



ANNUAL REPORT
JAN 2001 – MAR 2002

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ANNUAL REPORT

January 2001 – March 2002

1. INTRODUCTION

This has been an extremely eventful year. We became functional in January, moved into our new office in February, were officially launched in May, sent delegations to witness and study the Northern cities' disturbances in the early summer, participated at the World Conference Against Racism in Durban, South Africa in August/September and have been variously involved with numerous Government departments/agencies/quangos, mainstream NGOs/Human Rights organisations and many faith/voluntary sector organisations since 11th September.

Meanwhile, we have also spent much time and effort building and consolidating the organisations infrastructure – it's legal, governance, management and operational framework and it's vision, mission statement and work programme. This report will also detail the achievements in each of our 5 projects: the Islam Awareness (Education) Project, Media & Popular Culture Watch, Muslim Equality Casework Project, Institutional Discrimination Project and Policy Research & Lobbying Project.

2. OFFICIAL LAUNCH

The official launch of FAIR took place on 22nd May 2001. Feedback from most quarters would suggest that the launch was extremely well organised, delivered and received. Although Lord Patel was absent from the launch for reasons of ill health on the day, it was attended and addressed by the then Home Secretary, the Right Honourable Jack Straw MP, in the presence of over 200 guests. Guests attending were drawn from a wide range of people, many of them eminent in their fields, including leaders of various faith communities, scholars and academics, politicians and civil servants, ambassadors and journalists. The MC on the day was superb and the Chair of FAIR delivered a most impressive speech, which has since been widely circulated. The response after the launch was absolutely overwhelming. The launch was also very good for making contacts and networking. The launch was complemented, indeed augmented, by a very well designed and produced brochure for FAIR.

3. ORGANISATIONAL GOVERNANCE, MANAGEMENT & OPERATIONAL STRUCTURE

An early challenge for FAIR was to consolidate the top tiers of its agreed organisational structure with appointments of suitable and credible individuals. Due largely to the efforts of the early trustees, FAIR has risen to this challenge with a very impressive list of appointments. These appointments are as follows:

Patrons - Lord Adamjee Patel of Blackburn and Sir Cyril Townsend

Board of Trustees - Dr Jeremy Henzell-Thomas (Chair), Mr Ajmalul Hossain QC (Vice Chair), Mr. Rumman Ahmed, Prof. Zaki Badawi OBE, Mr Yusuf Islam, Mr Yousif Al-Khoei, Mr Omar Megerisi, Mrs Michelle Messaoudi, Ms Adeela Rashid, Mr Ahmed Al-Rawi, Dr. Anas Al-Shaikh-Ali and Mrs Batool Al-Toma

Board of Advisors - Mr Iqbal Asaria, Rev. Dr John Bowden, Ms Merryl-Wyn Davies, Roger Hardy, Dr Mohamed Al-Hashmi Hamdi, Dr Musharraf Hussain, Mr Iman M. Imam, Mr Fadi Ismail, Dr Majid Al-Katme, Mrs Deepa Korea, Prof. Tariq Modood MBE, Mr Fuad Nahdi, Mrs Gareth Peirce, Mr Mahmud Al-Rashid, Mr Robin Richardson, Dr. Ghayasuddin Siddiqui, Ms Susannah Tarbush, Mr Ahmed Versi.

At some point soon, however, we may need to consider expanding some of these tiers of appointments, particularly in light of the need to address perceived gender and ethnic imbalances.

The lower tiers of the agreed organisational structure include the Executive Team, Specialist Operational Experts/Advisors and Volunteers. This end of the structure has taken a slightly longer time to consolidate. However, we have made significant progress.

Executive Team - We have a very strong Executive Team, consisting of the Chief Executive Officer – a qualified barrister with experience in policy and strategy management; an Organisational Development Manager – a qualified accountant with a large portfolio of IT skills; a Media Project Manager with strong personnel management skills; a Casework Manager with good grassroots campaign management skills; and a Policy & Research Co-ordinator based at the University of Oxford. Recently, we also secured funding for a full time Fundraising Manager.

Specialist Operational Experts/Advisors - In addition to the Board of Advisors, FAIR has greatly benefited from the regular input of a large number of specialists and experts in a wide variety of fields, including IT, design, policy & campaigns, law and management. We are currently considering formalising the role of these specialists and experts through the introduction of Advisors Panels for each of our projects and work areas.

Volunteers – From its very inception FAIR has received invaluable assistance from a large number of generalist volunteers. This was particularly the case in the aftermath of 11th September. Over the reporting period we have developed a very basic system for the recruitment of volunteers to FAIR. Over coming months we will be developing this system to include proper induction and training of volunteers and the possibility of longer term internships.

In addition to the above structural tiers of involvement in FAIR, we have also developed a tier constituting of the Friends of FAIR. These are individuals who have directly responded to FAIR's appeal for financial assistance either with a one-off or a regular monthly payment. These individuals enjoy free access to all FAIR events, and though still small in number there is great potential in this group for future growth and assistance to FAIR.

4. VISION, MISSION, STRATEGY & WORK PLAN

In September, we organised a board meeting, facilitated by an expert in organisational development, to develop the organisation's vision, mission, strategy and work plan. The Board constituted the organisations Vision and Mission Statements as follows:

Vision Statement: To promote a multi-faith, multi-cultural Britain, where all people, including Muslims, are valued for the positive contributions they make to society and protected from all forms of demonisation, discrimination, harassment and violence.

Mission Statement: To address the causes and consequences of Islamophobia and racism and their various manifestations and to promote a more balanced picture of Islam and Muslims through:

- promoting greater awareness of Islam and Muslims in all sections of British society
- monitoring and challenging Islamophobia in the media
- assisting victims of Islamophobic discrimination, harassment and violence
- researching and challenging institutional religious discrimination
- campaigning on policy and legislation affecting the Muslim community in Britain

The trustees also undertook a SWOT and PEST analysis of FAIR and agreed an interim work programme. A sub-group has now been formed to develop the organisation's short, medium and long term work programmes.

5. OPERATIONAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

In the first year of our existence, inevitably much time and effort has been spent on developing the organisations infrastructure. Although much more needs to be done, significant achievements have been made.

5.1. Legal Matters

FAIR has been registered with Company House as a charitable company limited by guarantee and has also made its first annual return. It has also lodged an application with the Charity Commission for charitable status. The Charity Commission (CC) has so far shown favourable consideration. However, the process of gaining charitable status has been delayed by a number of reasons. Firstly, the CC had to obtain an opinion from its legal section that combating 'Islamophobia' falls within its objectives as it is not legally recognised as racism. Secondly, FAIR's political activities have had to be recast to ensure compliance with the CC remits for political activities allowed for charity sector organisations. And thirdly, since 11th September, CC has been much more rigorous with application for charitable status from Muslim organisations. Presently, we are awaiting a final inspection and interview, and if all this goes as well as we expect then we should be granted charitable status soon thereafter. FAIR has also undertaken Data Protection Registration as required by law and arranged employer's liability insurance cover for its premises and staff.

5.2. Financial Matters

Due to the generous efforts of one Trustee, we have secured 2 years budget for FAIR at £120,000 per year, an emergency budget post 11th September for £27,000 and an additional staff budget for one year at £25,000. Each of these items has been secured from El-Rahma. From separate sources we have also secured funding for 1 year for a full time Fundraising Manager.

FAIR's bank account and accountancy arrangements are maintained in very good order. A number of systems have been set up to make flow of cash and accounting within the organisation easier and smoother. We are also in the process of automating as many of the regular payments as possible. This includes rent, utilities and salaries. Although keeping accounts at FAIR is currently not an easy job, due appreciation must be accorded to Br Mohammed Zamir, provided by the courtesy of El-Rahma, who has throughout the reporting period ensured that accounting practices at FAIR fulfil all legal and professional requirements.

Arrangements have also been made for office contents insurance cover. However, we are yet to register for VAT returns and other tax benefits. This is to be undertaken as soon as we receive charity status.

5.3. Premises Management

The premises were initially acquired for one year with a six months break clause – with the possibility of termination of the contact after five months from commencement with one months notice. The contract came to an end in February, and has been renewed for another one year on exactly the same terms and at the same rate - £230 per week excluding service charges. The premises also benefits from once a week cleaning at £6.75 per week. Maintenance is included in the rent and the service is generally satisfactory. The office has been furnished with office furniture as required, and officers' space and storage have so far not been issues raising serious concerns. The office is soon to be assessed for health and safety requirements, particularly fire safety requirements – towards this end, fire extinguishers were recently installed.

5.4. Office Management

Although there has been the occasional complaint of unanswered or unreturned call, professionalism and efficiency in the office has generally been of a high standard. Systems are continually being developed to streamline work and increase further efficiency. Indexing has been developed for filing, books, research

documents, and magazines and newsletters. Standard forms have been developed for most aspects of routine work and this is currently being supplemented by databases wherever appropriate. Officers also collectively set aside one day per month for outstanding administrative and office work purposes.

One large draw back to our work is that we don't currently have any administrative staff. Administrative work is carried out by the officers themselves. Attempts are currently underway to secure an administrative staff from a local regeneration employment initiative. This will cost FAIR £6,000 a year but will allow the officers freedom from administrative chores and the ability to push ahead with substantive output.

In the very early days of FAIR some time and effort was spent on corporate imaging and stationery. Corporate stationery then produced has since run out and new stock needs ordering. This will be done in the next few weeks, including professionally produced letterheads and complementary slips.

5.5. Personnel & Payroll Issues

Great effort has been made over the last few weeks to develop our infrastructure in this area. The monitoring of time sheets, annual leave, sick leave and training needs and provisions has been regularised. JDs and PSs have been revised and construction where they did not exist. An Equal Opportunity Policy and a Trustee-Officer Protocol are currently being drafted. A complaints procedure has been established. We are also working towards ensuring that our recruitment practises meet not only legal but best practice standards, which includes properly constituted interview panels, agreed and written questions and uniform administering of tests. To increase proficiency and efficiency in this area, we have also constituted a sub-committee consisting of members from the Boards of Trustees and Advisors and the Executive Team. The sub-committee will also handle issues relating to pay increments for officers.

