

Roxi and the Tablighis: An Unholy Alliance.

Newham's Experience of Islamo-Leftism

A New Form of Entryism

A Paper from Open Newham (www.opennewham.org.uk)

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Part One. An Unholy Alliance

How a Refusal to Grant Planning Permission for a Huge Mosque Developed into a plot by Islamist extremists and the hard-left to take over a metropolitan London Borough.

The movement to unseat Robin Wales, the Blairite Labour Mayor of Newham was a cause celebre, which drew interest in the national and regional press in 2018.

But not many know how and why Labour's most-successful local authority leader was so unceremoniously dumped by his local Labour party. This is the story of how it was achieved, the shadowy people behind the plot and how various fringe movements and events converged to create a perfect storm leading to his ouster.

Three main streams of opposition always existed in his local party, they were disgruntled party members, local councillors overlooked for promotion and ambitious careerists eager to move up the greasy pole. But in 2014-2016 they were boosted by an influx of hard-left and religious hard-right extremists, wanting to eject Wales from office. Curiously, the core of this latter group came from the a band of local followers of a global esoteric Muslim sect.



Whilst many will understand the reasons for the hard-left's attempts to unseat Wales, it's more difficult for the lay-person to grasp how and why an obscure Muslim sect would play such a leading role in the plot. Theirs' was a decades-long battle against what they perceived was Wales's Islamophobic refusal to grant planning permission to build Europe's largest Mosque, in Newham.

The Growth of Tablighi Jamaat's foray into local politics

For those unaware of the details, (see background article on the open Newham website¹) the whole saga relates to a strategic plot of land in Stratford acquired by London adherents of the Tablighi Jamaat sect, nearly three decades ago. Tablighi Jamaat is an Islamic sect which started in India at the turn of the 20th century, mainly focussed on missionary activity amongst Sunni Muslims aiming to bring them 'back' to a stricter and simpler observance of Islam.

The group rapidly grew across the Indian subcontinent and eventually across the Arab and Muslim world. Today they operate across the globe and many Sunni-Muslims take part in

their missionary activities. But their work did not involve converting non-Muslims to Islam and they were famous for shunning politics. This 'hands-off' approach to worldly-affairs led to considerable popularity amongst those seeking simple traditional Islamic practice and Tablighi missionary centres were established across the globe.

Their world headquarters were, are still remained until recently, a Mosque based in the run-down Muslim dominated locality of Basti Nizamuddin in Delhi, India, an area built around the famous shrine of a 13th Century Muslim Sufi mystic after whom it is namedⁱⁱ. However, the global movement attracted huge influence and the leadership of the movement was in 2016, torn apart by a catastrophic split over the leadership, following the death of its then supreme leader.

A rival faction in Pakistan challenged the historic HQ in Delhi, India over its choice of the son of the deceased leader to succeed as head of the movement.

Known as the Raiwind group, they chose not to support this appointment but instead wanted a global advisory board or 'Shura' to make its decisions. (There is also a much smaller third faction based in Bangladesh, but they play no part in the Newham story.)



These differences over who should lead came to prominence as the son and heir of one of the movement's founders, Maulana Saadⁱⁱⁱ Khandalvi in Delhi,^{iv} refused to share power with the Pakistan based group. This split eventually became serious and it affected not just followers of Tablighi Jamaat in the sub-continent, but also at Tablighi centres across the world, including here in Britain.

Maulana Saad Khandalvi. Leader of the Nizamuddin faction.

TJ in Newham

Tablighi Jamaat (TJ) started its mission in Britain around 50 years ago and its membership grew rapidly amongst migrant unities from the Indian subcontinent.

Locally in Newham, they have a number of Mosques at which they operate and each week gather in portacabins at the former Burke-Spencer chemical works site.

In Newham both factions attempted to take ownership of it's local assets which were worth considerably more than the amount paid in 1995. Some estimates say it's now worth tens of millions of pounds.

The Newham centre is managed by a board of Trustees and headed by a pro-Delhi Ameer or leader. Unfortunately for him, he is opposed by a majority of his board who are all pro-Raiwind supporters. The differences have led to confrontations and in December 2017 several angry young men broke-in and assaulted the management and Trustees.

The conflict resulted in stalemate and then a protracted and ongoing legal action which is enriching the legal profession without moving the dispute towards resolution.



The Newham centre eventually had to be closed by the authorities as arrests were made^v including arrests of one Umair Zulfiqar and his disciple, Anas Khan. Zulfiqar, known as the 'Mufti', appears to have a group of young men around him and



reports from within the Muslim community suggests that they are not above intimidation of members of the community that oppose them. It is understood that they were primarily responsible for the police being called to the centre on no less than 13 separate occasions^{vi}.

Mufti is the son of the Ameer, Mr Zulfiqar Ali, (not the Newham councillor of the same name), lead Trustee of the London centre. Khan is a local follower who appears to have been schooled at Islamic seminaries in the UK. The duo set their sights on unseating Wales, but more about them later.

Going back to the split, there is something of an irony in that most of the British-Pakistani followers of TJ sided with the Indian HQ based in Delhi, whilst most of the British-Indian followers sided with the Pakistani HQ.

The other centres in the UK and abroad all experienced similarly acrimonious break-up's and in some cases violence over land and property as each chose a side. In the UK, the Tower Hamlets centre sided with Delhi, as did the national UK HQ in Dewsbury, Yorkshire.

