the GALHA press release referred to above ended with the words, 'We are taking urgent steps to avoid this situation recurring.'

They succeeded in that all right: they killed the magazine stone dead.

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1: The Magazine

Gay & Lesbian Humanist (*G&LH*) was a quarterly magazine published by the Pink Triangle Trust (PTT), a charity closely associated with the Gay and Lesbian Humanist Association (GALHA) and whose trustees are all – indeed have to be – GALHA members. It had been edited for five years by Andy Armitage, with Dean Braithwaite as assistant editor and some input in the first three years from Mike Foxwell. The magazine was an extension of GALHA's campaign against religious privilege and to highlight areas where religion is impinging unnecessarily and disproportionately on the lives of those who want nothing to do with it.

Its material has, in keeping with its name and *raison d'être*, looked at humanism, secularism, freethought and rationalism from a lesbian and gay point of view, though not exclusively. Equally, it has looked at lesbian and gay matters from a rationalist, humanist, secularist, freethinking point of view, though, again, not exclusively. In the past five years it has aimed to publish articles that challenge and stimulate as well as a regular fare of the sort of news and gossip to be found in any nonacademic periodical. It has had a mix of feature articles contributed on a voluntary basis by many writers from within, but also from outside, GALHA, a news roundup, a digest of news snippets from countries outside the UK ('World Watch'), book reviews, occasional music and video reviews and lighter, regular items such as 'Stateside' (celebrity gossip from the USA), 'Steven Dean on ...' (stuff and nonsense in a very light vein) and 'Infidel' (an anonymous, sometimes offbeat, 'mildly irreverent look at what some people find sacred'). In addition, it has provided events news, mainly concerning GALHA but including other events when that has been appropriate. *G&LH* has featured colour on its cover (both front and back) and black-and-white pictures inside.

As an example of a challenging piece of journalism, in the Winter 2003 issue it featured an article by the American writer, GALHA member and occasional *G&LH* contributor John Lauritsen, challenging the belief that AIDS is caused by the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). Much criticism was levelled at the magazine then – not only for the article itself, but for the magazine's decision to publish it. But, as the editor pointed out in a subsequent article, it is only by publishing stimulating articles that people who read them will be forced to re-

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examine their own views; that views might be modified by being exposed to new and challenging material, or they may, indeed, be strengthened. However, if the material had not been published in the first place, there would be no opportunity for any revision of opinion – or even knowledge of the subject at hand.

It has also published, among other things, material by Christians, including a practising priest, a practising Muslim, John Beyer, the director of Mediawatch-UK – the very antithesis of all that *G&LH* has stood for – and the *Sunday Express* journalist, now a Muslim convert, Yvonne Ridley. This is mentioned here to give some idea of the variety of material the editorial team have endeavoured to pursue to make the magazine stimulating and challenging and more than a mere mouthpiece for its publishers, thereby toeing some sort of committee line.

This document is a straight telling of a dispute concerning *G&LH*, its editorial team, the Pink Triangle Trust and the PTT's associated organisation, the Gay and Lesbian Humanist Association. Most of it is pasted material (typing errors have mostly been left intact) from emails sent to or by the editorial team and messages posted on discussion groups on the Internet. Linking material has been kept deliberately low-key and nonpartisan. See the Preface for discussion of any updating material in this Second Edition.

2: The Issue

The Autumn 2005 issue of *Gay & Lesbian Humanist* had a front-page picture of two Iranian teenagers about to be hanged in public, nooses about their necks. Their 'crime', it is widely thought, was having gay sex, although the Iranian authorities have claimed that they raped a thirteen-year-old boy. This is thought in campaigning and human rights circles to be a lie, a trumped-up charge. That disturbing picture sat above a headline, 'The sick face of Islam'. Below the headline there was a picture of a London street with billboards referring to the 7 July bombing by Islamic extremists.

In this issue, *G&LH* published an article entitled 'Towards a new Humanism', by Diesel Balaam. This is reproduced as Appendix I. It also published an editorial (this is a regular feature, and the first three paragraphs, two of which were objected to, are reproduced as Appendix II) by its editor and a news feature, also by the editor but only incidentally so, entitled 'When absurdity leads to atrocity' (Appendix III). The 'World Watch' feature, a regular look at stories from further afield, was criticised. It is attached as Appendix IV. A news story entitled 'Ban this cleric, says humanist group' is also referred to in these pages. This is attached as Appendix V.

Excerpts from several newspaper articles taken variously from both their print and online versions are reproduced as Appendix VI. These have been supplied by Diesel Balaam, the author of the article, 'Towards a new Humanism', and much of the information therein was referred to for the purposes of his article.

* * *

The first intimation that the editorial team received that there was some disquiet among GALHA committee members was in an email dated 11 October 2005 from GALHA's secretary George Broadhead. After dealing with some practical matters concerning the magazine's distribution, he wrote,

They [the committee] have expressed great concern about what they perceive as the racist comments made in Diesel Balaam's article. I myself was very surprised and taken back at this as I have been a friend of Diesel for many years (he joined GALHA back in 1985) and I have always thought

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of him as radical rather than conservative. Have you any comments about this which I can relay?

Armitage responded, dealing first with the workaday query on distribution, and then saying, 'As for Diesel's article, which bits are they concerned about? Once we know, we can offer some comment. And of course there's also the letters section.'

Two days later, the editorial team were informed by the GALHA committee, via their then chair, Derek Lennard, that there was material in the issue that was 'racially prejudiced and inflammatory'. This came in the following email, 'on behalf of the GALHA committee', dated 13 October, from Lennard:

In the past week, the GALHA committee has had extensive discussions about the content of the Autumn edition of 'Gay & Lesbian Humanist'. Specifically, we have been discussing the contents of an article by Diesel Balaam, but also some of the editorial. Specific extracts we have been discussing are appended to this e-mail.

The GALHA committee, individually and corporately, found that certain material in the Autumn edition of the magazine was racially prejudiced and inflammatory, as well as being unsubstantiated and unmarked as 'opinion'. These factors have combined to lay GALHA open to a lot of (fair) criticism that is extremely damaging to our reputation: they may even have left the Pink Triangle Trust open to legal action. We note that the www.islamophobia.com website is already repeating some of the inflammatory comments, and our experience demonstrates that this information will now be relayed to many other organisations and individuals including the Mayor of London.

GALHA members are involved in several campaigns which involve us working with organisations and individuals with whom we often disagree. While we are prepared to argue with them about the effects of religious dogma, we cannot be expected to defend prejudiced and inflammatory material, which in our view is diametrically opposed to the ethos of our organisation. In this respect all committee members are anxious to disassociate ourselves from some of the content of the magazine.

While we are extremely grateful to you for all the time and effort you have dedicated to the production of the magazine, we are now of the opinion that future editions (including editorial) should be approved before publication by the trustees of the Pink Triangle Trust, and we will be asking the trustees to give the GALHA committee the opportunity to clear all copy. Please confirm that this is acceptable to you.

The email had the following attachment, sent as a Word document. Here, the paragraphs have been subsequently numbered for the purposes of later reference. However, no wording has been changed, and the interpolations in square brackets are added for the purposes of clarity.

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GALHA COMMITTEE MEMBERS COMMENTS RE 'GAY AND LESBIAN HUMANIST' MAGAZINE-AUTUMN 2005.

1. '....the fastest growing religion is Islam. Chillingly, it continues to grow like a cancer ['canker' in the article], both through immigration and through the unrestrained and irresponsible breeding we have become used to seeing among practising Catholics'.

2. *Comment: Even if it's not racist, it's bigoted, unsupported, prejudiced hatred. The facts, subjected to a real analysis, even go against it-Prof Voas' recent study of the decline of religion generation by generation, suggests that the non-Christian religions fail in their efforts to transmit themselves down the generations at precisely the same rate as the Christian religion has in this country for the last 50 years.*

3. 'Legal or illegal, many of these Third World and Eastern European newcomers are criminals of the worst kind, and many more are helplessly ill equipped to live in a Western democracy, unable even to speak English in some cases. A parasitic few are bent on the destruction of Western civilisation'.

4. *Comment: I find it utterly implausible that any 'editor' who knows the meaning of the word would allow a comment such as this to appear in an article which he passed for publication. It is totally unfounded, citing no evidence. The tone is hectoring and hysterical, and seems informed by racial prejudice.*

5. *Further comment:The magazine was distributed 'hot off the press' at a GALHA function on Friday attended by international guests. The sick irony of course is that the event was in support of Eastern European LGBT's-some of whom are asylum seekers-the same group that our magazine brands as 'criminals of the worst kind' and 'ill equipped to live in a [W]estern democracy. This is the magazine that Bill Schiller [co-founder of the International Lesbian and Gay Cultural Network, international secretary of the Nordic Rainbow Humanists and a GALHA member] will be taking home with him. I'm ashamed'.*

6. *Comment: I've just read Diesel's piece....it matches Enoch Powell in its xenophobia and the NF in his class bigotry. I'd expect such condescending nonsense from the Daily Mail, but not a humanist magazine. And to think our vice presidents have been sent the magazine. I despair, I really despair.*

7. *Comment: We can close ranks over issues about whether DR Q [Dr Yusuf al-Qaradawi, an Islamic scholar who has expressed opposition to homosexuality to the extent of supporting gay people's execution in Islamic countries, who has supported Palestinian suicide bombings in Israel and who has been welcomed to City Hall, London, by the mayor, Ken Livingstone] should be banned or not because there are compelling reasons for both positions which are ideologically sound and sensible. It is possible to be on moral and ethical ground whichever position one argues for. However, I will not defend statements that claim (without any credible evidence I might add) that Britain is being over-run by thieving immigrants who breed too much. I'm sorry, but I have my own reputation to think of'.*

3: The Response

The editorial team provided a detailed rebuttal, emailed to the entire GALHA committee on 17 October, which is reproduced here. Its Annexe provided the text of the email and the attachment; however, since that has already been reproduced above (p. 10 ff.) for the purposes of chronology, there is no point in reproducing it below this rebuttal. Again, material in square brackets is for clarification or to point out a deviation from the original material.

Dear Derek

Editorial team's response to committee complaints on Autumn 2005 issue of *Gay & Lesbian Humanist*, with your original email and critique attached

Thank you for your email on behalf of the GALHA committee concerning Diesel's article and part of the Page 3 Feature of the Autumn issue of *G&LH*.

Let us first say that we are unsure whether the critique attached to your email has the endorsement of the committee or whether it is solely your opinion, since much of it is written in the first person singular. Some of the use of quotation marks is confusing, with material in quote marks in one instance (numbered paragraph 5) clearly beginning by quoting something from the magazine, but ending with something that wasn't. Paragraph 8 has a closing quote mark, but not an opening one, so we do not know whether this is quoted from someone else or your own words. We have highlighted areas in the paragraphs we quote below where there is some confusion.

Further, your criticism is split between the critique you attach and the email itself. We've made the distinction in dealing with the points you raise in both documents.

Before going on to deal with your criticisms individually and in detail, we will first respond to the committee's suggestion that future issues – including 'editorial' – should be approved before publication. What you are proposing is the introduction of an editorial committee – or, in fact, two editorial committees, since you propose that not only the PTT [Pink Triangle Trust] but also GALHA be involved in this process.

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This is wholly unworkable because it would entail to-ing and fro-ing of copy between the editor – who presumably would still be allowed some input – and the editorial committees. This would obviously increase the time burden and workload of the person who actually has to do the work – the editor – and, this alone is justification enough to decline your proposal. Furthermore, we find the suggestion patronising and dishonest. If you don't trust our judgement, you really should have the guts to say simply that, and not try to wrap it up as something else.

What your proposal would have meant in practice would have been up to 22,000 words' worth of copy being sent to two committees, and their having to return it in whatever time period we would need it, which would be the same day in many cases because so much is done close to deadline so we can be as up to date as possible. We fail to see how two committee meetings could be convened to deal with this as and when the need arose, and, of course, any amendments by the editor would then have to be reapproved by the committees. As far as we can see, the only way this would have been workable would have been for a single person on one of the committees to be responsible – but is that not just the same as being the editor?

Our scepticism is further fuelled by our past experience of trying to secure timely contributions from committee members concerning events they are organising.

Further, when we needed a two-sentence tribute from the organisation's chairman after the death of a highly significant honorary vice-president [Sir Hermann Bondi] this autumn, he was unwilling to spend the five or so minutes required to do it, pleading that he did not know the man. Nor did the secretary [George Broadhead] know him, but nonetheless he was able to send some words of tribute the same day.

We note that committee members, in five years, have contributed little by way of articles. We are often short of well-written, thoughtful interesting articles likely to generate enough interest to produce useful debate in our letters pages and so are in no position to discard an article such as Diesel's.

A more workable course would have been for editorial guidelines to be provided by the PTT, and this we have asked for in the past. If this were done, then there would be no question of our stepping over the boundaries of perceived acceptability or aggravating any sensitivities the committee might have on any particular issue.

Indeed, we have always sought to adhere to the wishes and desires of GALHA/PTT. This is why we formally asked for editorial policy guidance in the light of possible new legislation by putting a motion before the last GALHA AGM. No such guidance has yet been forthcoming.

Before moving on to your specific observations, it's worth pointing out that you say in your accompanying email to Andy, 'We note that the www.islamophobia.com website is already repeating some of the inflammatory comments ...' We believe you mean www.islamophobia-watch.com, a blog. The former site exists only as a 'portal' for the domain

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named, and has links to other sites. Of the latter site, which does indeed draw attention to the articles, [GALHA committee member and OutRage! activist] Brett Lock's blog¹ points out that it is run by two men called Bob Pitt and Eddie Truman, and adds,

The pair of them delight in listing anyone who says anything critical about Islam – whether they are Muslim, ex-Muslim, a women's or gay rights activist, a secularists, a political dissidents from the Middle East, an exile from the Islamic Republic of Iran, or a refugees from the GIA – you name it: say anything vaguely critical of Islamic fundamentalist or political Islamism, and according to Pitt and Truman you're an 'Islamophobe'.

We note that there's no criticism, either in your email or the attached critique, of the 'World Watch' column, and yet comments made there were highlighted by the Islamophobia-watch blog that you cite. Could this, we wonder, be because George Broadhead – whose name the piece was published under – did approve this copy?

We will now move on to your specific criticisms. First of all, you are incorrect in describing Andy's article as an 'editorial'. At the top of the page it states clearly that it is the 'Page 3 News Feature'. This is a regular column, written by different people, so is in no way an editorial in the sense that you mean: that of its being a leading article as such. In this issue, it just happened to be written by Andy as a contributor, not as editor.

We are somewhat at a loss to understand your allegations that the content you dislike has in some way brought GALHA/PTT into disrepute, since it clearly states on the imprint page of the magazine, 'The views expressed by the editor and other contributors do not necessarily reflect those of the Pink Triangle Trust.' This disclaimer is a standard inclusion in most serious publications that try to stimulate debate and discussion on subjects upon which opinions differ greatly. Surely, if the GALHA committee individually or corporately do not like the content of the magazine, they need only point out this clause, since it distances the PTT from it. Also, the magazine is not published by GALHA, a distinction that has been vigorously defended for many years, but is simply supplied as a membership benefit. In view of this, we cannot understand the anxiety you refer to of the GALHA committee to dissociate itself from the content of the magazine.

Your first specific criticism (note that we have numbered the paragraphs for ease of reference) concerns this passage:

1. '....the fastest-growing religion is Islam. Chillingly, it continues to grow like a cancer [cancer was printed], both through immigration and through the unrestrained and irresponsible breeding we have become used to seeing among practising Catholics'.

2. *Comment: Even if it's not racist, it's bigoted, unsupported, prejudiced hatred. The facts, subjected to a real analysis, even go against it-Prof Voas' recent study of the decline of religion generation by generation, suggests that the non-Christian religions fail in their*

¹ 'Even when you're right, you're wrong', 3 October 2005, <http://brettlock.blogspot.com/2005/10/even-when-youre-right-youre-wrong.html>.

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efforts to transmit themselves down the generations at precisely the same rate as the Christian religion has in this country for the last 50 years.

Having, in your email, criticised the content for being 'racially prejudiced', you agree that this part of the content isn't racist! As far as its being 'bigoted, unsupported, prejudiced hatred' is concerned, it is a fact, surely known to any humanist, that practising Catholics do have significantly larger families than average because of the prohibition on contraception. Also a matter of fact is that Islam is the fastest-growing religion, both in the world and in Britain.² It is also a fact that in certain cities in Britain the birth rate among Muslims is far higher than among the indigenous population.³ This, coupled with the further fact that the children born to Muslims are usually brought up to *be* Muslim, more than supports the assertion.

As Diesel states in *his* article, there are more and more mosques appearing in our cities – and this is a fact for anyone who has eyes to see. Why else is this happening if not to cater for the increasing number of Muslims?

In your email you say parts of the magazine were 'unsubstantiated and unmarked as "opinion".'

G&LH is not an academic publication, and so it is rarely the case that assertions are referenced. It is journalism. Your criticism, then, that

² See <http://www.iccuk.org/resources/islam/islam.htm>, which states, 'Although a mystery to most, Islam [is] the fastest growing religion in the UK. In fact it is more than a religion, it is a whole way of life, prescribing guidelines from theology through to personal conduct, commerce, welfare and more.' Also, see government statistics at <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nugget.asp?id=293>, which states, 'After Christianity, Islam was the most common faith with nearly 3 per cent describing their religion as Muslim (1.6 million).' See also <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/opinion/main.jhtml?xml=/opinion/2004/07/18/do1802.xml>, which states, 'A famous "moderate", Dr Zaki Badawi, the Egyptian director of the Muslim College in Ealing, has written: "Islam endeavours to expand in Britain ... It hopes that one day the whole of mankind will be one Muslim community, the Umma."'

³ See <http://www.muslimnews.co.uk/news/news.php?article=4432>, which states, 'Today, the Muslim birth rate in Europe is three times higher than the non-Muslim one. If current trends continue, the Muslim population of Europe will nearly double by 2015, while the non-Muslim population will shrink by 3.5 percent.' See also, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/opinion/main.jhtml?xml=/opinion/2004/07/18/do1802.xml>, which states, 'There were 23,000 Muslims in Britain in 1954. Today there are 100 times that many. In the next 50 years those 2.3 million Muslims will increase at an even swifter rate. The political implications of such an expansion are vast. The Muslim's kingdom is very much of this world. Our kingdom will therefore be very much of the Muslim's world.' Further, birth control is not encouraged in Islam, except when it is necessary, e.g. for medical reasons or when other children's health or upbringing might suffer, and it is not advised to be used indefinitely. See, for instance, http://www.stanford.edu/group/ISSU/about_islam/articles_Hussein/node39.html. See also *Islam and Terrorism* by Anwar Shaikh, in which it is said, '[A Muslim] cannot be a citizen of a non-Muslim state. He has the duty to treat his host country as dar-ul-harb (the place of hostility) where any ruse, machination, including treason, is a legitimate weapon to deal with the Kafirs (non-Muslim). Again, he is under Divine command to convert the Land of Kafirs into Dar-us-Salam (the house of peace) by turning majority of them into Muslims by propaganda, forced conversion, war, phoney piety or sexual prowess: the greater the number of children a Muslim produces, the nearer he becomes to the Prophet, who will get him into Paradise. This is the reason that the Muslims of India have usually large families consisting of ten to fifteen children.' See also <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/printFriendly/0,,1-7-376133,00.html>, which says, 'One child in eight is now from an ethnic minority, rising to one in three in London'; 'Cities such as Coventry, Leicester and London are vying to see which can become the first white-minority city'; and 'The London magazine *Time Out* recently interviewed a Turkish immigrant who said that the English were now the foreigners in Stoke Newington.'

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assertions are not supported doesn't stand up. We do agree with the assertion that the articles show not so much hatred but hostility – hostility towards abuse by religion, not of people or of races or of ethnic groups. If GALHA is suggesting it is wrong to hate religion, then it is doing the censorial work of Tony Blair's government for it, and it should reconsider what its values and beliefs are.

We will now consider your second quoted extract and the comments you make on it. This reads,

3. 'Legal or illegal, many of these Third World and Eastern European newcomers are criminals of the worst kind, and many more are helplessly [**'hopelessly' was printed**] ill equipped to live in a [**complex**] Western democracy, unable even to speak English in some cases. A parasitic few are bent on the destruction of Western civilisation'.

4. *Comment: I find it utterly implausible that any 'editor' who knows the meaning of the word would allow a comment such as this to appear in an article which he passed for publication. It is totally unfounded, citing no evidence. The tone is hectoring and hysterical, and seems informed by racial prejudice.*

Once again, you complain that no evidence is cited in support, and, once again, we must point out that this is journalism, not academe. The extract simply says that *many* of these Third World and Eastern European⁴ newcomers are criminals of the worst kind. Yes, you could equally well say the same thing about the inner-city population of some of our most deprived urban areas, but Diesel was confining his remarks to incomers, and, anyway, was not talking about any particular race or ethnic group.

Anyone who knows anything about prostitution, for instance, will realise that many of the people – men and women – coming to Britain as economic migrants from Eastern Europe end up *involved* in organised prostitution. There have been a number of TV dramas/documentaries on the subject, for example, Channel 4's *Sex Traffic*. This programme deals with the very issues of organised crime, drug-running, deprivation and prostitution, which is all part of what Diesel is referring to.

As far as being 'hectoring' and 'hysterical' is concerned, these are simply words that you have chosen to describe what someone else might describe as robust, strong, opinionated, forthright, forceful, vigorous, spirited, feisty etc. You have chosen pejorative words simply because you do not like the content, which is somewhat disingenuous. You further allege that the piece was 'informed by racial prejudice', and yet you selectively omit to acknowledge the pullquote on Page 11 – taken from the article, of course – which draws attention to Diesel's words, 'Let us be quite clear that race is not the issue here, as racism is the *antithesis of Humanism*. We are not concerned where people come from' (our emphasis). Further, Diesel specifically mentions and names ethnic groups who have 'integrated rather

⁴ See http://www.fco.gov.uk/Files/kfile/SoutheastEurope_Nov02.pdf, which says, 'Organised criminal groups from Southeast Europe are thought now to control a significant share of the vice trade in London, having emerged as the dominant criminal force in a matter of years.'

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well, maintaining a strong cultural identity while somehow managing to meet the host community halfway and contributing a great deal to our society'. We can find nothing racist in your extract and must ask *you* to substantiate your assertion that there is.

5. *Further comment:The magazine was distributed 'hot off the press' at a GALHA function on Friday attended by international guests. The sick irony of course is that the event was in support of Eastern European LGBT's-some of whom are asylum seekers-the same group that our magazine brands as 'criminals of the worst kind' and 'ill equipped to live in a [complex] [W]estern democracy. This is the magazine that Bill Schiller will be taking home with him. I'm ashamed!'*

In the above, you claim that the magazine brands LGBT asylum seekers as 'criminals of the worst kind' and 'ill equipped to live in a [complex] [W]estern democracy'. This is demonstrably untrue. What was stated was that *some* people coming from the Third World and Eastern European countries are criminals and are ill equipped to live in a complex Western democracy; and, as addressed above, this is demonstrable fact. You are making a classic logical error in inferring that, if some people in any given society are criminals, they all must be. Implicit in your criticism is the contention that it is not politically acceptable or correct to say that some people from a particular country or ethnic grouping are criminal. Would there be the same criticism if we repeated the oft-stated and equally true accusation that lager louts and football hooligans are largely represented within the grouping we might call 'white, British, working-class, male youth'? Further, we cannot be expected to tailor the magazine according to who outside its usual readership might see it. The contents are often decided upon weeks or months before it goes to the printer and before knowledge of any such events reaches us, and, anyway, such a policy. More importantly, surely, would not tailoring the content of the magazine to suit the particular audience GALHA wishes to woo at any particular time put the integrity of the magazine and GALHA into question?

6. *Comment: I've just read Diesel's piece....it matches Enoch Powell in its xenophobia and the NF in his class bigotry. I'd expect such condescending nonsense from the Daily Mail, but not a humanist magazine. And to think our vice presidents have been sent the magazine. I despair, I really despair.*

In the above, you liken Diesel's article to Enoch Powell and the NF. However, Powell's words do not refer to a religion, but to race, whereas Diesel's article is clearly about the mounting threat to secular and liberal values posed by the growth of Islam – a religion – in Britain. We are at a loss to understand how a humanist could attack the criticism of a religion such as Islam. It is not racist or xenophobic to say, as Diesel does, that in many of our towns and cities the indigenous population is becoming a minority⁵ and that this leads to serious social tensions and worse. Neither is it racist or

⁵ See <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/printFriendly/0,,1-7-376133,00.html>, which says, 'The British paper *Muslim News* compared Bradford with Belfast, with deeply entrenched divisions ripping a community apart and creating wounds that may be becoming impossible to heal. In Bradford, as in Belfast, the communities live apart, work apart, socialise apart and occasionally riot.' See also Footnote 3.

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xenophobic to say that many incomers to Britain, legal or illegal, are criminals. The comment purporting to be from the committee ends with a first-person-singular phrase. Why?

7. Comment: We can close ranks over issues about whether DR Q should be banned or not because there are compelling reasons for both positions which are ideologically sound and sensible. It is possible to be on moral and ethical ground whichever position one argues for. However, I will not defend statements that claim (without any credible evidence I might add) that Britain is being over-run by thieving immigrants who breed too much. I'm sorry, but I have my own reputation to think of.

No one, as far as we are aware, has asked you (Derek) or the committee to defend the content of the magazine, and yet you imply that this is the case. As we have already pointed out, the magazine carries a disclaimer on the imprint page to the effect that the views expressed are not necessarily those of the PTT, let alone GALHA.

Also, since we have now provided you with credible evidence, presumably now you will feel happier. After all, you state that the arguments in favour of al-Qaradawi are 'ideologically sound and sensible', even though this man condones the putting to death of homosexuals, suicide bombing of civilians and the gross violation of women's bodies and their civil rights. How it is that you can believe that there is 'moral and ethical ground[s]' for supporting these kinds of beliefs and yet you are outraged by what Diesel has said is quite beyond our comprehension. We are again perplexed as to why the final sentence, 'I'm sorry, but I have my own reputation to think of', has been included in what purports to be a submission from the committee. Perhaps the committee would like to comment on why they've allowed all these personal remarks to be included.

Returning now to your email, in which you state that, individually and corporately, the GALHA committee found certain material in the Autumn issue of the magazine to be racially prejudiced and inflammatory, we must say that there is nothing in your critique that substantiates these claims. Furthermore you complain that the content that you have objected to was not 'marked' as opinion. Surely, most people understand the difference between news and feature articles. As C P Scott famously said, 'Comment is free but facts are sacred.' Which publications carry a disclaimer on every article? Readers are assumed to know that an article is largely comment. And, as we have repeatedly pointed out, the whole content of the magazine is explicitly claimed *not* to be necessarily the views of the PTT/GALHA, so your allegation here is specious.

We are at a loss to understand why the GALHA committee is dismayed that a pro-Islamic organisation (www.islamophobia-watch.com, we are assuming, not www.islamophobia.com, as you stated) is critical of a magazine whose brief, *inter alia*, is to criticise religion. Surely, it is a mark of success in this that religionists take the magazine seriously enough to complain about it and feature it on their website. When was the last time any Christian religion took GALHA so seriously? It is right and essential that GALHA and the magazine take a very strong stance against Islam, since not only is Islam extremely homophobic – murderously so, in fact – but it is rapidly growing across the

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world and the potential disaster for civil liberties in general, and the rights, wellbeing and even safety of homosexual people in particular, is horrendous.

Furthermore, according to your accompanying email, the committee seems concerned that Ken Livingstone will see the magazine. Why on earth is GALHA running scared of the Mayor of London when it has already locked horns with him over al-Qaradawi, and has made blistering attacks on him both inside the magazine and beyond?

In your email you once again describe the content of the magazine that you dislike as prejudiced and inflammatory, when in fact it is, as we have shown, merely a robust rallying cry to humanists to confront the real religious threat in the twenty-first century: that of the rampant and highly authoritarian and homophobic religion that is Islam. We cannot see how GALHA can work with other groups with whom it often disagrees if that means that GALHA has to tone down its criticism of religion in the magazine that, among other things, communicates its views. Surely to do so is to deny the very founding principles of the organisation. We note that GALHA has never been sensitive in this way about the magazine's criticism of Christianity, and the magazine has carried some very strong anti-Catholic material recently. Why do different rules apply in the criticism of Islam?

You refer (in your email) to the ethos of the organisation, but surely anything other than robustly attacking all religion, including Islam, is a betrayal of that ethos. What all the critics of Islam, including many former Muslims, have done is instigate a widespread debate on the nature and compatibility of Islam with democratic, liberal and secular values, which underpin our Western democracies. GALHA should be proud of its part in this, not running scared of the ranks of formerly gay-friendly left-wingers who were once the champions of liberty and equality. The articles to which you have objected were published in the hope that they would further stimulate debate and discussion within GALHA itself and the wider humanist movement. You do not achieve this aim without challenging popular and comfortable notions and prejudices. And, indeed, we handle many articles, parts or the whole of which we often disagree with. This is true of Diesel's article: there is much that is counter to our own personal views, including some of the reservations raised by the committee, and also the question of ID cards. But we do not seek to censor.

You have chosen to criticise these articles using words such as 'inflammatory', 'prejudiced' and 'bigoted' simply because they do challenge certain views that have become entrenched. Surely, this is what freethinkers should do all the time, otherwise they are not worthy of the term. We are very disappointed that the committee has found an honest attempt to stimulate discussion of difficult and contentious issues to be distasteful and that it now wishes to censor all views that it does not individually or corporately endorse. We are supposed to be freethinkers, so there is no point in having articles that merely reinforce what we already know and believe. A freethinker will allow himself to be either convinced by a new argument, or, if he isn't, will feel that his own views are more secure for his having been exposed to others.

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It should be remembered that not so long ago heresy was punishable by death, and yet without the heretics religion would still have an icy grip on our society. It is sad that, in safer, less violent times, such courage has evaporated.

4. *Comment: I find it utterly implausible that any 'editor' who knows the meaning of the word would allow a comment such as this to appear in an article which he passed for publication. ...*

Andy takes issue most strongly with your use of sneer quotes on the word 'editor' within the above comment. This is an *ad hominem* remark of the most insulting kind and it is hoped that it was said in haste and will be withdrawn and apologised for in a communication copied to the committee.^[6] Andy has edited the magazine for five years, commissioning articles, writing articles and doing the layout, and has brought professional journalistic experience to those tasks. Had this childish comment come from a journalist, it might have been taken more seriously.