With regards to payroll matters, we have contracted the services of a payroll company that produces payslips and breakdowns for Inland Revenue type purposes. Our accounts with all tax agencies are clear to date. Furthermore, all officers also benefit from a stakeholders pension scheme in accordance with current legal requirements.

5.6. I.T and Related Matters

This has been perhaps the most difficult part of the FAIR infrastructure building exercise. But, Alhamdulillah, we now have an office with installation of telecommunications requirements that is helping our work rather than hindering it. All the computers in the office, except those specifically earmarked for volunteers, are now networked to a central in-house server with fire-walling for security purposes. We also have ADSL installed which allows continuous internet access at very high speed at a fixed monthly rate. This is absolutely essential for our media monitoring project.

We have also launched a web-page that is soon to receive a second stage of development to make it more interactive, particularly with our project work. Through the voluntary services of an IT Programmer, we are also on the verge of receiving a specially designed Database, which will be interfaced with our web-page. The Database will provide a dynamic contacts base and will also cater for the specific needs of our five projects. The overall IT system is managed by a volunteer whose professional fees we simply could not afford. The development of the web-page, with associated invaluable ancillaries, is the magnanimous contribution of TriStar through one of the Trustees. We have also in the reporting period purchased licences for all software used in the FAIR office.

5.7. Corporate Publicity

To complement the launch of FAIR, we produced a well designed FAIR brochure. The brochure has been widely circulated. FAIR also contributed to the production of a high quality Ramadan calendar, 70,000 of which was distributed around London and beyond carrying the FAIR logo amongst others. During Ramadan we also contributed on a daily basis to the news and current affairs sections of the Muslim Community Radio broadcast in East London. In return our name was mentioned as sponsors on

the radio twice a day. FAIR is currently producing a cheaper version of the brochure for further mass distribution. Additionally, a postcard is being produced to complement a current campaign literature describing FAIR's activities in brief. It is hoped that 35,000 of these will be distributed around the country. We have also commissioned Peter Sanders for photographs for two poster campaigns exploring the diversity amongst and the British-ness of Britain's Muslims.

5.8. Mandatory Organisational Meetings & Reports

During the reporting period, four meetings were organised for the trustees and one for the advisors. The CEO has also met separately with each of the Patrons. In addition to this annual report, we also produced a bi-annual report covering the first six months of the reporting period.

6. PROJECTS

Substantive output through the various projects of FAIR during the reporting period has been remarkable. The achievements may be discussed under FAIR's five identified projects as follows:

6.1. ISLAM AWARENESS (EDUCATION) PROJECT

6.1.1. Literature

6.1.1.1. Booklets on Islam and Muslims

We had initially planned to produce and distribute two pictorial essays on Islam and Muslim contribution to British society respectively. However, the project was put on hold on learning that the BBC was producing similar literature to supplement its Islam Season. FAIR was invited to assist the BBC's project. Assistance was sought on three fronts: firstly, with the booklet to complement the Islam Season; secondly, with the arrangement of a community activity to complement the Season; and thirdly, with a documentary on Islamophobia. FAIR played an active role in the development of the booklet on British Islam and Muslims – from the brainstorming stage to the contents stage, through to the design stage. The concept of the booklet was based on a production previously edited by the FAIR CEO. Some of the content was also taken from that production, and FAIR additionally reviewed the new contents on four separate occasions. At the design stage FAIR also assisted with the taking and locating of appropriate photos. We are currently negotiating with the BBC the transfer of all remaining literature after the season to FAIR and the possibility of a licence so that we may reprint the literature if we should wish to do so in the future. Our work towards a community event to complement the Season and the documentary on Islamophobia are detailed below.

FAIR has bulk purchased 500 copies of the Discover Islam Reader from WAMY and these are distributed to those requesting general information on Islam. FAIR has also received 300 copies of 'Silent No More' by Senator Paul Findley. Subsequent to a reception organised by FAIR for the Senator in the House of Commons, some of these books have been distributed free to specified individuals, some have been sold subsequent to an advert accompanying the Daily News Digest and there are still some in stock in the FAIR office. In addition, FAIR has received 5,000 copies of the Yusuf Ali translation of the Qur'an. A list is presently being drawn up of Members of both Houses of Parliament, senior Judges and Civil Servants, University Vice-Chancellors, senior media professionals, FTSE top 100 company directors, chief executives of local authorities, chiefs of police constabularies, etc. to whom these Qur'ans will be distributed. The Qur'ans will carry a FAIR frontispiece and be accompanied by a letter introducing FAIR and the purpose of the distribution of the Qur'an.

6.1.1.2. Community Activists Pack

We have produced two activists' packs for Ramadhan and Hajj respectively. These packs are displayed on our web-page and seek to assist Muslims across the country to engage with their local communities and

the media to promote greater awareness of them and their faith during the festival seasons of Islam. These packs are based largely on the packs produced by CAIR, USA.

6.1.1.3. *Schools Pack*

We are currently working on a schools pack. This is largely a volunteers' initiative. The pack will consist of twelve A4 cards on the different aspects of Islam. The pack will again be placed on our web-page and will be available to be downloaded by schools.

6.1.2. **Public Events**

6.1.2.1. *Public Awareness Conferences and Seminars*

On 16th July 2001, FAIR held a book launch at the House of Commons to mark the publication of the new book by former US Senator Paul Findley, entitled '*Silent No More*'. The event was hosted by Lord Ahmed of Rotherham. Mr. Paul Findley served as an American Senator for 22 years, much of which was devoted to challenging stereotypes about and prejudices against Islam and Muslims in the US and the West generally. Through his work he has endeavoured to expose the anti-Islamic sentiment that is prevalent in western societies. In his address to the audience, Mr. Findley explored US images of Islam and offered Muslims practical guidance, encouraging the Muslim community to take proactive steps in effectively challenging such archaic and damaging stereotypes. He urged that it is only through such proactive work that we may project a more balanced and accurate image of Islam.

Sharing the platform with the former senator was Mr. Christopher Allen, who has recently completed a well-received study entitled 'Islamophobia – Western Perceptions of Islam'. Mr. Allen's study seeks to uncover the historical roots of Islamophobia, tracing it back to the times of the Crusades. His research also explores Islamophobia in a more contemporary context. In light of the disturbances in various northern towns, Mr. Allen's research seeks to raise awareness of the BNP's blatant opportunism during the recent general election campaign, which was marred with aggressive exploitation of anti-Islamic sentiments. The speaker drew interesting parallels between the perceptions of Islam in the U.S. and the U.K. But more importantly he provided valuable insight into the global scale of the problem of discrimination, harassment and violence Muslims are faced with today based, on ignorant perceptions of their faith.

To complement the BBC Islam Season, we organised a large day conference on the 29th September 2001, entitled *Exploring Islamophobia - Deepening Our Understanding of Islam and Muslims*. The aim of this one-day conference was to explore the more subtle forms of the Islamophobic discourse which exist in intellectual traditions, political language, education, media, entertainment and popular culture. It sought to highlight the existence and extent of the Islamophobic discourse, its impact on the Muslim community – and by extension wider society – and to call on policy makers and government officials to take action. The tragic events of September 11th had brought issues of Islamophobia in Britain to the forefront. It resulted in some of the latent forms of Islamophobia being manifested in some very concrete forms, and consequently a stark rise in cases of Islamophobic discrimination, harassment and violence. The conference was also an ideal platform to explore the ways forward towards a more multi-faith, multi-cultural Britain. The conference hosted a number of exceptional speakers, including the Rt. Hon. John Denham MP, Minister for Home Affairs, Simon Hughes MP, Home Affairs Spokesman for the Liberal Democrats, David Veness CBE QPM, Assistant Commissioner of the MET, Trevor Phillips, Deputy Chair of GLA, Prof Tariq Modood, Dr Zaki Badawi, Yusuf Islam and many more. The conference was attended by over 250 delegates and was also heavily attended by media professionals. The event was widely covered by the media, including BBC News. BBC News Online had the story running for the whole weekend on its front page, and also had a direct link on the page to FAIR's website. The conference will be remembered for, amongst other things, the Rt. Hon. John Denham MP's speech on 'Islamophobia – a cancer in our society'.

On Thursday 25th October 2001, FAIR organised a conference on *Islamic Responses to Terrorism*. The conference sought to interrogate Muslim responses to the events of 11th September and also their

responses to the US led military interventions in Afghanistan. The conference also examined the causes of international terrorism, the adequacy of international law against terrorism, terrorism law provisions in the UK, intelligence gathering on terrorism and the impact of UK terrorism laws on the Muslim community in Britain. Once again the conference hosted an exceptional number of national and international speakers, including the Rt. Hon. Tony Blair, Prime Minister. Mr Blair then took the opportunity to meet with Muslim Leaders for an hour during the lunch break. The presence of the two chief guests resulted in wide-spread media coverage. This included coverage by the BBC, Al-Jazeera, Iran TV and columns in a number of national dailies. The conference was again attended by well over 200 delegates and many had to be turned down for space, safety and security reasons.

6.1.2.2. *Question Time Programmes*

On 16th July 2001 FAIR also organised a Question Time type programme at the House of Common on the theme of '*Media Coverage of the Middle East and its impact on British Muslims*'. The panel consisted of HE Afif Safiyeh, Head of the Palestinian General Delegate to the UK, Paul Findley, former US Senator, Brian Whitaker, Middle East Editor of the Guardian, Anton Le Guardia, Diplomatic Editor of the Daily Telegraph and Michael Binyon, Diplomatic Editor of the Times. The event was attended by more than 100 people and a range of foreign policy issues were discussed, particularly with regard to their impact on community relations in the UK. The discussions were intensive but well-controlled. The event was a great opportunity to engage the print media with the concerns of the Muslim community.