The other major TJ centre in Blackburn, Lancashire teamed up with the pro-Pakistan Trustees at the Newham centre and through expensive legal challenges, appear to have held onto the land and property.

The Blackburn centre now acts as a rival national Tablighi-centre vying with the more famous national HQ in Dewsbury, for the hearts and minds of TJ adherents in Britain.



But what does all this have to do with Newham politics?

The numerous planning application refusals by Newham Council in the 90s and the 2000s, led to a concerted, decades-long political campaign by local followers to unseat a host of Labour politicians in the borough. They perceived the local Labour party to be infested by an Islamophobic Council administration, which continually refused to grant planning permission to construct a huge Mosque.

For those with a knowledge of planning law, it was always a non-starter. A growing need to provide local housing and the need to promote community cohesion would always take precedence in the borough's local plan, and a single use Mosque on strategic land was not going to be approved without government intervention.

George Galloway's Respect Party became a convenient vehicle for the group to show its power especially in the post-Iraq War chaos as they actively contested elections, national and local, in 2005 and 2006 respectively. And whilst they lost quite badly, they did manage to attract a 23% share of the vote electing three Councillors in 2006 to the Green St West Ward.

Party	Candidate	Votes	%	±%
Respect	Asif Karim	1,829	40.4	N/A
Respect	Abdul Karim Sheikh	1,784		N/A
Respect	Hanif Abdulmuhit	1,751		N/A

The trends in the TJ split are worth noting at this point. This foray into electoral politics, seeking to build and control a 'Muslim' vote, would have been frowned upon by many in the movement who tended to be older and more traditional. This its ultimate failure led them to adopt a more engaging approach with Wales and his administration in trying to resolve the thorny planning problems.

But for younger followers this was only a start, and having fought a bitter protracted battle against Newham's Labour leadership, they become much more militant. They determined that the way to get planning permission was to unseat Robin Wales and take control of the local authority. In 2012 this was not a realistic option, but by the latter part of the decade the pieces were in place. Arise in the membership applications from Muslims, cooperation with the hard-left and with those others opposed to Wales for one reason or another. Having cast off the older generation's constraints that prevented active engagement in secular politics, these conservative reactionary forces became indistinguishable from their

Muslim Brotherhood colleagues (at least to the outsider) who had taken power in other parts of the Islamic world.

Fast forward to 2014 as Robin Wales begins his fourth term as Mayor taking over 60% of the popular vote. But this victory would be his last. Just four years later in 2018, his brand of progressive, Blairite politics would come to a shuddering halt as a coalition from inside and outside Newham Labour, successfully conspired to unseat him. Islamist, ex-Tory and ex-Respect candidates conspired with the Fiaz team to evict Wales from office.

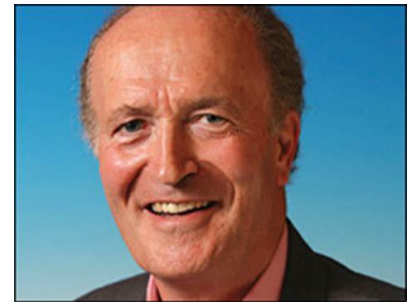
All Change

In 2015 it was all-change. The accidental victor of Labour's national leadership race was Jeremy Corbyn, the 'fresh-faced' far-left septuagenarian Labour MP from Islington. His ascension converted many of the newly created £3 voters into Labour members leading to a massive influx of hard-left activists into Newham's Labour Party branches. Energetic, enthused and committed to a revolutionary cause, they transformed Labour from a social democratic party into a vanguard socialist tribute act. Many came directly from Militant Mk II, (Socialist Appeal); and their ranks were swelled by assorted Trotskyists and self-identified communists. These former adversaries now became party colleagues as they challenged Wales' centrist political machinery across the borough. Their experience of politics and willingness to put in the time proved its worth.

This became apparent in the battle over 'triggering'. For those unfamiliar with the arcane procedural rules of the Labour Party 'triggering' was a way for the membership to force an open selection for the position of Labour's Mayoral candidate in the 2018 contest. MPs and Mayors must submit themselves for approval by local members every four years. The usual way is by gaining a simple majority of branches to affirm the incumbent. The long route and the route taken to force a change is to 'trigger' a ballot from the whole membership. When people talk of reselection, this is generally what they mean.

Since becoming Mayor in 2002, Wales had completely transformed the borough. Billions of pounds worth of global capital flowing in culminating in the Olympic games in 2012, the creation of a new international district in Stratford and the rejuvenation of the Royal Docks. Newham had undergone a transformation which saw

Mega Mosque. No Thanks



This is Alan Craig. A former Tory parliamentary candidate, albeit an unsuccessful one, he was a councillor in Newham for the Canning Town South ward between 2002 and 2010 representing the Christian People's Alliance. Following his election to the council, he succeeded Ram Gidoomal as Leader of the party.

Subsequent to his defeat in 2012, he left the CPA to join UKIP with whom he stood as a European candidate in 2019. Again, unsuccessfully.

He gained an international reputation opposing the building of the mosque and complex at Three Mills, which is ironic, as he was the only person elected to the council who ever spoke publicly in favour of the development, (as part of his successful election campaign in 2002).