It would seem that the editorial team have been tried *in absentia*, with both a verdict and a judgment given. Would it not have been prudent, not to mention accepted good practice, to ask those accused to make a contribution to their trial, instead of asking the chairman to send an aggressive, patronising and in places insulting document after the event? While the committee had all of 'the past week', according to your email, we don't have that luxury of so much time, and all of this might have been obviated if matters had been conducted in a more friendly, constructive and proper manner.

Finally, while on the subject of the process by which this has been handled, perhaps you could explain why it is that the GALHA committee has not referred this matter to the PTT committee of trustees, when it is the PTT that publishes the magazine. This is, after all, the reason given for GALHA's not issuing editorial guidelines apropos the motion Mike Foxwell [as a GALHA member] put before the last GALHA AGM. In this case, the GALHA committee said, essentially, that, since the magazine is published by the PTT, the PTT is responsible for its content and hence would have to issue any editorial guidelines.

Much more evidence to back up the assertions in Balaam's article were submitted at a later date both to Armitage and to the GALHA secretary by the author himself. We will return to these.

The islamophobia-watch.com blog criticised by Brett Lock on his own blog (referred to in the rebuttal above on Page 14) was highly selective in the passages it chose to quote in this post by one of its owners, Bib Pitt, who had this to say:

The latest issue of GALHA's *Gay and Lesbian Humanist* magazine contains a feature on what they call 'The sick face of Islam'. Editor Andy Armitage explains: 'Our front-page headline this quarter is deliberately ambiguous: it could be saying this is only the *sickening* face of this religion called Islam

^[6] So far, as at 3 January 2006, no apology has been forthcoming.]

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(implying that there is possibly another face); or it could be saying this is *the* face of Islam, and its face is sickening. Interpret it as you will. But I suspect that many who thought the former some years ago may well now be thinking the latter...'

The issue includes quotes such as: [from 'World Watch':] 'There are two terms that, increasingly, annoy us: *Islamophobia* and *moderate Muslims*. What we'd like to know is, first, what's wrong with being fearful of Islam (there's a lot to fear); and, second, what does a moderate Muslim do, other than excuse the real nutters by adhering to this barmy doctrine?' ... [from Balaam's article:] 'for homosexuals, it is doubtful that there is any such thing as a "moderate" practising Muslim, or that the Koran can be regarded as anything more than just a squalid murder manual' ... 'it is not racist to be anti-immigration or anti-Islam' ... 'the reckless and mismanaged immigration policies of successive governments have led to the demographics of our major towns and cities being forever changed by huge numbers of foreign settlers' ... 'Legal or illegal, many of these Third World and Eastern European newcomers are criminals of the worst kind, and many more are hopelessly ill equipped to live in a complex Western democracy, unable even to speak English in some cases. A parasitic few are bent on the destruction of Western civilisation' ... 'Redundant churches are sprouting onion domes and minarets. We are becoming strangers in our own land' ... [from Armitage's news feature:] 'the fastest-growing religion is Islam. Chillingly, it continues to grow like a canker, both through immigration and through ... unrestrained and irresponsible breeding' ... [from Balaam's article:] 'In the Netherlands, the warnings of popular gay politician Pim Fortuyn were tragically snuffed out by a left-wing assassin before he could sufficiently alert people to the damage the influx of Muslims is doing to his own native land'. And these are just a sample.

I believe Brett Lock of Outrage is a member of GALHA. Perhaps he'd care to comment on these articles on his blog?

Posted on Tuesday, October 11, 2005 by  Bob Pitt in Secular, UK | Comments Off

4: And It Came to Pass ...

The editorial team worked on the rebuttal detailed in the last chapter over the weekend of 15–16 October and emailed it on the 17th. Later that day, the following email was sent to Andy Armitage by Terry Sanderson, a GALHA committee member:

This is to acknowledge the response you have made to the letter sent to you by Derek. I can assure you that there has been much debate on this issue over the last week, and the letter that Derek sent to you was not the one that was agreed by the committee.

I'd better not say too much at this point – although I would like to – in case I cause another sensation. But as you know, George and Roy [Saich] have just left for a holiday, and won't be back for a week. I don't expect, therefore, that there will be a response, before then.

Another member of the GALHA committee, Keith Angus, emailed the editor on the 17th to say,

Thank you for your reply. I (and no doubt the rest of the committee) genuinely appreciate the time you've invested over the past couple of days to respond so fully to our original email.

Clearly you raise a number of issues, which we as a committee need time to digest and agree upon next steps. I think it's fair to say even at this point though, that no-one on the committee has been seeking to personally insult any of you. We do stand by our original email in that while there are specific concerns we have in relation to the current issue of the *G&LH*, we are very appreciative of the persistent hard work you've put into the magazine over the past few years.

You will no doubt hear from us again soon.

Although he said the committee would be digesting 'a number of issues', nothing has so far been forthcoming from any member of the committee based on the evidence marshalled in the rebuttal. The editorial team heard nothing more from the committee as such.

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However, on this day the editorial team were made aware of a GALHA press release, posted to its website and, it is to be assumed, to media, the previous day (16 October):

COMMENTS IN *GAY AND LESBIAN HUMANIST*

KENILWORTH, 16 OCTOBER 2005 – The GALHA committee has issued the following statement regarding comments in the Autumn 2005 issue of the *Gay and Lesbian Humanist* magazine.

‘We are disturbed by certain comments published in the editorial and opinion sections of the current issue of *Gay and Lesbian Humanist*.

‘As humanists, we believe in defending secularism and confronting religious ideology where it impinges on the rights of individuals. But equally we oppose the encouragement of hatred or discrimination against individuals or groups of individuals on the basis of their religious affiliation. Humanists criticise ideas, not people.

‘The views expressed in the magazine in connection with immigration are the personal opinions of the authors. In our view they are inconsistent with GALHA’s ethos. We therefore wish to make it clear that GALHA does not endorse those opinions and we unreservedly dissociate ourselves from them.

‘We are taking urgent steps to avoid this situation recurring.’

At no time during the committee’s deliberations or before the issue of this news release were the editorial team consulted or asked for a comment or for their opinion of events. It will be noted that the release was written and transmitted before the committee received the editorial team’s rebuttal.

This press release led to the following post on the islamophobia-watch.com weblog on 17 October, saying, ‘The GALHA committee has issued a statement regarding comments in the Autumn 2005 issue of the *Gay and Lesbian Humanist* magazine.’

After a single-line hyperlink to the 16 October press release on the GALHA website, the Islamophobia-watch.com post continued thus:

This statement can only be welcomed. On the other hand, the contact given is GALHA secretary George Broadhead, who is himself the author of an article in the same issue of *G&LH* magazine which includes the following passage:

‘There are two terms that, increasingly, annoy us: *Islamophobia* and *moderate Muslims*. What we’d like to know is, first, what’s wrong with being fearful of Islam (there’s a lot to fear); and, second, what does a moderate Muslim do, other than excuse the real nutters by adhering to this barmy doctrine?’

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Broadhead's assertion – in the aftermath of 9/11 and 7/7 – that there are no such people as 'moderate Muslims', and that all adherents of Islam are implicated in the actions of a minority of extremists, strikes me as only marginally less poisonous than the material in *G&LH* magazine from which the GALHA committee now seeks to dissociate itself.

Incidentally, the GALHA website contains the following information about the author of the most blatantly Islamophobic article in *G&LH* magazine: 'Diesel Balaam works in the television industry. He was co-author with Sukie de la Croix of the satirical column *Emerald City News* which appeared weekly in London's *Capital Gay* from 1987 to 1992. Their book of short stories *Black Confetti: New Fairy Tales for an Old Country* was reviewed in the Spring 1996 issue of *Gay and Lesbian Humanist*.' So GALHA members who deny any knowledge of who Balaam is are perhaps being a trifle disingenuous.

Posted on Monday, October 17, 2005 by  Bob Pitt in Secular, UK | Comments Off

Later that day, Terry Sanderson posted the following to the GALHA discussion list, referring to the post above:

Seems we've placated Islamophobia Watch a little – but not a lot. It seems nothing, but nothing other than complete abasement to Islam will ever succeed in satisfying this load of extremists.

Derek Lennard, announced his resignation that day from the GALHA committee and as chair, using a post to the discussion list:

This is to inform you that I have resigned as Chair of GALHA and as a member of the GALHA committee.

I found the autumn edition of *Gay and Lesbian Humanist* to contain offensive material about immigrants, and although I appreciate the fact that the GALHA Committee has distanced itself from these comments (www.galha.org <<http://www.galha.org/>>), in my view this is not a sufficiently strong enough response.

I've really enjoyed working with you all and wish you well for the future.

This brought a response on the discussion list from one of its subscribers, Paul Allen:

Hello Lennard

I have unfortunately never met you. I don't get out much.

I have not sent an email on this list before. I haven't even had chance to read the offending material. I am just surprised that the Chair of an organisation resigns over such a matter. I assume the issue is with the Editor and the contributor, not the whole membership which I assume voted you into office.

It seems a shame that there is little explanation to the membership which would enlighten rather than confuse, at least me. There are no references to the offending material or indeed a constructive solution to ensure such material doesn't lead to this response again from least of all the Chair of the

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organisation. Can this not be reconciled at least for now rather than 'resigned' over?

I will now go and read the magazine.

The editor received, from its author, a copy of an email from GALHA member and occasional *G&LH* contributor Daniel O'Hara, a former GALHA chair and former president of the National Secular Society, to another GALHA member and occasional *G&LH* contributor, Martin Stafford, also dated 17 October:

Thank you for bringing to my attention the article by Diesel Balaam in the latest *G&LH* magazine.

I am astonished to hear that the Editor has been criticized for publishing this very balanced and thoughtful contribution.

In my opinion, it contains a shrewd and accurate analysis of our current malaise as a Nation, and it is refreshing to see such sensible views aired in our journal.

My main surprise is that Diesel should have come round to such enlightened opinions. In the early days of GALHA, I remember him as something of an anarchist: now he seems much more like a potential Conservative MP. He would certainly get my vote!

Stafford himself emailed Armitage the following day, 18 October 2005, after a telephone conversation had taken place between the two on the 16th:

Since I spoke to you on Sunday afternoon I have carefully read Diesel Balaam's article once again. (Diesel has not yet replied to my email to him.) [Balaam was away on holiday, and would be until the following week.]

I reiterate my view that I can see nothing in it which is exceptionable. Its language is never intemperate and I think most of what he says is true beyond serious dispute. Diesel begins in the best tradition of empiricism and free-thinking by emphasising the need to question and revise our beliefs and attitudes. If over-liberal attitudes and naive optimism have served us ill (as I think they have), it is indeed time to think again!

On page 12, column b, he compares Islamic fanatics to the Nazis and Bolsheviks. I think it unlikely that Muslim fanatics would ever be able to seize power as the Bolsheviks did in 1917 or that they would be elected as the Nazis were in 1933. They are, nevertheless a growing menace against whom we need to be on our guard.

I am firmly of the view that not just deportation but also the death penalty should be available to punish their worst excesses and indeed other non-ideological crimes of violence. (The last few days have brought news of a homophobic killing on Clapham Common.) Last year, a policeman was stabbed to death in Crumpsall (North Manchester) by an Algerian whom he had come to apprehend. In a society managed to my liking, the murderer (who was apprehended and about whose guilt there can be no doubt) would have been summarily tried and executed the next day.

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Anyway, I hope you survive as editor. If you are removed, they will have to find a new editor who will do the job as efficiently as you. That may not be easy and such a prospect may deter them from acting hastily.

A post to the GALHA list on 18 October from Grant Denkinson said this (although it is not clear which of the previous posts the word 'similar' refers to in the first sentence):

I have a similar reaction to the piece. I was surprised to see what I read as a direct lift from British Nationalist Party (BNP) fascist rhetoric in GALHA's magazine. Was the point that we all agree that this stuff is wrong and so have lost the ability to articulate why? Was it designed to go against most of our views and so stir up controversy to make the magazine more lively? Was it a subtle point about the policy of various groups not to give a platform to fascists? Was it a serious call to Nazi philosophy or a reflection of the membership's views?

I'm involved with various campaigning issues. When I've been to GALHA meetings and read the magazine I haven't found the group widely out of step with my views. It has been one of my favourite groups and one I've always spoken highly of. Do I really want to spend my time fighting here? I think I could be more effective elsewhere. I'll leave it a few days to think about it, but am minded to say goodbye.

In response to Denkinson, a GALHA member and former PTT chair, David Christmas, posted the following:

I understand Grant's reaction to Diesel Ballam's piece in the magazine – I was also very uncomfortable with it, and I am also very fond of GALHA.

However, I don't think it is a reason to leave the organisation. This article wasn't in any way an expression of GALHA policy nor was it presented as reflecting our views as members. In fact, where it did claim for speak for us it was fine, eg 'racism is the antithesis of Humanism'. The rest was simply one person's view.

I would be happier if it hadn't been published, but I'm not going to cancel my membership because views that I find offensive have been printed in the magazine, especially when the committee is trying to make sure that it never happens again.

There's a tricky balancing act in producing a stimulating publication and I'm glad I don't have to do it. I'd be more likely to leave if the mag became a dreary mouthpiece for committee approved statements of official policy ... [ellipsis that of the author]

Also on the 18th, a contributor to the list, Peter Forster, sent the following post, addressed specifically to Lennard and concerning his resignation:

Isn't this a wee bit peremptory? There a letters page in G&L Humanist – or this site [referring to the GALHA Yahoogroups discussion list], or the coming [GALHA annual] luncheon – in which you can disassociate yourself from another individual's opinion and give your reasons? Having found the frightfully offensive remarks (presumably those on pp 10 -12) they might

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indeed offend somebody who is offended by other peoples' opinions, which are healthily debatable (conceding this, correcting that, coming to a compromise on the other) in a Society like GALHA, formed with the objective of criticizing what are usually called 'Other Peoples' Deeply Held Beliefs' and causing offence right, left, centre and 'On High.' Ah well. It's none of my business – except the loss of Chairperson is surely the business of everybody in GALHA, especially when a matter of principle is the cause.

During the evening of the 18th, the editorial team sent the following email, addressed to 'The PTT Board of Trustees':

You will all be aware no doubt of the criticisms of certain content of the Autumn issue of *G&LH* made by the GALHA committee. You may also be aware that we submitted yesterday to the GALHA committee a comprehensive and referenced rebuttal of the accusations made against us.

In our submission we touched upon the fact that the publisher of the magazine is the PTT not GALHA, and yet it is GALHA, not the PTT, that has made this complaint.

GALHA has now made a public statement indicating that it is 'taking urgent steps to avoid this situation recurring', which is, of course – given the fact that the matter has not even been raised by GALHA with the PTT – saying that GALHA will determine editorial policy of the magazine. Surely, then, by its own determination, GALHA is acting *ultra vires*, since its response to a motion from Mike [Foxwell] to its last AGM little more than a month ago, asking for editorial guidance from GALHA in certain matters, was to declare that GALHA did not have the power to issue such guidelines, since it did not publish the magazine. Both positions cannot be correct. Either GALHA misled the AGM or it is acting improperly now.

We will be addressing this question directly to the GALHA committee, but we must request the PTT's statement confirming that editorial control resides with the PTT not GALHA.

We don't have a personal email address for Mike Savage [a trustee]. If the PTT address we've used is incorrect, please could someone forward this to him.

The following (similar) email went out that evening from the editorial team to the GALHA committee:

You will now have received our detailed rebuttal of the accusations made against us relating to the content of the Autumn issue of *G&LH*.

In our submission we touched upon the fact that the publisher of the magazine is the PTT and not GALHA, and yet it is GALHA, not the PTT, that has made this complaint.

Now GALHA has issued a public statement indicating that it is 'taking urgent steps to avoid this situation recurring', which is, of course – given the fact that the matter has not even been raised by GALHA with the PTT – saying that GALHA will determine editorial policy of the magazine. Surely, then, by its own determination, GALHA is acting *ultra vires*, since its response to a motion from Mike to its last AGM little more than a month ago, asking for editorial guidance from GALHA in certain matters, was to declare that

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GALHA did not have the power to issue such guidelines, since it does not publish the magazine. Both positions cannot be correct. Either GALHA misled the AGM or it is acting improperly now.

We have addressed this question directly to the PTT but must ask you for a formal statement to confirm that you acknowledge that editorial control actually resides with the PTT, in order to be consistent with your treatment of Mike's motion at the AGM.

It is ironic that GALHA's news release gives George Broadhead as the contact, since it is he who had full prior sight of and gave approval to the World Watch copy. The very same World Watch that was criticised by the Islamaphobia-watch.com website that you complained to us had repeated the alleged inflammatory material you objected to.

The 'formal statement to confirm that you acknowledge that editorial control actually resides with the PTT' has to date not been received. Indeed, there was no response to the email to the GALHA committee, and there has been no response to the detailed rebuttal, other than Terry Sanderson's and Keith Angus's brief individual acknowledgements (above) as *members* of the committee.

On the evening of 18 October, Dean Braithwaite, assistant editor of *G&LH* and a PTT trustee, emailed the GALHA committee thus:

I'm dismayed to see that GALHA has made policy decisions and issued a public statement [the 16 October press release] relating to *Gay and Lesbian Humanist* without before speaking to the magazine's editorial team and without consultation with the PTT trustees.

I am in Swansea until late tomorrow, but have had input into the responses already sent from the editorial team to the GALHA committee and PTT trustees. However, as a PTT trustee myself, I have much more to say on this matter but, at this stage, will confine myself to the following.

It is not for the GALHA committee to decide editorial policy of *G&LH*. That is the preserve of the PTT. This fact was made abundantly clear last month when a motion put to GALHA's AGM asking for editorial guidance on *G&LH* was amended to refer the situation to the PTT. Despite this, in the row arising from articles published in this Autumn's *G&LH*, the GALHA committee has made policy decisions on behalf of the PTT, which it recognised at the AGM that it has no authority to do.

I only became aware of GALHA's actions after Andy [Armitage] informed me he'd received a complaint from the committee. At no time has this matter been passed on to the PTT as it should have been.

The GALHA committee must now acknowledge that it has acted improperly in this matter and the PTT must do what it should have done in the first place, take control of the matter, handle any complaints and decide how to deal with this situation.

Brett Lock, a GALHA committee member, said in a response to this,

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GALHA did query this with the PTT representatives on the GALHA committee and specifically asked if the comments should be addressed to the PTT. Roy Saich (a PTT trustee) *insisted* that GALHA write directly to the editor even after the appropriateness of this was questioned by some on the GALHA committee.

This brought the following response from Braithwaite in an email addressed to the GALHA committee, dated 22 October:

Roy Saich is a PTT trustee, not the PTT. It is not up to any one trustee to make policy decisions. The GALHA committee should have passed this matter on to the PTT, and GALHA committee members, especially those who were present at the AGM on 4 September (only ?? [sic – it was about four] weeks before this row erupted) would have been perfectly aware of this. The GALHA committee acted improperly in its actions and if GALHA committee members wearing their PTT hats endorsed these actions, then they also acted improperly in their trustee capacities.

The tone and method of the complaint sent to Andy by the GALHA committee on 13 October was extremely unprofessional, not to say very insulting, and does GALHA a great disservice. Barely 24 hours after sending the complaint, the committee chivvied for a response, apparently expecting one immediately. By its own admission, the committee had spent a whole week discussing this and then expected Andy to reply in less than 24 hours. Then, to make matters worse, and without having spoken to Andy, the committee issued a news release compounding the situation. All the time, ignoring the fact that the PTT should have been dealing with this anyway.

I have today written to ask George (in his capacity as PTT secretary) to arrange, as a matter of urgency, a meeting of the PTT trustees. I have also requested from him (in his capacity as GALHA secretary) a copy of the minutes of the GALHA committee meeting at which this matter was discussed.

The points made in this email have not been addressed. As stated in the above email, he had emailed George Broadhead thus:

Please forgive the formality of this email.

You may have gathered this already but, to say that I'm unhappy at what has transpired over the past week or so is a massive understatement. I have a great deal more to say on this matter.

I'm writing to request two things.

First, in your capacity as PTT secretary, I'm requesting that a meeting of the board of PTT trustees be arranged as a matter of some urgency. Unfortunately, I'm not available next week but can make any time after 2 November (except Wednesdays).

Second, in your capacity as GALHA secretary, as a GALHA member, I'm requesting a copy of the minutes of the GALHA committee meeting at which the matter concerning the Autumn issue of *G&LH* was discussed.

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Thank you.

Broadhead and Roy Saich, chair of the PTT trustees and a member of the GALHA committee (mentioned in Lock's email above), returned from a week's break. Broadhead emailed Braithwaite, who is a PTT trustee:

Roy and I returned from a visit to the IOM yesterday and I have just read your e-mail.

Lee Stacy took the minutes of the last [GALHA] committee meeting on 2 October 2005 and he has not yet issued them. However, I recall that although Roy and I had received copies of the magazine (in the batch Sean [of Hampden Advertising, the magazine's printers] sent to Kenilworth earlier that week) and were able to give one to Brett H [Humphreys] who drove us to London, none of the other six committee members had had it delivered and therefore a chance to read Diesel's article.

Re your request for a PTT trustees meeting, Brett H has already suggested this. We suggest Saturday 5 November here in Kenilworth.

Given my friendship with you and Andy, this whole business has been very distressing for me and the sooner an agreeable solution is reached the better. I will try and e-mail you and Andy later today with a proposition based on the last sentence of paragraph six in the 'Editorial team's response'.

(Paragraph 6 reads, 'As far as we can see, the only way this would have been workable would have been for a single person on one of the committees to be responsible – but is that not just the same as being the editor?')

In an email to Braithwaite on 23 October, Broadhead, among other things, announced the resignation from the GALHA committee and the PTT of the latter's treasurer, Brett Humphreys:

Just to confirm that the meeting proposed for 5 November is on as all five trustees can make it.

I've been a bit overwhelmed since our return yesterday, but I will e-mail you, Andy and Mike about the magazine tomorrow in the hope (desperate!!) that the matter can be amicably resolved.

Sadly Brett Humphreys has resigned as a GALHA committee member and will do as trustee after he has prepared its accounts.

5: Attempts at a Solution

Among other things, this chapter details an exchange of emails that show the two sides attempting to reach an accommodation, a mutually acceptable *modus operandi*. On 24 October, George Broadhead emailed the editorial team:

I am e-mailing you in a personal capacity in an attempt to resolve the present crisis which has caused so much grief, taken up so much time, and already resulted in two GALHA committee members and one PTT trustee resigning. I would have done this earlier but I was away all last week.

First I want to repeat what I said in a recent e-mail to Dean. The PTT publishes the magazine and pays for its editing. It is, therefore, solely responsible for this, and the only legal right GALHA has (according to the PTT Deed of Trust) is the approval of newly appointed PTT trustees. However, I hope you will agree that since GALHA set up the PTT in the first place and most copies of the magazine are distributed free to GALHA members, the GALHA committee has a close interest in the magazine, which is always on its meeting agendas, and a moral right to air its views about it .

Brett Humphreys' resignation has come as great shock to most committee members and has made it even more imperative that the present crisis is speedily resolved. I am therefore putting to you a proposal which, if acceptable, could be put to the PTT trustees for approval when they meet on 5 November 2005.

The proposal is based on your statement in 'Editorial team's response to committee complaints on Autumn 2005 issue of *G&LH*'.

'As far as we can see, the only way this [a check on the content of the magazine] would have been workable would have been for a single person on one of the committees to be responsible'.

As both a GALHA committee member and a PTT trustee, I am willing to take this on if it is acceptable. I think the magazine is the best thing GALHA/PTT has to offer and I have worked closely with Andy and Dean to help make it the success it now is.

I do hope you can go along with this proposal and thus ensure an end to the current crisis.

The editorial team's response to this was sent to Broadhead on 26 October:

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Thank you for your email, which you say is sent in a personal capacity. How much more welcome it would have been had it been in your capacity as GALHA secretary! More than a week has passed since we submitted to each committee member individually our rebuttal of the grossly insulting and groundless attack on us. We would have expected a formal response by now, in view of the fact that it took the GALHA committee just one week to hatch the attack and only a day longer to issue a news release that restated it, this time most publicly, without its bothering to consider, or even wait to hear, our side of the story. Nothing less than summary justice was meted out to us.

What is even more upsetting is that the GALHA committee has not even expressed regret, much less apology, for the hysterical and insulting way the complaint was couched, even though we know that Terry Sanderson has said that the complaint submitted to us by Derek Lennard was not the one the committee agreed upon. We cannot believe that you can be surprised at the considerable collateral damage that has occurred in the wake of these events.

We are further, quite frankly, astonished that the PTT has not, even now, made any formal reaction whatever to the crisis. It is the PTT that publishes the magazine and has the authority to set editorial policy, as indeed the GALHA committee confirmed at its recent AGM, and yet it remains resolutely silent. If GALHA can muster a hysterical, one-sided tirade in a week, why cannot the PTT manage even a squeak of comment in the same time, especially in view of the fact that it has three out of five members in common?

This, then, logically, is our problem, in knowing exactly how to respond to your personal email, but we will nonetheless attempt this. While we agree that GALHA, and indeed anyone at all, has a *moral* right to air whatever views it likes about the magazine, only the PTT has the right to rebuke the editorial team and to set editorial policy, yet this is exactly what *GALHA* has done – and most publicly at that! To suggest, as has indeed been suggested, that, because the GALHA committee has members in common with the PTT committee (or Board of Trustees, if you prefer), it has some special authority to speak for the PTT, is fatuous. The PTT's committee, just like GALHA's, is the totality of its members and no individual or subset of it has the right to speak for it unless the committee has consented to this, which in this case we know it had not. We know this because Dean is a member of the PTT committee, and he wasn't even consulted before (or indeed since) the GALHA committee's precipitate actions.

This is a very serious situation, but neither GALHA nor the PTT has shown the slightest sign that it recognises it as such, and this myopia poses an insurmountable barrier to any constructive or honourable resolution of this crisis.

In your email you quote, though unfortunately not completely, an extract from our rebuttal of the attack made upon us by the GALHA committee. Had you rendered it in full, you would have included the final clause 'but is that not just the same as being the editor?', and this contains the sense of the whole passage: what is the point in having two editors? While we can see the point

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of giving copy a legal read (that is having it read by a lawyer to ensure there is no defamatory etc. content – and this is often done by publishers and something we would have no objection to), we are not aware of any special expertise that you could bring to bear. After all, it is Andy who has been a senior journalist in charge of newsrooms and whose judgement in these matters his employers have relied upon. If we are missing something, please do enlighten us, as we seek only to state fact, not make derogatory personal remarks.

What other reason, then, can there be for having two editors of *G&LH* except for one to act as censor? And what possible other motive can there be for this, other than to ensure that, if the material about which the GALHA committee has complained had arisen under your proposed two-editor system, it would not be published? Since the GALHA committee has offered no reasoned support for its attack on us, nor any reasoned criticism (or indeed any at all) of our rebuttal of that attack, we can see no logical reason to change our view that we were in no way at fault for publishing the material in question and that we would not hesitate to do so again. That the material has offended the deeply held views of some people is either no argument for censorship or else it is, in which case there are no grounds to attack, as we believe GALHA has, in common with other liberal groups and individuals, legislation such as Tony Blair's government's religious-hatred Bill.

We are each of us categorically and unequivocally opposed to the censorship of the expression of legitimate opinion, no matter how contentious or politically incorrect it may be considered by some people, and we will not work under any such regime designed to do this.

Broadhead responded on 29 October:

I was disappointed to receive your response to what I thought was a conciliatory e-mail.

Partly because of our long-standing friendship, and partly because of all the good work you have done for the magazine, which was acknowledged in the GALHA committee's e-mail dated 13 October 2005, I was making a last-ditch personal attempt to ensure that you remained editors by complying with the request (made in that same e-mail) to have future issues checked on behalf of the PTT trustees. This e-mail was sent with the almost unanimous agreement of the nine committee members, though the attachment with comments was sent by Derek Lennard himself off his own bat without the committee's approval.

I don't think you fully understand the damaging consequences of publishing the controversial statements in the latest *G&LH*. The GALHA/PTT image has been severely dented. Gay activists like Peter Tatchell who has been a staunch GALHA supporter and frequent contributor to the magazine, have expressed their dismay and abhorrence at what they perceive to be the 'racist' content of the magazine. Peter e-mailed me: 'The writers may not be racist and may not wish for their views to be interpreted as racist. But some of the opinions expressed in the latest issue of *Gay & Lesbian Humanist* are racist. They include stereotyping and sweeping generalisations. This is intolerable. There can be no excuse or delay in condemning racism. If we believe in universal human rights, as OutRage! and I do, we are duty bound

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to challenge racism wherever we find it, and to express respect for, and solidarity with, people of all nationalities and races.' Furthermore, GALHA has received a communication from Imaan (the support group for LGBT Muslims), the Lesbian and Gay Coalition Against Racism, and Regard (the organisation for disabled LGBT people) expressing their grave concerns about 'the statements which we believe constitute incitement to racial hatred in the latest edition of *Gay & Lesbian Humanist*.' They want this communication, which quotes extensively from *G&LH*, forwarded to GALHA's president and vice-presidents asking them to withdraw their support, and we have good reason to believe they have already sent it to those vice-presidents whose e-mail addresses they have. Last, but by no means least, we are very concerned that many GALHA members and subscribers to *G&LH* will take the same view and discontinue their subscriptions. All in all, the publication of the controversial statements has caused a great deal of woe and may yet lead to something much more serious. As you know, the trustees and yourselves bear personal financial responsibility if any legal action is brought and our worry about this is another very good reason for requesting scrutiny of future material in the magazine.

I am very surprised that you think the PTT has taken no action. Dean should surely have told you that Brett Humphreys, Roy Saich and myself decided some time ago that an emergency meeting should be arranged asap to discuss the situation and 5 November 2005 had been agreed by all the trustees, including Dean. Unfortunately Dean discovered that he had another engagement in connection with his studies and the meeting will now not take place until later that month.

In view of your determination to disallow any scrutiny of the content of future issues of the magazine, a proposal will be made at this meeting that publication of the magazine be suspended until such time as a new editor, or editors, can be appointed.

Meanwhile, on 25 October, an email had been received by the editor from a new GALHA member, Frankie Green of Kent, although the salutation was 'Dear GALHA'. It read,

I have recently joined the Gay and Lesbian Humanist Association, concerned like many people by the growth of the right-wing influence of organised religion and patriarchal fundamentalism, in good faith expecting to find myself among others who uphold human rights in conjunction with the necessity of secular separation of religion and state.

However, I was disappointed and shocked to find, within the pages of your Autumn magazine, sentiments expressed which would not be out of place in the Daily Mail or a BNP publication.