6.1.2.3. *Celebrating Islam Festival*

Although the five-yearly Celebrating Islam Festival is still perhaps some way off, significant achievements have been made to make it a real possibility. We have so far had initial meetings with a number of interested parties, including Khayaal Theatre Co., Visiting Arts, the British Council and the Foreign Office to consider how we may progress this project. Meanwhile, we have also jointly organised an artists' dinner to explore this possibility and other opportunities with regards to achieving a fairer image of Islam through the promotion of Islamic arts and culture. As a stepping stone towards the Celebrating Islam Festival we have also embarked on one of our most daring and exciting projects to date, the *Best of British Islam Festival*. Both these events are discussed in more detail below.

6.1.2.4. *Artists Dinner*

Organised jointly with Khayaal Theatre Co. and ArRum, the Artists Dinner was held on 14th November 2001. The event was held on ArRum premises and was intended, amongst other things, to be the initial stepping stone towards the formation of a forum for Muslim arts and artists. The forum will seek to promote the work of Muslim artists and provide a means of networking between them. The forum will also celebrate the heritage and richness of art that has emerged from the Muslim world from the past to the present. It is strongly felt that by working on promoting the Islamic arts and the works of Muslim artists we can make excellent progress towards the portrayal of a different, more balanced and more celebratory view of Islam and Muslims. The operational heads of each of the organisations involved in organising the dinner spoke at the gathering. The dinner was attended by 20 artists and generated much enthusiasm from all present, and consequently, a follow up meeting is now being considered. In the meantime however, an e-group has been set up for all the artists to use as a tool for liaising, regarding any new ideas and initiatives, and for working towards the growth of a database to be used as a sourcing pool in generating further interest and making this project successful. FAIR hopes to utilise this forum to also work towards two of its specific projects: the 5-yearly *Celebrating Islam Festival* and the smaller *Celebrating Eid Festival*, which is to take place on an annual basis.

6.1.2.5. *Best of British Islam Festival*

The Best of British Islam Festival was launched on 2nd March at ArRum with a stunning exhibition of traditional and contemporary Islamic art by some of the leading Muslim artists in Britain. Chief Guests at the festival included Baroness Tessa Blackstone, Minister of State for the Arts, The Right Honourable Frank Dobson, former Cabinet Minister, Yusuf Islam (formerly known as Cat Stevens), David Veness,

Assistant Commissioner of the MET and Dr Jeremy Henzell-Thomas, the Chair of FAIR. The festival will celebrate the depth and diversity of Islam and Muslims in Britain. To be held between March and August 2002, it will entail over 100 individual events and host over 200 of Britain's finest artists, intellectuals and community representatives who have made their mark on British society and helped to enhance British-Muslim dialogue, understanding and cohesion. The expected audience is approximately 10,000 people, with a further estimated exposure to approximately 15m based on current press exposure between the joint organisers. The festival will reach out, inform, provoke and entertain as well as clarify certain misconceptions about Islam and Muslims in the mainstream media by offering an exciting spectrum of events, debates, screenings and lectures incorporating the following themes: fine and creative arts, visual and performing arts, literary arts, gender dynamics, business, current affairs, community issues, faith and spirituality, Muslim history and futures, Islamic thought and Islam and Science. The festival aims to be as comprehensive and representative of British Islam and Muslims as possible. The festival is being jointly organised with IMAN – an Islamic organisation that seeks to offer a framework for the continual intellectual development and spiritual growth of its members, Khayyal – a theatre company founded and led by Muslims, dedicated to the dramatic interpretation of Muslim wisdom literature for the stage and ArRum – a social club for Muslims that seeks to promote a God-centred approach to living through the celebration of Islamic arts and culture.

6.1.2.6. FAIR Road Show

Due to other pressures of work, this project has not received the attention it requires. However, since 11th September a new charity organisation, called Mosaic, has come on the scene with the specific purpose of organising a Road Show on Islam. FAIR has met with this group on two separate occasions to explore common ideas. FAIR has sought to help and assist this new group in every way possible. There is still a possibility that FAIR and Mosaic may work jointly on the Road Show project, but this will require further discussions.

6.1.2.7. Stamps Campaign

The idea is to launch a children's campaign for Eid stamps. However due to other pressures of work this project is yet to receive sufficient attention. The idea was recently discussed with the Interfaith Network, and it seems likely that they may campaign for a set of stamps that cover all of Britain's faith communities.

6.1.3. Youth & Students Focus

6.1.3.1. National Union of Students

During the 2001 NUS Annual Conference, an extremely Islamophobic motion was proposed, which sought to stifle not only legitimate discussions on the Palestinian crisis, but also to curtail the activities of certain Islamic societies throughout the country. Having been alerted about the motion a few days prior to the conference, FAIR became actively involved in the conference in order to ensure that the motion was not passed. This involvement resulted in a range of activities, including writing articles for the conference magazines and newsletters, producing and distributing flyers and information at the conference, and setting up a stall with FOSIS at the conference, which provided literature on Islamophobia, and Islam more generally. FAIR representatives also took part in a series of fringe meetings at the conference, provided speakers to talk from the main platform, and lobbied influential individuals and groups at the conference. As a result of this activity, the motion was reversed and the NUS committed itself to fighting against Islamophobia in the coming years. The NUS has now produced a leaflet on Islamophobia which explains what it means, how it can be prevented, and how one can help fight the challenge stemming from the rise of Islamophobic trends. The text for the leaflet was produced by FAIR with assistance from experts in the field, including Robin Richardson. The leaflet also carries FAIR's logo in appreciation of FAIR's assistance in this NUS campaign. FAIR has continued to liaise with the NUS in other ways too. It has on numerous occasions provided advice to NUS executives and provided speakers for many NUS conferences, including the NUS Regional Conferences in Leeds and Leicester.

FAIR achieved similar results at the 2001 Black Students Annual Conference. It contributed immensely by drafting motions on Anti-Islamophobia and the Nadeem Ahmed Case and sought to ensure that candidates sympathetic to Muslims were elected as officers. FAIR has also organised several meetings with FOSIS and the Black Students Alliance to consider strategies for greater Muslim participation in mainstream student activities.

6.1.3.2. Student Strategy Document & FOSIS

Subsequent to involvement in the NUS Conference, the Black Students Conference and the FOSIS Camp, FAIR has developed a student strategy paper and has been actively involved in seeking to activate Muslim students in mainstream student politics. In particular, it has met with members of FOSIS on a number of occasions. As a result of these meetings FAIR has been able to work very closely with FOSIS on two separate projects as below.

6.1.3.3. Student Politics Seminars

In order to encourage Muslims to become more involved with mainstream student politics, FAIR has assisted FOSIS to organise a series of 3 seminars. The first two seminars have already been held and the third is to be held in May. The first seminar, held on 24th November 2001, aimed to serve as an introduction to student politics, looking at factors such as the structures of the Students Union and the NUS. The seminar was kicked off with a presentation by the FAIR CEO. The second seminar, held on 16th February 2002, involved a look into the practical aspects of getting involved in the Students Union and the NUS, covering issues such as what positions Muslims should take in the NUS, how to run election campaigns, how to build relationships with other groups in student politics and so on. The third seminar, to be held in May, will focus on the issue of successive management in students work and will seek to teach students how to teach others to get the most out of their Students Union and the NUS.

To complement these seminars, FAIR will be working with FOSIS to develop a Students Pack to facilitate even greater Muslim participation in mainstream student activities. The pack will include the following elements: guidelines on how to deal with Student Unions (using examples of SU constitutions) and an explanation of the rights students and Islamic societies are entitled to, advice on gathering support on campus and forming alliances with other organisations, dates on which NUS elections/meetings will take place and any other important dates, details on the NUS Islamophobia campaign, details of NUS procedures and on how to pass motions and create block votes, advice on what we can/cannot legally do and a breakdown of laws that protect and conversely discriminate against Muslims, and details of organisations that can help.

6.1.3.4. Islamophobia Seminars

In line with its original work plan, FAIR has organised three roving seminars on university campuses on *Islamophobia – the Xenophobia of Our Times*. The seminars are being jointly organised with FOSIS and relevant Islamic societies. Posters for the seminars are being widely distributed. The first seminar was organised on 12th March at the University of Nottingham and was attended by more than 150 students and academics. The second seminar was held on 19th March at the University of Manchester and was attended by a similar number. The third seminar will be held on 8th May at the University of York. The common pool of speakers for the seminars are Dilwar Hussain, Chris Allen and Soufian Gent.

6.1.3.5. Miscellaneous Students Activities

FAIR has also provided advice and guidance to individual Islamic societies on putting together motions on issues which would be of benefit and interest for Muslim students. Examples include motions on the events in the US, UK and Afghanistan, and a motion on the human rights abuses against the Palestinians. FAIR is also working with a London based Muslim students forum called Student Represent (SR). SR recently produced the second issue of its tabloid newspaper with a focus on Islamophobia, and FAIR is given centre stage in the issue. FAIR is also considering jointly organising with SR a large conference in London on the issue of Islamophobia in Education. Additionally, on 23rd October 2001, the CEO of

FAIR presented a paper at Oxford University on *Islamophobia in the Media post-11th September*, which was attended by approximately 50 people. Other planned activities in the area of students work include the compilation of a questionnaire on facilities for Muslims to be issued to all universities and FE colleges with a view to publish a league table and the distribution of a letter to all Chancellors and Vice-Chancellors reminding them of their duties towards Muslim students under the Human Rights Act.

6.1.3.6. Briefing to Young Professionals

On 14th September 2001, FAIR made a presentation to City Circle on its initial analysis of responses to 11th September. The session was also aimed at exploring the different ways in which Muslim professionals could contribute towards alleviating problems caused by the immediate backlash against the Muslim community. As a result of the presentation, FAIR received a flood of responses from eager volunteers, who subsequently worked on a variety of projects at FAIR, including media monitoring and victim support.