With little understanding of the planning process he spent the best part of a decade building a career out of his opposition to a mosque that didn't have planning permission. He successfully created a 'straw man' out of the mosque enlisting the support of a variety of (very) conservative Christian organisations in the UK and USA and becoming the beneficiary of support from some of the more unpleasant UK based right-wing political groups.

increasing numbers of local people taking up opportunities for work. For the first time in half a century, Newham's employment rate began to match the London average.

It was a record which any other local government leader could only dream off. The borough had been at the bottom of the national poverty indices since records began, but under his leadership, it moved from 3rd to 23rd. However, it hadn't all been plain sailing and controversial decisions like the £40m Council investment in the Olympic stadium soured his record and would be used by his detractors to discredit his legacy. Other factors also contributed to his demise including the narrative that after 12 years as Mayor, Newham needed a change.

This led to a fractured internal re-selection process in 2017 which he won, but which in turn ended up in a legal challenge at the High Court. The challenge came from local hard-left members and the result was subsequently quashed by the national party. Wales agreed a re-run by way of an open selection which took place in February 2018 just months before the polls in May. This made it possible for any local party member to challenge him for the candidacy. By now, the national mood within Labour had swung violently against Blairite politics and Wales was a prime target for removal by local Corbyn-supporting factions. And so, by a quirk of fate just as the anti-Wales movement with Labour gathered pace, so did the split in the Tablighi Jamaat, with Newham at the epi-centre of a tussle for power, both secular and temporal.

The Delhi-supporting followers of the sect in Newham, led by Umair and Khan consisted mainly of second-generation South Asian Muslims who were more militant in their approach, especially towards the local Labour party whom they held in particular contempt.

It must also be remembered that Tablighi Jamaat was regularly monitored by the security services for its links to extremists, as two of the July 7 suicide bombers and the failed-shoe bomber Richard Reid had been known to have attended Tablighi meetings, including at the Newham based centre.^{vii} These young radicals despised the conservative non-political ways of the austere elder generation that then ruled over the centre. They were particularly aggrieved at what they saw as attempts to cavort with the Wales-led Labour party after yet another application had been

CHRISTIAN peoples ALLIANCE

And by spinning a web of conspiracy theories he informed the world that the decision to approve the development had already been made and approved, behind closed doors.

As part of this he went to great pains to link Tablighi Jamaat to terrorism and indeed three people who went on to commit acts of terrorism did indeed visit TJ mosques. But he neglected to mention that when political Islamists sought to gain influence in TJ mosques, they were generally thrown out on their ear, as happened nearby at the Christian St mosque in Tower Hamlets.

Prior to the recent split in the movement, TJ adherents were wholly against involvement in secular political activity, and whilst their beliefs and practices were conservative to the point of being reactionary, it was never the job of the council to police who was and who was not allowed to own land. Nor to prescribe what religious beliefs were permitted and which were not.

Far from improving community relations, Craig's actions were widely seen as disturbing them.

The MegaMosqueNoThanks website is now inactive, so it is reasonable to assume that his attentions have switched elsewhere.

refused. The international split now allowed these radicals to become independent with no central authority to rein in their excesses. The previous structures of authority crumbled as Mufti Umair and Khan took centre stage and later formed the Newham Muslim Forum. But in 2016 they turned their attention to forging political links with local pro-Corbyn and other anti-Wales Labour factions. The principal protagonist, Mufti Umair Zulfikar had as his moniker the title Mufti, which in Islamic terms signifies an elevated religious status.



He had previously used this to great effect when he persuaded impressionable young local Muslims to stand as Tory candidates against their Muslim Labour counterparts in the 2014 local elections. Alongside firebrand local Imam, Mufti Sadruddin, (reported in the Express^{viii} as the Chair of NPA), they railed against the alleged ‘Islamophobia’ in Newham Labour, principally for not granting planning permission for their ‘Markaz’, the Urdu word for the Newham centre.



The campaign became extremely communitarian and the national Conservative Party was condemned by Labour for their local tryst with Islamic extremists.^{ix}

1. To listen to the Muslim community.
2. Two hours of free parking for all residents during Friday prayers.
3. To support the provision of safety railings for children outside mosques.
4. Respect for religious beliefs and needs when making planning decisions.
5. To support the provision of a burial ground for Newham Muslim community.

From a 2014 Conservative election leaflet.

There was an echo of this in the pledges given by mayoral hopeful, Rokhsana Fiaz two years later, who was the figurehead of the cabal to oust Wales.

- create a fairer and more consistent parking scheme that is not run as a business, is less expensive, and works for shopkeepers, traders and residents in places like Green Street and High Street North. I will give residents 30 minutes free parking in our main retail areas;

Green St and High St North, the two areas highlighted for shopkeepers, traders and residents are the commercial hubs for the South Asian community in the borough.

During the 2014 campaign the NPA directly confronted Muslim Councillors and their supporters labelling them collaborators for supporting or serving in Wales' Labour administration. But the 2014 venture yielded no significant results as they were defeated even in the Muslim-dominated wards in which they stood; often to an assortment of Muslim, Christian and Hindu opponents. Labour relied on a coalition of voters including a substantial section of the Muslim vote. To defeat this Islamist challenge they simply had to split the Muslim vote and there were plenty of Muslims more than willing to vote against bigotry and sectarianism. Labour, in terms of communities was a coalition, they would pick up votes from the White working-class voters and from Africans and Caribbean's; from Sikhs and Hindus, none of whom would be attracted to the sectarian bigotry shown by the young Tablighi firebrands.