Statements such as 'racism is the antithesis of Humanism' are completely undermined by your editorial referring to Muslim influence growing 'like a canker ... through immigration and ... unrestrained and irresponsible breeding' and an article opining that demographic changes resulting from 'reckless and mismanaged immigration policies' mean that 'foreign settlers' are making 'us' 'strangers in our own land' where in some places 'Englishmen (sic) will be in the minority.' Incredibly, the author of these

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comments advocates 'selective immigration' as practiced in Australia, well known for its liberal hospitality to asylum seekers.

I could only conclude that writers for GALHA magazine are completely out of touch with the reality of current practices of immigration officialdom, which I assure you are not only tough but frequently brutal and inhumane, far from being 'hampered' by the efforts of 'human rights lawyers.'

However much you oppose Catholic 'old-style morality campaigners' it is offensively sexist to refer to them as 'shrewish post-menopausal women.'

However, reading on, I found the author contending that Britain, because of 'its colonial past', provides the 'big template for democratic freedoms and the rule of law' and lamenting that recent decades have seen a denigration of 'Britain's colonial achievements' when 'we should take pride in the good our forefathers have done in the world.'

At this stage, of course, I realised that this must be a spoof article, satirising the current state of a world riven by the legacies of imperialism, and the disregard of its political leaders for law, both domestic and international.

Some doubt remains, however, and so I am writing to request a clarification of your editorial policy on these matters and commitment to upholding anti-racist policies worthy of Humanism. Should this be impossible, I request a refund of my subscription and resign my membership.

It was signed 'Ms Frankie Green (Post-menopausal, internationalist, secular feminist lesbian shrew)'. The editor expressed the wish in a response that she remain a GALHA member, but gave her George Broadhead's email address, since GALHA membership matters were not his concern. Green must then have sent the same email to Broadhead, for some days later Broadhead forwarded it to Armitage, probably not realising the latter had already seen it. In his 25 October response to Green explaining the magazine's editorial policy, Armitage wrote,

Thank you for your email. However, GALHA doesn't publish the magazine: the PTT does, and you will see on the imprint page (p. 2) a disclaimer to the effect that the PTT doesn't necessarily endorse the views expressed in the magazine.

The magazine attempts to publish a wide variety of views, believing that publishing only non-contentious, middle-ground opinions is not the way to stimulate debate and broaden humanist discourse.

I hope you will not resign from GALHA, but the person you need to contact is its secretary, George Broadhead.

Thanks again for getting in touch.

The day before this, on 24 October, a short debate had begun to appear on another Yahoo! discussion group, Gay Campaigns. A member of Polari, Richard Farnos, criticised the magazine indirectly after reading an article Armitage had posted to the list – for general interest, and nothing to do with the

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magazine or its contents – from *Spiked*, an online magazine. Farnos wrote, 'Thank you for sending us this [the *Spiked* article], I haven't read such ill-informed conflation of half truths and prejudice about liberal establishments and need to rein in the rights of a minority group since the last edition of *Gay and Lesbian Humanist*.' This prompted Armitage to write to the list (but addressing his remarks to Farnos),

Thank you for your considered comments. I am not getting into the debate about the article in *G&LH*, except to say you ought to read it again and question your seeming assertion that a magazine – any magazine – should stifle debate, whether its editors agree or disagree with the content.

In a 25 October post to the list, Farnos wrote,

... the particular article being referred to in *Gay and Lesbian Humanist (G&LH)* is Diesel Balaam's 'Towards New Humanism' which is on pages 10 to 12 of the last edition. Like Josie Appleton [in a *Spiked Online* piece referred to earlier], Diesel argues that a minority group are being give too much liberty by the 'liberal establishment' (whoever they are) and need to be reined in. For Josie it is queers for Diesel it is Muslims. Diesel does take the argument a bit further than Josie in calling for 'Enlightened Authoritarianism' (whatever that is) and the repatriation of 'undesirables' (whoever they are) including 'perhaps second or third generation immigrants'.

Sorry Roger [Burg, list moderator] if there has been some confusion over what I am saying, as outline above I was simply seeking to point out the similarities in the arguments – well that teaches me not to use irony.

Indeed contrary to Andy's assertion I never raised the question of whether the *G&LH* should have published this feature, but while we are on the subject may I point out a couple of points:

- 1) To my knowledge *G&LH* has never published an article critical of the clash of cultures thesis inherent in Diesel argument. So I do find the assertion that the *G&LH* encourages debate a bit rich.
- 2) While a journal is not responsible for the opinions of its contributors it is both legally and morally responsible to ensure that the evidence they represent in the support of their arguments is accurate and that opinions are not expressed in such a way as they contrary to the law. So, for example, I challenge the accuracy of the assertion that 'our population is growing by the equivalent of a city the size of Cambridge every six months' (that would be 229,000 a year) and I think that Diesel assertion that 'many of these Third World and Eastern European newcomers are criminals of the worst kind' may actually be incitement of racial hatred.
- 3) I am a bit worried about Andy's continued defence of this piece as I understand that GALHA's national committee has distanced themselves from it and have promised that they 'are taking urgent steps to avoid this situation recurring.' A link to the GALHA press release as follows http://www.galha.org/press/2005/10_16.html

On 26 October, Armitage wrote to the list,

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I defend the publication of articles, not necessarily the articles. Much appears that I don't agree with, or only half agree with. Please don't shoot the messenger.

As for our prompting debate, you may recall the one about AIDS and HIV not so long ago. Some of the reactions (not all) to that proved that there are a lot of people who feel uncomfortable if their well-entrenched views are challenged and they're forced to think outside their cages – and I wrote a piece (<http://www.galha.org/glh/233/aids.html>) defending my decision to publish it. You may recall it. Reread it. My stance there remains. There's plenty in the magazine to encourage debate (and clashes of culture are often alluded to).

The GALHA committee are not the publishers of the magazine. However, what you may not know is that we have produced a heavy (more than 5,000 words long) and *well*-referenced rebuttal. A piece of journalism cannot be expected to cite a reference for each claim. When did you last see that in the *Guardian* or *Times*? You're confusing the magazine with an academic journal. It is not, and doesn't purport to be.

Now if you wish to argue with the matters in the article, feel free.

Ending this short diversion into the Gay Campaigns discussion is a message Armitage posted on behalf of Broadhead, who was not at that time a subscriber to that list. This was dated 31 October 2005, and read,

Please note:

(1) that the Gay and Lesbian Humanist Association (GALHA) and the *Gay & Lesbian Humanist* magazine have not condemned only Islam on account of its homophobia, but the Church of England, the Roman Catholic Church, the Salvation Army et al.

(2) GALHA invited Adnan Ali of the gay Muslim group Al Fatiha UK (now renamed Imaan) to give a talk putting the gay Muslim point of view at one its public meetings in 2003 at London's Conway Hall. This talk was reported in *G&LH* Spring 2003 and was very sympathetic towards gay Muslims, if not to their religion.

(3) A link to Al Fatiha International is given at the end of the GALHA briefing on Islam on its website at http://www.galha.org/briefing/2003_03.html.

Meanwhile, on 28 October, GALHA's new acting chair, Lee Stacy, emailed the editor:

The GALHA Committee sincerely regrets that the former Chair, Derek Lennard, made an executive decision without the Committee's agreement to attach samples of comments made in private on the committee discussion list to the letter drafted from the Committee to yourself. We are certain that Derek only did so to demonstrate the strength of feeling among the Committee, but we feel that this was wrong and we are sorry for the offence the unauthorised appendix to the authorised letter undoubtedly caused.

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By way of explanation, the 'committee discussion list' referred to by Stacy is another Yahoogroups list, and is restricted to members of the GALHA committee. It is also worth pointing out that Braithwaite was told in a telephone conversation with George Broadhead that the committee had not wanted to make this statement of regret but had to be 'bullied' into making it.

On 31 October, Armitage and Braithwaite sent the following email to Broadhead by way of a response to his previous one, and offering a way around the crisis:

Much has been said over the past couple of weeks concerning the brouhaha following the publication of contentious material in the Autumn issue of *G&LH*. Clearly, there is no need to rehash any of that here. What we are about to propose is predicated on the assumption that the PTT would still like us to continue in our roles as editor and assistant editor of the magazine. If this is not the case, you may as well not read on! But here goes.

We do believe that there's a campaign afoot to silence GALHA's criticism of the dangers Islam poses to lesbian and gay people. If this is the case – and we suspect others on the two committees (GALHA and the PTT) share our concerns – then GALHA and the PTT, and especially the magazine, are faced with a stark choice: either we have to tone down any criticisms to the point that they become innocuous and therefore ineffective, or we put into place measures that would protect all parties from a legal challenge, thereby enabling GALHA, the PTT and the magazine to continue their mission of challenging religious threats to the human rights and dignities of gay and lesbian people.

It seems to us that this protection would come in two parts. First, all contentious material would be vetted legally by someone with the necessary expertise, appointed by the PTT. It may be possible to find someone within the ranks of the GALHA membership. Further, we do feel that this person should not otherwise be involved in the committee, so as to guarantee independence and to obviate any suggestion of partiality from any party, be it GALHA, the PTT or us.

Having put this in place, the PTT then needs to purchase indemnity insurance so that, notwithstanding the legal safeguard we mention above, there would be protection from any action or threat of action. This need not be very expensive, we think, since Mike has similar insurance cover for his editorial services business and tells us he pays only something like £25 per month. Any good commercial broker should be able to advise on this.

The way we'd envisage this system working would be along the following lines. All contentious material would be sent by us directly to the PTT-appointed legal expert for vetting. This would be a matter of course for all contentious material. We would then categorically and without reservation guarantee that all recommended changes to copy would be implemented.

We would be happy to formally indemnify the PTT of any liability should we fail in our undertaking, and this would be fair, since, if the above two measures were implemented by the PTT, it would have done all it could reasonably have done to protect itself.

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This, then, is our proposal to the PTT board, and we look forward to a formal response in due course.

We do recognise the trauma this has caused everyone and the above proposals are meant to ensure that this can never happen again.

A response to this came from Roy Saich, who in error sent it only to Braithwaite, but apologised and sent it to Armitage two days later, 2 November. It is dated 31 October:

George has forwarded your e-mail to the PTT trustees. He is not able to take the stress the Autumn issue of the G & L H is generating and so please send all future communications to me as Chair of the PTT at this e-mail address.

The following are my personal comments and I await the responses of the other PTT trustees.

I agree with following your suggestions about insurance and legal advice, but this does not get over the over problem. The mag is partly to promote GALHA and the PTT in a good light. It is not a soapbox. When an issue leads to the resignations of important committee members the resulting woe and difficulties cannot be ignored.

It is therefore essential that, in addition to safeguarding ourselves from legal threats, we maintain good relationships with other like minded organisations. You have seen the reaction from Peter Tatchell.

I cannot sit in Kenilworth waiting until each issue to our mag is delivered wondering if it contains 'contentious material' that I could not defend if challenged, and is likely to lead to acrimony.

Any editor must in future agree to the decisions about content the PTT may make. It is not right for any editor to fail to consult the trustees at all in advance about content. I hope that you can agree with this reasonable request, because as you say I would like you to continue in your roles as editor and assistant editor of the mag.

If you cannot do this, please let me know so as not to prolong this agony.

The editors' response to this was sent on 4 November:

Thanks very much for your email dated 2 November. We note your comments. While there are areas we could take issue with, we have gone over a lot of ground over the past week or so, and there seems little to be gained by raking over the coals again. I hope, too, that you have noted the mass of evidence we (and Diesel Balaam) have brought to your attention in support of his article and the points in Andy's piece and George's 'World Watch' that caused some concern.

We understand your concerns. Logically, then, the way to meet them is for all copy for inclusion in the magazine to be sent to us by the PTT, once the PTT has established that there is nothing that offends its taste. In practice, this would be more straightforward, since all contributions need only be sent

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direct to the PTT for approval, rather than to us, as has happened in the past. In view of your concerns, there is little sense in wasting time by having contributions sent to us, only for us to send them immediately to the PTT for vetting, and for the PTT then to return them to us.

This, then, constitutes a second proposal, which is not intended to replace our first one: both proposals are intended for consideration by the PTT.

We hope that you agree that we have done our best to meet your concerns, irrespective of our own views on this whole matter.

In the meantime, we would ask that you would acknowledge receipt of this email once you have downloaded it. Thanks.

This, however, was not acceptable to Saich, although there had not been a meeting of the trustees thus far, so he was still writing as an individual trustee. In an email dated 4 November, he said,

Thanks for your e-mail. I don't see the point of copy being sent here as the PTT would need to see the whole contents, including photos and captions prior to publication – the modern equivalent of galley proofs. Please confirm that this is acceptable you.

For all copy to be looked at by a solicitor would be prohibitively expensive so we would all have to exercise reasonable care as you have done up to now.

The cost of insurance would have to be investigated but I fear that without legal scrutiny it would be prohibitive.

The editorial team did not respond immediately. A chivvying email dated 6 November:

In my last e-mail to you I said, 'I don't see the point of copy being sent here as the PTT would need to see the whole contents, including photos and captions prior to publication – the modern equivalent of galley proofs. Please confirm that this is acceptable to you'.

I had hoped you would be able to confirm by return that it is acceptable to you to let the PTT see all the proofs prior to publication, so that we can move on. Are you able to confirm it now?

Yet another attempt by the editorial team to suggest a way around the issue was sent to Saich on 7 November:

Thank you for your email. We're sorry our reply hasn't come as quickly as you would have liked, but we feel this is a very important matter that needs full and careful consideration and there have been far too many hasty reactions of late.

We have carefully considered your reservation about our second proposal and so have recast it to take this into account. Before stating our new proposal 2, we would like to give some explanation concerning our reasons behind it.

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You say that you wish to have sight of the 'galley proofs'. Well, what this would mean would be the finished magazine prior to printing. It would be ludicrous to start editing/vetting copy and thereby unpicking the magazine when all the editing, design work, layout, proofreading etc. had already been done. This could mean that substantial parts or even the whole of the magazine would have to be redesigned, since even quite small changes can have knock-on design and layout consequences. This is unreasonable, as producing the magazine as it is is already a labour of love and takes far more time overall than the payment Andy receives justifies. Please do not misunderstand: Andy is not unhappy with the remuneration for the work in producing the magazine because he (and indeed Dean also) is committed to *G&LH* and we have wanted it to always be as good as possible. Also, to have to rework an already completed magazine would, in addition, be totally soul-destroying. The only logical and sensible way around this is for GALHA/PTT to supply all the ready-vetted material including pictures that it wishes to go into each issue of the magazine. Provided this is done, we would be quite happy to accede to your wish for the PTT to view the galleys as the likelihood of any substantial change being required under these circumstances would be very small.

You have said that you see *G&LH* as the GALHA newsletter, notwithstanding that it isn't published by GALHA and, as was demonstrated at the GALHA AGM, you believe GALHA has no power to influence editorial policy. These contradictions are something for the PTT and GALHA to resolve and so we will ignore them here and take your assertion that *G&LH* is the GALHA newsletter at face value. You have also stated that *G&LH* is not a soap box, which we take to mean it should not provide platform for any non-committee-authorized expression of opinion. Surely, then, GALHA must take total responsibility for supplying the material to be included in its newsletter to its editor. Anything else, quite frankly, is inconsistent with your assertions.

A great virtue of our proposal is that there would be no possibility of any disagreement, resentment or unpleasantness between the editors and GALHA because the vetting would have occurred before the material was supplied to us. Conversely, if the material was not supplied on this basis, then editorial judgement by us would already have been exercised and any subsequent amendment of the finished magazine could only be perceived as a criticism of our judgement. This has the potential to cause further misunderstandings and unpleasantness, something that, we think, we can all agree must be avoided at all costs.

Our new proposal 2, then, is as follows: All material, including photographs, for each issue of the magazine would be sent to us and the magazine would be produced solely from this material. We guarantee not to include under any circumstances any material not supplied to us and, thereby, implicitly approved by GALHA/PTT. When each issue of the magazine is complete, we would forward it to you on CD-ROM for your approval. Should any minor changes then be necessary, we would implement them and re-submit the completed magazine to you on CD-ROM. When GALHA/PTT are happy with it, you would then forward the CD-ROM to the printer, thereby ensuring that no subsequent changes could be made to it by us. This would give you complete peace of mind about the content of the magazine and we can see no possible objection to this proposal, since it satisfies all your requirements.

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Finally, since we would be relinquishing editorial control of the magazine to GALHA/PTT, we would require a formal disclaimer indemnifying us of all liability for the content of the magazine. This is only fair and reasonable, since it is nothing more than you seek for yourselves and would give us, in equal measure, peace of mind.

6: Enter Mr Fernando

Before giving Roy Saich's response to the above proposal, it is necessary to refer to the entry into this story of one Mr Denis Fernando, a member of the far-left Lesbian and Gay Coalition Against Racism (LAGCAR) and, we believe, the Student Assembly Against Racism, who has brought together a number of signatories from other LGB organisations. He had put out a statement to several organisations and the editorial team heard about it via one of them and again, later, via GALHA committee member Brett Lock on the GALHA discussion list.

The editorial team first became aware of Fernando's statement when they read this email from Roy Saich as chair of the PTT to Fernando, dated 4 November:

To the Lesbian and Gay Coalition Against Racism

Dear Mr. Fernando,

As you should know, Humanists are totally opposed to racism.

However, it has come to my attention that you are circulating a public statement which contains references about the Autumn issue of the 'Gay and Lesbian Humanist' published by the Pink Triangle Trust, of which I am Chair, which might be thought to insinuate that this was not the case. This statement could, therefore, be harmful to the magazine, its editor, and its publishers.

I am therefore writing to you to insist that your statement in its present form be withdrawn immediately, and that you so inform all recipients to whom it has been sent, including lagcar@naar.org.uk and any website references to it and, further, that all such references to the 'Gay and Lesbian Humanist' be removed from any other statements you may choose to issue.

If you care to issue a general statement condemning racism, I shall be happy to sign it, as will other Humanists.

You will realise that in the circumstances I must reserve our position, including the option of seeking legal advice about all aspects of the harm and costs that may result from your statement.

Please reply immediately to this e-mail address roysaich@humanists.freeseve.co.uk confirming that you are complying with this request.

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The GALHA discussion list first heard of Fernando's statement in a post from Saich dated 6 November, which said,

Mr. Denis Fernando, described as a member of the Student Assembly Against Racism, has made some childish comments about the Autumn issue of the Gay and Lesbian Humanist. He clearly knows nothing about the Humanist ethical tradition. Some young people are better seen and not heard.

This prompted one Martin Reilly to ask where Fernando had made the comments, to which Saich replied, 'If you haven't come across Mr. Fernando's comments don't worry. They don't bear repeating.'

Still on the 6th, Reilly posted this:

When somebody generally well respected (at least by me) for making sensible contributions to discussions on this list resorts to making childish comments (such as, 'Some young people are better seen and not heard.') as part of a post accusing another of childish comment, isn't it human nature to be interested in what brought this about? Unfortunately while I can find a lot about Denis Fernando via Google, I can't find anything that mentions GALHA in the same article.

George Broadhead explained to Reilly later that day (still via the discussion list),

As a member of the gaycampaign list you will have read the recent exchanges between Richard Farnos and Andy Armitage, editor of Gay & Lesbian Humanist concerning an article in the current issue of this magazine. Fernando is taking the same line as Farnos only more publicly. He is doing his utmost to vilify GALHA by linking it, and Humanism in general, with the views expressed in this article partly, I believe, because he objects to our stance on Islamic homophobia. It is significant that he was one of those who objected strongly to our protest at the warm welcome Ken Livingstone gave to the ultra homophobic Islamic cleric Yusuf Qaradawi – a protest supported by OutRage!, School's Out!, the Queer Youth Alliance and LGCM, to name just a few.

Another list member, John Allen, was also keen to know more. That day, he wrote,

I read the exchanges on the GALHA web-based network regularly but recent exchanges between George, Roy and Martin Reilly have left me feeling very puzzled. I seem to be missing half the conversation and I suspect others may be feeling the same.

Surely if we are to have open discussion we ought to be prepared to share our sources even though we might find ourselves in disagreement with the views expressed. More importantly if there is a parallel conversation going on (I refer to the 'gaycampaign list') could the link to this be made explicit for those not in the know?

Age and general senility may mean that I have seriously missed the point; in which case I apologize for wasting time. Perhaps I will be able to judge how

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urgent my referral to the local home for the 'mildly distressed and borderline insane' needs to be from the responses this msg generates, if any!

It was at this point that Brett Lock chose to publish and endorse Fernando's statement, which he did as part of the following post. However, the statement itself has been paraphrased in places here to avoid any possibility of defamation of third parties. While the editorial team can publish what they wish against themselves, there are two other names that Lock's republishing of the Fernando rant might libel: Diesel Balaam and George Broadhead. This is Lock's email:

So we all know what is being discussed, I will post the contents of Denis Fernando's letter (which is circulating to other gay and human rights groups) below. I don't think it is fair that cryptic messages are appearing on this list without the proper context, and I think we – young and old alike – are able to make our own judgements without having to be protected from these points of view.

I'd like to add mine, before I post the letter below. I think that the issue is complex. I think that Fernando often cannot tell robust secular critiques of religion apart from racism. I think that his including comments by George Broadhead as examples of 'racism' is inappropriate and wide off the mark. However, I do feel very strongly that some other comment that appeared in *G&LH Magazine* clearly cross the line, and that Fernando has a valid point. While standing against religion as an ideology and political interference by organised religion, I do not feel it is right to demonise religious individuals or communities or immigrants in general.

Beneath this was a straight paste of Fernando's statement. It began, 'Please find enclosed a statement from LAGCAR and Imaan regarding the Gay and Lesbian Humanist Magazine Autumn issue "The Sick face of Islam".' It then invited people to sign up to it. To say here what they were being asked to sign up to would cause a potential defamation by implication, as Roy Saich perspicaciously pointed out during the evening that Lock sent it to the public list.

However, it criticised the magazine, and cited five pieces:

- the **Page 2 'editorial'** (basically, an introduction to that quarter's magazine, written by the editor);
- a **news feature** on the hanging of two teenagers in Iran for being gay (which happened to have been written by the editor, but not as the editor, merely as another contributor);
- **'World Watch'**, which appears under the name of the GALHA secretary, George Broadhead;
- a **news story** based on a press release issued by the GALHA committee; and
- a **contributed feature**, 'Towards a New Humanism', by Diesel Balaam.

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It then proceeded to use selective extracts from all five pieces. Here is a quotation from one piece, the Page 2 editorial. This is Fernando's version:

'Our front page headline...could be saying...this is the face of Islam and its face is sickening. Interpret it as you will. But I suspect that many...may well be thinking the latter, as more and more of what Islam seems to stand for is laid before us, as article after article in the newspapers and magazines chronicles the atrocious nature of aspects of this growing belief system.'

And this is the full version:

Our front-page headline this quarter is deliberately ambiguous: it could be saying that this is only the *sickening* face of this religion called Islam (implying that there is possibly another face); or it could be saying this is *the* face of Islam, and its face is sickening. Interpret it as you will. But I suspect that many who thought the former some years ago may well be thinking the latter, as more and more of what Islam seems to stand for is laid before us, as article after article in the newspapers and magazines chronicles the atrocious nature of aspects of this growing belief system.

Readers will be able to make up their own minds about the selectivity used by Fernando, and may like to ask themselves how many (if any) of his co-signatories read all the articles in their entirety before appending their signatures to his document. The rest of his document has not been reproduced here in its original form, as reproduced on the public discussion list by Brett Lock, because it is believed by us, by our solicitors and, as will be seen below, by Roy Saich to be libellous. However, the articles can be read in their entirety in the Appendices and the essence of Fernando's statement is conveyed here.

Fernando begins by saying that racism has 'no place in the lesbian and gay community'. Fair enough. The editorial team and most other people would agree entirely. However, he then goes on to allege that *G&LH's* Autumn issue was racist and that it is trying to create an openly racist current within the lesbian and gay community in Britain, and that it 'praises' the late Dutch politician Pim Fortuyn.

The editorial team absolutely reject this allegation, which is offered without proof and appears intended as a smear. In particular, there is no praise of Fortuyn: merely an examination of his statements.

Fernando then goes on to quote selectively and out of context from the various articles and the news story and accuses the magazine of demonising immigrants by saying that 'our major towns and cities [are] being for ever changed by huge numbers of foreign settlers' and referring to *some* of them as often poor, ill-educated and culturally estranged ... and 'criminals of the worst kind'.

In criticising George Broadhead's 'World Watch', it quotes the following: 'what does a moderate Muslim do, other than excuse the real nutters by adhering to this barmy doctrine?' This was, as the Appendices clearly show, within the context of an examination of the terms 'Islamophobia' and 'moderate Muslim'.

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Fernando goes on to say,

We believe that the lesbian and gay community has nothing to gain from racism. On the contrary, we pledge to work with the Black and Asian communities to tackle racism and the far right which threaten all of our human rights and indeed our very lives.

We differ with the leaders of most religions in their all too often bigoted attitudes to lesbian and gay rights but rather than demonise any one religion or race or immigrants, we will work with lesbian and gay Muslims, Christians, Hindus, Sikhs and Atheists to promote respect for our human rights.

Denis Fernando, Lesbian and Gay Coalition Against Racism

Ubaid, Secretary, Imaan, The LGBT Muslim support group

Fernando then attaches excerpts from the articles in question, but there is no point in reproducing them here, since readers can see them in their entirety in the Appendices.

Lock had posted his email with Fernando's statement *before* Saich posted one urging him *not* to post it: 'Please do NOT post Denis Fernando's letter to the GALHA or any other list for legal reasons – it may be libellous.' But it was too late: a statement that Roy Saich, GALHA committee member and PTT chair, had deemed libellous had been posted to a public list by Brett Lock, GALHA committee member. This left the editorial team no option but to ask for the offending piece to be withdrawn, especially as one of the editorial team, Andy Armitage, was mentioned by name, and his reputation among the constituency the magazine serves had been sullied. The team would eventually threaten GALHA – which operates the list – with legal action, and the offending post would be removed. But that is some way away.

Since *this* dossier is the work of the editorial team, they would be within their rights to republish Fernando's rant and Lock's endorsement thereof *as it concerns them*. However, as we have seen, it concerns two other people, and that is why we have resorted to paraphrase. Although it was seen as defamatory by Saich at the time, no apology, or even the courtesy of an acknowledgement of that fact, has so far been forthcoming from the GALHA committee or the committee member who posted it, Brett Lock.

Once Lock had sent this post to the list, Armitage posted the following – to the list members but specifically addressed to Lock:

Perhaps we should know *which* bits are racist. I seem to recall that the criticisms have been aimed at George's text, a news story that directly quoted a GALHA press release, something from me and something from Diesel Balaam. Are you saying George cannot be a racist but Diesel Balaam and I can be, even though George has been criticised by the same PC rent-a-mob? Now,

(a) which of this is racist, Brett?

(b) prove it.

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When we condemn the Catholic Church as evil, as GALHA and the magazine do all the time, what are we doing other than demonising every Catholic in Christendom? And are not Catholics a community? Are we not demonising a mainly white community (in Western countries, at least, and certainly in the UK)? Now, if this is OK because they're mainly white – and I don't recall any hullabaloo when we've done this – is this not racist? In fact, the only mention of a race in Balaam's piece was a reference to white people, when he wrote of white supremacists.

Why is the Balaam piece not given credit by the PC brigade for the parts that explicitly condemned racism? People have selective vision. Perhaps you should read the piece again.

The post by Lock, republishing Fernando's defamation, was deemed by the editorial team to be libellous in that it clearly had the potential to damage Armitage's reputation in the eyes of the constituency he was serving as a magazine editor. Lock's endorsement of Fernando's statement served only to reinforce this. And it was clear that an official of GALHA and the PTT in the form of Roy Saich clearly thought it potentially libellous, as instanced by his urging Lock not to post it.

The editorial team felt they had no other option but to send the following to Saich, dated 6 November (it was at first in the form of an email, and was then sent on paper by special delivery the following day, reaching its destination on 8 November):

We are writing to you to complain that Denis Fernando's statement has not only been published on GALHA's public list but has been endorsed there by Brett Lock, a GALHA committee member. This material contains seriously defamatory allegations and statements against *G&LH* and, hence, us as its editors, and Andrew Armitage in particular, who is in fact actually named.

As editors of the magazine, we demand that this statement be withdrawn immediately by both Brett Lock individually and the GALHA committee corporately, and that a full and unequivocal statement of retraction and apology be posted on the GALHA list.

Because of the seriousness of the allegation and the great harm it does to our reputations and integrity, we must insist that this retraction and apology be published no later than 6 p.m., Tuesday, 8 November 2005. If this does not occur, we will seek immediate legal advice with a view to suing both Brett Lock and GALHA for defamation.

We very much regret that you have not been able to control the GALHA list sufficiently to prevent seriously defamatory statements being published on it, especially by one of GALHA's own committee members. This is even more serious since another GALHA committee member, Roy Saich, has already publicly acknowledged on this list and elsewhere that Denis's statement is defamatory.

This email will also be sent by Royal Mail Special Delivery.

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Legal advice, meanwhile, was being sought and Mr Davies, a defamation specialist with the large Swansea firm of John Collins & Partners, was ready to take the first steps in a legal action.

* * *

We can now return to the latest proposal from the editorial team, which we left at the end of Chapter 5 (see p. 40). Once again, Roy Saich was unhappy with the editors' latest suggestion. On 8 November, he emailed the following, referring both to that proposal and the threat by the editorial team to take legal action:

Thank you for your e-mail. Your latest proposals unfortunately do not meet our needs and are in any case impracticable.

In view of the present threat of legal action by you against GALHA, issued since my last e-mail, George and I, as members of the GALHA committee as well PTT trustees, find ourselves in the unfortunate position of being part of the object of any such legal action.

In these circumstances we will be proposing at the next PTT trustees' meeting that a new editor of 'Gay and Lesbian Humanist' be appointed and that all material appertaining to the magazine that you hold be sent immediately to the PTT address.

I am personally very sorry that matters should have deteriorated to their present level after all the effort you have both put in to make the magazine so successful.

The editorial team responded to this, also on 8 November, as follows:

The legal action you refer to is only the same as you threatened Denis Fernando with a few days ago. You yourself, on the list on which the defamatory remarks were published, admitted that it could be defamatory, and did so with these words addressed to Brett Lock:

'Please do NOT post Denis Fernando's letter to the GALHA or any other list for legal reasons – it may be libellous.'