6.1.4. Corporate Focus

6.1.4.1. Corporate Culture Evenings

The idea was to arrange cultural evenings at large public and private sector agencies, institutions and organisations to combat Islamophobia and increase greater awareness of Islam and Muslims. However due to other pressures of work this project has yet to receive sufficient attention.

6.2. MEDIA & POPULAR CULTURE WATCH

Much time and effort was initially spent on amalgamating the existing work and future plans of City Circle and Action Alert with FAIR. The result was the pooling of resources, the reduction of duplication and the avoidance of future complications. The former Co-ordinator of Action Alert was absorbed into FAIR as the Media & Popular Culture Watch Project Manager and the data-bases of the two organisations were merged. The media project at City Circle was also seconded to FAIR and volunteers from both AA and CC have contributed to our work in many significant ways. The work of the Media and Popular Culture Watch and our achievements so far break down as follows:

6.2.1. Media Monitoring and Community Empowerment

Currently we are scanning the British electronic media on a daily basis and producing a Daily News Digest (DND) similar to the CAIR model. The Digest summarises the main articles of relevance to Muslims and also provides links to fuller versions and other related stories. The Digest has been well received in many quarters and is a key source of information for many Muslims and Non-Muslims. The Digest is now being expanded to carry other news or appeals from FAIR and to encourage Muslims to respond to media agencies where such a need is strongly felt. The DND is soon to appear on the front page of our website, giving the website a fresh look on a daily basis. Work is also in progress towards web-enabling the media monitoring process, which would include on-line reporting facilities for members of the public and detailed guidelines and resources for making effective responses to the media. Together with MPAC and JustPeace, work is also underway towards establishing a grassroots media monitoring network of volunteers. The new web based facilities and the volunteers' network should help the task of monitoring become much wider and more dynamic.

6.2.2. Media Response

On scanning the electronic media, where an article has been identified that requires a response, a response is immediately drafted. The draft is then further improved by the senior officers in FAIR before it is sent to the relevant media agency. Volunteers also contribute in identifying relevant articles that need responding and draft lists of points that may be raised in the responses. This is then circulated to a wider list of people for a variety of responses. FAIR is currently responding to one or two articles a week. We have also started receiving listings from the BBC, ITV, Channel 4 and Channel 5 and previewing

appropriate programmes. We seek to inform all our contacts about our views on relevant materials and to encourage appropriate viewing and response where necessary. We are currently involved in a systematic response to the Season on Islam by Channel 4.

6.2.3. News Sharing and FAIR as a point of reference

Community News Releases and Press Releases are now being distributed to an increasing database. The structure and content of the releases are developed with a view to increase community awareness of and media exposure to all issues that FAIR undertakes to challenge. Through its networking abilities and Press Releases FAIR is fast becoming a first port of call by both the ethnic and the mainstream media. A database has now been developed to log the first port of call enquiries we are receiving from the media. An example of the work we have done in this respect is when FAIR was approached by the BBC to assist with a documentary on Islamophobia as part of its Islam Season. FAIR assisted by providing essential research materials, gathering contacts of victims of Islamophobia for interviewing and by arranging a panel discussion on Islamophobia with Max Clifford. FAIR's input into the Islam Season was acknowledged by senior figures at the BBC at a gathering to launch the Season.

6.2.4. Shaping the Media

On 20th September 2001, FAIR held a press conference in response to the attacks in New York on September 11th. Not only was the conference used as a platform to show the communities condemnation of the attacks, but it was also used as a request to the media to be objective during this very sensitive period, and not to tap into the current hysteria of sensationalism, and not to start pointing fingers without further conclusive proof. Amongst others, present at the conference were Cyril Townsend (Patron of FAIR), Brian Pearce (Interfaith Network), Zaki Badawi (Muslim College) and Sir Sigmund Sternburg from the Three Faiths Forum. Once again Dr Jeremy Henzel-Thomas made an excellent speech at the conference, which has since been very widely circulated, especially in Government circles.

The Media Team at FAIR is involved in the various campaigns currently being worked up at FAIR. For each of the campaigns the Media Team is responsible for putting together a media pack. A meeting was recently organised with a contact at the Independent on Sunday for an insight into building successful media packs. The meeting proved to be extremely successful. The contact was also able to impart invaluable insights on organising successful press conferences. We are currently seeking to organise for staff three one-day seminars on print, radio and TV media respectively. This should help the Media Team to better utilise the world of media to enable progress on the primary objectives of FAIR.

6.3. MUSLIM EQUALITY CASEWORK PROJECT

6.3.1. Casework

Having spent much time and effort initially on amalgamating potential FAIR work in this area with similar existing work by others, FAIR launched its casework project to assist victims of Islamophobic discrimination, harassment and violence quite early in the reporting period. A strategy paper has since been developed to elaborate and strengthen the interim casework system. Since April 2001 we have worked on the following cases:

Mr K faces discrimination, harassment and violence in the army – Mr K commenced on a career with the British Army in January 1999, serving as a soldier in the 2nd Parachute Regiment. In March this year he withdrew from his unit on a medical note from his civilian GP. The entire duration of his service was plagued with a catalogue of discrimination and abuse, endured at the hands of both senior and junior officers and officers of the same rank. In October last year, and again in January this year, attempts were made on his life by white officers in his unit. In March, he was informed by the only other ethnic minority soldier in the unit that it was no longer safe for him to be there. With his career brought to a premature end, and bearing in mind that he was once a confident and fine soldier, Mr K's ordeal had left him so psychologically disorientated that he required regular therapy. Meanwhile, having completely failed to support Mr K through his ordeals of racial and religious abuse, the Army had refused to accept numerous

certifications from civilian medical professionals and had instead sent him on AWOL (absent without leave). This entitled the Police to arrest Mr K and hold him in custody until he returned to the Army. Mr K was of the opinion that the discrimination and abuse he had faced was motivated by his ethnicity and Islamic faith.

Mr K arrived at FAIR extremely distressed and on the verge of complete breakdown. Apart from providing counselling, advice on welfare rights and moral support, FAIR also secured for the K family legal support from a city employment law firm on a conditional fee basis. The family has so far received some financial support from health charity sources and the AWOL has been rescinded. This effectively means that Mr K's arrest warrant has been withdrawn and his pay reinstated whilst his case is in progress and he is unfit for work. In the meantime legal proceedings have commenced and the case has appeared at an Employment Tribunal for directions hearing. The case has presently been stayed at the request of the MOD for four months. The lawyers for Mr K are confident that this is a straightforward winnable case against the Army on the grounds of discrimination and constructive dismissal.

Mr A faces discrimination at Oxford University – Mr A was admitted to Oxford University in 1998 to study for an MPhil in Medieval Arabic Thought, along with two other students, at the Oriental Institute. In June 1999, in line with the established practice for this course, all three students were set an informal test, which they had specifically been told was only to assess their progress and to assist in the tailoring of the rest of the course. Based on this test, however, Mr A was excluded from continuing his studies. It was later suggested that Mr A had been excluded because he had failed a 'Qualifying Examination'. However, it would appear from the Adjudication of the Senior Proctor, Richard Jenkins, of 17th November 1999 and the briefing of the Oxfordshire Race Equality Council on 21st May 2001, that the 'Qualifying Examination' was seriously flawed. The exam was neither independently set nor independently marked, and it was also not properly invigilated. The exam was thus in breach of the University's own Examination Decrees and Regulations. Mr A was then forced to sit a second equally flawed test, subsequent to which he was again told that he could not continue with his studies – and, in fact, he has not been allowed to continue his studies at the Oriental Institute since. It would appear that despite accepting the flawed nature of the tests, the university authorities to this day have not resolved the matter. Mr A meanwhile remains aggrieved that his studies and career have been unjustly brought to a premature end. He is strongly of the view that he has been discriminated against on the basis of race, and perhaps even, on the basis of his religion, and that the tests/exams have been used merely as a cover.

With the university authorities dragging their feet, Mr A's case progressed to the Courts. At a Judicial Review in the High Court last year Mr A's lawyers questioned University practices and the powers invested in individuals. The judge criticized the tests as 'unfortunate', but was unable to find in Mr A's favour due to certain technicalities and the restrictive nature of Judicial Reviews. Mr A was advised by his lawyers to seek a second opinion on the High Court's decision regarding the University's ambiguous statutes, but due to a lack of funds he was unable to pursue this advice. The main issue, however, is yet to be decided in the County Court this year, where Mr A's lawyers will allege that his supervisor used these tests to racially discriminate against him. In view of the virtual absence of Muslim, Arab and other ethnic minority lecturers at the Oriental Institute, they will also accuse the University of being institutionally racist.

FAIR wrote a detailed letter to the Vice-Chancellor of Oxford University expressing its concerns in this matter. The response from the Vice Chancellor was immensely unhelpful. FAIR has since sought to publicise the case at Mr A request. We have sent out 4 Press Releases/Community News Releases on the case and have consequently drawn much attention to it. We have also had a meeting on this case with the NUS Black Students Officer, resulting in the development of an alliance of ethnic minority student societies campaigning for Mr A. The alliance has caused much embarrassment to the university through national and international coverage on the case in the print media. The alliance also sought to discourage Kofi Annan, UN Secretary-General, from receiving an honorary degree from the university, as did FAIR. Although this was not achieved, reference to Kofi Annan has certainly increased the profile of Mr A's case. Mr A now has a number of extremely prominent supporters, including the Oxfordshire Race Equality Council, Prof. Michael Dummit, founder of the Institute of Race Relations, Mr Tom Paulin, the

renowned poet and panelist on BBC2's Late Review, Dr. Dosmukhamedov, Wolfson College, University of Oxford and Darcus Howe, The New Statesman.