Like Respect, they had demonstrated that they could influence and mobilise a substantial vote. But this mobilisation had been insufficient to loosen the Labour grip on Newham. If they were to exercise influence, they would have to use their numbers differently.

The 2014 Results.

For example: (from [Wikipedia](#)^x)

In East Ham North Labour fielded One Muslim woman, one Muslim man and a Christian.

East Ham North (3) ^{[4][3][11]}			
Party	Candidate	Votes	%
Labour	Firoza Ahmed Nekiwala	2,809	21.0
Labour	Zuber Gulamussen	2,741	20.0
Labour	Paul Duraisamy Sathianesan	2,684	20.0
Conservative	Ilyas Sharif	1,547	12.0
Conservative	Duraimurugan Kannan	1,335	10.0
Conservative	Biju Gopinath	1,282	10.0
Liberal Democrats	Sunny M. J. Latif	496	4.0
TUSC	Keerthikan Thennavan	131	1.0
Communist	Rod Finlayson	120	1.0
CPA	Akorede Opemiyan	92	1.0
CPA	Margaret Oluseyi Sadiq	85	1.0
CPA	Moriamo Sadiq	68	1.0
Turnout		5,037	52.0
Registered electors		9,693	

In Green St East, Labour fielded one Muslim woman, one Hindu man and a Christian man.

Green Street East (3) ^{[4][3][15]}			
Party	Candidate	Votes	%
Labour	Rohima Rahman	2,723	22.0
Labour	Mukesh Patel	2,635	21.0
Labour	Jose Alexander	2,598	21.0
Conservative	Ashfaq Ahmed	1,348	11.0
Conservative	Shahan Ahmed	1,313	10.0
Conservative	Kamran Qureshi	1,187	9.0
UKIP	Robert Rush	290	2.0
TUSC	Lois Austin	217	2.0
CPA	Cherie Ann Donaldson	126	1.0
CPA	Charles Benjamin Laing	93	1.0
Turnout		4,894	48.8
Registered electors		10,031	

In the predominantly Muslim ward of Green St West, Labour fielded three Muslims, two men and one woman.

Green Street West (3)^{[4][3][16]}			
Party	Candidate	Votes	%
Labour	Hanif Abdulmuhit	2,914	23.0
Labour	Idris Ibrahim	2,756	22.0
Labour	Tahmina Rahman	2,744	21.0
Conservative	Mufti Shah Sadruddin	1,266	10.0
Conservative	Abdul Karim Sheikh	1,164	9.0
Conservative	Saiful Choudhury	1,136	9.0
TUSC	Mark Dunne	270	2.0
CPA	Yvonne Perry	169	1.0
CPA	Blazo Nikivorovic	135	1.0
CPA	Christopher Oching	134	
Independent	Rushna Mehboob Sulyman	96	1.0
Turnout		4,795	49.1
Registered electors		9,764	

Part 2. The Engagement of Newham People's Alliance (NPA)

The NPA was created by these Tablighis to appeal to a communitarian demographic in the Muslim community and the following year it began to show its opposition to Labour, firstly by attacking a Hindu, (albeit secular Hindu) candidate in the GLA elections.

Tweet

 **Newham people's Alliance**
@newhampa

@copwatcher @Rachel_shares Plz RT. Unmesh Desai's not capable to represent #Newham let alone City & East London

What I've delivered for Newham whilst being a councillor since 2002 and Cabinet member in charge of Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour:


Unmesh Desai
Newham Labour Councillor

I am Unmesh Desai, I want to be your candidate for City and East London

- Have given Newham the No.1 crime hotspot in the whole of UK which is Stratford
- Have made Newham rank 2nd worst borough for robbery, motor vehicle theft & handling stolen goods
- Have made Newham rank 3rd worst borough for rape
- Have made Newham rank 4th worst borough for common assault and GBH
- Have made Newham rank 5th worst borough for assault with injury
- Under me, Newham is now ranked as one of the worst 5 boroughs for 13 crimes, including rape, robbery and GBH

Met Police crime performance data 2014/15

DON'T nominate Desai to be your candidate for the City & East London GLA Assembly seat!

Their return to the fray was noticed. Ex-SWP blogger Kevin Blowe noted the contributions and was not impressed by the posturing of people who had supported the Tories in the previous election.



A New Direction

When referencing the 'Muslim vote' two mistakes are frequently made. Either they are referred to as a homogeneous block that votes as they are told to by an imam or they are individuals and autonomous voters who freely choose the candidate to support.

Both things are true, but both statements ignore the complexities. Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi Muslims might share many religious tenets but differ markedly in attitudes towards political policy, nationality, history and sympathies. Sudanese and Arab Muslims may be focussed on entirely different political priorities and have little in common with Muslims from the sub-continent etc.

But in terms of the critical mass, Sudanese Muslims are a figurative handful in the borough. South Asian Muslims account for almost one third of the population, and as we have seen in the election results, whilst extremist leaders only influence a minority of Muslim votes, they are able to organise and focus them.

To have an influence it doesn't need 100% adherence of the community or even of a single mosque. The point about targeting is that you gather a sufficient number at a specific place. Fifty voters in a council election are unlikely to swing the election one way or the other. Fifty voters at a Labour Party selection meeting will determine the candidate who fights the election for Labour. And in Newham, the proverbial donkey would be expected to win, providing it was wearing a red rosette.