In view of this, and the fact that GALHA controls the list, what is GALHA's difficulty in retracting these statements, which, after all, were never made by GALHA, albeit that they have been endorsed by a GALHA committee member on GALHA's discussion list? It is bizarre that you are demanding that Fernando retract the comments, but – it seems – have a problem in doing so yourselves. After all, the threat was not against you personally, or George, but against GALHA as the controller of the public list. Surely you cannot be surprised at our robust response, given the way we have been treated so shabbily from the start by the GALHA committee. The GALHA committee purports to have acted in *its* interest – and, indeed, George has told Dean on the telephone that it is in no way personal – so why, then, are you irked by our acting in our *own* interests in a manner that is, similarly, not personal?

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We have no great desire to take legal action, and the remedy is both within GALHA's hands and simple. You seem to suggest that this is something personal, but it is not. In view of all the circumstances, we have been advised that we cannot let the statement made on the GALHA list go without challenge, since to do so would prejudice our interests.

We are at a loss to understand why our latest proposal vis-à-vis the magazine does not meet your needs and is 'impracticable'. This seems a rather inadequate response to a detailed proposal that was sincerely constructed in order to bring about a mutually satisfactory resolution. We think you at least owe us a detailed explanation and reasoning to back up your rejection, though of course we understand that this will be decided by the PTT Trustees, and not you.

On the question of appointing a new editor, we must point out that the magazine does not *have* an editor at the moment, since, in our first response to you via our detailed rebuttal, we declined your proposal, thereby resigning. (And, once again, Dean reiterated this in his telephone conversation with George.) Since then, we have been involved in a renegotiation exercise.

In summary, we are very concerned that you seem unable to separate the personal from the corporate, since the tone of your response to us (below) has been extremely personal, as exemplified in Paragraph 2, in which on the one hand you concede that the legal threat is against the GALHA committee but, on the other hand, seem to take it as a personal affront, and this is clearly not our intention.

On 9 November, Saich sent the following:

Thank you for your e-mail. I note that you say, 'the magazine does not have an editor at the moment, since, in our first response to you via our detailed rebuttal, we declined your proposal, thereby resigning. (And, once again, Dean reiterated this in his telephone conversation with George.)'

In these circumstances George and I will propose at the next PTT meeting that a new editor be appointed for the 'Gay and Lesbian Humanist'.

This will ensure that the content of the mag is approved in future by those responsible for publishing it before it is published.

Please therefore send all the G & L H material you have to me here in Kenilworth [location of the PTT's and GALHA's head office].

7: The Debate Spreads to Gay.com

Denis Fernando's next move was to put a post on the Gay.com message boards' 'News' section, similar to the one we have seen above, dated 10 November:

Racism has no place in the Lesbian and Gay Community

We are deeply concerned that the autumn issue of The Gay and Lesbian Humanist magazine includes a number of statements which can be interpreted as racist, including support for the now deceased gay Dutch racist, Pim Fortuyn.

One article demonised immigrants stating: 'our major towns and cities being for ever changed by huge numbers of foreign settlers', referred to as: 'the often poor, ill-educated and culturally estranged Third Worlders' many of whom 'are criminals of the worst kind.' (p.11)

Another article denounces all Muslims, stating: 'what does a moderate Muslim do, other than excuse the real nutters by adhering to this barmy doctrine?'(p.6)

The magazine endorses views of the deceased far right Dutch leader Pim Fortuyn, saying: 'the warning of popular gay politician Pim Fortuyn were tragically snuffed out by a left wing assassin before he could sufficiently alert people to the damage the influx of Muslims is doing to his own native land.'(p.12)

This attitude to Fortuyn is consistent. As long ago as 2002, the editor wrote of him approvingly: 'his "crime" in the eyes of many was that he said his country could take no more immigrants.'

We believe that the lesbian and gay community has nothing to gain from racism. On the contrary, we pledge to work with the Black and Asian communities to tackle racism and the far right which threaten all of our human rights and indeed our very lives.

We differ with the leaders of most religions in their all too often bigoted attitudes to lesbian and gay rights but rather than demonise any one religion or race or immigrants, we will work with lesbian and gay Muslims, Jews, Christians, Hindus, Sikhs, people of all religions and none, to promote respect for our human rights.

Denis Fernando, Lesbian and Gay Coalition Against Racism

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Ubaid, Secretary, Imaan, The LGBT Muslim support group
Dennis Carney, Chair Black Gay Mens [sic] Advisory Group
Takhsin Begum Black representative, NUS LGBT Campaign
Black Lesbians UK
UNISON LGBT Committee.

Kirsten Hearn, Chair of the Equal Opportunities and Diversity Board of the Metropolitan Police Authority

Peter Herbert, Chair, London Race Hate Crime Forum and Spokesperson, Society of Black Lawyers

Reeva Bell, Chair, National Black Crown Prosecution Association

Simon Wooley, Chair, Operation Black Vote / Director, Black Londoners Forum

Pav Akhtar NUS Black Students Officer

Brenda Ellis Regard Executive Committee member

Pam Burrows, Satori Diversity and Training

Attached to this are the highly selective and out-of-context excerpts from *G&LH* already referred to above. Once again, it could be asked how many of Mr Fernando's fellow signatories have read the articles in full, or, indeed, seen other issues of *G&LH* in order to form a balanced appraisal of the real nature and ethos of the magazine.

On 12 November, Andy Armitage responded to Fernando's Gay.com post with the following, on the same message board:

Mr Fernando is mischievous in the extreme. He has taken quotations completely out of context (brazenly using ellipses to show where he has left out the more positive parts of my own editorial material, such as it was), and branded *Gay & Lesbian Humanist* magazine racist.

One contributed article by Diesel Balaam – not the magazine itself – had robust things to say about immigration and the criminality of many Third World and Eastern European immigrants, mentioning no race at all. His assertions have been backed up with several sources, including articles in quality newspapers citing their own sources. Indeed, everything you have quoted or referred to has been backed up with documentary evidence. It would not have appeared in the magazine otherwise. Obviously, you do not, in a journalistic publication, have reams of scholastic, bibliographical endnotes citing author, date, title, edition, publisher and page numbers; that is left to the works one finds in the academic journals.

It needs to be pointed out that, in the article that seems to have prickled Mr Fernando and others of a politically correct bent that tends to be selective in its appraisals, Balaam wrote positively about humanism's take on racism: it is simply a nonstarter: 'Let us be quite clear that race is not the issue here, as racism is the antithesis of Humanism,' he wrote. 'We are not concerned where people come from, genetically or geographically, but we ought to care very much about where they are going, ideologically. Racial discrimination is

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abhorrent, but the meaning of racism, for Humanists, has to remain very narrowly defined. It is not racist to be anti-immigration or anti-Islam, or believe in strictly selective immigration like Canada and Australia.'

Whether one agrees with those views or not is another matter, and the magazine encourages debate in the form of letters and feature articles. Not everything that has gone in the magazine in my five years of editorship has met with my agreement ideologically. I've disagreed with much, but any responsible editor knows that debate sparks new knowledge; challenges to sometimes ossified views often invigorate them, introduce new ideas from which springs more understanding.

The magazine has carried articles from Muslims, Christians and nontheists during my editorship. It once carried an article from that arch opponent of free speech, John Beyer, of Mediawatch-UK. It has encouraged such expressions of views as a foil to its more usual fare of rationalism, secularism and gay rights, which, after all, is its *raison d'être*. In its UK news pages, straightforward, comment-free news stories have concerned, for instance, the Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement and other aspects of the Christian church.

It would be interesting to know how many of the signatories Mr Fernando has dragged along with him have read that issue of the magazine in its entirety and have read any issues of the magazine in the past five years. It would be interesting to know whether Mr Fernando – for he it is who has rabble-roused and he it is who has been an annoying tick on the back of the beast of reason, taking pot shots (if I might change the metaphor) at GALHA in the past, I am led to understand from others (as have some of the organisations the signatories claim to represent) – can draw up the wealth of evidence I and my editorial colleagues have produced to back up every 'contentious' statement he has selectively taken to back up his pathetically weak 'case'. If Mr Fernando and his chums wish me to send this information, they know where to find me.

As Paul Simon wrote, 'A man hears what he wants to hear and disregards the rest.' This has been the case with Mr Fernando. He thinks he has done a huge service for racial integration. He has instead created a little heat, which will soon go away, and no light whatsoever.

On the question of editorship in general, let me say this. If views are not challenging, they do not have a chance of changing the views of the readers. If the readers' views are modified in some way, they ought to be glad that they have seen something hitherto hidden from them. If the article in question strengthens their existing views, then it has done a service in that way, too. At least those readers have read the piece, delivered a verdict on it and had their views either modified or made stronger. One takes the distinct impression from Mr Fernando's childish and politically correct tone that he probably does not understand what the hell I am going on about. I may be wrong. I hope I am.

Mr Fernando and his friends clearly wish to run away from robust debate. What are they afraid of?

On the same day, Diesel Balaam also responded to the post by Fernando et al.:

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Mr Fernando is right to say that racism has no place in the lesbian and gay community. As I wrote in the Gay & Lesbian Humanist magazine ‘... racism is the antithesis of Humanism. We are not concerned where people come from genetically or geographically, but we ought to care very much about where they are going, ideologically. Racial discrimination is abhorrent ...’ In other words, no one should be discriminated against or victimised because of their race, ethnicity, or skin colour – however, we should (and I quote again from the article) ‘... hold people to account for their beliefs and the actions that arise from them.’ Humanists exist to question and challenge belief systems, in particular religious belief systems, that seek to curtail the freedoms of, or discriminate against those, who do not share their religious beliefs. This particularly applies to the freedoms (or otherwise) of lesbians and gay men. To challenge Christians, Moslems or any other religious group has nothing to do with their race – you can also robustly criticise Humanists and Atheists without being racist. There is an important distinction to be made here.

As for the idea posited that foreign settlers to the UK should possibly face deportation if they commit seriously damaging crimes against society, this idea is based solely upon behaviour, not racial origin. In fact, the only foreign group identified as possible candidates for deportation are ‘white supremacist troublemakers’ – the gun criminals, drug traffickers, people smugglers and allies of terrorism mentioned in this part of the article could be of any race or religion. Shortly after July 7th, Tony Blair gave a speech at a press conference at Downing Street (reported in the Sunday Times 7th August), saying almost exactly the same thing (in relation to terrorism at least). This idea is not new, and Tony Blair was not suggesting this policy should be along racial lines any more than I was. Such a policy would face numerous legal obstacles, like the Human Rights Act and Britain’s membership of the Council of Europe, but as an idea perhaps it is still worth thinking about?

So, yes, racism is abhorrent and wrong. But religious and political beliefs can be legitimately challenged and discussed.

The previous day, 11 November, GALHA had posted to this same discussion board its press release of 16 October (see p. 23). It will be remembered from earlier in this dossier that Fernando’s comments were roundly condemned by George Broadhead, and yet GALHA felt the need to duplicate its press release here in response to Fernando’s statement. Armitage responded to the press release thus:

Contributors may wish to read my response to the first post (from Fernando et al.) before this, because I make some points there about his naïve little rant. They may also like to read Diesel Balaam’s response (he was the writer of the article that seems to have ruffled the most feathers).

Before dealing with the GALHA committee’s press release, let me briefly say that the magazine has, during my five years’ editorship, published articles that are not necessarily from a humanist standpoint, because I made it my business to find and encourage articles to stimulate and challenge. For instance, there have been articles from a would-be TV censor (see my post), a Christian priest, a practising Muslim and an American writer who posited that HIV did not cause AIDS. This last one generated much debate and the

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magazine was livelier for it, although there were those who, instead of engaging with the content of the article, sought to challenge the magazine's right to publish it.

However, I cannot let this press release go without saying that it was published without any consultation whatever with the editorial team (including myself as editor) of *Gay & Lesbian Humanist*. This constitutes little short of cowardice on the GALHA committee's part. Instead of going headlong into the fray and challenging the politically correct nonsense that comes from the likes of Mr Fernando, and at the same time defending its magazine's right to publish challenging and stimulating material (which was not racist, and I challenge anyone to prove that it was), it puts its tail between its collective legs and runs scared of Mr Fernando's schoolyard gang. Whether all of the committee were in favour of this act of faint-heartedness and pusillanimity I cannot say, but no member has demurred from it so far.

On 14 November 2005, the editorial team wrote to Roy Saich pointing out that, in posting its 16 October news release to the Gay.com board, GALHA were, by implication, accusing Diesel Balaam, Andy Armitage and their own George Broadhead of racism. Also on that day, Diesel Balaam wrote to George Broadhead in a similar vein, clearly concerned that he had been in effect accused of racism by GALHA's news release.

Here is the email from the editorial team, which also observed that the offending post to the GALHA discussion list had now been mysteriously removed:

We noted last week that the post on the GALHA discussion list that you advised Brett Lock not to publish had been removed, but we also note that we have received no apology for what, in your own opinion, was potentially libellous. Indeed, we haven't even been formally told that the offending piece had been removed.

However, GALHA has now compounded the issue by republishing GALHA's press release on Gay.com. We have precisely the same concerns as Diesel expresses in the email to George, which you have now presumably seen. Placed where it is, right below Denis Fernando's piece with its selective quoting and manipulation of facts, this press release effectively accuses Diesel, George and me of racism. Who posted it? Considering that both you and George have condemned Fernando's rant in separate posts, it seems bizarre that, by implication, GALHA seems to be siding with him.

Saich's response to this is dealt with in the next chapter, for matters concerning bulletin boards the like were not to end here. A further strand is about to enter the story in the form of the GALHA weblog.

However, let us look briefly at a news story that appeared on Gay.com on 18 November (not to be confused with the message-board postings already mentioned). This regurgitated much of what Denis Fernando had said, and made the claim that all the 'offending' comments had been in some kind of special editorial feature. As will have already been seen, they were not. The only part of the magazine that can be called 'editorial' – as opposed to the news and features – is the Page 2 piece already referred to, which is by way of an

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introduction to that quarter's magazine (see Appendix II). Ironically, for all its talk of a special editorial section, Gay.com did not quote from the editor's editorial at all!

Armitage emailed Gay.com's newsdesk and pointed out these inaccuracies, while defending the magazine's right to publish the material referred to in the story. Gay.com emailed back promptly and said they had pulled the story from their news pages.

8: The Case of the Disappearing Names

At the time of last updating this dossier (3 January 2006), the GALHA committee has not *formally* retracted the potentially libellous post that was placed there by its committee member Brett Lock. However, it was noticeable that, while it possibly remains in the email boxes of those on the GALHA list who have chosen not to delete it, it *has* been removed from the GALHA page at Yahoogroups, where anyone visiting will see message numbers going from 3,124 to 3,126, with 3,125 mysteriously not there.

It will have been removed in one of two ways: either by the moderator, Brett Humphreys, or the poster, in this case the person who chose to republish the potential libel, Brett Lock, a GALHA committee member. No other list member has permission to remove a post. Whether it was removed on the insistence of a GALHA official is not known to the editorial team. Its removal has saved GALHA from a great deal of potential embarrassment and possibly damages. Few GALHA members will be aware of this until they read this dossier. Some will have no doubt seen the editorial team's formal message to the GALHA list – the one that first referred to the first edition of this dossier.

The editorial team were not told that the post – which, as we have seen, had been deemed potentially libellous (see p. 47) by Roy Saich himself – had been removed, nor was an apology given. However, it is as well that it came to their notice, since Mr Davies, a defamation specialist at John Collins & Partners of Swansea, was poised to take the first step in commencing legal proceedings on behalf of the editorial team.

In a bizarre twist to this tale, Andy Armitage noticed on 14 November that his name and that of Dean Braithwaite had been removed from the list of contributors to the GALHA weblog, which has been live for only a few weeks. Their names were listed along with those of GALHA committee members. The administrator of the blog is Brett Lock. Armitage emailed Lock – with copies to all GALHA committee members – to ask why the names had been removed. Thinking it might be because the editorial team had deemed themselves to have resigned from that role pending a period of renegotiation, he offered the observation that the names of Derek Lennard and Brett Humphreys were still there, even though they, too, had resigned (in the case of Humphreys, he had

said he would be serving until such time as he had drawn up the PTT accounts, so this may not be significant). The email from Armitage to Lock reads,

I see that Dean's and my names have been removed from the list of those able to post to the GALHA blog. I see that both Derek Lennard's and Brett Humphreys's names are still there.

Do you have an explanation for this?

Discourteously, perhaps, no reply came from Lock (any more than one had come from him when Armitage challenged him on the GALHA list to prove racism – see p. 47), but one did arrive from Saich, dated 14 November, dealing with this and the question of the republication of the GALHA press release on the Gay.com message board (see p. 54). This is what it said:

The report on Gay.com. was not sent by GALHA. It may have been sent by Denis Fernando or his mates. You must ask Gay.com for information about it.

I confirm that you have been removed from the GALHA blog. You will recall that you were concerned about postings to the GALHA list and threatened legal action against GALHA in that connection. I would not want anything similar with regard to the Blog.

This, Armitage felt, was bizarre in the extreme – or sinister. He wrote back on 15 November, saying,

Sorry, but this is not making sense. *I'm* concerned about an irresponsible posting from someone else, so *I* am one of those removed from the blog? Where is the logic? How does taking *my* and *Dean's* names off it prevent someone else from posting something libellous about me? You just have to keep your more impulsive committee members in order, that's all, as I recall you tried to do (but by no fault of yours it was too late). Or are you accusing me of being the type of person who would libel someone else on there? Apart from the insult if that's the case, that doesn't make sense, either, since I could libel anyone anywhere on the Net, but would not, anyway, stoop to do that. Add to that that, unlike your errant committee member, I *know* when something is likely to be defamatory and am not as likely to put myself in the position of being sued. If anyone is to be removed as a contributor because of possible dodgy posts, it should be Mr Lock. Give me one good reason – and I mean a rational reason – why we should not be reinstated?¹

As for your reference to our threatening legal action, we were advised by a lawyer that it would be necessary to act very quickly in matters such as this. So we were left with no option. This is the standard advice in matters of defamation.

As for the Gay.com post, why should Fernando wish to diminish the impact of his own rant? It was most likely someone from the GALHA committee. I

¹ No reason – rational or otherwise – was forthcoming and, indeed, few of the points raised in our emails to Saich had been dealt with. Whether it is because he could not muster rational argument or just could not bother to address the points, we cannot say.

can't prove it, of course, but, given the way GALHA has tried to shaft us over the past few weeks with a public announcement (made without talking to us first), why should I trust anything that comes from that quarter?

As at the time of writing the first edition, an extraordinary meeting of the PTT trustees was planned for 26 November, at which the matter of the content of the magazine was to be discussed. The meeting did not take place and as of the date of this update, 3 January 2006, has still not taken place.

* * *

At the GALHA annual reunion lunch was held in London on 12 November, at which – out of the blue to many there assembled – GALHA's acting chair, Lee Stacy, announced that *G&LH* had a new editor: Brett Lock. In attendance at the lunch was a PTT trustee, Mike Savage, who subsequently informed Dean Braithwaite – who is another PTT trustee – of this announcement and, in common with Braithwaite, had no prior knowledge of it. This announcement is very worrying, since it is the PTT, not GALHA, that publishes the magazine and that sets editorial policy, as was confirmed at the recent GALHA AGM, when a motion concerning the magazine was deemed to be solely the province of the PTT.

This announcement, then, had been made without the prior knowledge or consent of two PTT trustees and without any *meeting* of the PTT trustees having taken place to discuss this matter. On hearing about this announcement from Savage during the following week, Braithwaite immediately telephoned George Broadhead and Roy Saich to ask what was going on. There ensued a most heated and acrimonious discussion, which was followed up by the following email from Braithwaite – signed as a PTT trustee – to Saich and the other trustees:

Further to our telephone conversation this evening, I'd just like to add the following.

What GALHA did in isolating and attacking us at the outset left us no response other than robust defence. It is the acrimony that stemmed from GALHA's first decision to exclude us from the discussion process that has harmed GALHA, and I'm astonished that you can't see this. As has been proven at length, not only in our initial rebuttal of the attack made on us by the GALHA committee but in Diesel's copious research that we know has been sent to you also, the published material is not racist. Yet you can't apply reason since if you did you would see that what was published is no more than what one commonly reads in quality newspapers and magazines. Far from being inflammatory, let alone racist, what we published can be read in publications freely available in the high street.

As I said on the phone, I'm angry that decisions are being made and those decisions announced publicly without proper consultation. Nothing illustrates this better than the announcement made by Lee Stacy as GALHA acting chair at the GALHA lunch that a new editor had been appointed for *G&LH*, even though GALHA has no authority to appoint an editor and in spite of the

fact that not only had the PTT not met to discuss this but two of the trustees, myself and Mike Savage, had not even been consulted.

No one has given any evidence whatever to support the allegations that any of the material we published in the Autumn issue of *G&LH* (including George's World Watch, which has been condemned by many of the same people in the same way as Diesel's and Andy's articles) is racist.² All that has been expressed is a plethora of left-wing-informed politically correct lay opinion. Andy has already challenged Brett Lock – who alleged publicly by publishing and endorsing through the GALHA list, Denis Fernando's statement – to state what exactly of what was published is racist and to prove it.

I also find it rather rich that I am being accused of damaging GALHA when I have made no public statement on this matter except in defence, whereas Derek Lennard and Peter Tatchell were both, according to you, straining at the bit to run GALHA down in public.

You said that our actions had been reprehensible, but I find reprehensible that GALHA issued public statements condemning us without ever bothering to consult us beforehand. Though, maybe, reprehensible isn't the right word to describe being stabbed in the back. If the GALHA committee didn't want a fight then they shouldn't have picked one with us in the first place.

The implication of what you both said to me tonight is that we should never publish anything that offends anybody. Well, if GALHA is serious about combating the evil of Islam, it had better get used to being smeared as racist because this is the standard trick used by Islamists and their left-wing friends to censor any criticism or debate about Islam.

While I'm dismayed that things have turned out the way they have, I stand by our decision to publish. What I'm even more dismayed about is the secretive and sectarian manner of our assassination. I have known you both for a very long time and I had expected better.

(Intriguingly, as far as the editorial team were concerned, Braithwaite's saying above that 'two of the trustees, myself and Mike Savage, had not even been consulted' brought an email addressed to Braithwaite, the other trustees and Armitage, saying, 'Make that three – I wasn't consulted either.')

Braithwaite also posted a notice on the GALHA discussion list on 15 November, pointing out that those who had been at the lunch and had heard this announcement had been misinformed. He pointed out that it was the PTT and not GALHA that had the power to appoint an editor, and that no meeting to discuss had yet taken place:

I've learned this evening that at the GALHA lunch on Saturday, Lee Stacy, acting chair of GALHA, announced that a new editor has been appointed to *G&LH* magazine.

² The question of George Broadhead's 'World Watch' column, and, for that matter, the GALHA press release on which an 'offending' news story was based, have not been addressed, which makes one question why. The only 'offending' material according to the GALHA committee and those on the PTT who are also on that committee is that by Balaam and Armitage.

I'm afraid you've been misinformed. GALHA is not the publisher of *G&LH*, the PTT is, and it is the PTT who appoints editors and decides editorial policy as was confirmed at this year's GALHA AGM. Furthermore, the PTT has not yet met to discuss the appointment of an editor, and two PTT trustees – myself and Mike Savage – had not even prior knowledge of the announcement.

* * *

This, with minor changes mentioned in the Preface, completes the story up the above email.

9: Towards a New Magazine

Emails continued to be posted to the GALHA discussion list, as they did between the secretary and chair of the PTT, George Broadhead and Roy Saich respectively. As we saw in the last chapter, Saich was by this time dealing with most of the email traffic.

On 15 November, Martin Reilly, whom we first met on Page 44, asked on the GALHA list, 'Has the current editor actually submitted his resignation to, or been dismissed by, the PTT? If not, then surely there is no reason to appoint a new editor.'

Dean Braithwaite responded on the same day thus:

I'll give a brief answer with my former assistant editor hat on, though the former editor, Andy Armitage, will no doubt respond more fully later.

Basically, what has happened is this. Certain content of the Autumn issue of *G&LH* was seen by some people as racist, though this has never been proved, and we do not accept that it is. We as editors were very disappointed (to say the least) that the GALHA committee issued a public news release condemning, and distancing themselves from, us and the content in question without ever considering our opinion or views beforehand.

Furthermore, we were told that all future issues of *G&LH* would have to be vetted by the GALHA committee. Since we have always believed in publishing as wide a range of views and opinions as possible, because we believe this is the best way to stimulate freethought and debate, we were unhappy to accept this kind of censorship and declined to continue under these circumstances.

Well, that's it in a nutshell, though there's a whole lot more that could be said.

Reilly posted on 16 November, saying, 'I for one would be perfectly happy to subscribe separately to a *G&LH* magazine that had no direct connection to GALHA. What do others think?'

Armitage told him via the GALHA list,

If you or anyone else is interested in this and possibly subscribing and/or contributing to such a magazine, email me off list and I'll add your name to those who've already expressed an interest. Do pass this information on to anyone who does not subscribe to this list.

(Armitage's private email address can be found on p. 73.)

That same day, George Broadhead, GALHA secretary, posted the following in response to Reilly's email:

G&LH wouldn't exist if it weren't for GALHA. It was founded and published by GALHA years ago before the group decided to hand publication over to The Pink Triangle Trust, the charity it set up in 1992.

The magazine has always existed primarily to provide a voice for GALHA, publicity for its campaigns, and a means of encouraging lgbt people (and, for that matter, heterosexuals) with a Humanist/Freethinking outlook and concern about lgbt rights. to give it their support.

It is also one of the perks of being a GALHA member since all members in the UK and in other countries receive it free.

GALHA's interim chair, Lee Stacy, then clarified what the committee's thinking was on the question of a new magazine, with the following email to the editorial team, copied to the GALHA committee:

In order to clarify and immediately resolve the controversy surrounding the *G&LH* magazine, the GALHA Committee has unanimously decided to publish its own magazine in time for winter. This new publication will be offered to all GALHA members in place of the *G&LH* and have a different title. We will also be urging the PTT trustees to bear this action in mind when considering the future of their own publication, which will not have the support or endorsement of the GALHA Committee.

I would like to add that the Committee was informed that you and Andy had resigned as editors some weeks ago. In light of that information, the Committee felt decisive action was needed in order to ensure our members receive a quality magazine as quickly and as practicably as possible.

Furthermore, one of the Committee's principal duties is to guard and uphold the image and reputation of GALHA. By taking this action the Committee is doing just that.

On the GALHA list, Stacy said,

I'm posting this notice in response to Dean's email ('GALHA lunch'). Dean is right to point out that the PTT are the publishers of the *G&LH* magazine. But public perception is that the *G&LH* is the mouthpiece of the GALHA Committee and hence of GALHA's members. As you are all well aware, this is NOT the case. Regardless, therefore, of the outcome of the PTT trustees' next meeting (on 26 November), where it will be proposed that the PTT

cease acting as publishers of the *G&LH*, the GALHA Committee decided to publish its own magazine and appoint its own editor.¹ This will ensure that the new magazine will reflect the values and aims of GALHA. The first issue of GALHA's very own magazine will be out in December, after which the editor and us on the Committee look forward to hearing what you think of it.

The question of a new magazine would arise again, but not until 29 November (see p. 69).

* * *

It was at this time that the first edition of this dossier was published on the Internet, and Armitage and Braithwaite posted the following to the GALHA list:

Most of you are probably aware of certain criticisms of the content of the Autumn issue of *G&LH*. Some of you will no doubt know that a serious attack on our integrity as editors has been launched by the GALHA committee. We are only too well aware that, because of the complex nature of this whole issue, few people will be in possession of all the facts, and therefore most will be unable to reach an informed opinion about what has happened.

To rectify this, and also to place on the record publicly what has actually happened, we have compiled a detailed dossier, which reveals what was said by whom, and the consequences thereof.

This dossier can be accessed by going to the following URL: www.mfebooks.com/G&LH/Intro.htm.²

We trust that this document, which has taken a considerable time to compile, will be found helpful and will facilitate reasoned and well-founded debate on this matter (which has always been our aim in our roles as editors). Furthermore, the dossier explains in detail why we chose to resign as editors of the magazine.

George Broadhead sent an email to the editors, copied to other PTT trustees, on 18 November, clearly concerned that the matter had generated more publicity:

I thought you might like to know (if you don't already) that there has been further publicity about the magazine since that on the Gaycom website, and there is more to come.

Diesel Balaam's article has been published in full, with a nasty introduction, in the magazine 'What Next?', which is edited by Bob Pitt who runs Islamophobia-Watch, and this has obviously been prompted by Denis Fernando:

<http://www.whatnextjournal.co.uk/Pages/Politics/Balaam.html>

¹ As we have seen, this meeting did not take place, and no meeting of the PTT trustees has taken place as of the time of updating this dossier, 3 January 2006.

² Readers passing this URL to others should inform them that it is case-sensitive.

A hostile report about some of the content of *G&LH* has been published in the 11 November 2005 issue of *the Morning Star*, again obviously prompted by Fernando.

Barry Duke [editor of the *Freethinker*] has informed me that he will be reporting on the controversy in the next *Freethinker* (hopefully in a balanced way) and I gather that *Gay Times*, which has also been nobbled by Fernando, will be reporting it in *its* next issue.

I'll be surprised if *the Pink Paper* doesn't publish the Fernando letter with signatories and/or a report, and perhaps other gay publications will as well.

Armitage responded thus on 18 November:

Thanks for your email. Perhaps it's time for the GALHA committee to start defending its magazine's courage in publishing stimulating and challenging material and not being afraid to slay a few sacred cows, instead of leaving it all to me and Diesel to defend it on the message boards (although some others seem to agree with the article). I've been assured by Joe Galliano, deputy editor of *GT*, that they'll be in touch so that I can defend the magazine when they come to put their piece together.

As for Pitt, well, you can see where he's coming from.

At the time of writing, the next issue of *Gay Times* is awaited and the former editor of *G&LH* has not yet been approached, although has been told (see the email above) that he will be approached if *GT* decide to cover the story. As for the *Pink Paper*, this story appeared on Page 6 on 24 November:

EDITOR QUILTS IN RACE ROW

The editor and deputy editor of a gay magazine have resigned after they were accused of printing racist articles.

The Lesbian and Gay Coalition Against Racism led a group of mostly ethnic minority protestors who slammed the Lesbian and Gay Humanist [*sic*] magazine – accusing it of having 'demonised immigrants'.

The last edition of the magazine carried a picture of two gay teens being hanged in Iran on the cover and, inside, raised questions about Islam.

In another article it referred to 'foreign settlers' as 'often poor, ill-educated and culturally estranged Third Worlders' also claiming many of them are 'criminals of the worst kind'.

A statement criticising the magazine was signed by the gay Muslim group Imaan, the Black Gay Men's Advisory Group, and representatives of the Met Police and Society of Black Lawyers.