An additional problem in this case is the influence of Oxford University over the system through which Mr A is seeking his redress. Mr Dee Singh who was the Race Harassment Officer responsible for the investigation of cases at the Oxfordshire Race Equality Council, and who found in favour of Mr A, has since had to resigned from his post claiming that the 'power and influence' of Oxford University has hampered his work on behalf of the aggrieved. The main concern of the victim is that, given the power and the influence of the university over all institutions in Oxford, any action taken from within Oxford is likely to be ineffective, and for this reason Mr A has now requested that the matter be investigated from London. Recently FAIR has written to the Chair of the Commission for Racial Equality demanding a formal inquiry into the matter. FAIR has also launched a fundraising campaign for Mr A and has so far raised £3,100.

Mr B is penalised by the BBC for fair reporting – Mr B is well known for his particular journalistic style, characterized by its openness and incisiveness. Mr B is a freelance journalist, who writes regularly for *The Guardian* and has in the past also contributed reports to BBC Radio 4's *The World Tonight* programme. Subsequent to a news report by Mr B aired on *The World Tonight* programme on 17th April 2001, BBC staff made statements to the effect that Mr B should have been introduced as “an avowed supporter of Islamic causes” and that this editorial view had been made “absolutely clear to the production team” for implementation in the future. The statements came as a result of pressure from Mr Mike Gapes MP who featured in Mr B's report as a pro-Israeli Member of Parliament with a high concentration of Muslims in his constituency. The statements were made, however, despite another statement by the very same members of staff that Mr B's report was in and of itself “factual, fair and balanced”.

Having been contacted by Mr B in the aftermath of the statements, FAIR wrote a very long letter to the Director of the BBC drawing out the very negative implications of the newly adopted policy and its possible future impact on the Muslim community. FAIR has also advised Mr B to initiate legal proceedings against the BBC through a well-known discrimination law firm.

Imam faces problems with Prison Services – Mr C was the Imam at Downview Prison and alleged that the authorities there had denied Muslim inmates their fundamental right to practice their faith. Having received Mr C's case, and aware that there are a number of other organisations working on Muslim concerns with the Prison Services, FAIR organised a large case conference for interested parties. The case conference revealed that Muslim inmates at Downview were denied observation of some of the most rudimentary aspects of Islam. From a verbal report from Imam C and a written report from the National Council for the Welfare of Muslim Prisoners we learnt that inmates had been offered haram meat as halal, haram meat was stored with halal meat and neither was labelled, prayer space for inmates was inadequate, prayer room had no ablution facilities, it was not always possible to have showers before Friday prayers, cell doors were not regularly opened on time to allow inmates to participate in the Friday prayers, inmates had been denied days off for religious festivals, Iftar (the break of the fast) during Ramadhan was not allowed on time and each inmate had an allocation of approximately 4-5 minutes per week for pastoral and spiritual support.

Indeed, Imam C himself had suffered many problems at the Prison. The inmates were unable to contact him as his telephone was not always in working order and despite continued requests to have it repaired it remained so. He was subjected to a full body search on many occasions whereas representatives of other religions, such as Christianity and Judaism, had never been treated in the same way. Also, Islamic periodicals had been de-subscribed since the arrival of the Governor without any consultation. Imam C was strongly of the opinion that the poor facilities and mistreatment of Muslims was motivated by racist and anti-Islamic feelings harboured by the prison governors. The Governor, Mr. Chapman, was dismissed from his previous post at Brixton Prison for similar racist and Islamophobic tendencies.

The case conference concluded on two proposed strategies of action. It was proposed that in the long term interested parties should consider in greater detail the issues surrounding the 1952 Act; Imam status and hours; specific instructions, guidelines, key performance indicators and budgets for Muslims; a letter

writing campaign and the idea of an All Party Parliamentary Group on issues of concern to Muslims. In the short term, it was proposed that all internal avenues of complaints be exhausted (including the Muslim Advisor), that the NCWMP should pursue a more substantive response to its report and that FAIR should consider Downview as a test case under the Race Relations Acts, the Human Rights Act and the Consumer Acts.

As a result of the case conference, the Muslim Advisor promised to visit Downview Prison. Subsequent to his visit there has been a change of Governors at Downview. However, Downview is now a women only prison and FAIR has sought reinstatement of the Imam in another appropriate prison.

Centre I is targeted by The Daily Star in Ireland – The Daily Star in Ireland published an article on a decision of the Irish Advertising Standards Agency to withdraw an advertisement depicting a topless woman advertising Coke, which amounted to a brutal attack on Islam, Muslims and particularly Centre I, an Islamic Centre in Dublin. The ASA's decision was prompted by complaints from members of the public, who found the advertisement offensive and requested for it to be taken down. Centre I was only one of the 27 complainants who objected to the advert being displayed in the immediate precincts adjoining their place of worship. The author of the article, Terry McGeehan, availed Centre I's objection as an opportunity to openly display some of his very deeply seated animosity towards the Muslims in Ireland and also towards Islam in general. The article was wholly inaccurate and offensive. In it he sought to demonise the whole Muslim community by depicting Islam as an oppressive religion, particularly towards women.

Although the case was outside FAIR's jurisdiction, we took great pains to provide detailed advice to Centre I. We also helped Centre I to draft its correspondence and responses. The case still remains to be resolved.

Witch hunt in the Metropolitan Police – Superintendent D was the highest-ranking ethnic minority officer in the Metropolitan Police Service and was soon to be promoted to the rank of a Chief Officer. After 14 months of covert investigation, which included the tapping of phones and the use of intrusive surveillance, on 18th January 2001, he was suspended by the MPS on allegations ranging from assault and conspiracy to pervert the course of justice to drug misuse and contacts with prostitutes. However, despite the large-scale investigation, involving 44 officers (including the personal involvement of the Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner, an Assistant Commissioner and Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary) and costing approx. £2m, and the lapse of more than 11 months since his suspension, Dr D is yet to be substantively charged. The only charge made against him so far concerns a £300 expense claim. It would appear that the MPS is still searching for evidence to justify its actions despite the lack of it.

Dr D is an Executive Member of the National Black Police Association and has worked tirelessly for the last 15 years towards challenging racially biased practices within the forces and has been instrumental in securing equal rights for black and Asian police officers by advising and representing them in numerous discrimination cases. His doctorate is on racial discrimination in the Police Service and he has also written many articles on various aspects of civil liberties.

The NBPA believes that the MPS's unfounded allegations and the suspension of Dr D are an attempt by the police to stifle the progress of minority officers by criminalizing the best amongst them. Although Dr D has widespread support from various corners and he is taking his own legal action, FAIR was approached to help in any way it could. FAIR has publicised Dr D's case in various ways and provided a platform for him to speak at its very highly profiled conference on Islamophobia in September 2001.

The Oldham Cases – Following the increased activities by the BNP in Oldham, the increase in incidents of harassment and violence against members of the Muslim communities, the much-publicised subsequent riots and clashes with the Police, FAIR called a consultation meeting with interested parties to discuss how it may contribute, particularly in light of the recent Islamophobic stand of the far right. The meeting agreed on a number of suggestions but concluded that FAIR should first send a representative delegation to Oldham to hear what is required by the local Muslim communities there. FAIR sent a delegation to

Oldham on 24th June consisting of representation from itself, the Black Race Attacks Independent Network (BRAIN), the Newham Monitoring Project and Amnesty International. In Oldham the delegation met with leaders of the Bangladeshi and Pakistani communities, and also with members of the local Anti-Nazi League.

Leaders of the community spoke about how they had been let down by the local authority through its insular policies in the areas of housing and education, the Police through its manifestations of institutional racism, irresponsible use of statistics and high-handedness, the media through its less than thorough and in depth reporting and inability to represent the voices of the marginalized communities, the local MPs through their lack of leadership and the Home Secretary, who received a delegation from Oldham with no ethnic representation and has subsequently imposed a six-month action plan without any consultation with the ethnic minorities.

Most particularly the community spoke about the protection the Police afforded to the racist bigots and the brutality it meted out to the Muslim communities. The delegation agreed to set up a Defence Team for Oldham. The Defence Team, consisting of 2 lawyers from Birnberg, Peirce & Partners and representatives from FAIR and BRAIN visited Oldham again on 2nd July to consider the cases of those victimised by police brutality or have been charged. Since then Birnberg, with regular consultation with FAIR, have worked up a number of cases on behalf of the victims in Oldham. FAIR was also considering other short, medium and long-term points of action, including the organising of a peoples court, assisting in the setting up of a local religious/racial harassment project with a 24-hour helpline, campaigning for a full judicial inquiry of the highest level conducted by an international panel and preparing a case against the Government under the Human Rights Act. However, much of this had to be dropped as a result of other pressures post 11th September.

Ms J Suffers Religiously Motivated Abuse – In September 2001 a young Kurdish lady contacted FAIR complaining of victimisation. Since being re-housed in East London she and her family have encountered countless incidences of serious anti-Islamic and racist abuse. Ms J is a single mother with three small children and the fact that she wears a niqab has made her a more visible target for abuse amongst the local predominantly white community. She has been made to suffer continuous verbal and physical abuse and is now living with the constant threat of violence. The frequency and ferocity of these attacks have increased since the events of 11th September in the US.

As a result of having encountered countless incidences of verbal and physical abuse Ms J is too terrified to leave her house. She was moved to the area on 4th September 2001 and the first incident of harassment took place on the following day – an assault on her 5 year old child who was violently pushed aside by a white man, who walked past muttering abuse. Since then, in the course of doing simple tasks, such as shopping, she has received a great deal of unprovoked abuse. Much of this has been overtly Islamophobic rather than merely racist. It has become common place for her to be faced with accusations of being a ‘bloody terrorist’ and she lives in constant fear of attack in the neighbourhood. One of her Muslim neighbours has told her that she and her four young children had similarly suffered abuse from the locals and had been harassed because of her faith, and that this only stopped to a large extent when she stopped wearing the hijab.