Because there are secular and liberally minded Muslims, the temptation is to dismiss references to organised blocks. That would be also wrong. But it is better to think of 'blocks' rather than a single homogenous group. The 'blocks' might be fluid and there will always be individuals who vote according to their own consciences.

The political journey of the late Abdul Karim Sheikh BEM is illustrative. He first stood for election as an Independent Islamic candidate, and lost. He joined the Labour Party and stood for Labour enjoying repeated electoral success. Following the 2003 invasion of Iraq, he joined Respect and was re-elected as a councillor. As Respect withered, he sought a new home in the Conservative Party, where again he stood unsuccessfully for the council alongside Sadruddin et al.

The purpose of mentioning A K Sheikh is not to ridicule him, but simply to note that his political journey makes no intellectual sense, unless that is, it is seen in the context of seeking to further a communitarian agenda. The ideological slant of the party is less relevant than the access to power.

What the 2014 campaign did achieve was to put Mufti and others in direct contact with disgruntled members of the local Labour Party many of whom wanted Wales out. And so, began a relationship which would culminate four years later in the end of the Wales-era. His challenger was an as-yet little-known British-Pakistani, Rokhsana Fiaz, who would go onto win the internal selection by 300 or so votes and become the new Labour candidate for Mayor of Newham in February 2018.

Newham People's Alliance- Two Campaigns, One Agenda



There are a number of people who post on the NPA Facebook page. It provides an outlet for those concerned about car crashes, criminal behaviour and litter on the streets.

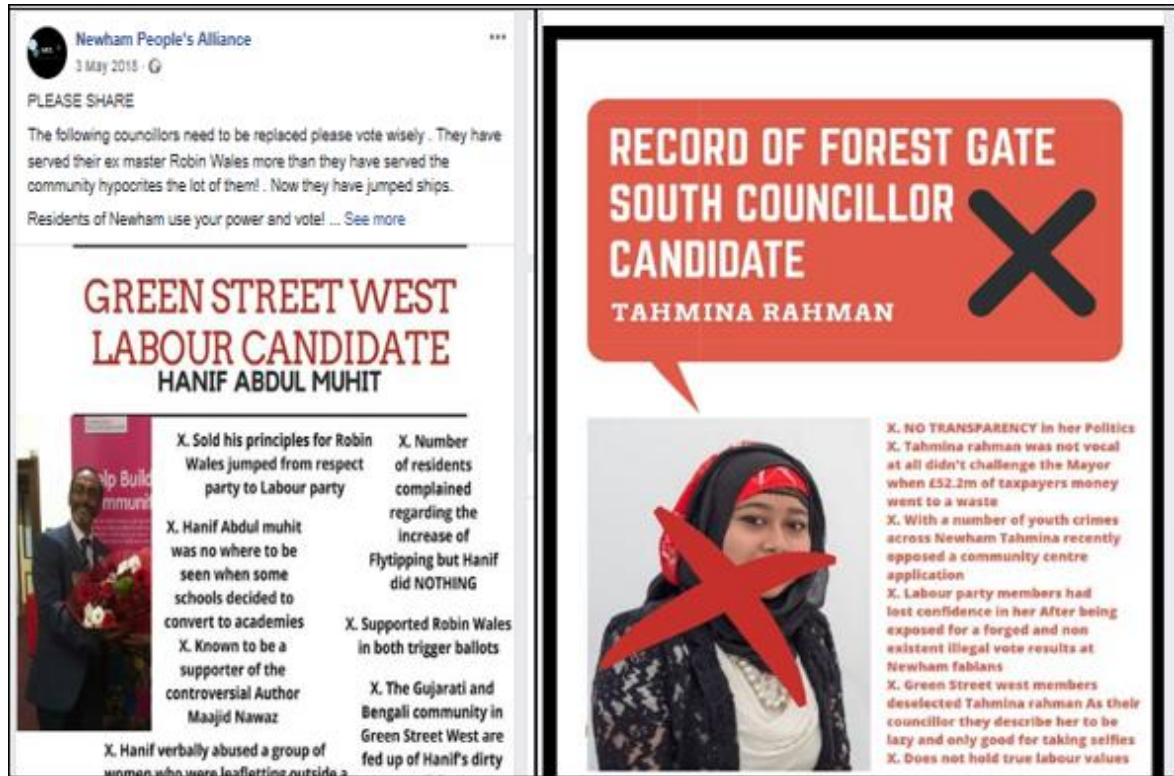
But there are two campaigns which have dominated its output over several years and which have been used to mobilise supporters in overtly political campaigns.

The first of these is the campaign to establish a major mosque and centre in the Abbey Mills area of West Ham. Sometimes called the Riverine Centre, sometimes The Markaz and sometimes the Mega Mosque.

The second campaign was to deselect Robin Wales as the Labour candidate for Mayor of Newham. This organisation which was avowedly not a Labour supporting body was embraced as a key ally by Fiaz and her supporters in her campaign to replace Wales.



Politics is not a clean business, but it surely must cause some Labour members a moment's concern that their local leader utilised the services of an organised group, what is effectively a party hostile to the Labour Party and its principles. We know that members of sundry Trotskyist groups have re-entered the Labour fold, but they nominally at least pledge to support Labour candidates. The NPA wanted rid of Wales AND they wanted rid of liberally minded Muslims, even if they stood for Labour. They were prepared to campaign to get rid of sitting councillors at the ballot box whilst at the same time working with the Fiaz faction to oust Wales and promote her candidacy.