Now editor Andy Armitage has quit, because he claims his publishers didn't back him up. He denies the material was racist.

He said: 'I wouldn't say it demonised them [immigrants]. It was robust and very analytical and it touched a few raw nerves. There are too many people of the political correctness brigade who conflate any criticism of religion with racism.'

Armitage said he recognised that there are many moderate Muslims but he said the religion represented a 'growing threat' to gays and women. The

Pink Triangle Trust which publishes the magazine is meeting this Saturday to decide its future.³

As for the Marxist *What Next Journal*, a print publication with a Web presence, it published Balaam's article in full as a web page without asking for permission (and it was still there on 30 November 2005, in spite of an email from Diesel Balaam as copyright holder asking them to remove it) and carried a standfirst calling it 'racist filth' and likening it to material from the British National Party. In common with the GALHA committee and Denis Fernando and his pals, it made no attempt to engage with the issues the article posed. Also, its implied intention in publishing it in full was for readers of its website to read Balaam's views and come to their own conclusions:

We reproduce it here because, although it has been the subject of considerable controversy, the article has been unavailable to those outside the rather narrow [*sic*] circle of the magazine's subscribers.

Presenting an article so that people can read it and draw their own conclusions was precisely the intention of the editors of *Gay & Lesbian Humanist* when they decided to publish it. Odd, that! An emailed letter from Armitage defending his decision to publish the article was sent to these people; it is not surprising that no response has so far been forthcoming. This is what he wrote:

I note that, somewhere on your website, you reproduce the article 'Towards a New Humanism', which Diesel Balaam wrote in the Autumn issue of *Gay & Lesbian Humanist*. It needs to be pointed out that, in your standfirst, you imply that you are reproducing it so that people outside the limited circle of the magazine's readers can themselves read it. This, one can only infer, is so that they can make up their own minds about it. The question needs to be asked: is this not why *Gay & Lesbian Humanist* printed it in the first place? And yet there is implied criticism on the *Islamophobia Watch* blog by your editor, Mr Pitt, of the magazine's very decision to publish the article. A case of shooting the messenger, methinks.

Your own publication may be always preaching to the converted, I don't know; but *G&LH* does not set out to do that, and any editor worth her or his salt will provide material that sparks debate, whether s/he actually supports that material or not. I happen to agree with *most* of what Balaam says, but that is incidental. The important thing is that such material be published (and, of course, remain within the law, which it clearly does). It is not racist. The only race mentioned is white, in the phrase 'white supremacists'. But it is robust. If people cannot engage with the arguments, but instead carry on an *ad hominem* attack on the author, then they do not deserve to be listened to. If they select the bits they disagree with, as Denis Fernando has done on the Gay.com message boards, they, too, do not deserve to be listened to.

You do not have copyright permission from Balaam for reproducing that article, but, had you asked, permission may well have been given. I suspect Balaam is not afraid of debate; the Fernandos of this world clearly are.

³ It did not meet, as we have seen.

At the time of this update, the article in the *Freethinker* has yet to be published, but both Broadhead and Armitage have been invited to comment, and, as far as we are aware, those comments will be printed.

After Armitage had emailed *G&LH*'s New York contributor of celeb gossip, Warren Allen Smith, to apprise him of events (although he had seen some of the emails on the GALHA discussion list) Smith emailed back to say, among other things,

I enjoyed Diesel Balaam's article, by the way, and assumed it would be followed next issue by someone's different views – after all, the journal is not a house organ – that could lead to yet more constructive articles on the subject.

When I sent jpegs of the hanging Iranian gays [a reference to the picture on the front cover] to Dominica's major anthropologist and Isaac Asimov's widow, both told me how abhorrent they are. I would think the magazine's circulation would have increased because of the cover.

On 22 November, the reviewer Mansel Stimpson, formerly of *Gay Times* and a reviewer for *G&LH*, wrote to Armitage by email:

Being wise after the event it did seem to me that an article intended to be provocative and thought provoking did stick its neck out on occasion in the way it was phrased. In particular the comments about certain places becoming de-Anglicised which, read in isolation, implied that an ethnic mix was undesirable.

While I could understand some people reacting against these statements (which is not to say that I would have anticipated that reaction) it certainly needed to be read in context and even if some points could have been made discreetly the main thrust of the argument was clear and, in particular, it included a summing up which advocated the removal of all forms of racial discrimination for the law-abiding. Where I did detect some confusion it related on the one hand to Diesel's suggestion that tolerance was appropriate towards Muslims who quietly and privately profess their faith and on the other to his indication that the Koran can only be regarded as a squalid murder manual. But if there is some inconsistency any libel would be of Muslims and their faith as opposed to being racist.

But even if one were to take a more dubious view on some of these points the fact would remain that strong arguments could be put against it being racist and, that being so, it seems entirely inappropriate for certain members of GALHA to have jumped to their own conclusions and to have issued public statements without at the very least first approaching you and Dean and taking full account of what you wish to say against the suggestion that it was racist. From the way you describe it I entirely understand the decision to resign.

On 19 November, Andy Armitage wrote to two members of the PTT who were at that point on the point of resigning. His purpose was to set out his reasons for resignation, but to point out that, should there be a development in the direction

of reason, he would enjoy continuing to edit *G&LH*. This is what he wrote to Brett Humphreys and Mike Savage:

I feel I ought to clarify my position regarding my editorship of the magazine. The reason for my resignation was that I did not wish to face the indignity of being sacked. However, there has been an ongoing exchange of email correspondence between me and Roy Saich concerning how things might continue, and we have at some point in the correspondence referred to this as a 'period of renegotiation'. I don't actually *want* to give up the editorship, but formally did so for the reasons stated.

Several *modi operandi* were suggested from this end, all of them turned down out of hand by Roy, who did not respond constructively to the suggestions. The last of these did allow, as he wished, for the PTT to see the final product before it went to the printer. We went to great trouble, in very detailed emails, to explain why what he was suggesting was impracticable, but, again, he did not seem to want to listen. In fact, the substance of the suggestions was just ignored.

Indeed, the powerful impression coming from the GALHA committee is that they wanted me out from the start. Subsequent correspondence has only confirmed this.

So this is why I have resigned. I jumped because I was determined not to be pushed, but, as can be inferred from my reference above to all the correspondence between me and Roy, I clearly do not wish to cease my editorship.

Armitage subsequently tried to persuade Savage not to resign, but he had by this time already done so by email. He was, however, willing to try to withdraw that resignation in order to attend the intended 26 November meeting of the PTT. It was thought that his support might make a difference. However, it was subsequently confirmed that a resignation, once received by the secretary of the trust, is a done thing. Both Savage and Brett Humphreys are now no longer members of the Pink Triangle Trust.

Humphreys's resignation from the PTT came two days before the intended meeting, and a while after his resignation from the GALHA committee, this affair being something of a deciding factor. The body count, then, includes the resignations of GALHA chair Derek Lennard that of Brett Humphreys from the GALHA committee and those of Humphreys and Savage from the PTT. A few GALHA members, we have learned, will not be renewing their subscriptions.

We await any letters to the *Pink Paper* as a result of the article (reproduced above on p. 65). One that we know has been sent is that of Dr Stephen Moreton, a GALHA member. We do not know whether – at the time of updating – it will be published, but here it is:

The original fascists were racists, but now there seems to be a new breed of fascist – the Politically Correct (PC) brigade hiding behind the banner of anti-racism. I refer to your report (24 November) about various gay and black groups criticising the *Gay and Lesbian Humanist* magazine for daring to publish a few pertinent observations about Islam and immigration.

As your own publication carried, on the same page, a report about the shocking treatment of gays by Islamists in Iran you had better watch out or the PC fundamentalists may target you next. One can no longer say a bad word about Islam, or express concerns about immigration, without being branded 'racist'. I suppose it will not be long before we have our own Pim Fortuyn or Theo van Gogh, slaughtered in the street by, respectively, a PC fanatic and a Muslim fanatic.

Finally, before the PC zealots attempt to brand me racist they should note that one of my oldest school friends was Ethiopian, my boss is Eritrean, my first two lodgers Nigerian, the next one will be a Zulu, and my boyfriend is a black, Muslim immigrant. Criticising Islam, and suggesting that immigration is not all good, does not make one a racist.

And a further email of support came to the former editor from *G&LH* contributor Matthew Thompson (one or two personal observations have been omitted):

I'm surprised, and saddened, by what's happened to GALHA mag. I've read over Diesel Balaam's article again and there are certainly remarks I could take issue with. No doubt, though, there are quite a few who could say the same of my own offerings. Articles are surely intended for discussion, personal thoughts. While I don't doubt the existence of racism, and ... particularly despise unjust discrimination, I am increasingly tired of the accusation on flimsy grounds. It seems some people could see racism in a field of daisies.

Why the clear disclaimer on p. 2 didn't prove adequate for objectors bewilders me.⁴ How much censorship would satisfy them? ...

* * *

The matter of the GALHA committee's wish to go ahead with its own publication eventually prompted Dean Braithwaite to write on 29 November to the interim GALHA chair Lee Stacy via the GALHA list (since this was where previous discussion on this topic had taken place) to say the following:

Despite your clear recognition (see below [where Stacy's earlier posting – see p. 63 – was pasted]) of the fact that *G&LH* is published by the PTT and that it is not the organ or mouthpiece of the GALHA committee or its members, there still persists some confusion, which I seek to clarify.

While GALHA is of course perfectly at liberty to publish whatever it likes, it may not publish a magazine called *Gay and Lesbian Humanist* or *G&LH* as this title is the property of the PTT under ISSN 0953-8763.

The future of the PTT's magazine has yet to be decided, since the trustees have not yet met to discuss this and are unlikely to do so in the near future. Since *G&LH* no longer has an editor, the Winter issue will not be appearing as planned. However, since it has not been decided by a meeting of the PTT trustees that *G&LH* will cease publication, it is possible that production of the magazine will re-commence.

⁴ The disclaimer on Page 2 of *G&LH* reads, 'The views expressed by the editor and other contributors do not necessarily reflect those of the Pink Triangle Trust.'

On the same day, 29 November, Stacy emailed Braithwaite thus:

I thought you should know that I never received the original email from you regarding the use of *G&LH*. Of course, had I done so I would have emailed you sooner. As it happens, it wasn't until just now when looking at the GALHA members' e-list that I saw your message to me. I'm sorry you felt you had to resort to corresponding with me via the e-list. Perhaps you don't have my right email address? For future ref, it's [email address supplied].

As for the use of *G&LH*, the Committee has already adopted a new title for the new magazine and has applied for a new ISSN. Nevertheless, thanks for the clarification.

And Braithwaite responded on the same day with,

Thank you for your email and for the clarification regarding the new GALHA magazine.

The confusion over *G&LH* has arisen because of conflicting statements from the GALHA committee.

At the GALHA lunch on 12 November, you (as interim GALHA chair) told those present that a new editor, Brett Lock, had been appointed to *G&LH*. You may recall that I posted an email to the GALHA list on 15 November in order to point out that this was not possible since it was the PTT who would be deciding the future of *G&LH*. On 16 November you replied on the GALHA list to my email, this time saying that GALHA would be producing its own magazine. But George (who is the GALHA secretary) has emailed off-list saying he endorses 'the GALHA committee's decision to publish *G&LH*'.

Hence the email I sent to the GALHA list earlier today, which **was** the original email. I didn't 'resort to corresponding with [you] via the e-list' but did so deliberately simply because I was replying to the email you sent to the GALHA list on 16 November. I trust this clarifies things.

* * *

More comment on the Autumn issue arrived by email on 29 November from a kindred editor, that of *ScotsGay*, John Hein, known for the acerbic one-liner on bulletin-board postings and a no-bullshit attitude in his editorials (and a fondness for good beer). He wrote,

I've now read through your dossier on this sad affair.

I've been a member of GALHA since it was set up and a member of the NSS since I was 15, so I'm probably longer in the tooth than most folk when it comes to being a committed and reasonably active atheist.

The piece by Diesel contains nothing I wouldn't have been prepared to publish in *ScotsGay*. That said, there is much in it with which I disagree but then I've printed verbatim press releases from the Metropolitan Community Church in *ScotsGay* and publish listings for a number of superstitious LGBT groups. There's nothing wrong with printing bollocks from time to time – as long as, from time to time, you point out that it is bollocks – which I do!

It's sad that your detractors are falling into the trap that any criticism of adherents of the Islamic superstition is intrinsically racist – it's exactly the same specious argument as any criticism of Zionism being condemned as being anti-Semitic.

As an atheist, I put all superstitions – be they Christianity (of whatever unpleasant flavour), Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Man-in-the-Moon-ism or whatever – into one basket: the trash basket. Their adherents are, at best, unfortunate dupes – at worst, unreasonable fanatics. It's worth trying to educate the former, the latter are probably best publicly excoriated in the hope that the canker (or cancer for that matter) of their unreason will not spread in the light of our superior criticism.

I'm not prepared to temper my criticism of Muslims because some of them (or others on their behalf) affect to interpret this criticism as racist. There are Muslims of all colours and races – they're all equally soft in the head, in my humble opinion.

And the same applies, *mutatis mutandis*, to the rest of the superstitious.

When atheists start getting their tongues up the fundamentals of the superstitious, there is something seriously wrong. We should not be pulling our punches – these people are potentially as much the enemies of humanity as racists and fascists.

So, I fully support your printing of the offending article(s).

* * *

On 2 December 2005, our friends at Islamophobia Watch suddenly caught up with the first edition of this dossier, and one of its owners, Bob Pitt, posted the following (the ellipses are merely where hyperlinks referred to material already contained in this dossier):

Update on the story of *Gay and Lesbian Humanist* magazine's 'Sick Face of Islam' issue and the resignation of its editor, Andy Armitage. ... Armitage and his supporters have issued a dossier documenting the dispute within the Gay and Lesbian Humanist Association ... We are pleased to see that the role of Islamophobia Watch is given full recognition. ('It seems that nothing, but nothing other than complete abasement to Islam will ever succeed in satisfying this load of extremists.')

It will be noted that, ironically, the quotation in parentheses is that of GALHA committee member Terry Sanderson (see p. 24).

The *Freethinker* published a three-page feature article on the matter in its December 2005 issue, in which Andy Armitage and George Broadhead were allowed a couple of hundred words or so each for comments. Broadhead criticised the groups who had criticised the magazine, by saying it was 'highly significant' that the signatories to the letter were among those who had strongly objected to a protest by GALHA and other groups at the welcome given by London's mayor, Ken Livingstone, to the homophobic Muslim preacher Yusuf al-Qaradawi.

'These people are opposed to any criticism made of Islam and brand it racist,' Broadhead wrote. 'But GALHA has every right to condemn a religion which is not only intrinsically homophobic but oppresses women and calls for the murder of unbelievers, and it will continue to do so.'

Armitage reiterated his condemnation of the GALHA committee, concluding with, 'I've never seen such spinelessness from people who call themselves campaigners and freethinkers. GALHA is the worse for this fiasco. I hope its members will bear that in mind come the next committee elections, before a much-needed organisation becomes a eunuch.'

The article republished some of Denis Fernando's rant, including his quotation of extracts from the magazine, and juxtaposed Fernando's quotation of Armitage with Armitage's own words, as we have done here on Page 46, to make the point that Fernando had used selective extracts in order to favour his own opinions.

It also published, as part of the feature article, a considered piece by Diesel Balaam, explaining some of his reasoning behind the original article.

Gay Times used a short story in its January issue (out in December) under the headline GALHA 'RACIST' ROW:

The editorial board [*sic*] of *Gay and Lesbian Humanist* magazine has resigned, after publishing an article widely condemned as 'racist'.

Thirteen representatives of black, anti-racist, gay, student and trade union groups signed a letter condemning the article, 'Towards a New Humanism', by 'Diesel Balaam' [*GT's* quotation marks on the author's name].

It described immigrants as 'criminals of the worst kind' and 'unable even to speak English in some cases'. It also called for 'the repatriation of undesirables' and claimed: 'It isn't racist to be anti-immigration or anti-Islam'.

The Gay and Lesbian Humanist Association (GALHA) Committee issued a statement disassociating themselves from the article. They regretted publication, and admitted the piece was 'racially prejudiced and inflammatory'.

The magazine's editor, Andy Armitage, and deputy editor, Dean Braithwaite, have since resigned.

It won't have escaped readers' attention that the juxtaposition of detail here makes it look as if the editorial team resigned in shame. It can be gathered from all that has been reported in this dossier so far that this is far from the truth.

The unbylined writer had not come to the editorial team for any comment, in spite of an 18 November email to Armitage from *Gay Times's* deputy editor, Joseph Galliano, some time before the article appeared, saying,

Hi there Andy,

I'm not yet sure what we will be doing, but rest assured that if we do cover this story you will be given the opportunity to put your side,

Best wishes

Joe

Armitage wrote to Galliano, complaining that a story had appeared without 'the opportunity to put your side', and Galliano responded, offering space for a letter of about the same space as the story had taken.

In a separate email, Braithwaite complained to *Gay Times's* editor, Vicky Powell:

I'm dismayed at your news story 'GALHA "racist" row' in the January 2006 issue of *Gay Times*.

I'm angry that the story implies I (and, indeed, Andy Armitage) resigned from *Gay and Lesbian Humanist* out of shame. The story implies this by its juxtaposition of the ultimate paragraph and the quote 'racially prejudiced and inflammatory' at the end of the penultimate paragraph. This quote appears to be taken from the online dossier detailing the events surrounding this dispute, and it is quite clear in that dossier where we stand on this issue and the reason why we resigned. If you'd cared to read this fully or approached me for a comment, you'd have known this.

I would like to know why you carried this story without availing yourselves of the full facts and would respectfully ask that you allow this to be rectified in the next issue.

I look forward to hearing from you asap.

* * *

On 2 January 2006 the *Guardian* carried a story under the illogical headline, GAY MAGAZINE IN RACE ROW AFTER CALLING ISLAM A BARMY DOCTRINE (as so many do, it conflates race with religion). It was highly selective in its quotations and failed to make reference to Balaam's assertion that racism is the antithesis of humanism and his acknowledgement that many racial groups have integrated well into British society and are 'contributing a great deal'.

The piece ended with the words of Rasina X of the gay Muslim group Imaan, who said, 'In lots of ways the gay community reflects the straight community, but GALHA has gone beyond what the average straight person thinks. These comments are disgusting. They are worse than what the BNP would publish. It is racist.' It is not know, however, whether Ms X read the articles or only the carefully selected extracts such as those that Denis Fernando chose to publish (see Chapter 6).

* * *

This dossier may be further updated as further material becomes available and as events continue to unfold. If anyone believes we have omitted any important factual information or have made errors, please email the authors at ajarmitage@aol.com.

Appendix I: Towards a New Humanism

'Towards a new Humanism', article by Diesel Balaam

Gay & Lesbian Humanist, Autumn 2005, pp. 10–12

From time to time we must, by the very fact that we are freethinkers, question our Humanism. Is secular Humanism truly relevant to our society and the world today? And, if Humanism must evolve, what underpins it? These are very big questions and I will leave the big answers to philosophers and others more learned than I.

Like many readers of this magazine, who came to Humanism in the 1980s and 1990s, I've always been in awe of the previous generation of Humanists. Their Humanism was, and still is, passionate, and uncompromising. Fired up by rationalist campaigns defending and extending freethought, free speech and freedom of expression, as well as promoting scientific enquiry, the relaxation of censorship in the arts, a woman's right to control her fertility, the abolition of the death penalty and the decriminalisation of homosexuality, their mid-twentieth-century Humanism was confident, unapologetic and hugely influential. Of course, others also campaigned for greater freedom and openness, including some Christian reformers, but it was a mark of Humanism's power and social reach that these people were also effectively advancing the Humanist ethos, even if they didn't acknowledge it as such.

Humanism was on the march, confident that it would ultimately banish inequalities, man's inhumanity to man and the odious superstitions and ideologies that underpinned them (we sometimes forget Humanism's antagonism towards communism). Freedom of enquiry, science and education were the tools that would achieve the future's enlightened state. Unfettered human beings were, ultimately, rational and humanitarian. Like Marxists, some Humanists appeared to think the triumph of their world view was 'inevitable'.

On the face of it, Humanism, in Britain at least, appears to have enjoyed many a quiet victory. Churchgoing is in terminal decline, and we have had, at last, a solid Labour government that has delivered gay rights and other long-overdue reforms, however slowly and imperfectly. Social attitudes are generally liberal,

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with most people publicly tolerant and secular, even if they are privately prejudiced and religious.

Christian notions of 'sin' have largely given way to Humanist ethics, which determine that only those actions that actively harm and exploit people are wrong. Old-style morality campaigners – typified by those shrewish postmenopausal Catholic women you see on religious talk shows – are little more than a laughing stock in most quarters. The new pope is almost universally viewed with suspicion and contempt outside of so-called 'faith communities'. The Church of England is an irrelevance in day-to-day life.

With all this, you'd think British Humanists would be cock-a-hoop. But, arguably, most of these positive changes have occurred in spite of Humanism rather than because of it. If society is indeed more open, it may just be down to the disintegration of the social fabric that once held us all together, securely, if unequally. After all, while most people don't particularly care if you're gay, they don't particularly care if you're homophobic either – Elton and Eminem are both considered cool. What we have now is a widespread passive secularism and an empty, unanchored tolerance. And, if the churches really are emptying at a rate of knots, isn't it something of a Pyrrhic victory, if all we have done is replace socially concerned Christians with consumer zombies queuing outside IKEA on a Sunday morning?

Peter Tatchell has previously reflected in *G&LH* on the heady days of radical politics in the 1960s and 1970s, recalling ruefully the big ambitions he and others of his generation had for the end of the family, church, patriarchy and class system. The removal of all four was part of a Utopian project that presupposed that, without these structuring institutions and the hegemony of the ideologies underpinning them, everybody would be free and fulfilled. Of course, no such Utopia was delivered, but all of those institutions have either withered or changed beyond all recognition. On the level that everyday life is lived, they are weakened or nonexistent.

Unfortunately, what Tatchell, and even Margaret Thatcher, didn't allow for was the fact that not everyone is capable of managing their individual freedoms wisely and responsibly. So, while middle-class people (well resourced, either financially or culturally, or both) generally thrive in a time of easier divorce, easy credit, permissiveness and the deregulated workplace, lower-middle- and working-class people (poorly resourced, either financially or culturally, or both), are more prone to familial chaos, uncontrollable debt, binge drinking, antisocial behaviour and debauched holidays in the sun.

This doesn't mean that the middle classes are intrinsically better people, just that their situation is better – they have the means to cope with greater freedom by independently establishing their own boundaries, boundaries that were formerly imposed on everyone via closer family and community ties, stricter schooling, bank managers, church leaders and trade unions.

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Since the 1960s, the prevailing currents of social and economic change have conspired to erode the supervised and sometimes onerous values that make society tolerable – respect for others, common courtesy, aspirations to self-improvement (intellectually as well as materially), thrift, sobriety, a sense of duty and obligation, civic pride and benign patriotism.

These things are sneered at today, while, culturally, our aspirations have nose-dived. Vapid celebrity culture makes millionaires out of undeserving dullards (Jade Goody, anyone?), while National Lottery winnings randomly reward participants regardless of merit, sending out an insidious message that status and reward have no connection with effort, conduct or contribution.

We are all encouraged to ‘dumb down’ – epitomised by privileged men like Guy Ritchie and Jamie Oliver, who feel obliged to effect hideous ‘mockney’ accents and pretend to like football. Anything remotely risky and therefore character-building is quashed by an overzealous Health and Safety Executive running scared of the compensation culture, while, most distressingly, young women have coarsened themselves with ‘ladette’ behaviour, with dire consequences for their health, their appearance and their decorum.

Basic life skills, such as managing a household budget, enjoying a healthy balanced diet and elementary hygiene, are now mysteries to vast swathes of the population, which is presumably why we have endless TV programmes telling us how to clean our homes, lose weight, dress ourselves or even boil an egg. The TV programme that shows viewers how to wipe their own bottoms cannot be too far away.

As if this weren’t a depressing enough scenario, the reckless and mismanaged immigration policies of successive governments have led to the demographics of our major towns and cities being for ever changed by huge numbers of foreign settlers. For years, the liberal elite dismissed fears about immigration, because more people quit the UK than moved in – the pretence being that all the doctors, engineers and inventors we lost were somehow equivalent to the often poor, ill-educated and culturally estranged Third Worlders who largely replaced them. Even now, they close down any real debate about immigration, branding those who want one as ‘xenophobic’ – but so fundamentally changing the character of our society, without consulting the general populace, has been hugely detrimental to the Humanist Project.

Controlled immigration is sometimes economically necessary and can be socially beneficial, but, since the 1990s, the effective loss of control over our borders (officially, 1 per cent of the population are now illegal settlers) has led some commentators to claim – quite convincingly – that our population is growing by the equivalent of a city the size of Cambridge every six months.

Legal or illegal, many of these Third World and Eastern European newcomers are criminals of the worst kind, and many more are hopelessly ill equipped to live in a complex Western democracy, unable even to speak English in some cases. A parasitic few are bent on the destruction of Western civilisation.

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Our history, traditions and our evolved democratic values mean little or nothing to them. The official line has always been that immigrant newcomers would assimilate themselves and, of course, many have done. By and large, Jews, Sikhs and Hindus have integrated rather well, maintaining a strong cultural identity while somehow managing to meet the host community halfway and contributing a great deal to our society (more, in many respects, than some of the dissolute members of our tragically disinherited working class).

Other groups have fared less well, overall, evinced by their hopeless insularity and overrepresentation in our mental hospitals and prisons. But the policy of assimilation was a cynical and ethnocentric assumption in the first place, made by politicians who knew that their own neighbourhoods, like leafy Hampstead, would remain beyond the reach of 'coloureds' on account of the inbuilt apartheid of the housing market. The politicians also failed to anticipate the alarming Balkanisation of Britain, whereby places like Bradford and Leicester are gradually becoming de-Anglicised to the point where Englishmen will be in the minority within ten years, as they will be in Birmingham soon afterwards. Even now, walking down the street in some parts of London – not just the obvious areas, but places like Queensway, Willesden and the Edgware Road – you could be forgiven for thinking you were in Kandahar. Redundant churches are sprouting onion domes and minarets. We are becoming strangers in our own land.

Let us be quite clear that race is not the issue here, as racism is the antithesis of Humanism. We are not concerned where people come from, genetically or geographically, but we ought to care very much about where they are going, ideologically. Racial discrimination is abhorrent, but the meaning of racism, for Humanists, has to remain very narrowly defined. It is not racist to be anti-immigration or anti-Islam, or believe in strictly selective immigration like Canada and Australia.

Nor is it racist to believe in the removal of citizenship and the repatriation of undesirables – including perhaps second- or third-generation immigrants – who criminally abuse and damage the host community. The obvious candidates for repatriation would be drug traffickers, people smugglers, gun criminals and the allies of terrorism, but they should also include those who incite others to commit violent hate crimes (including white supremacist troublemakers).

To his credit, the former home secretary David Blunkett did try to remove Sheikh Abu Hamza from these shores, but was hampered by human rights lawyers for whom an individual's rights always seem to coincide with the availability of generous Legal Aid handouts. So, while Humanists must continue to counter racial discrimination, it is important, nonetheless, for them to be culturally discriminating – to hold people to account for their beliefs and the actions that arise from them. For 'culture', you can usually read 'religion'.

Maybe it's a fear of being labelled 'racist', or just politically correct inertia, that leads Humanists to bang on endlessly about the Church of England (which seems to me rather like kicking a blind dog with three legs), when it's patently

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obvious that the wolf at the door is militant Islam. For homosexuals, it is doubtful that there is any such thing as a 'moderate' practising Muslim, or that the Koran can be regarded as anything more than just a squalid murder manual. So, while we must be tolerant towards Muslims who quietly and privately profess their faith, we must be ever vigilant.

If we truly believe that Humanism is more than just one of many competing and equivalent belief systems in a 'pluralist' society, then we need to reorder our priorities and adopt a more robust approach. Western Europe is the very crucible of freethinking and the rationalist tradition, so it should be vigorously defended against those who abuse the freedom our civilisation bestows upon them. This is especially true in Britain, because, while there are other countries more disposed to secular social policy, Britain has always, on account of its colonial past, provided the big template for democratic freedoms and the rule of law. Unfortunately, the fashion over the last thirty years has been to denigrate Britain's colonial achievements. Notwithstanding certain brutal and shameful episodes, we should take pride in the good our forefathers have done in the world. With apologies to Monty Python, what have the British ever done for us? (Apart from the provision of secure borders, the rule of law, railways, schools, dams, hospitals etc. etc.).

In the 1960s and 1970s, the rage for satire, rock and roll and the optimistic libertarianism of the Tatchell generation all combined to create a climate in which anything detrimental to the British Establishment was applauded, in the expectation that, as the Establishment was rolled back, a free zone of enlightenment would be created. The Establishment certainly has retreated and lost credibility, but the resulting vacuum has hardly been occupied by an engaged and active citizenry.

Rather, it has been a gift to small groups of Islamic fanatics, generously funded by our benefits system, waiting for the moment in history when they can exploit a weakness or crisis for their own murderous and power-hungry ends. Like the Nazi Party in Germany and the Bolsheviks before them, these groups are highly organised and determined. The lesson needs to be learned.

By some horrible coincidence, on the same September day that we gay Humanists gathered in sunny Hove for our 2004 conference, children were being bayoneted by their Muslim captors in a Beslan school for daring to ask for a drink of water. So what did we do? Like a *Guardian* readers' knitting circle, we sat around lamenting the supposed wickedness of the Americans, the Israelis and the Church of England! Truthfully, there was also some criticism of Islam, but this was secondary and muted.

We have yet to develop a clear and unapologetic discourse that allows us to condemn Muslim fanatics and their multicultural stooges, like Ken Livingstone, without looking over our shoulders. Our efforts also need to be pan-European – in France, almost one-third of babies are born to Muslim parents, and Frenchmen will soon be in the minority in Marseille. In the Netherlands, the warnings of popular gay politician Pim Fortuyn were tragically snuffed out by a

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left-wing assassin before he could sufficiently alert people to the damage the influx of Muslims is doing to his own native land (proved by the Islamic assassin who subsequently murdered Theo Van Gogh for making a film, and the marked decline in tolerance towards homosexuals there). We need a pan-European response to militant Islam, not least because, as things stand, our hands are tied by European laws that effectively protect its foot soldiers.

A good starting point would be for Humanists to lobby Parliament demanding that the 2011 census become a National Audit of Population, carried out in conjunction with the issuing of identity cards. This would weed out illegal immigrants, many of them problematic and undesirable, who could then be deported – though, in line with our traditions of tolerance and fair play, noncriminals could be granted leave to remain here if genuinely compassionate grounds are proven.