FAIR has sought to help this victim by seeking re-housing for her. We have written to her local housing authority on her behalf, relating to them the full extent of her plight. An early concern on our part was that Ms J’s language barrier was a serious impediment in her cause and was making it difficult for Ms J to articulate her problems to the relevant agencies. We managed to get around this by providing her with an interpreter who accompanies her to all her interviews. We have also put her in touch with the Kurdish community helpline so that she can receive assistance in her own language. FAIR has also brought her case to the attention of the Black Racial Attacks Independent Network (BRAIN), who have extensive experience in dealing with such cases. They have agreed to put simultaneous pressure on the authorities to re-house Ms J.

Ms W Faces a Case of Unfair Dismissal – A Muslim woman working for a large and well-known company lost her job 15 days after the September 11th attacks. She was not given a reason for her dismissal, but

simply told it had 'nothing to do with what happened in New York'. It appears, however, that on 12th September, in an informal conversation with the Regional Manager, she had mentioned that she was a Muslim. Since then the attitudes of her colleagues towards her had changed. Prior to this, reports on her work were always more than satisfactory and there had never been a formal complaint against her.

Prior to making her redundant the company had not sent out a notice of any sort warning of any possible redundancies. Ms W felt strongly that she was being victimised because of her faith. Three months prior to this incident she was involved in two confidential projects, which she would not have been involved in had they then intended to make her redundant. She was initially informed that her position had been made vacant. However, soon after she left a white employee with only four months experience was promoted to her position. Also, although her employers were obliged to help her find alternative work within the company during the 'consultation process', and she had been assured that her CV had passed, this was not done, despite the fact that jobs were made available for which she was suitable. What was most concerning was that others, whose positions were made redundant, were promptly found alternative employment within the firm.

Ms W already had legal representation when she approached FAIR. What she sought from FAIR was assistance to publicise her case. The threat of publicity is an invaluable negotiating tool in these matters and FAIR is allowing her to make optimum use of this tool.

Lack of Prayer Room Facilities at University W

FAIR was approached by representatives of University W's Islamic Society, requesting assistance in their campaign against the closure of prayer rooms on campus. The main prayer room at the university has been closed down and the space has been re-designated as staff offices. This room was taken away without any consultation or prior warning. Although an alternative room has been offered at a different campus, using the facilities there is proving to be highly stressful for the students, who are having to trek to and fro between the campuses.

The Islamic Society believes that the problem is deeper than just the matter of space. At the university, where fixed prayer rooms did exist in the past, the university has without any prior consultation decided to initiate a policy of calling them 'quite rooms', the implication being that these are no longer for Muslims only but are essentially multi-faith prayer rooms.

Despite the large number of Muslim students at University W, the authorities have refused to provide them with suitable prayer facilities. FAIR has written to the Vice-Chancellor at the university voicing its concerns in this matter and requesting an urgent meeting with him to further discuss this matter.

Vicious Attack on Mr A, a White Muslim Revert – FAIR was approached by Mr A, a white revert Muslim, who had been attacked in London after the events of 11th September. The victim had received a letter from Combat 18 on 14th September, which was followed by 11 more letters until a vicious attack on 31st October. The letters were all of a similar nature, stating that the victim and his family should move from his current address or 'Die'. Many of them went on to mention his wife and children, suggesting that they would be dealt with in a similar way. The attack consisted of repeated slashing with a knife.

Subsequent to the attack, the tenant housing association begrudgingly moved Mr A to a new property within the same borough. Soon after the resumption of normal life, however, he received another letter at the new address, stating "we didn't succeed this time but next time we will, so beware". All the letters received by Mr A are written in red with the characteristic 'C.18' written in black, which is apparently the Combat 18 trade mark. Subsequent to the letter at the new address, the police arranged a panic button linked directly to the local police station and hourly patrols to Mr A's home. Notwithstanding the police efforts, however, Mr. A and his family effectively became prisoners in their own home.

FAIR has compiled a dossier of the events surrounding the vicious attack, with a view to getting greater official recognition for serious attacks targeted at Muslims. It is apparent from the BNP website that they are concentrating their efforts on specifically targeting Muslims. We are also working with other anti-

racist victim support organisation to put pressure on the authorities to recognise the problem of the increase in far right targeting of Muslims and working with various Muslim journalists to raise awareness of the increasing attacks against white Muslims by racist organisations.

Separately, FAIR is offering continuous victim support to Mr A. Since the initial reporting of these crimes to the MET, Mr A had not been contacted by anyone to update him on any progress in the investigation. Mr A was concerned that the four crimes he had reported had been ignored. FAIR urged an inquiry into the matter and arranged regular meetings between Mr A and the MET. As a result of our efforts the police have given greater attention to this matter and this has in turn given the family much psychological reassurance. FAIR has also sought to assist the rehabilitation of the family by assisting them to find appropriate schooling for the children.

Ms P, a Staff Nurse, Complains of Religious Discrimination – FAIR was approached by a Staff Nurse of Mauritian origin complaining of religious discrimination. Ms P had been working at a London hospital for a year and half. Being the only Muslim nurse on the ward, she encountered hostility and discrimination from fellow staff, in particular the Ward Sister and one other senior nurse, and received no support throughout her period of suffering. She recalls the Ward Sister, of Malaysian Chinese origin, saying to another member of staff: “I hate Muslims and will not have any on my ward”, and complaining that Muslims in Malaysia had taken over all the good jobs.

Ms P recounted many incidences where one senior nurse had publicly humiliated her. Her complaints were also directed towards two other senior nurses who constantly belittled her in front of other staff and patients, calling her stupid and incompetent. Ms P had reported all the incidences to her union representative who had done very little to defend her. Her main complaint was in reference to the Malay nurse, who was appointed to conduct her assessment. The nurse had given her three highly unfavourable assessments, whilst elsewhere she had been assessed to be very competent. Ms P approached FAIR in search of suitable legal representation. FAIR has helped her to acquire representation from a top city human rights law firm and continues to provide her with victim support.

Child S is Expelled from School for Wearing the Jilbab

Child S is a 14 year old girl attending a school in East London predominantly populated by Muslim pupils. In December 2001 she was excluded from five weeks of classes and denied entry into school unless she agreed to abandon wearing her jilbab. The school student diary stipulates that for safety reasons burkhas must not be worn. Child S approached FAIR in a very distraught state. Her adoption of what the school has mistakenly classed as a ‘burkha’, is worn in observance of her understanding of the Islamic faith. She is very troubled by the idea of having to remove the jilbab and is faced with the ultimatum of removing it or finding an alternative school.

Child S reports various incidences of victimisation, some of which are very concerning. For instance, she reports that she was elected Form Representative by her class but without any warning or consultation this position was taken away from her and allocated to someone else. Child S was increasingly being referred to as a ‘pest’ or ‘trouble maker’. More disturbingly, on one occasion an outrageous comment was made to her by the Head of Year. When Timothy McVeigh was executed she was told: ‘it should have been you’. It is of great concern to FAIR that an institution which is charged with the responsibility of nurturing its students is capable of showing such complete disregard towards the educational and emotional well being of this child.

The garment worn by Child S could just as easily be classified as a ‘dress’. Although she has expressed her willingness to compromise by shortening the garment and having it taken in, so that it no longer constituted a safety risk, the school has responded by simply stating that it will not accommodate ‘burkhas’. The continued demands from the school for the removal of the jilbab are arbitrary and unjustified. From our own observation it is clear that many girls at the school wear skirts below their ankles, and so far as the school is concerned this does not seem to raise any health and safety issues. There appears to be an overwhelming lack of consistency in the schools approach to safety issues.

FAIR contacted the school to voice its concerns in this matter. We emphasised particularly our concerns with regards to the number of classes and tests Child S has missed and requested that she be reinstated as soon as possible. We also urged that provisions be made to allow her to sit the end of unit tests she has missed and that she be allowed an extension on her course work deadlines. In response to our efforts the school has agreed to compromise and Child S has returned to normal schooling. Provisions are also being made to enable her to sit the tests she has missed. In our last contact with her she reported that she was happy and was concentrating on her studies.

Ms A's Case of Unfair Dismissal – Ms A had been employed at her company for almost a year. A few months into her employment she adopted the headscarf. Although her relations with the other employees remained amicable, Ms A's manager expressed some discomfort at the visible manifestation of her faith. Subsequently, complaints were made about her work on various occasions. On one occasion she was called into the manager's office and told that she was not performing well enough, but generally she was being picked on for not much. On another occasion she was given one day to train a temp and severely reprimanded when he subsequently made mistakes. Then, whilst Ms A was on annual leave her manager and supervisor decided to change her duties and responsibilities. This was done without any consultation with her at all.

Ms A complained to her manager that her work load had become difficult to handle. Despite the recognition that she was being overloaded, however, no action was taken to decrease her work load, although on several occasions she was reassured that she would be getting assistance. Ms A was made to feel that she was being pushed out of the team and was finally asked to leave the company and given a compromise agreement to sign. FAIR has brought her case to the attention of an employment lawyer, who has advised her that she has a very strong case for unfair dismissal. Ms A has been advised not to sign the agreement. Presently, we are working with the lawyer to build up her case against the company.

6.3.2. Emergency Helpline

Separate to the above casework projects in the aftermath of 11th September, because of the very large scale backlash against the Muslim community, FAIR set up an additional emergency helpline to cope with the large number of victims calling for help and assistance. The emergency helpline number was very widely publicised through leafleting. The informative leaflet produced by FAIR was endorsed by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO). It gave advice on what security measures should be taken in the circumstance of any form of prejudice or racial harassment. The leaflet also had a list of numbers of other Muslim organisations that victims could contact for help. FAIR's own emergency helpline was manned by volunteers 24-hours a day. As a result FAIR logged approximately 25 serious incidents of harassment and violence over a period of just two weeks. These incidents have been widely publicised in a separate report.

For reasons of resource implications FAIR's helpline could not be sustained indefinitely. FAIR then took a lead in forging a consortium with other Muslim organisations which has since put in a bid to the Home Office for proper funding of a helpline for victims of Islamophobia to be managed by Muslims. The project has been named MuslimLine. The bid was worked up by the FAIR office, was signed by the main Muslim organisations and is presently being considered by the Home Office's Finance Section.