Let's look at the two campaigns.

The Mosque Development.

We reflect upon the history of the Riverine Centre elsewhere^{xi}. Suffice to say that despite the urgings of planning officers, those behind the scheme(s) have chosen not to take their advice and remained wedded to the idea of a major mosque, accommodating 8,000 or more which would draw in adherents from across London and Essex.

The personalities have changed and the management of the site has passed through various hands. With this change has come a marked change in strategy.

The land was purchased in 1995 for £1.6m. A number of planning proposals were submitted and all rejected. Despite assertions to the contrary, the only local councillor who spoke publicly in favour of the development was one Cllr Alan Craig of the CPA, (long before he went off to join UKIP). Despite his earlier support, Craig was to go on to become the harshest critic of the scheme and of the TJ sect. Apart from Craig the only mainstream public political support came from Conservative Assembly Member Andrew Boff in the run up to the 2014 election campaign where an unusually high number of Muslim candidates were to stand for the Conservatives^{xii}.

Labour members had tended to be tight limped with regard to the proposals, being aware of the dangers of being thought to have pre-judged a planning issue. Like Caesar's wife, they had to be beyond reproach. Consequently, they tended to say nothing in public.

The matters came to a head in December 2012 when an outline proposal, which fell outside the planning guidelines was submitted to the Strategic Development Committee for approval. The NPA and Tablighi Jamaat went into action. On a cold winter's night an estimated 3,000 people, many bussed in from distant parts of the country, literally surrounded the Old Town Hall at West Ham (Stratford).

The picture below from the BBC^{xiii} gives a flavour of the event as protesters milled around the Town Hall.




The plans were rejected.^{xiv}

In the days surrounding the planning discussion, one Muslim councillor was targeted for concerted lobbying. He had frequent knocks on the front door from concerned groups, generally of three men, who sought to discuss with him his responsibilities towards the community and the importance of the approval of the mosque. He received phone calls at all hours. He was lobbied when he attended the mosque. His father was lobbied with a view to influencing his son. He was driven to the verge of a nervous breakdown.

The Need for a New Mayor


The NPA did not take kindly to the rejection and were soon back protesting. In February and March 2013, they came out in force to Newham Town Hall. Prominent amongst them were Messers Mufti and Khan, caught in their own photographs, with others from the Newham Recorder^{xv}.




 **Newham People's Alliance**
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3 Feb 2013 · 🌐 · Can someone please remind mr robin Wales newham is not North Korea nor it is egypt and Syria. The UK does not allow tyrant rulers like hi...


newhampeoplesalliance.org
Newham People's Alliance protest at East Ham Town...



 **Newham People's Alliance**
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3 Feb 2013 · 🌐 · Islam is a religion of peace

newhampeoplesalliance.org
Newham People's Alliance protest at East Ham Town...





Newham People's Alliance

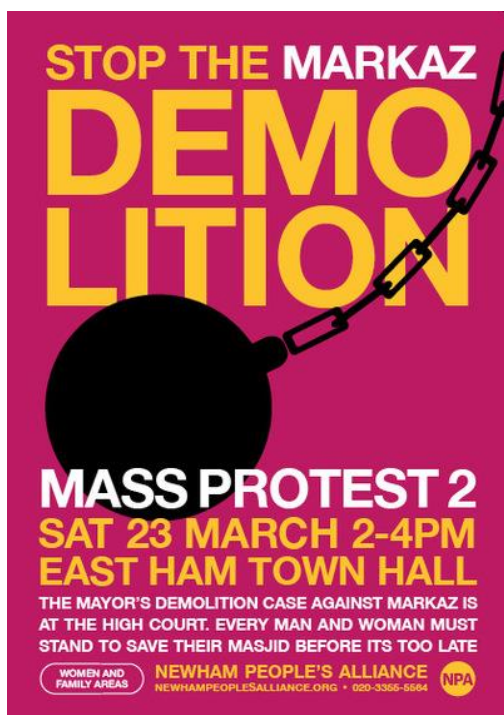
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24 Mar 2013 · ...the Masjid due to our (NPA's) last protest (the pressure works!) they are still trying to go all the way. We MUST stop them. ROBIN WALES THIS IS IS NOT ALBANIA WHERE YOU CAN DESTROY HOLY PLACES

Councillor Aisha Siddiqah and 2 others

1 share



In a report carried by Islamophobia Watch, “An NPA spokesperson added that the protest encouraged many people in the community to become more politically engaged and sign up to their petition to trigger a referendum on the directly-elected mayor system.”^{xvi}

They also embarked on a series of new legal challenges. All of which ultimately failed.

The post below from Islamophobia Watch gives a flavour, they correctly attribute the organisation of the event to Newham People’s Alliance. It is evident that even by 2013, the issue had become highly personalised wherein Robin Wales is the focus of the ire of the protesters. We begin, in this to see the crossover between the two campaigns with leading young Tablighis in evidence at NPA events.

Newham People’s Alliance takes on Newham Council



Last Friday [Newham People’s Alliance](#), which is committed to “fighting the institutional social and religious cleansing of Newham”, organised a well-attended demonstration outside Newham Town Hall protesting against the local council’s treatment of the Riverine Centre.



In support of the mosque development and in an attempt to revive the defunct Respect Party, the organisers of the NPA brought in George Galloway, then the MP for Bradford West. The following comes from a report in the Newham Recorder of February 14th 2013.