A sensible debate about the extent, character and policing of future immigration is urgently needed. Perhaps the most immediately important campaign is to prevent the liberal elite – who have long presided over the reverse-colonisation of so many of our towns and cities – from extending legal protection to religious expression, which may well compromise efforts to prosecute or even counter hate speech from Islamics and other fundamentalists.

For us Humanists, our objective should remain to achieve a proactively secular public sphere that tolerates and protects private religious freedoms, but one that does not allow any religious faith to dictate social policy, or otherwise contaminate that secular public sphere. However, we do need to shift our approach from one of indulgent libertarianism to an enlightened authoritarianism – to put ourselves on a war footing, if you will. After half a century of helping to remove the old structures, it is time to erect new structures that will protect our hard-won freedoms and reinforce the social obligations we have to one another. This includes removing all forms of racial discrimination for the law-abiding, while at the same time making it clear to foreign settlers that, if they seriously abuse and damage our society, their criminal convictions will carry the ultimate forfeit of fast-track deportation. This, I believe, is the challenge we must face now as we move towards a New Humanism for the twenty-first century.

DieselBalaam@aol.com

This article was written before the terror attacks in London on Thursday, 7 July 2005.

Appendix II: Page 2 Editorial

From Page 2 editorial

Andy Armitage

Gay & Lesbian Humanist, Autumn 2005, p. 2

Following are the first three paragraphs of the editor's Page 2 editorial, a short feature that usually comments on some aspect of that quarter's magazine and then provides a breakdown of content. It is only the first two paragraphs that have been referred to above. The third is attached here to show how the editorial then led into talk of that issue's content.

Our front-page headline this quarter is deliberately ambiguous: it could be saying that this is only the *sickening* face of this religion called Islam (implying that there is possibly another face); or it could be saying this is *the* face of Islam, and its face is sickening. Interpret it as you will. But I suspect that many who thought the former some years ago may well now be thinking the latter, as more and more of what Islam seems to stand for is laid before us, as article after article in newspapers and magazines chronicles the atrocious nature of aspects of this growing belief system.

However, there probably are Muslims among us who would as much abhor the behaviour of their fellow religionists in Iran as we do. And we know that some so-called 'community leaders' have spoken out against the London bomb outrage. It is, though, usually the words of mullahs and imams that we find ourselves seriously at odds with. The thoughts of the average Western Muslim are rarely heard publicly.

You can see the story of the Iranian barbarity, as well as stories closer to home, in our news round-up and our 'Page Three News Feature', while, as usual, **George Broadhead** brings us a digest of news from various parts of the world in 'World Watch'.

Appendix III: When Absurdity Leads to Atrocity

'When absurdity leads to atrocity', article by Andy Armitage

Gay & Lesbian Humanist, Autumn 2005, p. 2

We carry two pictures on our front page. Both are shocking. Both are of different events, thousands of miles apart: the lower one on 7 July and the other one on 19 July. One thing binds them: certainty.

Both barbarities were carried out by deranged people who are convinced that their interpretation of the way the cosmos began and is maintained is the only true one. While 7/7 had a greater international political dimension – with Tony Blair's decision to prosecute an illegal war in Iraq being, perhaps, only a part of the mix – the fact remains that the malevolent perpetrators were certain that their imaginary god would grant them 72 virgins when they reached Paradise. Without that certainty, they would not have blown themselves up. Whether they would have carried out their act of violence in another way can only be guessed at.

As for our first picture, it was not long before these last moments of two frightened young men were appearing on websites and Internet discussions and blogs all over the world, shocking and disgusting anyone with an ounce of decency and regard for human rights and dignity.

Mahmoud Asgari (16) and Ayaz Marhoni (18) were hanged publicly in Edalat Square in the city of Mashhad in northeast Iran on 19 July. The irony of the fact that '*edalat*' means 'justice' will not have been lost on most observers.

Their 'crime'? They expressed feelings for each other in a sexual manner. It is said to be widely known that Iran executes lesbians and gays, and, according to the gay rights group OutRage! – which has been following events in Iran – the Iranian government has executed 4,000 homosexuals since 1979. It bases this on estimates in the mid-1990s by Homan, an exiled Iranian gay rights group. Is there any reason – in the light of our picture – that this rate has eased any since those Homan figures?

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OutRage! says it's a fact that Iran 'pins false charges on the victims of its murderous policies in order to discredit them and discourage public protests'. In this case, the lads were accused of raping a 13-year-old boy.

Aaron Saeed, the group's gay Muslim spokesperson, says that Iran 'enforces sharia law, which dictates the death penalty for gay sex: variously including hanging, stoning, beheading or dropping from a high place like a tall building or cliff top'.

He adds, 'The teenagers admitted to having gay sex, probably under torture, but claimed in their defence that their crime was common and they were not aware it was punishable by death. Prior to their execution, the teenagers were held in prison for fourteen months and severely beaten with 228 lashes.'

Some misguided people will no doubt argue that people in such benighted countries know exactly what the law is, and, while to deny them their sexual outlets (provided they are consensual) is harsh, they ought to act with restraint, for the sake of their own skins if for nothing else.

But, if humanity is to progress at all, it needs to have at least one Golden Rule: that we recognise human rights – that, as humans in a *world* of humans, we recognise each other's right to be and to act according to what is *in* us as humans, according to the things that *make* us human. The caveat is that we do not harm others.

This is nothing less than John Locke might have advocated – although sexuality was not as boxed, pigeonholed or codified in his day. One might extrapolate, though, from his harm principle, that, had 'gay rights' been an issue then, he would either have had to include it in his list of freedoms or have been left open to accusations of inconsistency.

As a Golden Rule, it has served us well in countries that are more civilised than Iran and its fellow Islamic states.

The Iran hangings prompted me to look further into the sadism and evil carried out by malevolent mullahs, and I didn't have to look far for headlines such as these: 'Iran sentences woman to flogging and jail, man to execution', '7 boys under-18 executed in Iran since January', 'Iran town's jail has 30 prisoners on death row', '17-year-old musician to be hanged in Iran capital', 'Iran to hang 16-year-old schoolboy', and 'Iran hangs four men aged between 17 and 23'.

Only China scores higher than Iran in the execution stakes.

There are more headlines, including one that tells us that Iran is to 'speed up flogging of women for "bad" veil' – in other words, for not wearing the appropriate clothing in public.

All these are taken from one source, the human rights page of *Iran Focus*, a web-based news outlet that claims to report impartially on news in the region. In

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early September, it reported on and quoted from a statement from prosecutors' offices concerning the fast-track flogging of women:

'Individuals whose state of attire and make-up is against religious laws in public will be prosecuted without having to first wait in a queue and will be sentenced to flogging and fines,' the statement said.

'Scarves which do not cover the hair and neck', 'tight overcoats or coats which finish above the knees and whose sleeves cover to a point higher than the wrist', 'tight trousers which do not cover the calf of the leg', and 'women's make-up' are all forbidden, according to the statement, which added that failure to adhere to the dress code would be dealt with accordingly.'

Whether it's the subject of our first picture or our second – or the barbarities cited by *Iran Focus* – one is reminded of Voltaire's words: 'Those who can make you believe absurdities can make you commit atrocities.' There are absurdities aplenty in the Koran and other 'holy' books. There are atrocious people who conduct their affairs accordingly. They do so because of their certainty in the baloney their books contain.

And, while church attendances in the UK are thankfully decreasing, the fastest-growing religion is Islam. Chillingly, it continues to grow like a canker, both through immigration and through the unrestrained and irresponsible breeding we have become used to seeing among practising Catholics.

It's encouraged by our government's determination to court the Muslim vote with ever more religious schools, furthering the ghettoisation of the mind, and by its cosyng-up to unelected and largely unrepresentative 'community leaders', forever cementing the idea that religion *per se* is a good thing and religious sectarianism is harmless.

Further reinforcement comes when a British police force issues edicts on how officers should behave when entering a Muslim household lest religious sensibilities be offended (whatever the emergency, one assumes); when, some years ago, a British woman was forced to remove porcelain porcines from her window because Muslims passed by and were offended; when, as happened this autumn, a burger chain had to withdraw ice-cream wrappers because the stylised cone depicted on it looks a bit like the Arabic script for 'Allah' – and even then only when it's turned sideways on; when posters advertising *Desperate Housewives* are desecrated by Islamic fanatics because some flesh is on display.

We should be very watchful.

The absurdities are there in the books our children – of all faiths and none – are forced to use in school each day.

The atrocities have long begun.

Appendix IV: World Watch

'World Watch', regular column by George Broadhead

Gay & Lesbian Humanist, Autumn 2005, p. 6

What depressing times! Despite the vile atrocities in the name of Islam committed in the heart of the British capital and the disgusting actions perpetrated by one of the world's great (!) Islamic states (**Iran**, see p. 3 [of the magazine]), the Christian-dominated **UK** Labour government push ahead with plans for ill-advised incitement-to-religious-hatred legislation. Where will it all end? But, *hey*, let's lighten the mood.

During EuroPride in Oslo, **Norway**, in June, the humanist and veteran lesbian and gay rights activist Kim-Karen Kristine Friele (70, right) was presented with the 2005 Happy Rainbow Humanist award. The presentation by the Nordic Rainbow Humanists (NRH) coincided with the unveiling of a bust of her. During Friele's acceptance speech – 'Changes and Challenges' – she talked about the early years of the Norwegian and Nordic lesbian and gay rights struggle. She highlighted the fears and feelings of guilt that prevented many from being active in the movement, and warned, 'We have long neglected the question of international rainbow solidarity – and should give much more support to this now.'

Together with the Nordic Homo Council and Tupilak (the Nordic organisation of lesbian and gay cultural workers), NRH held a series of EuroPride fringe events at Humanist House, including seminars, films and art exhibitions on Nazi and neo-Nazi persecution of homosexuals and Nordic and international solidarity. The international secretary of NRH, Bill Schiller (a GALHA member), said, 'We were very pleased to have been given facilities at the large and beautiful Humanist House in Oslo [and] very proud to see the downtown ... building fly a large rainbow flag from its façade – visible in all directions, and a solid confirmation of the decades-long support given to homosexuals around the world by the global humanist movement in the face of homophobic pressures from all religions. We are also very thankful for all the crucial support given to these events by Norwegian Rainbow Humanist, Rolf Solheim.'

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[The Happy Rainbow Humanist award was created in 2002, and our very own George Broadhead was its first recipient! – Passepartout.]¹

Queers have been blamed by mad Muslims for the Asian Tsunami, cranky Christians for Hurricane Katrina and rabid religionists *great and small* for everything that's wrong with the world in between. In a *Spectator* article in August – 'Muslims are right about Britain' – the Conservative MP John Hayes blamed the ugly brutishness of our cities on gays, too, lumping us with drunken yobs. That some gay men or lesbians can turn into lager louts as easily as straights may well be the case, but why, as he suggests, should 'moderate Muslims ... despair of the moral decline and the ugly brutishness that characterise much of urban Britain ... the metropolitan mix of gay rights and lager louts'?

There are two terms that, increasingly, annoy us: *Islamophobia* and *moderate Muslims*. What we'd like to know is, first, what's wrong with being fearful of Islam (there's a lot to fear); and, second, what does a moderate Muslim do, other than excuse the real nutters by adhering to this barmy doctrine?

The International Humanist and Ethical Union (IHEU) – of which GALHA is a member – together with two other NGOs, has been involved in a long-running campaign to get the Commission on Human Rights to 'unequivocally condemn any call to kill, to terrorise, or to use violence in the name of God or religion'. In July, during an oral statement to the **UN** given on behalf of the Organisation of Islamic States (OIC), **Pakistan's** ambassador, accused the three NGOs of 'packaging their crass propaganda as scholarly research in their bid to spread hatred against Muslims'.

Misrepresentation

IHEU's president, Roy Brown, said, 'This gratuitous insult has no basis in fact. Instead of providing leadership to the Islamic world on this important issue, the OIC has again chosen to demonise the messenger. This is part of a continuing campaign of misrepresentation by the OIC against NGOs. The OIC statement hides behind accusations of Islamophobia [*that* word again] in order to block any discussion of those extremist clerics who call to kill in the name of Islam.'

IHEU expressed its deep concern at the failure of the OIC and the Islamic states even to recognise that those who call for these terror attacks are Muslim clerics, pointing out that this failure creates an obstacle to discussion of this important issue, and will make any solution to the problem of terrorism harder to achieve.

On a lighter note, in August, in the **Netherlands**, Amsterdam's Mayor Geert Dales was presented with the first copy of the new *Encyclopedia of Gay Men in the Netherlands*, published by Ambo/Anthos. The Dutch Liberal Party (VVD)

¹ This interpolation was an editorial addition to the magazine article, not to this dossier.

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politician was chosen for the honour in recognition of his 'conspicuous efforts' to protect gay people. The book is thought to be the first of its kind in the world.

The Dutch-language encyclopedia has been written by 25 authors – most of them gay – and contains 1,300 entries, spread across its 24 chapters, discussing the history and culture of gay men in the Netherlands, through politics, the law and rights philosophies, and representation on TV and radio.

According to the publishers, the idea for the book has been around for a number of years and they hope it will be read by a wider audience than just the GLBT community. 'There are things in here that outsiders would not know about,' a spokesperson said. The book (with a first edition of 3,000) has been published with the aid of grants from the Hartenfonds and VSB Fonds foundations.

All summer, around the world, more GLBT Pride events than ever have attempted to brighten up our lives but, predictably, religious bigots have been out in force to condemn us for our unnatural ways. In **Estonia** in August, clerics tried, without success, to have the Tallinn Pride banned, while the Estonian Christian People's Party claimed that the parade propagated 'an immoral sex life'. **Russia** is still to stage its first Pride, though. In Moscow, where gay community leaders Nikolai Alekseev and Evgeniya Debryanskaya announced at a press conference in July that they will be applying to the authorities for permission to hold Russia's first ever Pride in 2006, Mayor Yuri Luzhkov (above) stated publicly in response that he will Not Allow It! Meanwhile, in **Spain**, July's Pride events turned into huge victory parades to celebrate the country's first gay marriage, despite fierce opposition from crazy Catholics.

In **Latvia**, the head of the Roman Catholic Church, Cardinal Janis Pujats, criticised Riga's GLBT parade (left) – which was staged in the capital in July – and the Russian ambassador to Latvia, Viktor Kalyuzhny, thanked him for doing so. Kalyuzhny had met with the cardinal and, he told journalists, 'made a deep bow to His Grace who practically alone has clearly, openly and directly said what happened here'. He criticised the authorities for allowing the march to take place and said such an event would not be possible in Russia because 'it is anti-human'. Obviously, a friend of Mayor Luzhkov, then.

The ambassador went on to spout the sort of rubbish fit for the Pope: 'Today, the mortality rate in Latvia exceeds the number of births, and now here is an attempt to say in the framework of democratic principles that [the gay parade] is necessary and democratic. This is not only a matter of the church, but that any normal individual should understand that cheating nature is impossible.'

What delights will next year's Pride season bring? we wonder. At a guess, we won't see the Islamic world staging Pride events just yet, and 'moderate Muslims' and Islam sympathisers should think hard about why that is. In fact, if we don't stop the madness we're now engaged in, it's more likely that Islamists will attempt to ban Pride events here.

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Till next time ... Up, up and away!

Appendix V: 'Ban This Cleric ...'

'Ban this cleric, says humanist group', news story

Gay & Lesbian Humanist, Autumn 2005, p. 4

Reacting to the reports in the Middle Eastern press that the Islamist cleric Yusuf al-Qaradawi has called for the execution of the Crown Prince of Qatar following allegations that he's gay, GALHA has called on Home Secretary Charles Clarke to ban al-Qaradawi permanently from Britain.

There were allegations that the prince had been involved in a scuffle at London's GAY nightclub.

A spokesperson for GALHA said, 'To call for the execution of Prince Tameem Bin Hamad Al-Thani simply because he is alleged to be gay flies in the face of all international human rights conventions.'

GALHA has welcomed the announcement made in August by Clarke concerning the deportation and exclusion from the UK of extremist Muslim clerics, and hopes that this ban will include al-Qaradawi.

GALHA's secretary, George Broadhead, said the organisation had written to Clarke, urging him to ban the homophobic preacher, 'who has made his extremist views very clear in his speeches and books, and via his website, and who is currently banned from the USA'.

More information about al-Qaradawi's extremist views can be found at www.galha.org/briefing/qaradawi.html.

A group representing Muslim gays and lesbians has criticised GALHA for its call for al-Qaradawi to be banned from Britain. Imaan said in a statement that there should be unity within the LGB community, and that some press coverage of the atrocities had failed to distinguish between Islam and terrorism.

But one of its chief criticisms was against GALHA, which had said in a press release that a reported forthcoming visit by al-Qaradawi would be wrong while Britain was still 'reeling from the kind of extreme violence that is spawned by his religion'.

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London's mayor, Ken Livingstone, has continued to say he would welcome al-Qaradawi to City Hall.

Appendix VI: The Evidence (I)

This Appendix contains sundry articles and website text supplied by Diesel Balaam – much of which was reference material for his article in Appendix I. Some has been published since the article appeared in *G&LH* and is included here as further support for the facts and comments the article contains.

From *Independent*, 6 August 2002. Page unknown. Headline: **The pressure group, a right-wing agenda and the truth about ‘our immigration crisis’**. Steve Boggan

Report

Excerpts only, but in same order as appeared:

[starts]

Even as immigration stories go, this one was a bombshell: Britain would be swamped by two million foreigners over the next decade, a net increase of 240,000 a year, because of smuggled asylum-seekers, over-stayers and economic migrants, as well as those genuinely entitled to stay. The rate of immigration into Britain, equivalent to creating a city the size of Cambridge every six months or a Birmingham every five years, was pushing Britain’s population to crisis point.

... ..

The apocalyptic predictions, from no less a source than MigrationwatchUK, a think-tank, were roundly rejected by the Home Office. The group’s attempts to estimate the number of asylum-seekers smuggled through cross-Channel ports in the back of lorries, were quickly dismissed as guesswork.

... ..

Sir Andrew Green, a retired diplomat who chairs the charity Medical Aid for Palestinians, is the group’s founder and chairman. A former ambassador to Syria as well as Saudi Arabia, he became interested in Britain’s asylum laws in

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1996 during the embarrassing (for the government) case of Mohammed al-Masari, a dissident Saudi physicist who operated a campaign against the Saudi regime by fax from London.

‘I was under-secretary for the Middle East at the time and I was trying to remove Islamic extremists like Masari from Britain,’ Sir Andrew told *The Independent* yesterday. ‘But because of our asylum laws, I found I was unable to do so, despite having the support of the Prime Minister, John Major.

... ..

‘I found immigration out of control but I also saw there was not a healthy debate about the issue, that the information was not getting out to people. It is important in a democracy that people are shown the full facts, and I think from the response we have had to our findings that they were not getting them.’

... ..

... Dr David Coleman, 57 [of MigrationwatchUK], reader in demography at Oxford University ... has published 90 papers and eight books on the growth and movements of populations, [and] is a regular contributor to [*The Times*].

... ..

[He] talks of ‘a pervasive but unofficial institutional multiculturalism’ and advocates that ‘migrants should in general accommodate themselves to local conditions, not oblige the customs and institutions of their new home to make way for them.’

... ..

Yesterday he [Dr David Coleman] said ... ‘I have been writing about this for some time but no one has really latched on to it,’ ... ‘I think this is the first time we have put it in terms of two million new immigrants and likened it to the growth of cities like Cambridge and Birmingham. The figures are all in the public domain; we have simply put them together for people to see ...’

... ..

Asked about his own politics, Dr Coleman described them as ‘on the right, rather than the left’. He is a former adviser to the Conservative government and was special adviser to both Leon Brittan at the Home Office, and William Waldegrave at Environment. He has also advised the United Nations on demographics.

‘There are some elements of foreign cultures that are not compatible [with the British culture],’ he said yesterday. ‘It is difficult to talk about it without making people cross. For example, the traditional attitudes of Islamic societies, especially those from poor rural backgrounds like Bangladeshis and Pakistanis, to do with equality of women with men, in terms of the law, division of labour,

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standing as witnesses and the refusal of Islam to acknowledge the separation between church and state.'

... ..

Migrationwatch says it has no secret financier behind it, relying only on £25-a-year subscriptions from parties interested in its publication. ... While there is no evidence to suggest that its claim of being independent is untrue, whether it is independently minded is an entirely different matter.

[ends]

* * *

From *Sunday Times*, 6 June 2004. Page 21. Headline: **Islamophobia: the making of a nasty British myth**. Minette Marris

Comment on a report by the Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia 2004

Excerpts only, but in same order as appeared:

[starts]

It is dangerous to cry wolf, as the little boy in the story discovered. When the frightened villagers found there was no wolf, they were angry with him. After that they ignored his cries. So when the wolf really did appear, disaster followed. In the same way, it is dangerous to cry Islamophobia.

Last week the Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia (CBMI) published a report which did just that. What it said has, predictably enough, been exaggerated by others quick to jump on the bandwagon of righteous indignation. Jean Lambert, a Green Party Euro MP, rushed to offer a public warning that Britain is 'institutionally Islamophobic'.

... ..

[The report] quotes the Muslim Council of Britain's view that very little progress has been made in tackling the horror of Islamophobia since it was brought into sharp focus by the CBMI in 1997 ...

... ..

Islamophobia – dread, guilt-ridden word – is defined to include anti-Muslim comments and attacks on mosques right through to the 'lack of attention to the fact that Muslims in Britain are disproportionately affected by poverty and social exclusion'. 'Institutional' Islamophobia is also defined to cover a confusing multitude of possibilities. Its most important feature is that it is 'predominantly hidden', which perhaps explains the lack of evidence.

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... ..

The combination of serious accusation, muddled thinking and unreasonable demands is almost breathtaking and its superficially reasonable tone cloaks the mentality of the race relations thought police. I do not for one minute want to deny that British Muslims suffer attacks of various kinds because of their religious faith, 9/11 or because of practices that some Muslims say are essential to Islam, such as the hijab. That is absolutely wrong and ought to be punished whenever it happens according to the many laws that deal with such crimes.

However, this report seeks to extend the notion of Islamophobia much further, to cover all kinds of grievances, including racial and cultural problems, that have nothing to do with Islam and which also affect many people who aren't Muslims. Then, with Humpty Dumpty logic, it suggests that the existence of these problems among Muslims (though they also exist among others) is evidence of Islamophobia.

... ..

Islamophobia is not racist. However much activists might like to try to insist that it is, it simply can't be, because people of all races can be Muslims and you cannot guess from someone's colour or bodily appearance whether he or she is a Muslim or not.

... ..

Discriminating against a person because of his race or colour who just happens to be a Muslim is one thing, discriminating against him precisely because he is a Muslim is quite different. It suits activists, understandably, to promote confusion between the two, but it is a highly manipulative conflation and ought to be pointed out ceaselessly by people who haven't yet been addled by the circumlocutions of anti-discrimination-speak.

Nor is discrimination against a person's culture the same as Islamophobia or even – obviously – the same as racism, though activists and writers have long tried to conflate all three, and in the process shift the notion of race. So far, British legislators have resisted pressure to bring religion under race relations legislation, so that being against a certain religion would be tantamount to being a racist. ...

The CBMI report states that British Muslims are more likely to be very poor, sick, unsuccessful at school, unemployed and underpaid than almost all other groups. Muslims are overrepresented in jail.

... ..

Yet in fact the operative description in these figures should not be Muslims but people of Bangladeshi, Pakistani and Indian origins (who make up two-thirds of Britain's Muslims) ... It is their origin not their religion that counts. The poverty and disadvantage suffered by these groups is terrible and should be addressed.

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However, the explanation for it is surely not that other Britons dislike the Muslim faith (even if they do). It is, most importantly, that there all sorts of cultural reasons why these groups are poor and seem to be stuck in ghettos where they cannot easily move beyond the difficulties of the first-generation immigrant into the confidence of the well-established second and third generation. A big factor is the practice or arranged marriages abroad (not a religious practice), often to illiterate spouses who speak no English and who perpetuate the cycle of deprivation and segregation here, as do some of the less-educated imams from abroad.

... ..

As for Islamophobia it is a scary word used to silence criticism. But why shouldn't one criticise Islam or any other religion or culture? Why shouldn't one discriminate between one view and another? Actually, in the western tradition one has an intellectual and moral duty to discriminate. It seems to have become a universal article of faith that all religious beliefs and cultures are equal or equally respectable. That's just a conventional piety, and a dangerous one. Denouncing Islamophobia where it doesn't exist is likely to make people ignore it where it does. Worse still, it's likely to increase it.

* * *

From *Sunday Times*, 10 July 2005. Page 1. Headline **Leaked No. 10 dossier reveals Al-Qaeda's British recruits**. By Robert Winnett and David Leppard.

News report, front page.

Excerpts only, but in same order as appeared:

[starts]

... ..

A joint Home Office and Foreign Office dossier – Young Muslims and Extremism – prepared for the prime minister last year, said Britain might now be harbouring thousands of Al-Qaeda sympathisers. Lord Stevens, the former Metropolitan police chief, revealed separately last night that up to 3,000 British-born or British-based people had passed through Osama Bin Laden's training camps.

... ..

Drawing on information from MI5, it concludes: 'Intelligence indicates that the number of British Muslims actively engaged in terrorist activity, whether at home or abroad or supporting such activity, is extremely small and estimated at less than 1%'. This equates to fewer than 16,000 potential terrorists and supporters out of a Muslim population of almost 1.6m. The dossier also estimates that 10,000 have attended extremist conferences. The security services believe that the number who are prepared to commit terrorist attacks may run into hundreds.

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... ..

'They range from foreign nationals now naturalised and resident in the UK, arriving mainly from North Africa and the Middle East, to second and third generation British citizens whose forbears mainly originate from Pakistan or Kashmir. In addition ... a significant number come from liberal, non-religious Muslim backgrounds or [are] only converted to Islam in adulthood. These converts include white British nationals and those of West Indian extraction.'

[ends]

* * *

From *Sunday Times*, 10 July 2005. News Review, Section 4, Page 1. Headline **The Hate**. By David Leppard and Nick Fielding.

Topic: Report about Project Contest, a civil service policy paper commissioned by the Home Secretary and Foreign Secretary in early 2004.

Excerpts only, but in same order as appeared:

[starts]

... ..

This was Whitehall's long-term counter-terrorist strategy code-named Project Contest. As a strategy it can hardly be qualified as a success after last week's outrages [7 July], but it certainly identified the problem.

Intelligence experts and Islamic leaders agree that Thursday July 7 marks the bloody emergence of home-grown Islamic terrorism in Britain rather than the arrival of Al-Qaeda's bombers on these shores. The favourite hypothesis of investigators is that the bomb teams comprised a cell of some eight or nine young British Muslims, led by a foreign-born 'talisman' figure who controlled and directed them. 'This is a very worrying situation,' said M J Gohel, head of the London-based Asia Pacific Foundation which monitors Islamic terrorism.

... ..

His view was echoed by a former radical who sometimes leads prayers at the Finsbury Park mosque in north London where Abu Hamza, the blind hook-armed cleric, used to preach. 'There is a growing phenomenon of angry young Muslims in Britain,' said this man, who wished to remain anonymous ... '... There is an absolute majority among Muslims who share the anti-US sentiment of Al-Qaeda and it is easy to harness that.'

... ..

The paper prepared for the prime minister spelt out the breadth of the problem: 'By extremism, we mean advocating or supporting views such as support for

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terrorist attacks against British or western targets, including the 9/11 attacks, or for British Muslims fighting against British and allied forces abroad, arguing that it is not possible to be Muslim and British, calling on Muslims to reject engagement with British society and politics, and advocating the creation of an Islamic state in Britain.'

... ..

'... an increasing number of British Muslims, often young, have needed UK consular services after being detained on suspicion of terrorist activity in other parts of the world (e.g. Yemen, Egypt and the US).'

... ..

The paper cited an intelligence estimate that the number of British Muslims engaged in terrorist activity, whether at home or abroad, or supporting it, was 'less than 1%' of the UK's Muslim population of 1.6m. But that suggests that up to 16,000 may be evolved – a numbing figure.

... ..

'By and large most young extremists fall into one of two groups: well educated – under-graduates or with degrees and technical professional qualifications in engineering or IT – or under-achievers with few or no qualifications and often a criminal background.

'The former group is often targeted by extremist recruiters circulating among university-based religious or ethnic societies. Among the latter group some are drawn to mosques where they may be targeted by extremist preachers; others are radicalised or converted while in prison. ...'

... ..

The root of the problem in the eyes of many foreign security operatives remains London's reputation as a haven for extremists. 'It may not be the moment to say it,' said a defence ministry official in Paris, 'but London is paying for its mistakes, for allowing all those radical organisations from Saudis to Pakistanis to set up shop in London, put out newsletters, make recruits and gather funds to finance their activities. Young men from Algeria and Morocco, including members of Islamist armed organisations, came to Britain in the early 1990s to escape persecution in their home countries. They were granted asylum and some have since lived on welfare. Supporters of the Armed Islamic Group, known then as the GIA, used mosques such as Finsbury Park and Brixton, in south London, to raise funds to buy guns and bankroll a terror campaign that cost tens of thousands of lives in Algeria. They engaged in blackmail, drug dealing and credit card fraud to support their fundraising in London, Manchester and Birmingham. In April 1994, after raids on GIA in Paris, police found documents said to be "GIA communiqués" sanctioning the murder of Algerian police officers. Fax numbers were traced to London addresses in Southall, Mile

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End, Brixton, Finsbury Park and Richmond.'

... ..

The French were so concerned about the role of GIA and other groups in London that they authorised illegal spying operations against them in London – without telling the British. [...] Reda Hassaine, an Algerian journalist who came to Britain in the early 1990s, ended up working for MI5 and French Intelligence, reporting on radicals inside the Muslim community. [...] For more than a decade, Hassaine says, Britain has been a 'soft touch' for Islamist radicals who used it as a fundraising and propaganda base to launch attacks in Algeria and elsewhere: 'The groups here now are much more independent of each other. There are plenty of them and they've been here in London for a long time.'

[ends]

* * *

From *Sunday Times*, 10 July 2005. News Review, Section 4, Page 1. Headline **Turning From Britain's Youth Culture to Islam's Certainties**. By Giles Hattersley.

Topic: Young British Muslims.

Excerpts only, but in same order as appeared:

[starts]

Professor Akbar Ahmed, the world's leading authority on contemporary Islam, first noticed a shift towards militancy here in the 1980s. 'The Muslim generation of the Sixties were more interested in making a name for themselves on the cricket field or in the literary field but now the equivalent generation want to make a name for themselves by going out and fighting a physical and violent jihad in the name of Islam'

... ..