6.3.3. The Muslim Lawyers Committee

In addition to the above casework projects, FAIR was actively involved in the setting up of the Muslim Lawyers Committee, the first comprehensive legal advice and referral service for the Muslim Community in the UK. Also involved in this project, are the Islamic Cultural Centre, the Muslim Council of Britain, the Muslim Directory and a number of other Muslim organisations in the UK. The project was launched on 24th November 2001

This is a community based initiative which deals with a broad range of community based cases, ranging from immigration and employment issues, to issues of mental health or personal injury. Through the establishment of a surgery at the Islamic Cultural Centre & Regents Park Mosque, London the

Committee acts as a liaising forum through which Muslims in need of legal advice and assistance are put in touch with competent and recommended Muslim lawyers and solicitors.

The legal advice centre operates on Wednesdays and Saturdays between 2-6pm. Volunteers staff the centre and are responsible for initial contacts and case summaries. These summaries are then forwarded onto a relevant lawyer or solicitor from the directory of lawyers so far created. The individual firm then has the option to either accept or decline the case. If the case is accepted, the firm then makes the necessary appointment with the concerned client.

Apart from undertaking the bulk of the administrative work for this project, FAIR has also arranged a training programme for the volunteers in this project. The training programme, held on 8th December 2001, focused on victim support work and was delivered by a volunteer at FAIR specialising in counselling. The project works well for FAIR in many ways, but most importantly as a filter and a sister referral agency.

6.3.4. Potential for Development

The Muslim Equality Casework Project has enormous potentials, both in terms of attracting funds and delivery. The project Manager has been assigned the task of developing the project to cater for the following target audiences: 1) refugees and asylum seekers, 2) deprived communities, 3) victims of discrimination in employment and delivery of goods and services, and 4) victims of Islamophobic harassment and violence.

6.4. INSTITUTIONAL ISLAMOPHOBIC DISCRIMINATION PROJECT

Initially earmarked to be deferred for a year, this project took off during the reporting period due rather to circumstances than to design. Items for reporting to be covered are as below.

6.4.1. Police Authorities

Since the tragedies of September 11th, FAIR has worked very closely with the Police on a number of projects. This has been the case with the aim of safeguarding the Muslim community from the post-September 11th Islamophobic backlash and also from heavy handed policing. From 13th September to the beginning of Ramadhan FAIR was involved in regular weekly meetings at New Scotland Yard. These meetings have taken place under the chairmanship of the Assistant Commissioner of the MET, Mr David Veness CBE. The purpose of these meetings was to discuss the best way of tackling the emerging backlash against the Muslim community and the role the Police could play in helping to combat the growing problem. FAIR has also taken the opportunity provided by these meetings to raise other policing concerns in the Muslim community. Some of the projects that FAIR has worked on through these weekly meetings are as follows:

6.4.1.1. Poster Design

There is currently much under-reporting of hate crimes and anti-social behaviour suffered by Muslims. FAIR has persistently demanded that the police take action to encourage greater reporting, particularly in the aftermath of 11th September. Apart from radio announcements on mainstream and ethnic radio channels, FAIR also demanded that the MET also undertake a poster campaign. FAIR worked closely with the Metropolitan Police on the language and design of the poster and assisted in acquiring images for the purpose. The poster produced encourages Muslims to report all incidences of Islamophobia to the Police. FAIR's contribution has helped to ensure that the poster is as powerful as possible by incorporating specific images and specific terminology. This poster has been printed and distributed in various languages to mosques and Islamic centres throughout London. FAIR hopes that the project will be taken up by ACPO as a national project.

6.4.1.2. *Terminology*

One of the very early objections raised by the Muslim community after the events of 11th September is the association of Islam and Muslims per se with terrorism. A sub-group was set up by the weekly meeting to reconsider the language/terminology deemed to be offensive to the Muslims. The sub-group started meeting on 22nd October 2001 and has had a number of meetings with experts since then with the aim of finding a phrase or phrases to replace the commonly used expressions 'Islamic fundamentalism/fundamentalists' and 'Islamic terrorism/terrorists'. What is being sought is terminology which in essence encapsulates the political agenda of so-called 'Muslim extremists' without feeding on the ideological discourse of Islam. The importance of this cannot be underestimated, for once approved it will be taken on by the security services, and may eventually be used at governmental level and in the media. FAIR has played an active role in the sub-group and has persistently demanded that the name of the specific terrorist group be used until appropriate generic terminology is agreed.

6.4.1.3. *Borough Commanders Briefing*

FAIR observed the problem with policing was usually not at senior levels but at operational levels, and therefore, suggested a meeting with Borough Commanders. On 29th October 2001, a briefing was facilitated with the 32 Borough Commanders and their colleagues, in order to discuss the issue of Islamophobia and the fears of the Muslim Community. Two representatives from FAIR and one representative from Al-Khoei Foundation were present to provide the briefing. The briefing consisted of a presentation and scope for questions and answers. The briefing proved to be successful and several members of the Police asked the presenters to stay for further discussions at the end.

6.4.1.4. *Policing the Police*

FAIR worked with the Police at a very large public demonstration (estimated to have between 20-50,000 participants) in order to ensure that agitation between Police and Muslims would be kept to a minimum. The demonstration was against the war in Afghanistan, which took place on 23rd October 2001. This worked by having a team of FAIR representatives, all supplied with mobile phones, that the Police could contact should there be any hint of a problem. Upon being called, FAIR representatives stepped in and worked to alleviate the issue at hand. This initiative resulted in the resolving of several small incidences and one major incidence, and respectively, avoided the arrest of any Muslim demonstrators. FAIR has subsequently been called upon by the Police to play a similar role in other demonstrations. However, due to the intensity of resources required for such work, FAIR has been unable to oblige.

As a result of these projects, the Police have increasingly turned to FAIR for advice and assistance. All this can only be viewed as an important stepping stone in the progressive measures that need to be undertaken to ensure that effective efforts are made at different levels when it comes to aiding the Muslim community. It also means that when demands are made by FAIR the Police are more inclined to deliver. For example, when FAIR demanded that the Police provide a regular written report that outlined incidences of Islamophobia, in and around London, the Police obliged and a report is now presented at the regular meetings at New Scotland Yard. FAIR is currently preparing a comprehensive document on Muslim policing concerns. This will be presented to the MET and by extension to the Association of Chief Police Officers, and will serve as a basis for future discussions between the Police and the Muslim community.

6.4.2. **Greater London Authority (GLA)**

On 20th September 2001, along with other Muslim organisations, FAIR was invited to a meeting with Ken Livingstone, the Mayor of London, and Trevor Phillips, Deputy Chair of the GLA. Muslim leaders present made a wide range of suggestions and requests: that the GLA should recognise the victimisation of people on the grounds of religion as separate from race and reflect this in its literature; that the GLA should assist to put in place the infrastructure necessary to assist victims of Islamophobic backlash in London; that the GLA should take particular note of victimisation of children in state schools; and that the GLA should put pressure on the Government to address the loophole against the protection of

Muslims in the law. Concerns were also raised about the treatment of Muslims in the media. Mr Ken Livingstone agreed to send a letter to all schools in London and to place an article in the print media against Islamophobia. Since the initial meeting, the GLA has assisted in the formation of a London Muslim Coalition. The Coalition seeks primarily to address the issue of institutional Islamophobia in public agencies that impact on the lives of Muslims in London. The Coalition has so far had a fruitful exchange with the Department for Education & Skills. FAIR has regularly participated in all the Coalitions meetings.

FAIR has also participated and contributed to a large number of meetings organised by the Government of London (GoL) and the London Civic Forum (LCF). In addition to the work described above, FAIR has also secured a PhD Scholarship from El-Rahma for a student at Birmingham University to study institutionalised Islamophobia in the media industry. The area of institutional discrimination is a very large and challenging area of work. It requires focussed resources and attention. There are many institutions that require urgent attention, the Crown Prosecution Service, H M Prison Services, the Probation Services and the NHS to name but a few. Trustees need to give some considered attention to this area of work.

6.5. POLICY RESEARCH & LOBBYING PROJECT

This project was also initially intended to be deferred for a year, and was commenced due to circumstances rather than design. Initial ideas for this project centred around the setting up of two high powered Working Groups on 'Religious Discrimination and the Law' and the Terrorism Act. As a result of the new Terrorism Act post 11th September, the scheduling of this project was moved significantly forward. In actuality, however, the project had already been underway from before the UN World Conference Against Racism.

6.5.1. World Conference Against Racism

The UN World Conference Against Racism, held in Durban, South Africa, from 31st August to 7th September 2001, was a major event in the diaries of most organisations dealing with racism and related intolerances, and for FAIR it could be no different. In the short time that FAIR had been around at that stage, it had already made a significant contribution to the emerging discourse on Islamophobia at the international level: FAIR had already partaken in a number of international preparatory conferences prior to the Durban Conference, including the Islamic Responses to Racism Conference, organised by Al-Khoei Foundation, and a conference organised by Rights & Humanity in which FAIR made an invaluable contribution to the wording of the clause on Islamophobia in the declaration.

At the World Conference Against Racism, FAIR presented a 20 minute paper on Islamophobia at a parallel session. The session was attended by over 400 delegates and the UN Special Rapporteur on Religion and Belief as Chief Guest. FAIR also, as a joint initiative with Interfaith International, based in Geneva, made a statement on Islamophobia at the General Plenary of the United Nations. Prior to the Durban Conference, FAIR was also actively involved in lobbying the Government to sponsor a resolution at the conference, and although this did not actually happen, the Government did acknowledge in its own statement to the General Plenary, Islamophobia as a problem that it is seeking to address.

The world conference was an extremely valuable experience, and the profiling of Islamophobia as an issue was greatly assisted by FAIR's efforts. Islamophobia appears in the Final Declaration of the Conference on two separate counts.