Mr Galloway was met by applause last night as he told audience: “This is the beginning of the Newham revolution.”

He said the “revolution” would not stop until a new mosque in West Ham, rejected by the council on planning grounds, had been built.



Galloway offered Yvonne Ridley as a Respect candidate for Mayor and expressed his confidence in the election of a number of Respect councillors. Although when the NPA backed candidates stood in

2014, they stood as Conservatives rather than as Respect candidates. Alongside Ridley we see Khan and Sadruddin.

Thus, in their first attempt to unseat Labour councillors in the 2014 election, roughly two thirds of the Conservative candidates were Muslims from South Asia.

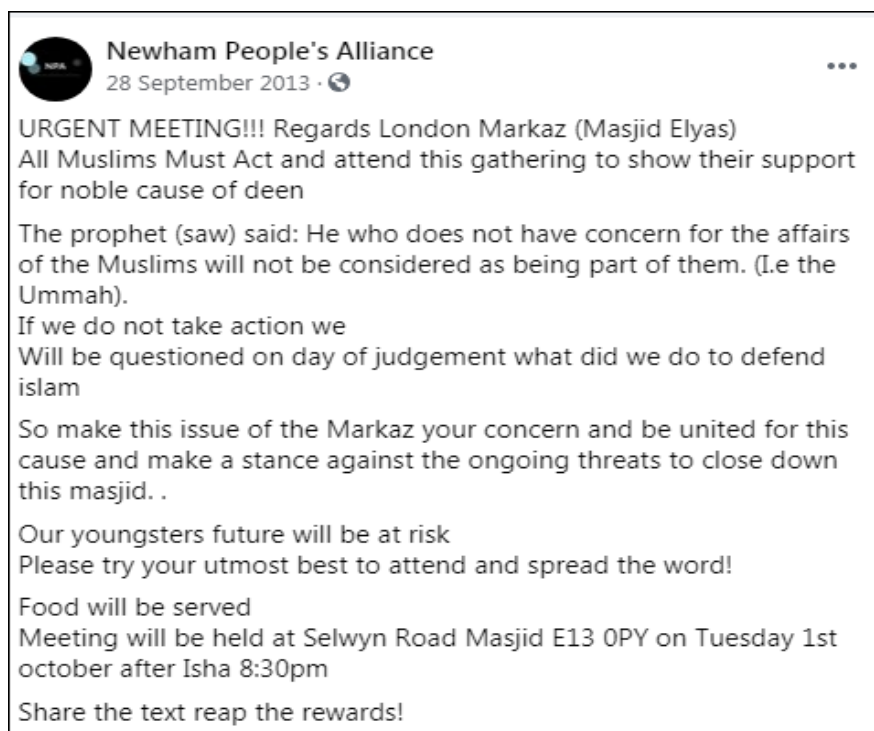
As we have noted, they were markedly unsuccessful. Labour won, 61:0.

The Express noted however, in respect of one individual we have seen elsewhere, (seated second from the left, above) that

“A central theme of Mr Sadruddin’s campaign is his desire to punish Sir Robin for his opposition to the Mega Mosque project, which is also known as the London Markaz.”^{xvii}

The link to build the mosque and remove Wales had solidified by 2014.

It was evidenced in frequent posts over the next few years.





Newham People's Alliance

Page · 25K like this · Community organisation



26 May 2014 · 🌐 · What do we do next how many of you guys still want robin as mayor



1

1 comment



Newham People's Alliance

15 December 2016 · 🌐



This is the first of many protests outside Stratford town hall everyone uniting against the corruption of Robin Wales and his cronies keep up the momentum guys! [#focusE15](#) [#Momentum](#) [#RobinRunning](#) [#robinwales](#) [#NoManDate](#)



Newham People's Alliance

Page · 25K like this · Community organisation



4 Dec 2017 · 🌐 · ...of dictatorship He must step down Come protest today and ask him to resign [#RobinWalesMustGo](#)



3

6 comments

FLASH PROTEST
@Stratford town hall
Monday 4th december
6PM-6pm
Use your democratic Rights
As residents and get your
voices heard. Stand up for
all the injustice done by
Robin Wales in Newham
Unite together and say



Entryism in the 21st Century

“Entryism is a political strategy in which an organisation encourages its members or supporters to join another, usually larger, organisation in an attempt to expand influence and expand their ideas and programme. If the organization being “entered” is hostile to entryism, the entryists may engage in a degree of subterfuge and subversion to hide the fact that they are an organization in their own right.”

Under the Wales incumbency London Region of the Labour Party had been warned of the Tower Hamletisation of Newham politics but they chose to do nothing about it.

When Fiaz got in and turned on one faction of her Islamist allies, the regional Party undertook an investigation.

Fake Members

We understand that they found 440 individuals (from a membership that was then around 1500) in East Ham who were, in the current jargon, ‘fake’. That is to say

- they were not living at the stated addresses,
- they were not registered as voters at the addresses or
- they were working and paying reduced subs.

This last matter has been an endemic problem in the Labour Party where a large group are signed up by and paid for by a single individual who is then able to command their vote.

The Labour Party chose not to conduct a similar investigation into West Ham.

This raises an interesting question and one which the Labour Party must be acutely aware of. Given that there were likely to be a similar number of fake members in West Ham. Just how many of the membership in Newham are in breach of the Labour Party membership rules?