[quoting Zubair, British Muslim youth] Zubair said: 'I've been back to where my parents grew up in India and in their neighbourhood they had two mosques. Here we have four mosques on our street and an Islamic boarding school on the corner. They had two scholars, Leicester has 165. England has given us a greater chance to become more devout than our parents'.

[ends]

* * *

From *Sunday Times*, 7 August 2005. Page 12. Headline: **Blair's extremism proposals attacked as the hunt continues for terror's new breed**. David Leppard and Robert Winnett

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Focus Article

Excerpts only, but in same order as appeared:

[starts]

Last Friday, before leaving for his annual summer holiday, Tony Blair unveiled an unexpectedly radical set of measures designed to stamp out Muslim extremism.

... ..

The prime minister said he was prepared to amend the Human Rights Act, if necessary, so that judges would be able to overrule the plan [Act?] to deport extremists. This may involve lengthy wranglings in Europe, which has established a pan-European system of rights. At a press conference in Downing Street, Blair said: 'If people want to come here, either fleeing persecution or seeking a better life, they play by our rules and our way of life. If they don't, they are going to have to go because they are threatening our people and way of life. Coming to Britain is not a right. And even when people come here, staying here carries with it a duty.'

... ..

The Conservatives said they broadly supported the thrust of the proposals and would consider their response when the measures were put before parliament

...

... ..

Dr Mohammed Naseem, chairman of Birmingham's central mosque [said, in response to Blair's statement] '... [Hitler] was democratically elected and gradually created a bogey identity – that is, the Jewish people – and posed to the Germans that they were a threat to the country,' [...]. 'On that basis, he started a process of the elimination of Jewish people. I see the similarities. Everything moves step by step. I am saying these are dangerous times and we must take note of this.' Even moderate Muslim groups that had been liaising closely with the government protested. Inayat Bunglawala, spokesman for the Muslim Council of Britain, described the measures as a 'mixed bag, some of which will cause concern and heighten anxiety in the Muslim community. There has been no recognition that his policies have contributed to a radicalisation of the Muslim community; the Iraq war has caused immense damage.' Tahrir Butt, spokesman for the Muslim Safety Forum which liaises with the police, said: 'This is where the government has been heading all along: Al-Qaeda claims responsibility for the attacks and Blair targets British Muslims'.

Legal experts have also questioned the viability of the proposals. Alex Bailin, a barrister specialising in human rights law at Matrix Chambers, which has represented suspected foreign terrorists, said: 'It is not possible to derogate from it [the Human Rights Act], even in a public emergency threatening the life

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of the nation. The only legal option, theoretically, would be for the UK to deratify the whole convention. That would involve us legally withdrawing from Europe, as respect for the convention is a condition of membership of the Council of Europe.'

... ..

M J Gohel, a leading expert on Islamist terrorism, believes that while individuals can be inspired by the message of the global jihad – or holy war – cells of four, five or six individuals do not spontaneously come together without any kind of 'guiding hand'. He believes the two cells [July 7 and July 21] must have been drawn together by an Al-Qaeda recruiting agent. Nonetheless, he is clear that a defining characteristic of the new threat, the growth of potentially dozens of home-grown cells throughout the West, presents a real escalation in the nature of the terrorist threat. 'Al-Qaeda and its global jihadi friends have been one step ahead of us ... While we are watching and sealing our borders, Al-Qaeda and the global jihadi movement has penetrated into western society ... We are into a new dimension,' he said.

Blair's Terror Crackdown

- New powers to deport suspected terrorists or those involved with extremist groups
- Powers to close places of worship
- Anyone with links to terrorism automatically refused asylum
- New international database of people whose views represent a threat to Britain, who will be banned
- Wider grounds for banning extremist groups including Hizbut-Tahrir and Al-Muhajiroun
- Strip citizenship from naturalised Britons engaged in extremism
- New offence of glorifying terrorism in Britain or abroad
- Extend use of terrorist control orders to British nationals
- New commission to examine the future of the policy of multiculturalism

[ends]

* * *

Excerpts from Migrationwatch website

And if net immigration continues at present levels, the proportion of our population growth due to future immigrants and their descendants will rise to

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89% of a total of 7.6 million by 2031, two million more than the Government's principal projection.

In describing their projection, the Government claimed that, out of a total population rise of 5.6 million by 2031, there would be some three million immigrants – but they only included first generation migrants. Children and grand children of these migrants were counted in the natural population increase and hence not attributed to the effect of migration.

'It is unacceptable that the Government should manipulate the figures in this way so as to conceal the true impact of immigration from public view,' said Sir Andrew Green, Chairman of Migrationwatch UK. Clearly if the first generation of migrants had not arrived on our shores, their descendants would not add to our population.

'It is therefore entirely logical that descendants be included in population forecasts as being due to immigration, not to the natural increase of the existing population. If the Government are ever to regain public trust about immigration, they must make a start by being honest as to its true scale.'

Migrationwatch: 22 March 2004

Third-world countries and regions are the principal contributors of net immigration into the UK accounting for net immigration of approximately 187,000 people (84%) out of the net 222,000 people arriving from countries and regions which provide net immigration to the UK.

Migrationwatch: 10 May 2004

Total net Immigration from outside the European Union has more than trebled in the past five years and is still rising. Each year nearly a quarter of a million people come to live in Britain. This is the equivalent of the City of Cambridge every six months. Arrivals on this scale make successful assimilation very difficult. Furthermore, between 1996 and 2001 three quarters of international migrants went to London and the South East. This pattern exacerbates the already heavy pressure on transport, housing, education and health services

Illegal Immigrants

20. Numbers are, by definition, very uncertain although the USA and some European countries attempt estimates. Those discovered by customs and immigration officers rose from 3,300 in 1990 to over 50,000 in 2002 before falling to 38,000 in 2003 . At least part of this increase was a result of improved detection, but the total number is likely to be considerably higher as only a fraction will be detected.

22. A Home Office research paper describes rising illegal immigration as both unsustainable and undesirable in economic and social terms.

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RDS Occasional Paper No. 67 Summary Paragraph 10

31. Ethnic minorities now make up 29% of London's population. This is projected to rise to 31% by 2011. Children in London schools speak more than 300 languages.

Conclusions

32. Net inward foreign migration from non EU countries has more than doubled since 1997 to 222,000 in 2003. Significant components – asylum seekers and family settlement – are likely to continue to increase. Indeed, under present legislation, they will continue indefinitely.

33. Illegal immigration is an additional, unquantifiable, component. The economic case for such flows is far from definitive. The social consequences have been little investigated but the implications, for example for housing, are considerable. Congestion in the cities, particularly in London, will increase. Consequent increased demand for new housing in the South outside London is already apparent.

34. A recession would have some temporary impact on the inward flow but a fundamental change in the legal framework would be necessary to achieve a permanent impact. We need to find a balance between meeting the humanitarian needs of those genuinely fleeing persecution and the serious practical consequences for our society and its future that stem from migration on its present scale. MigrationWatch UK will be conducting further research on key aspects of this problem.

What is wrong with a 'managed migration policy'?

Nothing. But, in reality, it is not managed. Over 85% of asylum seekers remain in Britain even if they are refused. And 1.5 million visas are issued every year yet there are no checks on departure. David Blunkett has admitted publicly that 'he hasn't a clue' who is in Britain. The Government must put in place the necessary tools to be able to manage migration – notably, embarkation checks and ID cards. Until then, 'managed migration' will remain merely a slogan.

(Revised: February 2005)

—

In 2003 **12.2 million non-EU nationals arrived in the UK**. How many left? No one knows – we have no embarkation controls.

In Inner London **55% of all births** are to foreign-born mothers.

70% of net international migration is to London. In recent years a **net 100,000 migrants a year** have been arriving in London and there has been a **net movement of 100,000 existing residents** from London to the rest of the UK.

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The **cost of running** the Immigration and Nationality Department of the Home Office rose from £300 million in 1998-1999 to 1.9 billion in 2003-4. **Legal aid costs** of £170m a year are additional.

England is one of the **most densely populated countries** in the world. It has nearly twice the population density of Germany, 4 times that of France and 12 times that of the USA.

Since 1997 about 308,000 **asylum seekers** have been refused permission to stay here but only 72,000 have been recorded as having been removed from the UK.

And **those with families** whose claims have failed continue to receive benefits worth an average of £15,000 a year tax free.

* * *

YOUNGUV Poll: Immigration now the top issue of public concern.

A poll published in the *Daily Telegraph* on 26 May 2004 contained some remarkable numbers.

Immigration and asylum is now the TOP ISSUE facing the country with 56% selecting it.

Crime (49%) and Health (46%) followed.

72% thought that the British government took account of the people's views almost never or only occasionally.

67% thought that Britain was already an overcrowded island.

Only 17% agreed that we need immigrants to meet skills shortages.

White population declined across the four conurbations. Only in six LBs did the white population grow to 2001. This loss in the rest of London is despite the growth of the population as a whole by 4%. W Yorks had population growth of 0.2% but white decline by 2.5%. Manchester and the W Midlands had declining populations, but the decline was steeper among the white population. 42 Across the four conurbations, white population losses were greatest in the districts with the highest ethnic minority populations in 1991. 43 Thus the contrast in ethnic composition between districts grew between 1991-2001. 44 On the other hand, the growth of minority populations in most districts meant that more white people were living in areas of ethnic diversity in 2001 than in 1991. 45 'Thus while white people were becoming less isolated from people of a minority ethnic background, and there was an increasing number of people from ethnic minorities in formerly all-white areas, people from ethnic minorities were also becoming more likely to live in areas with much higher proportions of minorities than the national average. These trends are consistent with trends of dispersal and of continued growth in areas of existing minority settlement.'

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England is already the fifth most densely populated country in the world [1], and will become grossly overcrowded. The Government claim to have a policy of managed migration. In practice their policies take no account of the social impact on Britain, still less of the wishes of the British people of whom 80% want to see much tighter immigration controls.

NOTES:

[1] Excluding small island and city states such as Malta and Singapore only Bangladesh, Taiwan, South Korea and the Netherlands have higher population densities than England.

* * *

From Sky News Website, 7 November 2005. Headline : **Why Is France Burning?** Tim Marshall (Sky News Foreign Affairs editor)

Excerpts only, but in the same order as they originally appeared.

[starts]

... ..

Recently the new laws banning religious symbols in state schools, which meant no hijabs, further heightened the sense among French Muslims that society is against them. And so as the *banlieu* [area of poor, largely Arab & North African suburbs] has gone its own way, so criminal elements within the immigrant communities have seized on the opportunity to help create no-go areas. This helps their nefarious activities, thus reinforcing the exclusion from the mainstream of the majority of residents who simply want to better themselves through the classic route of immigrants; [*sic*] hard work and family ties.

The sink estates are now areas where gang rapes are common, drug dealing a way of life and where social services fears to tread because of the dangers. Some of the young men have taken to enforcing the hijab on young women. This is no statement of their own piety, more a statement of power and control in a wider society which gives them neither. Some young women say they wear headscarves to try and avoid the fate of gang rape.

... ..

Politicians are seriously worried by news that some of the violence is organised. The gang culture, already embedded in the estates may now grow stronger but there's an even more worrying thought for the government. The French domestic intelligence services have long reported that radical Islam is trying to break into the youth culture of the *jeune buerre* [street slang for young Arabs and young Muslims generally] at a time when population projections suggest that within 15 years one in five French people will be a Muslim.

... ..

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If the men trained in the terrorist camps of Afghanistan and who fought the terror war in Algeria in the 1990s can take hold of the gangs, then the level of this year's trouble may be surpassed in the future.

[ENDS]

Appendix VII: The Evidence (II)

The following are additional excerpts from articles supplied by Diesel Balaam since the first edition.

From the *Daily Mail*, 6 November 2004. Pages 16–17. Title: **Death of the Liberal Dream** by Nick Craven in Amsterdam.

Excerpts only, but in the same order as they originally appeared.

[starts]

As a film-maker who loved to shock, Theo van Gogh might have admired the spectacularly brutal manner of his own murder. A bearded assassin, clad in a flowing Moroccan jallabah, emptied six bullets into the portly director as he cycled through the Amsterdam morning rush-hour.

Van Gogh, though bleeding heavily, pleaded for mercy as the killer approached and drew a long butcher's knife to slit his throat, before plunging the blade into his heart. He then calmly took a smaller dagger and used it to pin a verse from the Koran to his victim's chest, exhorting the faithful to jihad, or Holy War, against the enemies of Islam. Hundreds of witnesses on cars, bikes and trams watched in sickened disbelief as Islamic retribution came to their city.

... ..

Police were quick to catch the killer, Dutch-born Moroccan Muslim and Al Qaeda supporter Mohammed Bouyeri, 26, but van Gogh's murder has outraged Holland, just as did the shooting in May 2002 of politician Pim Fortuyn, who campaigned on a staunch anti-immigration ticket.

As I watched crowds lay a carpet of flowers along the East Amsterdam cycle lane where van Gogh was gunned down, it became obvious that the tears were not just for a man who revelled in issuing politically incorrect statements. The mourners clearly feared for the survival of the freedoms which allowed him to do so.

For the truth is that today, the Netherlands, long hailed as a model of tolerance and racial integration, has come to the conclusion that their 30-year multicultural

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experiment is an abject failure. Nearly one million Muslims make up 5.5 per cent of the national population but in main cities, it is around a third – and growing at a much faster pace – leading white citizens to fear their own culture will be submerged under an increasingly intolerant new one.

A survey last week showed that a majority of Dutch expected not to feel at home in their own neighbourhood five years from now, due to the rising number of foreigners.

Far from integrating, many ethnic districts are instead virtual ghettos, with little contact between the mainly Moroccan and Turkish communities and their white counterparts. Worse, opinion polls suggest that as many as 50,000 young Muslim men hold radical Islamist views, supporting suicide bombers and Al Qaeda.

... ..

Since Fortuyn's death ... Strict limits have since been put in place on immigration and asylum seekers and those whose claims have failed have, for the first time, been sent home. Non-Dutch speakers are obliged to take language classes or see their benefits cut.

But for most Dutch people, and certainly for Fortuyn and van Gogh, it was not immigrants per se who made them uneasy, but specifically the influx of Muslim immigrants who refused to integrate or adapt their strict religious codes or customs to their new environment.

... ..

The message for Britain could not be clearer. Our Muslim population may be much smaller – proportionately less than half that of the Netherlands – but the Dutch have decided that the ghetto-isation fostered by a multicultural approach doesn't work: integration must be imposed.

Significantly, it was recently revealed that 10,000 Somali immigrants, granted refugee status and clutching new Dutch passports, have quietly left Holland in the past five years and slipped into Britain, precisely because they know they will not be required to assimilate with the British population if they join large Somali communities in London, Birmingham and Leicester.

... ..

Ulla Mirowska looked across the 100ft-long display of floral tributes and mementos ... that the followers of Theo van Gogh had left in tribute. 'I am not here because I am a racist, I came because I think Theo sometimes talked a lot of sense' she said. 'I do not want to wake up in a country one day where I have to go around with my head covered.'

... ..

[of van Gogh] ... it was when he joined forces with Somali-born MP Ayaan Hirsi Ali to make [the film] *Submission* that, in the eyes of his enemies, he crossed the line from irritant to infidel.

Ali, 34, spent most of her childhood in Kenya as a refugee from her war-torn homeland

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and had suffered female circumcision. Then, against her will, her father arranged a marriage for her in Canada. While en route there she escaped during a stop-over in Germany. She later fled to Holland. She learned Dutch and studies politics. She later became an activist, declaring herself an 'Ex-Muslim' and eventually MP for the conservative VVD party where she cuts a striking willowy figure in designer outfits among the grey-suited legislators of The Hague.

She has become a thorn in the side of the Muslim establishment in Holland, accusing them of turning a blind eye to the 'honour killings' of wayward women and has criticised the Prophet Mohammed's view of women ...

She has accused Muslim men of taking advantage of the liberal society in Holland to achieve very illiberal aims, beating and locking up women in their homes. Her solution is far from liberal; she advocates a ban on fundamentalist books, deportation of militant Imams and Mullahs and the imposition of Western law on Muslim men.

... ..

This week, Ali said she felt guilty about having approached van Gogh with the script [of the film *Submission*]. 'Of course, rationally speaking, I know that his murderer alone is responsible for his death. Theo and I spoke at length about the consequences for us both. He said: 'When fear holds you back from saying what you think, our freedom of speech is eroded and it plays right into the hands of the Islamic extremists.'

... ..

There are fresh flowers each day laid at the feet of the bronze statue of Pim Fortuyn outside his pretty Rotterdam house, and his ghost still haunts Dutch politics.

His old friend, former teacher Ronald Sorenson, 57, still leads the biggest group – Leefbaar (Liveable) Rotterdam – on the city council, in what is the first Dutch city where non-European immigrants outnumber the indigenous population. This is a phenomenon which is not far off in Amsterdam and the Hague either.

... ..

Sorenson denies that Dutch tolerance is dead, but hopes that the shock of the second political murder in two years in Holland might 'wake people up'.

'We are still a liberal, tolerant society. What we are against is intolerance that comes from some Muslims,' he says. 'The message we want to send immigrant groups is that you are welcome here, but you must live by our rules in our country. We don't mind what colour you are, but once you are here, then you should become Dutch ...'

... ..

In West Amsterdam's noisy, bustling 'Little Morocco' ... I meet 18-year-old Khaled Mohammed, a smartly-dressed student born in Holland, who appears to be a good example of integration.

'I speak Dutch and English' he says, 'and this is my home, where my family live. I want to study and go into business, maybe selling electronic goods.'

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... ..

Asked his view of van Gogh's murder, he referred to the Old Testament. 'He sowed the wind and reaped the whirlwind,' he said without emotion.

But had he no qualms about cold-blooded murder? 'He knew the risk he took by criticising Allah and Islam,' he replied.

Following the murder, it emerged that Bouyeri – now in a prison hospital after being injured in a shootout with police – told many in his community of his plan to murder van Gogh, but not one felt the need to report him. It's hard to imagine that Khaled would have done so.

... ..

The Prime Minister, Jan Peter Balkenende, declared: 'The world knows us as a country where free speech is sacrosanct. Bullets will never have the last word in the Netherlands.' But for Theo van Gogh, they did.

[ends]

* * *

From the *Evening Standard*, 3 February 2005. Pages 16–18. Title: '**Revealed: The rise of the Muslim Boys**' by David Cohen

excerpts only, but in the same order as they originally appeared.

[starts]

... ..

'Knives is f*** all. Later, my bruvv will be back from their robberies with our skengelengs [guns] and cream [money]. Later there be MAC-10s [sub-machine guns] all over the floor, laid wall to wall. And moolah! We count it – 10 grand, 20 grand. Then, after midnight,' he adds, matter of factly, 'me and my bruvv go to mosque to pray.'

Winston's casual depiction of a lifestyle of crime tightly bound up with religious observance would normally be regarded as paradoxical, but in his case it is what defines him. For Winston is a member of the Muslim Boys, a gang, the black community says, unlike any that has operated before in South London.

Until now, the Muslim Boys have never allowed any members to be interviewed. Ex-convicts and youth workers who knew some of them personally warned us: 'It's too dangerous. They'll shoot you on the spot.'

... ..

They number in their hundreds, according to some estimates, with ages ranging from 15 to 30, and their hallmark is extreme violence, with automatic and semi-automatic machine guns their weapons of choice. But what makes them unique is that they are so-called 'converts', whose perverted interpretation of Islam is central to their identity as killers and criminals. Their stamping grounds are the estates of South London,

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where they hole-up in safe houses, living ascetic lives in stark contrast to the 'bling-bling' lifestyle of other gangs.

Detective Chief Superintendent John Coles, in charge of the Met's Operation Trident team, which investigates black-on-black shootings, confirmed that 'the Muslim Boys are responsible for at least two execution style murders in the past eight months', as well as scores of robberies and attempted murders. 'We have taken out most of the hardcore,' he says. 'We arrested 20 of them. The majority were sentenced for crimes ranging from murder to shootings to possession of firearms and drugs.'

... ..

Coles believes, nevertheless, that the Muslim Boys have been 'over-hyped' that there are 'less than a hundred', and that they are nothing more than 'nasty, ordinary south London criminals who have adopted the Muslim Boys name to make them sound bogger and more fearsome than they really are.'

But Lee Jasper, the Mayor of London's senior adviser on policing, vehemently disagrees. He says: 'The Muslim Boys pose one of the most serious criminal threats the black community has ever faced. The police tell me they have never seen anything like this gang before. They speak in an almost impenetrable code, they use heavy firepower, are forensically aware, unbelievably violent and extraordinarily disciplined. They're as tough to crack as the IRA.'

Our investigation reveals that Jasper's concerns are shared by many – including youth workers dealing with vulnerable teenagers in south London. The Muslim Boys, they say, are notorious for intimidating imams into opening their mosques in the early hours of the morning so that they can pray, often right after committing crimes, and for their 'forced conversions', carried out at gunpoint, of black youths to Islam. At least one local young man, Adrian Marriott, thought to have resisted such a conversion, is believed to have been murdered 'as an example to others'.

... ..

The existence of the gang is a cause of profound concern within the Muslim community. The precedent set by Richard Reid – the infamous 'shoe-bomber' who prayed at Brixton mosque, and who was both a black convert and a criminal who became a terrorist – is one they don't want repeated.

Last month, the Brixton and Stockwell mosques moved to publicly distance themselves from the gang, saying – without actually naming the Muslim Boys – that there are 'criminals masquerading as Muslims' who threaten the good name of their religion.

... ..

Lee Jasper, speaking in his capacity as chair of the Lambeth police consultative group, says that 'the story is potentially explosive', but that he is speaking out because he has become 'increasingly frustrated' at the 'lack of adequate police action'.

'So far,' he says tersely, meeting me face-to-face in central London, 'police arrests have not made a dent in this lot. There is barely a major estate in Lambeth or Southwark – and increasingly in Lewisham – not dominated by the Muslim Boys. The problem is that the police treat them like an ordinary criminal gang, which they are

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not ...'

... ..

Jasper's deepest worry – that 'the leaders of the Muslim Boys could be a criminalised front for terrorist extremists' – is voiced by many with links to the south London underworld. Trident's John Coles acknowledges these concerns, but says, 'we have found no evidence whatsoever of a link to terrorism.' Nevertheless, questions remain: if their crime spree is not funding a lavish lifestyle, what are the Muslim Boys doing with their ill-gotten gains?

The story of the rise of the Muslim Boys started 15 months ago, when a hardcore of Afro-Caribbean 'Muslim converts' began violently 'taxing' the south London criminal community ... dubbed 'the Taliban Terrorists', these were ex-convicts who had been turned on to Islam in prison, and who began to use the austere discipline of Islam to fashion a criminal network with a 'higher' purpose.

... ..

In the early days, there were about 25 hardcore members, plus 40 'foot-soldiers'. They had come out of a gang called the SMS, the South Man Syndicate, and now began to rope in other crews, such as The Brotherhood and the Stockwell Crew, evolving into an umbrella crew called PDC, Poverty Driven Children. To this day, gang members refer to themselves as PDC, regarding the Muslim Boys as a term used by outsiders.

... ..

Police arrest, it is claimed, have failed to break the gang. Instead, the Muslim Boys are believed to have prospered, recruiting inside Feltham, Brixton and Wandsworth prisons, as well as on the outside, and their numbers have leapfrogged from dozens to hundreds. It has helped that the Yardies, once the most feared gangsters in London, have become marginalised, and the Muslim Boys are said to have stepped into the breach.

Wayne Rowe, 39, an ex-prisoner working as a Brixton community liaison officer, explains their appeal. 'For many poverty-stricken kids growing up alienated on estates, often without fathers, the Muslim Boys have become a seductive, alternative family.'

... ..

Unlike religions that have lengthy, formal conversions, the process in Islam can be instant. You neither have to convert in a mosque, nor in front of an Imam says the Muslim Council of Britain. All that is needed is that, in the presence of two other Muslims, you voluntarily make a declaration of faith 'that none is worthy of worship except Allah' and that 'Muhammad is the messenger of Allah'.

But the conversions administered forcibly by the Muslim Boys are, says Imam Omar, totally anti-Islamic, as is their violent, criminal lifestyle.

... ..

The picture Winston paints is of an affiliation of gangs – all 'converted Muslims' – holding up banks and post offices, trading guns and 'taxing' drug dealers, then

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returning days later to share the booty with affiliates. According to Winston, gang members fan out beyond London to towns such as Reading and Bristol. If this is true, then Winston and his fellow Muslim Boys are responsible for a national crime wave whose significance extends way beyond south London.

... ..

One final question, I say. Where does your money go? 'To the f***ing laundry innit,' he says, licking his teeth. Is there any connection between your gang and al Qaeda? He glares at me. 'That's a deep piece of info. I support Bin Laden. I wouldn't ask that question, bruv – it's rude, it's dangerous, it's ... '

[ends]

* * *

From *Sunday Times*, 7 August 2005. Pages 12–13. Insight Team Report: **Undercover in the Academy of Hatred** – by Ali Hussain and Jonathan Calvert.

Excerpts only, but in same order as appeared:

[starts]

On a Friday evening late in July a small group of young Asian men gathered secretly in the grounds of a Victorian manor house on the edge of Epping Forest, east of London, to listen to their master.

... ..

Earlier that day police had arrested the remaining three suspects for the failed 21/7 London bombing. While millions of Britons watched the dramatic final siege on television, members of the Saviour Sect had come to hear a different interpretation of the day's events.

Among them was an undercover reporter from *The Sunday Times*. He joined a football kickabout as they waited for their leader. Others practised kick-boxing.

As they chatted the reporter was asked if he would be willing to wear a 'strap' – slang for a suicide bomb belt. He laughed the suggestion off nervously and was relieved when everyone smiled.

... ..

Two hours late, Sheikh Omar Bakri Mohammed has finally arrived.

A Syrian with seven children who has lived on benefits for 18 years, this extremist cleric has been investigated by police for using inflammatory language but he has never been prosecuted.

... ..

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During a two-month undercover investigation *The Sunday Times* has amassed hours of taped evidence and pages of transcripts which show how Bakri and his acolytes promote hatred of 'non-believers' and 'egg' their followers on to commit acts of violence, including suicide bombings.

The evidence details how his group, the Saviour Sect, preaches a racist creed of Muslim supremacy which, in the words of Bakri, aims at one day 'flying the Islamic flag over Downing Street'.

In his two months with the sect, our reporter witnessed a gang of Bakri's followers brutally beating up a Muslim who challenged their views. He listened as a succession of 'religious leaders' ridiculed moderate Muslims and repeatedly justified war against 'kuffar' – non-Muslims.

He discovered that the core of the group consisted of about 40 young men ... Many are of Bangladeshi origin, jobless and living in council flats in east London. They use aliases, taking the names of the prophet Muhammad's companions.

... ..

Integration with British society is scorned, as is any form of democratic process. Followers are encouraged to exploit the benefits system. They avoid jobs which could bring them into contact with western women or might lead them to contribute to the economy of a nation they are taught to despise.

In regular lectures and sermons it is instilled into them that Islam is a religion of violence. While publicly they did not defend the London attacks, they speak differently in private.

... ..

It was important to be unemployed, Nasser said [a member of the Saviour Sect], as taking a job would contribute to the kuffar system. He said he was receiving a jobseeker's allowance and justified this by saying the prophet Muhammad also lived off the state and attacked it at the same time. 'All money belongs to Allah anyway,' he said.

There were other ways to opt out. 'All the brothers drive without insurance,' Nasser said proudly.

Bakri was the star attraction that night. Under bright fluorescent lights, he preached to the 50-strong audience about the need for a violent struggle to defend Muslims who, he claimed, were under constant attack.

With a new member in the audience, he added carefully that he was not actually 'inciting anyone to violence in the UK'. But the violence was not far away. The following afternoon the reporter witnessed an Asian man being beaten up by members of the Saviour Sect for 'insulting' their version of Islam.

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... ..

Unabashed, one of the group, dressed in an Arabic shawl, shouted out to onlookers: 'You should not feel sorry for him. He is a kuffar and deserves it.' ... Later that day it emerged that the man who had been assaulted had been a member of the moderate Young Muslim Organisation and was also a supporter of [George] Galloway's Respect Party.

... ..

On July 3, Sheikh Omar Brooks of Al-Ghuraaba addressed the group at its Saturday night lecture.

The 30-year-old, who comes from a Caribbean background and used to work as an electrician, converted to Islam after coming under Bakri's spell. ... His speech that night at Oxford House, a Victorian hall in a side street off Bethnal Green, was intended to stir passions. He said it was imperative for Muslims to 'instil terror into the hearts of the kuffar'.

Occasionally sipping a can of Fanta and gesticulating wildly, he declared: 'I am a terrorist. As a Muslim, of course I am a terrorist.' ... Schoolchildren in T-shirts bearing the words 'mujaheddin' and 'warriors of Allah' listened intently as Brooks said he did not wish to die 'like an old woman' in bed.

'I want to be blown into pieces,' he declared, 'with my hands in one place and my feet in another.'

Brooks – who caused an outcry last week when he told BBC2's Newsnight that he would not condemn suicide bombers – called on the group of burqa-clad women in the audience to help the fight by making weapons.

He told the audience that it was a Muslim's duty to stay apart from the rest of society: 'Never mix with them. Never let your children play with their children.'

...

Warming to his theme, he said: 'They will build bridges and we will break them; they will build tall buildings and we will bring them down.' The audience rippled with laughter at the obvious reference to September 11, 2001.

Nasser's brother, 'Mr Islam' – believed to be Islam Uddin – had started the speeches that evening with his own fiery rhetoric.

He told the audience that Islam was a religion of violence and that Muhammad was the 'prophet of slaughter, not peace'. He said Muslims must not be defeatist ,, The Jews, he said, were 'the most disgusting and greedy people on earth'.

Four days after this meeting, on July 7, London was hit by the first wave of suicide bombings. Immediately the spotlight was thrown onto extremist Muslim

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groups and, in particular, those linked to Bakri.

The sheikh avoided difficult questions about the attacks by refusing to answer his telephone. He advised all his followers to do the same in the case [sic] they incriminated themselves. The sect closed down its meetings and stopped leaflet campaigns, fearing reprisals.

... ..

[At a prayer meeting at the Selby Centre, Wood Green, London] ... Before the prayers started, our reporter joined a small group of men sitting on the floor of the dilapidated 1960s hall in a circle with Bakri.

Bakri sighed. 'So, London under attack,' he said. Then, leaning forward, he added: 'Between us, for the past 48 hours I'm very happy.'