6.5.2. Foreign Office

In the immediate aftermath of September 11th, on Monday 17th September 2001, FAIR were invited to a meeting between Muslim community leaders and the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, the Mr Jack Straw MP. In essence, Mr Straw wished to use this meeting to clarify the Government position, and at the same time to hear the concerns of the Muslim community arising from September 11th.

The meeting was used as an opportunity to raise a whole host of issues, particularly, the need for adequate investigation to identify the real perpetrators of September 11th as opposed to hastily laying blame on different Muslim groups in order to meet the demand of having a figure to blame, the use of language in the media by politicians which was using the attacks as a platform to demonise Muslims and place Islam and Muslims into one large terrorist camp – and the dangers of this, in light of the growing attacks on the Muslim community throughout the country, and just as importantly, the overlooking of other international events, such as the escalating violence in Palestine, as a result of world media attention being focused on New York. After the meeting, FAIR summarised all the points raised in a letter which was signed by all the Muslim leaders present at the meeting and sent to Jack Straw. This was done to provide a record of the discussions for future reference. A copy of the letter was also sent to the Prime Minister, Mr Tony Blair.

At the meeting, FAIR also raised a very specific point about the conduct of the FCO. On the evening of September 11th, following the attacks in New York, an article on the FCO web-page made a suggestion that British citizens, for their own safety, should not visit any Muslim countries. FAIR brought this to Mr Straw's attention. Mr Straw promised to look into this matter, and subsequently, the content on the web-page was changed.

6.5.3. Home Office

On 21st September 2001, FAIR was invited to a meeting with the Home Secretary. This was also attended by various other Muslim community organisations. Also present at the meeting were Tessa Jowell MP, Secretary of State for Media, Culture & Sports, John Denham MP, Minister for Home Affairs and Neil Frater, Chief Advisor at the Home Office on Religious Issues.

Amongst the various concerns that were discussed at the meeting, FAIR raised four issues in particular: the coupling of terrorism with Islam and Muslims by politicians, and subsequently by the media; the need for greater and more frequent dialogue between the Muslim community and senior figures in the media industry; the lack of available legal protection and victim support for Muslims in Britain, experienced particularly after 11th September; and the increased bullying of Muslim children in schools in the aftermath of the attacks on New York on September 11th.

As a result of the issues raised at the meeting, Tessa Jowell MP promised to organise a meeting between Muslim leaders and those holding senior positions in the media industry. The Home Secretary gave assurances that he would consider legislation aimed at providing greater protection for the Muslim community, and he also indicated that he would be looking into funding regimes and structures to provide greater access to social funds by faith communities. In particular, Mr Blunkett sympathised with the victims of the Islamophobic and indicated possible support for an emergency helpline for Muslims to deal with the current rise in Islamophobic discrimination, harassment and violence. A meeting with the Department for Education & Skills was also promised in order to discuss the issue of the harassment of Muslim children in state schools.

The meeting also resulted in a follow-on meeting with Mr John Denham, to discuss specifically the possibility of the helpline mentioned by the Home Secretary. Since then there have been two further meetings with Mr Neil Frater on this issue and a final proposal for the helpline, as mentioned above, has now been submitted to the Home Office

6.5.4. Commission for Racial Equality (CRE)

FAIR were invited to a meeting called by the CRE on 2nd October 2001. The meeting was also attended by leaders from the Muslim community. The aim of the meeting was to assess the levels of activities being undertaken by various organisations to deal with the backlash against the Muslim community from 11th September, and see what more can be done, particularly by the CRE.

In addition to the reports from the various organisations several other issues were raised at the meeting, most importantly: the recent treatment of the Muslim community by the media, the lack of legal

protection for Muslims and the under-reporting of Islamophobic incidences. An expert on the media from the CRE discussed what could be done to address the media in the circumstances. He also offered himself to the Muslim organisations for further advice. Members of the Muslim community suggested that the CRE take a more active role in lobbying the government for greater protection for Muslim communities. Gurbux Singh, Chair of the CRE, said that he had already made representations on this point to the Home Secretary and had been assured that something was on its way and would be announced within the week. FAIR raised its particular concerns regarding victim support to those not finding their way to mainstream support mechanisms and suggested that the CRE should run a poster campaign on Islamophobia to encourage greater reporting. FAIR also suggested that the CRE assist in capacity building and empowerment in the Muslim community so that it could undertake greater victim support work itself.

The CRE also informed the meeting about what they were doing – an example being the work on a system which gives daily reports of incidences collated by local race equality councils. This information will feed into their main system, and hence, can be used as a guide for gauging the level of anti-Muslim backlash up and down and country. FAIR is currently seeking a second meeting with the CRE to pursue further some of these issues, and also to establish organisational links for partnership work in the future.

6.5.5. Department for Culture, Media and Sports

Further to the meeting with the Home Secretary, and as requested by FAIR at that meeting, Tessa Jowell MP, Secretary of State for Culture, Media & Sports, facilitated a meeting between the Muslim leadership and key officers in her Department. Subsequent to this first meeting, the Department also facilitated a second meeting between the Muslim leadership and executives/policy makers in the media industry. The aim of the meetings were to discuss the coverage of Islam and Muslims in the media in the aftermath of September 11th, and also more generally.

The first meeting also sought to brief the Muslim leaders on and give an insight into the structural framework of the media industry, media regulation, the watch-dog bodies and how complaints procedures work. This was done in order to help bring Muslim leaders up to speed in order to discuss informatively and productively the best ways forward in tackling the concerns of the Muslim community. FAIR used the meeting as a platform to express its concerns about the regulations and complaints procedures themselves, and how they had failed the Muslim community in the aftermath of 11th September.

The second meeting was held on 31st October 2001. The meeting was attended by very senior individuals from the media industry and FAIR played a significant role in this meeting. One important development at this meeting was the promise of a set of general guidelines which would deal with the covering of religions, and particularly Islam and Muslims in the media. The guidelines will synchronise the current piecemeal guidelines across the industry. Before any draft is finalised, it was agreed that the Muslim community will have a final opportunity to request any changes or make any further suggestions. Once approved by both sides, the guidelines will be made official.

Meetings with the media industry at this level are certainly very important for the Muslim community. They provide excellent opportunities for building contacts at a very high level and are imperative steps in working towards influencing policy makers regarding issues facing the Muslim community. To this end, at the second meeting, FAIR suggested a further meeting. This was accepted and held on 30th January 2002. At this meeting FAIR presented a very well researched and worked up paper covering a vast array of Muslim concerns regarding the media. It would appear that the media executives and regulators found the paper to be very engaging and we are currently developing strategies to pursue this engagement further.

6.5.6. Association of Local Governments (ALG)

On 18th June 2001 FAIR were invited to a meeting organised by the ALG. The purpose of the meeting was to consult on the draft of a Best Practice Guide for Local Authorities being produced by various Government agencies. The purpose of the Guide is to present guidance to local authorities on promoting

good relations with local faith communities. FAIR made significant inputs to the guide and were recently invited back for the launch of the guide.

6.5.7. Legal Protection of Faith Communities

Further to a round table meeting with all prominent UK human rights organisations arranged by Amnesty International on 8th October 2001, and a second meeting organised jointly with FAIR on 15th October 2001, with leading Muslim organisations and legal experts, FAIR was at the forefront of the Muslim campaign on the new terrorism law provisions and the internal security provisions recently announced by the Home Secretary.

On Monday 29th October 2001, FAIR organised a briefing meeting on the proposed legislation for Muslim leaders. The meeting took place at the Regents Park Mosque and sought to inform the Muslim leaders about the objectives, content and potential consequences of the proposed new legislation. The briefing was provided by four Muslim experts in this area of law: Maleiha Malik, Lecturer in Discrimination Law at the University of London, Sadiq Khan, Chair of Liberty and Partner at Christian Fisher, Makbool Javaid, former Head of Litigation at the CRE and Partner at DLA, and Asad Rehman, Campaigns Manager at Amnesty International, each focusing on a different aspect of the proposed legislation, including incitement to religious hatred, aggravated offences, terrorism and civil discrimination. The briefing was attended by approximately 50 Muslim leaders.

Subsequent to this briefing meeting, FAIR co-ordinated a Muslim response to the proposed legislation in the form of well researched and detailed documents, which were produced with the help of the legal experts. Once approved by the Muslim leadership, these documents were then submitted to the Home Office Affairs Select Committee and the Home Secretary. The documents were extensively used to inform debates in both the Houses of Parliament, the Commons and the Lords. They were also used as the basis of extensive discussions between the Muslim community and the civil servants/Ministers in the Home Office. FAIR also played a large part in these discussions. What was most heartening about the campaign was the near perfect results achieved by the campaign.

The campaign on the terrorism law and internal security provisions was also important for establishing strong links between FAIR and the various political parties, and FAIR and various NGO/Human Rights organisations, including Amnesty International, Liberty and Justice.

Since the campaign against the new terrorism law and security provisions, we have embarked on a number of other research and policy projects. Recently, we made a submission to the CRE on its proposed implementation of the Race Relations Act 2000. We have also just completed two further submissions to the Government: the first is centred around the 'Secure Borders, Safe Haven' White Paper released by the Home Office on Immigration and Asylum matters, and the second is around the 'Equality and Diversity' Consultation Paper released by the DTI on civil anti-discrimination legislation. The response to the DTI paper is being accompanied by a full scale campaign. This includes a grass roots campaign consisting of the distribution of 35,000 packs and 4 regional seminars, a media campaign and political lobbying. FAIR is also working with a number of other Muslim organisations to produce a status report on Muslims in Education in the UK.

7. CONCLUSION

Setting up and sustaining a small organisation has proved to be difficult and complex work. After the initial difficulties, however, FAIR is slowly beginning to find its way. We pray that in the coming year we can consolidate our work, develop organically and reach out from a strong foundation. May Allah accept our prayers.