

THE REAL WORDS OF ISLAM

Andrew Bolt, *Herald Sun* - 6/12/01

Our multicultural lobby should do the country a favour and stop pretending that Islam's only problem is with its racist critics. Let me give you an example of how we are being misled. The non-profit Melbourne based Adult Multicultural Education Services is the country's biggest English training scheme for migrants, and runs courses for the Education Department. AMES boasts of its "philosophical commitment to multiculturalism", and recently wrote to state politicians "at the suggestion of the office of Mr John Pandazopoulos", the Minister who helps the Premier run our multicultural policy.

Its letter asked MPs to distribute an AMES brochure called "Understanding Islam and Muslims in Australia", meant to increase tolerance of our more than 200,000 Muslims, two-thirds of whom were born overseas. The brochure tries to do this by "explaining" Islam to us, claiming, for instance, that "tolerance of other religions is part of Islam itself", which understands that "freedom of choice is an intrinsic human right". It also claims that jihad "does not mean 'holy war' and it does not mean harming innocent people". ("Innocent" isn't defined.) True, most Muslims here seek no trouble, but this brochure seems to me to lack the frankness we now need for an honest debate about Islam in Australia. For a start, the word "jihad" isn't quite so harmless. Right now, the terrorist Islamic jihad is praising the devastating suicide bombings in Israel, and 7000 Laskar jihad fighters are wiping Out Christian towns in Sulawesi. The AMES brochure excuses this by saying "the behaviour of extremist groups should not be identified with Islam itself."

But then I turn to two books being sold right now by the Islamic Council of Victoria. *What Islam is all About* is a popular textbook for children by Yahiya Emerick, who writes that, "Muslims dream of establishing the power of Islam in the world", and of ensuring that "the law of the land is the Shari'ah of Allah". (Shariah law, it points out helpfully, demands that those who fight Allah "should be murdered, or crucified, or their hands and their feet should be cut off on opposite sides, or they should be imprisoned".)

AS for jihad, Emerick explains it is "most often associated with the act of physically confronting evil and wrong-doing, hence, it can be applied to the act of fighting as well." And such fighting is allowed to "eliminate an evil force which is oppressing people" or to "remove any barrier to the free flow Of Islamic da'wah (preaching)". Which sounds worryingly broad. Another book sold by our Islamic Council is the famous *Let Us all be Muslims* by Sayyid Abul A'la Mawdudi, who declares: "Stated simply, the ultimate objective of Islam is to abolish the lordship of man over man and bring bum under the rule of the One God. To stake everything you have - including your lives - to achieve this purpose is called *jihad*." In case you're still not clear what this means, Mawdudi adds: "Wherever you are, in whatever country you live, you must strive to change the wrong basis of government, and seize all powers to rule and make laws from those who do not fear God ... The name of this striving is jihad." This applies even if you live under the laws "of Britons, of Germans", and, presumably, of Australians.

These preachings by Muslims to Muslims here raise grave questions about the role of Islam in a secular, multi-ethnic nation like Australia. It is dishonest for our multicultural lobby to pretend there is nothing here to worry about or even debate.