... ..

The congregation was instructed to avoid expressing disapproval of the attacks. 'If you cannot support what has happened, then at least don't condemn it,' Bakri said. If anyone were to ask what they felt about it, they should answer that as Muslims they have no 'feelings', 'ideas' or 'personal judgement'.

... ..

The extent of the indoctrination of the members of the Saviour Sect became even clearer during the two weeks in July which saw the failed second attempt to bomb the London transport system.

... ..

'The toe of the Muslim brothers is better than all the kuffar on the earth,' Bakri said in one sermon. 'Islam is superior, nothing supersedes it and the Muslim is superior.'

... ..

The influence on the younger members of the sect was obvious. Nasser told our reporter not to worry about those who died in the London attacks. They were, he said, 'collateral damage' and they were kuffar anyway.

This is not, of course, something that they would say in public. When Bakri finally commented publicly on the bomb attacks, he condemned the deaths of 'innocents'. But this was not quite the remorse it seemed.

At Friday prayers, on the day after the second bomb attacks, there was a buzz in the air as Bakri walked into the Selby hall in his brilliant white shalwar kameez.

In the preamble to the sermon he referred to the bombers as the 'fantastic four'.

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He explained that his lament for the 'innocent' applied only to Muslims. It was a linguistic sleight of hand which he summarised as: 'Yes I condemn killing any innocent people, but not any kuffar.'

... ..

On Friday the prime minister said that the successor groups of Al-Muhajiroun, including the Saviour Sect, could be banned under new anti-terrorist proposals.

At a hastily arranged press conference in Chingford, Essex, in response to the proposals, Bakri said the Al-Muhajiroun group had never supported terror attacks in the UK.

... ..

[ends]

* * *

From *Time Out* magazine, 9–16 November 2005. Pages 19–22. Title: 'Armed and Dangerous' by Tony Thompson

Excerpts only, but in the same order as they originally appeared.

[starts]

A ban on handguns in the wake of the Dunblane shootings, numerous amnesties, and regular seizures have had little effect on the amount of guns available on our streets. While the number of gun-related deaths has fallen recently, the overall trend in London over the past decade has been firmly upwards. In Lambeth alone, gun crime has risen 44 per cent in the last year. Firearms can be bought over the internet, in pubs, or from council estate flats. But for some Londoners, they have become a part of everyday life – a fashionable tool that can be used to settle even minor disputes. Children as young as 11 are arming themselves, as gun culture becomes sewn into the social fabric of the city.

... ..

Detective Chief Superintendent John Coles, head of Operation Trident, the Metropolitan Police's anti black-on-black crime initiative, told *Time Out*, 'There is no doubt that 20 years ago, petty arguments were settled by fisticuffs among youngsters. Today they are settling mild disputes through firearms.' And the ease with which people can get hold of a gun in London is frightening.

... ..

Capable of firing around 1,200 9mm rounds per minute, the MAC10 is renowned for being one of the most deadly and reliable submachine guns. Famed for its simple design and compact size, the 'Big Mac' has become synonymous across the world with gang violence and drug dealing.

[A man who had been involved in a gun incident] is believed to have purchased the gun for as little as £500 through his underworld connections and it is believed to have originated in Eastern Europe. In the aftermath of conflicts in the region, there are an estimated 600,000 guns 'loose' in the Balkans. These can be illicitly shipped back, via Amsterdam, often in deals brokered by Albanian gangs. They are smuggled into the UK a few at a time ... Trident officers alone have

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seized more than 420 'real' guns in the past two years. One MAC10 recovered this year had even been fitted with a laser sight.

... ..

Michael Pech was desperate to get hold of a gun. The 30-year-old former soldier and sometime security guard had complained to friends that buying a black-market gun in London was too expensive and that he intended to go back to his homeland in the Czech Republic and pick up one there ... a few weeks later, he walked up to the perfume counter at Harvey Nichols in Knightsbridge carrying a loaded Luger pistol, the standard sidearm for the German army during both World Wars ... The Luger in his hand, Pech pumped five shots into his former girlfriend, Clare Bernal, killing her instantly. Pech then turned the gun on himself.

Pech had been on bail for stalking Ms Bernal, but had not been required to surrender his passport. While on bail he returned to the Czech Republic, where firearms are on sale in open-air markets, bought the gun and smuggled it back into the UK on the Eurostar.

... ..

Roger Gray, who served with SO10, the armed response unit of the Met, believes the true extent of gun crime is being underplayed and that a greater number of highly sophisticated weapons are being smuggled through Britain's 'porous' borders.

... ..

A third of those convicted of possessing guns are now under 18. Earlier this year, a 14-year-old and 16-year-old were charged with shooting Zainab Kalokoh, 33, dead in front of guests at a christening party in Peckham. Children as young as 11 have been scared into taking guns to school, according to the government-funded 'Safer London Youth Survey' which interviewed 11,400 London children about the gun problem. The study found that one in ten teenage schoolboys admitted to having carried a gun or replica gun in the past year. Six per cent of 11 to 15 -year-olds said they had fired a real gun. Most of the children interviewed said they carried a gun for 'self defence'. Police warn that the number of youths carrying firearms has doubled in the past five years ...

[ends]

* * *

From *Sunday Times*, 13 November 2005. Page 16. Headline: **Muslim apartheid burns bright in France** by Minette Marris

Excerpts only, but in same order as first appeared

[starts]

... ..

There was something almost frightening in the air. It is strange to me that people have been so surprised by the past few weeks of burning and rioting in French cities, including Montpellier. It has been obvious for at least 10 years, even to a foreign visitor, that something was badly wrong.

The first sign I noticed, one Easter, was the arrival of a lot of new people, north Africans to judge from their appearance, who seemed to spend most of the time hanging around in the streets looking lost and forlorn.

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... ..

What surprised us was the animosity that people in the village felt for the Arabs, as they called them ... In every shop there would be angry mutterings among indigenous people about them and us – how they were parasites, thieves and ignorant; they wouldn't even have their children inoculated. You had to lock your doors. And there were so many of them.

Whatever righteous attitudes we tried to strike, we too became angry when our house was burgled. We had to start locking our door and our car wheels were slashed ... Then we began to hear of attacks on local synagogues, usually downplayed. Finally a synagogue in Montpellier was firebombed. We were glad to be out of there.

... ..

Perhaps it is unfair to single out the French. The multicultural social model has not worked either and all European countries have been unforgivably slow on the uptake. The riots have spread to Denmark, Belgium and Holland; we have already had riots in England and bombings in Madrid and London.

It is perhaps pointless to look back at the shamefully irresponsible immigration policies that have brought so many European countries to this explosive point. It is pointless to wonder how anyone in authority could have imagined that it would be a good idea to dump enormous numbers of poorly educated Third World immigrants from different societies into unprepared and unwilling, sometimes racist, European host cultures ... in numbers so huge that integration became ever more unlikely and ghettos more inevitable.

... ..

However, we might at least recognise the problem. As usual a great many people are deliberately avoiding it, in particular by editing the word Muslim out of their debates, as if Islam had nothing to do with the dangerous mood sweeping Europe. Poverty and rejection have played a significant part, but there is an unmistakable sense in which the riots are Muslim, consciously so.

... the response of some Muslims ... has been to retreat into more extreme forms of Islam and into the arms of fundamentalists. Yet although we know this, and despite the Salman Rushdie affair, despite the bombs and assassinations that led up to 9/11, despite the recent atrocities, we seem unwilling to recognise that what this can mean is deliberate separatism – apartheid.

Islam in the European ghetto can mean an unwillingness to integrate at all, a desire to practise the faith with as little interference from the geographical host country as possible. An internal security agency in France reported in 2004 that there were 300 communities across the country – roughly the number that rioted – which were 'in retreat', meaning communities marked by fundamentalism, anti-semitism and violence, coupled with a hatred of France and the West.

... ..

Even when Islamism does not aim at anything so extreme as striving for an Islamic caliphate in Europe it can mean trying to impose Islamic practice and law. According to

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Amir Taheri, the Muslim writer, says some French Muslims are calling for local religious autonomy, as in the Ottoman empire, and it already exists in some parts of France where radicals have imposed Islamic dress, chased away French shopkeepers selling alcohol and pork and shut down 'places of sin' such as cinemas.

Even more startlingly, in Canada this year the Islamic Institute of Civil Justice proposed that sharia should take precedence over Canadian law in civil disputes between Muslims. There are sharia courts and councils operating informally in Britain.

... ..

~~

The following letters appeared in the *Sunday Times*, 20 November 2005, in response to the above (page 20)

We have lived for 15 years in a small village on the outskirts of Bayonne, southwest France and what Minette Marin ... wrote reflects what is happening. Fortunately we are not seeing the worst of it here – the Basques would never stand for outsiders, and that includes the French, interfering with life in their heartland.

I grew up in the 1960s in the era of the civil rights movement and anti-apartheid demonstrations, which were essentially about integration – and the crazy part about all this is that the Islamics and Africans want segregation. I fear there will be an immense backlash from the 90% or so of native French people ...

~~

As a Sikh second generation immigrant to the UK, I am constantly frustrated by comments by Muslims that the root cause of anger within the Muslim communities is as a direct result of the racism that the community has to put up with. There are many other immigrant communities in the UK: Sikh, Hindu, Chinese, Japanese that suffer no less discrimination but react to this in a totally different way by excelling in education and business ... The Muslim community must look at itself critically rather than blaming the rest of the world for its problems. In particular, the older generation must look at its role in teaching their young moral values and the value of all life.

* * *

From *Sunday Times*, 20 Nov 2005. Page 14. Title: **Blair's ban fails to silence Muslim preachers of hate** – by Abul Taher

Excerpts only, but in same order as appeared:

[starts]

Islamic extremists are targeting British Muslims with violent Al-Qaeda propaganda, in defiance of Tony Blair's announcement four months ago that he would clamp down on preachers of hate.

... ..

Muhammed al-Massari, a London-based Saudi extremist, has been allowing the

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forum pages of his website – www.tajneed.net – to be used by terrorist groups. They include Al Qaeda in Iraq, headed by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, who was responsible for the murder of Ken Bigley, the British hostage.

A second Saudi, Saad al-Fagih, uses his website and satellite radio broadcasts to incite an uprising against the House of Saud.

... ..

Last week *The Sunday Times* disclosed that al-Massari's website carried an attack on the Queen as one of the 'severest enemies of Islam' from Ayman al-Zawahiri, Osama Bin Laden's second in command. This was in defiance of a declaration by Blair that the 'rules of the game' were changing. He said after the London bombings: 'The new grounds [for deportation] will include fostering hatred, advocating violence to further a person's beliefs, or justifying or validating such existence.'

... ..

The Saudi dissident [al-Massari] advocates the beheading of homosexuals and describes the September 11 attacks as the 'blessed conquest in New York and Washington'.

... ..

In his response to the killing of 52 commuters on July 7, Blair also announced that the radical group Hizb ut-Tahrir and the offshoots of Al-Muhajiroun would be banned.

He said: 'Those that ... incite hatred or engage in violence against our country and its people have no place here'. A few days after his announcement, 10 foreign preachers were arrested. They are in police custody awaiting court hearings about their deportations.

But more than four months later, Hizb ut-Tahrir remains active and is lobbying Muslims to challenge the new anti-terror legislation.

Al-Ghuraaba and the Saviour Sect, two offshoots of Al-Muhajiroun, which had kept a low profile since the summer, announced on Friday that they had merged into a stronger organisation.

The new group – Ahlus Sunnah was Jamaah (ASWJ) [Followers of the Prophet] – is headed by Anjem Choudary, who was second in command to the cleric Omar Bakri Mohammed before Al-Muhajiroun disbanded early this year.

Bakri is in Lebanon now. Although he was widely thought to be the first cleric to be deported after Blair's announcement, he managed to slip out of Britain in August.

At a press conference this weekend, the leaders of ASWJ mocked Blair's efforts

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to ban them.

... ..

Abu Izzedine, also known as Omar Brooks and a prominent member ... previously said of the London bombings: 'I would never denounce the bombings, even if my own family was to suffer, because we always stand with the Muslims, regardless of the consequences.'

... ..

[ends

* * *

From the *Sun*, 19 September 2001. Page 11. **21 Terror Groups Based In Britain (not including the IRA)** – by Martin Phillips and George Pascoe-Watson.

Excerpts only, but in same order as appeared:

[starts]

It is the city described as 'terrorist central' – a mecca for extremists preaching hatred for the West and advocating its annihilation. But this is not Beirut, Kabul or Gaza Strip. It is **London**.

Although the West has declared war on terrorists and vowed to hit hard any state which harbours them, politicians need look no further to find them than our capital.

This is in spite of tough new laws imposed to curb their activities.

At least nine governments have asked Britain to extradite terrorists who they complain are operating freely here – including Afghanistan,

The Government brought in a new Terrorism Act last year banning 21 organisations and making it illegal for others to collect money for terrorism overseas or to conspire to commit terrorism. But their supporters are still here.

MI5 and Special Branch have had known Muslim fanatics in Britain under surveillance for years.

... ..

MI5 is desperate to find any 'sleepers' – fanatics recruited maybe years before they carry out attacks – operating on behalf of extremists ... Paul Wilkinson, director of the Centre for the Study of Terrorism And Political Violence at St Andrew's University, said: 'London has been a base for groups exploiting the freedoms of this country.'

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*Here we name the 21 groups suspected of plotting violence from within Britain – and it **DOESN'T** include the IRA or 13 other groups active in Northern Ireland.*

Al-Qaeda – Led by Osama bin Laden ...

Egyptian Islamic Jihad – Aims to replace the Cairo government with an Islamic state.

Al-Gama'at Al-Islamiya – Also wants to create an Egyptian Islamic state. It killed 58 tourists and four Egyptians in Luxor in November 1997.

Armed Islamic Group (GIA) – Aims to create an Islamic state in Algeria. Its UK members raise funds and buy chemicals for explosives. One jailed here – Rachid Ramda – is wanted in France for the 1995 explosion at Paris's St-Michel metro station which killed eight.

Salafist Group for Call and Combat – GIA rival which also wants an Islamic state in Algeria. In February, six Algerians were arrested in London after the discovery of plans to bomb in Europe.

Babbar Khalsa – Sikh group which wants an independent Khalistan within India's Punjab.

International Sikh Youth Federation – Also aims to create an independent Sikh state of Khalistan.

Harakat Mujahideen – Seeks an Indian-run Kashmir and urges worldwide attacks on US interests.

Jaish E Mohammed – Supporters seek the liberation of Kashmir from India and the destruction of America.

Lashkar E Tayyaba – Aims to make Kashmir an independent Islamic state.

Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam – London is the international HQ of the Tamil Tigers guerilla group fighting for a Tamil homeland in north and east Sri Lanka.

Hezbollah External Security Organisation – Lebanese-based group which wants armed resistance to Israel.

Hamas-Izz Al-Din Al Qassam Brigades – Has vowed to end Israeli occupation of Palestine and create an Islamic Palestinian state.

Palestinian Islamic Jihad-Shaqaqi – Shia Muslim group committed to ending Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories and creating an Islamic state similar to Iran.

Abu Nidal Organisation – Intent on destruction of Israel. Two members serving jail terms in the UK.

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Mujaheddin E Khalq – Dissident Iranian group based in Iraq.

Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) – Aims to create an independent Kurdish state in south east Turkey.

Revolutionary People's Liberation Party (DHKP) – Extreme left wing group bent on creating a Marxist regime in Turkey.

ETA (Basque Homeland and Liberty) – Wants independent state for Basque areas of France and Spain.

17 November Revolutionary Organisation – Greek terror group fighting imperialism. In June 2000 it killed the British Military Attaché in Athens.

Islamic Army of Aden – Committed to overthrowing the Yemeni government and replacing it with an Islamic state.

[ends]

Appendix VIII: From the *Freethinker*

The following is what Diesel Balaam said in the *Freethinker* article referred to on Page 71, which he had emailed to Armitage beforehand.

At 7 a.m. on July 7 I was putting the finishing touches to my controversial article 'Towards a new Humanism'. I read it back to myself and wondered if the argument was perhaps a little too strong, too over-stated. I decided to wait until that evening before deciding whether or not to submit it to the *Gay & Lesbian Humanist* magazine (*G&LH*). The events of the next few hours, which I spent desperately trying to contact both my partner and father (separately caught up on the periphery of those awful events, but unharmed), caused me to return home that evening, like most Londoners, in a grim Churchillian mood. I hit the 'send' button without further ado.

The views expressed and questions raised in 'Towards a new Humanism' are nobody's but my own, as is made clear by the disclaimer on Page 2 of *G&LH* magazine. Of course, there is much in the piece that can be justifiably criticised. It tries to cover too much ground, it neglects to reference source materials, and in places, the language used is unnecessarily waspish in tone. It is an exploratory piece (the title 'Towards a new Humanism' is a big clue); it raises difficult questions, and it does not even represent my own final opinion – which is still a work in progress. This is the nature of freethinking – it is a process, not a ding-dong battle of entrenched opinions based on received wisdom. Freethinking humanists have a moral duty to question everything and keep an open mind. Admittedly, I was painting my argument in very broad brush strokes and some of the generalisations, could, if lifted out of context and looked at in isolation, be misinterpreted by some as being motivated by a kind of generalised racism. This was certainly not my intention. My true intention was to provide a rallying cry to other freethinkers to adapt to the changing circumstances we now find ourselves in, to make humanism, increasingly marginalised, relevant once again. By 2050, humanism might very well be viewed as we now view 19th century Chartism. More than anybody, freethinking humanists should have a lot to say about the rise of militant Islam, but we are too cowed by far-left 'unthinkers' to say very much at all.

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Sometimes freethinkers are summoned by a moment in history to turn conventional pieties on their head. Perhaps one such moment is now. Nonetheless, challenging debate should still have due regard for the sensitivities of others. The same arguments in my article could have been advanced using kinder, more moderate language. It must be pointed out that the piece contains no fewer than four unambiguous denunciations of racism and calls on humanists to continue opposing racial discrimination in all its forms. Humanism, almost by definition, is the antithesis of racism. There are also two calls for private religious expression to be tolerated and protected.

Let us now examine the most controversial statements:

Quote: 'Legal or illegal, many of these Third World and Eastern European newcomers are criminals of the worst kind, and many more are hopelessly ill-equipped to live in a complex Western democracy, unable even to speak English in some cases. A parasitic few are bent on the destruction of western civilisation.'

This statement refers to, but does not directly cite or quote from, numerous high-profile news stories and crime reports widely available in the public domain, which were committed by persons who could reasonably be described as 'Third World or Eastern European newcomers'. The overwhelming number of newcomers, have for some years, come to Britain from these global regions [ref Migrationwatch figures], either to better their economic chances, or sometimes flee persecution. As widely reported in the press and on television, numerous individuals from within these demographic migrations have either been convicted, arrested, placed under surveillance, investigated, or continue to be sought, in connection with crimes such as: gangsterism behind sophisticated and widespread credit card and ATM fraud, people smuggling, exploiting and mistreating migrant workers, enforced prostitution, drug trafficking and supply, gun crime, membership of violent gangs (e.g. Yardies, Triads, Mafia), honour killings (currently there is one a month – *Times* Nov 5), plotting to assassinate public figures (including Tony Blair at the Queen's golden jubilee celebrations in 2002), directing terrorism in their native lands from bases in London (sometimes financed by other crimes like fraud and blackmail), the manufacture of ricin and explosive substances for planned terrorist attacks, planning at least half a dozen terrorist attacks in Britain prior to July 7 (foiled by the police and intelligence services), inciting racially motivated attacks on specific groups here in the UK and overseas, as well as recruiting jihadis in mosques, and at universities, to fight in countries such as Iraq and Afghanistan (often against UK Service personnel). This list is not necessarily exhaustive.

These are crimes which exploit and harm other people, either from within their own, or other ethnic groups. In fact, a disproportionate number of their victims are those from ethnic minority backgrounds, often the most vulnerable people at the margins of society. Given the crimes they commit, those committing such crimes might reasonably be described as 'criminals of the worst kind'. They certainly pose a threat to the peaceful, integrated and multiracial society we have to build, and they should be dealt with firmly. I accept that the word *some*

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would have improved on the word *many*. I have not claimed that 'all' or even 'most' Third World and Eastern European newcomers commit such crimes, or that people outside these groups do not commit similar offences. Further, it should be noted that one such group exploited by these criminals, were the tragic Chinese cocklers who perished in the bay at Morecambe in February 2004, unable to summon help on their mobile 'phones because 'they were unable to speak English'. Obviously, shared language is central to integration, participation and social cohesion. Migrationwatch has found that up to 300 different languages are now spoken in London's schools. The Government has now introduced citizenship tests for those wishing to become naturalised Britons, to ensure applicants do at least have a basic understanding of our way of life. Finally, the 'parasitic few bent on the destruction of western civilization' clearly refers to those who help themselves to welfare benefits and Legal Aid provided by the very society they seek to undermine and destroy (also widely reported).

Peter Tatchell (of Outrage) is right to say, partly in response to my article, that we should 'challenge racism' and 'express respect for, and solidarity with, people of all nationalities and races'. I totally agree with him. But simply repeating this noble platitude like a mantra, does not actually help us manage the day-to-day realities of net in-flows of migration. It ignores difficult questions like 'How many can we reasonably be expected to accommodate within the UK?' 'Where can we put them?' 'How can they support themselves and be supported?' 'Can our infrastructure cope?' and 'What does this all cost?' Finally, and most importantly, 'What do we do, when newcomers, including naturalised citizens, subsequently turn against society and commit terrorist acts or other highly damaging crimes that hurt people?' However over-stated, my article does at least raise these concerns. Peter and his dwindling band of OutRage! supporters, in their rush to censure, conveniently ignore these questions because they don't do 'nitty-gritty', just robotic self-righteousness. The truth is, there are numerous positions on immigration, falling between the Tatchellite 'open door' policy at one extreme, and the Powellite 'keep 'em all out' policy at the other. Most people, including those from ethnic minority backgrounds, occupy the middle ground. So do I.

Quote: 'For homosexuals, it is doubtful that there is any such thing as a 'moderate' practising Muslim, or that the Koran can be regarded as anything more than a squalid murder manual. So, while we must be tolerant towards Muslims who quietly and privately profess their faith, we must be ever vigilant.'

In other words, 'It is questionable that practising Muslims would fully support the rights of homosexuals to live freely, openly and equally within society.' This is what I meant and probably what I should have said. Koranic texts, together with the Sunnah (sayings of the Prophet) and the Hadith (stories about the Prophet's life), have nothing to say to homosexuals, certainly practicing homosexuals, beyond that they should be killed by one of several grisly means – hanging, stoning, beheading, or dropping from a high cliff or building. The above statement couches these points in hyperbole, but the basic premise holds true, as demonstrated by the distressing hangings of the gay teenagers in Iran, under

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shariah law, which the *G&LH* editorial in the same issue rightly highlights. It should be noted that Muslims are not a race of people, any more than Catholics or humanists are, so strongly worded criticism of practicing Muslims cannot be considered racist (small numbers of white Britons are converting to Islam too).

'After further consideration and reflection on the freethinkers' 'naughty step', I now accept that I failed to differentiate properly between information and opinion. It is true to say that comment is free but facts are sacred, but a fact still has no meaning until it has been interpreted (which is why we have political debate in the first place). I also neglected to provide named, accredited sources, which have since been lodged with the editor. The tone was hectoring, and, in places, immoderately expressed. Unintentionally, some careless statements may have appeared to some, in isolation, to endorse a non-specific and generalised racism, which I deplore.

Finally, it is worth looking at the conclusion of 'Towards a new Humanism' as this sums up the thrust of my whole argument:

'If people want to come here, either fleeing persecution or seeking a better life, they play by our rules and our way of life. If they don't, they are going to have to go because they are threatening our people and way of life. Coming to Britain is not a right. And even when people come here, staying here carries with it a duty.'

'Actually, I did not say that. What I said was:

'[I]t is time to erect new structures that will protect our hard-won freedoms and reinforce the social obligations we have to one another. This includes removing all forms of racial discrimination for the law-abiding, while at the same time making it clear to foreign settlers that if they seriously abuse and damage our society, their criminal convictions will carry the ultimate forfeit of fast-track deportation.'

So who is the author of the first statement? Prime Minister Tony Blair, at a press conference given at Downing Street, shortly after the July 7th bombings (reported *Sunday Times* August 7). You could not put a cigarette paper between his statement and mine, and mine improves on his by prefacing the argument with a call to end all forms of racial discrimination. Unintentionally, it seems that I have become a Blairite. Albeit an open-minded and freethinking one.

Appendix IX: Praise Be!

Below are some congratulatory emails and one phone message that show readers' appreciation of *G&LH* during its final editorship. The latest are shown first, since two of them are from members of the very committee that was so disparaging of the Autumn 2005 issue of *G&LH*. Any elision is merely to indicate omission of either personal material in emails or matter that is irrelevant to the magazine.

Email to GALHA secretary George Broadhead, copied to the editorial team in Wales, from **Lee Stacy**, currently acting chair of GALHA and one of the committee members who were very condemnatory of the Autumn 2005 issue – January 2005:

Hi George,

Sorry I haven't phoned yet. Will do soon.

But briefly, I wanted to say that I think the latest issue of G&L Humanist looks especially wonderful! And Gordon loves (joke) being on the front cover along with Keith and Michael Cashman.

The issue just arrived and I've not read through it yet but the content appears to be a heady blend of froth and serious news. Once again it looks like the boys in Wales have produced an interesting, entertaining, and stimulating issue.

I'm cc'ing this to Andy but if for some reason he doesn't get it, do please pass on my sincere congratulations.

~~~

From the entertainer **Clare Summerskill** (sister of Stonewall's director, Ben Summerskill) – January 2005:

Sharlean McLean told me about your magazine and lent me a copy. I thought it was excellent!

~~~

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From **Cherry Bennett**, former GALHA committee member (already off the committee by the time of the publication of the Autumn issue), filmmaker and co-organiser of GALHA's 2005 film festival – January 2005:

Dean and Andy: Just got my mag – fab – all that stuff GALHA got up to last year! Also, thank you very much for profiling my little film company. All I need to do now is get the money to make another film.

~~~

From **Peter Flynn**, Cape Cod, Massachusetts, USA (first and last paragraphs in an email mainly about Amazon and donations to the Republican Party) – 2 July 2005:

My name is Peter and I live in the USA. I subscribe to the *Gay and Lesbian Humanist* magazine and look forward to every issue. ...

I really like the *Gay and Lesbian Humanist* magazine. I learn so much from each issue. Thank you for a great magazine.

\* \* \*

Among earlier emails was this from current committee member Terry Sanderson, who praised the team's efforts on a special *G&LH* in summer 2002 to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the prosecution of *Gay News*:

I want to congratulate you on the absolutely superb 'blasphemy' edition of the *Gay & Lesbian Humanist* – surely the best in its whole history! The depth of research and the sheer excellence of the content will keep me happy for hours. And this is one journal that is going into my archive for future reference as a goldmine of eyewitness history.

~~~

From the then and current GALHA and PTT secretary **George Broadhead** – July 2003:

I left a [voicemail] message this morning shortly after the delivery of the mags. I think you have excelled yourselves with this issue. The photo on the front has come out extremely well and the varied contents, layout, photos etc. inside seem equally praiseworthy. ...

~~~

From **Dick Phelps**, *G&LH* reader in the USA and no relation to the hatefully homophobic 'Reverend' Fred Phelps of Westboro Baptist Church, about whom Armitage wrote a feature article, 'Preachers of Hate' – July 2003:

I received the summer issue of the magazine in the mail today. Every issue seems to get better and more interesting. As I previously said, I would love to be able to attend meetings [of GALHA].



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'Preachers of Hate' is excellent. I look forward to sharing it with friends here. We have a very close and dear friend, Gary, and his lover was one of the earlier AIDS deaths. He was diagnosed before all of the improved treatments came along. As a result, he suffered one of the prolonged agonizing and wasting deaths. They experienced Fred's hatefulness during Bill's last months. I know he will like the article and the fact that people's resistance to this nut continue to grow.

Again, my thanks for a great magazine and article.

~~~

Another US reader and occasional contributor, **Clark Flint**, wrote this to George Broadhead – October 2003:

... Tell Andy I was just reading the latest issue over too many cups of tea this morning. A great read!

~~~

In December of that year, responding to a subs reminder from the GALHA secretary, **Dick Phelps** emailed him:

Thank you for this reminder. I very much wish to remain a member and continue to receive the excellent *Gay & Lesbian Humanist* magazine. I look forward to each issue.

~~~

Here is one from the executive director of the National Secular Society, **Keith Porteous Wood**, who is also a GALHA member. It came in the form of a message on the BT Answer voicemail service, left for the editor at the Wales editorial address at 11.28 a.m., 28 December 2003:

Just to say what a cracking issue your Christmas *Gay & Lesbian Humanist* is – the winter edition – absolutely wonderful. Just wanted to say to you both – Dean as well, of course – how much we appreciated it. Thank you, and all the best for the forthcoming year.

~~~

From GALHA member **James McGregor** to George Broadhead – January 2004 – referring to the John Lauritsen article (see Page 7) that posited that HIV does not cause AIDS:

I found the article quite good even though I feel incompetent to judge his views on AIDS and HIV. Still, I support the expression of thoughtful views that challenge the mainstream. Your excellent magazine should be commended for publishing such criticisms. You and your colleagues deserve the strongest praise for contributing such a quality publication. I am a proud subscriber!

~~~

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Chris Terry, another American subscriber, had only just begun to take the magazine, and had this to say in January 2004:

I've just received the Winter magazine and it is fantastic. Looking forward to the Spring issue now.

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*G&LH* produced a special series of features on Alan Turing in 2004, one article of which was written by the philosopher **Peter Cave**, who in 2005 had a philosophy series on Radio 4. In July 2004, he sent this:

Just to let you know Turing edition of your mag has arrived.

Many thanks.

You produce a professional magazine! Splendid.

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In September 2004, George Broadhead emailed the then chair **Derek Lennard** (who sent the rant on Page 11 that helped to bring about the ensuing crisis, and subsequently resigned from the committee and as chair) to say the latest issue was ready to be sent out. Lennard responded thus (his hyphens are meant to be dashes):

Great-I'm really looking forward to it-though I still haven't finished reading the Turing articles yet! Every edition so far has been a treat-almost without exception!

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The agony aunt, writer and GALHA honorary vice-president **Claire Rayner** responded to an email from George Broadhead in September 2004 (the cake reference is to the marking of GALHA's 25th anniversary):

I greatly enjoyed the current 'Humanist' mag and loved the picture of your birthday cake!