In 2020 the situation became even worse. In the first eight months of 2020 insider sources report that the Labour Party has grown by more than 1000 members, almost all of whom appear to have come from the Bangladeshi community.

The numbers are larger now with, we are told, approx 50% of the total membership coming from the south Asian Muslim community.

As of 12th March 2021, the Labour Party suspended the CLPs in both East and West Ham while they investigated allegations about breaches in the recruitment and membership rules. This was reaffirmed in July 2021 when the Labour Party informed its members in Newham, that they would not be voting for candidates this year to fight the next council elections. Instead the Labour Party’s NEC would be deciding the candidates.

In addition to Umair-Khan and the NPA, Fiaz relied upon the support of an East Ham based group of Muslims of similar outlook. They controlled the East Ham CLP and at one point had all of the executive positions on the GC bar one, for Equalities. One suspects that this was a deliberate choice on their part. No sooner had Fiaz been elected than she dropped them in favour of the TJ ‘Young Turks’. They did organise as ‘Grassroots Momentum’ but did not otherwise exist as a separate party within a party. Several have confided that promises they believed to have been made by Fiaz were abandoned as soon as she got into office. And whilst a membership dossier several inches thick was supplied in respect of East Ham, (home of the Islamists that the mayor has fallen out with), the complaint about West Ham (home of the Khan/Umair faction) may have been as little as a single sheet.

Part Three. The Fiaz Ascent

Rokhsana Fiaz was a relatively obscure figure in local Labour circles, she had left local politics many years previously hoping to forge a career in national politics.

Just after the Iraq War, she worked for the Labour Party on a range of PR projects to help promote Tony Blair and his policies within the Muslim community. For that she was rewarded with an Order of the British Empire for her services to community cohesion but interpreted as promoting the war effort.

She made a number of unsuccessful attempts to become an MP, including challenging in 2005 for the West Ham candidacy, which she lost to, Lyn Brown, then a local Councillor. She also failed to win the nomination in Leyton; other efforts in seats across the country failed to bring her a parliamentary nomination.

Her repeated lack of success in national Labour circles eventually forced her to return to Newham in the hope that she could capitalise on the growing discontent against Robin Wales. In 2014 along with a new intake of candidates, she managed to secure a safe Council seat and quickly joined the small but ever-present anti-Wales faction on the Council's backbenches. Every Labour Party branch was required to select at least one woman as a Labour candidate and 23 were selected. There were 20 branches. Every woman who applied got a seat.




But in Fiaz's case she was not a very popular candidate and didn't get selected until the very last selection meeting at Custom House, when quite literally there was no-one else left for members to choose.

Her four-year term as a Councillor was unremarkable by any standards. She made little headway amongst her peers, many of whom viewed her as an opportunist.

But early on, she sensed an opportunity to position herself as a possible anti-Wales candidate and began to define herself as part of the left-opposition.



Mufti Zulfiqar's Facebook page lists his education. We see that this self-employed 'advisor' on a whole number of issues was educated in Pakistan's Jamia Darul Uloom, in Karachi. It seems that his secondary education was at a related institution in the UK.

EDUCATION	
	University of London University School year 2010
	Jamia Darul Uloom Karachi Pakistan University
	Darul Uloom London High School 30 November 1995 - 1997

In a report *Karachi's Madrasas and Violent Extremism* (<https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/461cd8812.pdf>), the International Crisis Group raised some major concerns in respect of Darul Uloom.

The ICG notes that Shias, other religions and the West in general are referred to as 'the enemy'. The madrasas promoted a theology that is not simply conservative but which endorses the use of violence against their enemies. 'Moreover, madrasa students are taught to view everything Western as a threat. A madrasa teacher explained the need to teach his students English on these grounds: "Western ideologies cannot be countered unless the thoughts and plans of the enemy are understood.'" The UK and the West in general it seems, are viewed as being "the enemy".



The most vocal opposition on the council came from the 'Johns', Councillors Gray and Whitworth. Whitworth, as a card-carrying member of Newham's far-left put himself forward as the stalking horse candidate against Wales. Gray on the other hand was a Trade Unionist with Unison, who previously had stood as a Liberal in Forest Gate and lost. He then joined Labour and became a councillor in 2010. He was never promoted under Wales and over time key joined the efforts to unseat him. For that he would be rewarded with the job of Deputy Mayor in Fiaz's first cabinet. And then it went sour and he was sacked or walked (whichever version you choose to believe) in the antisemitism crisis that engulfed Newham Labour. Whitworth, an ideological, as opposed to an opportunistic left-winger, would be entirely side-lined by Fiaz.

Back to 2014 – 2016, Fiaz shared a confused political agenda with the smattering of perennial anti-Wales protagonists who were bitter at either being overlooked for a job or had been sacked from their positions on his executive. However, a unique convergence of disparate events would totally change their luck as the post-2015 influx of Corbyn-supporting members and hard-left political activists supercharged the anti-Wales insurgency in Newham's Labour party. It meant a reawakening of Fiaz's personal ambition to forge a serious political career but that would be dependent on persuading enough people in the growing insurgency to support her credentials to head up the challenge to Wales.

She seized the opportunity and this one-time Blair, Iraq-War supporter joined the newly formed hard-left Momentum movement. She chaired its first meeting in Newham. By 2016, Newham Momentum had begun to mobilise with great effect in wards across the borough^{xix}, and Momentum saw a real chance to unseat Wales and take control of an entire London borough, something they could only dream of pre-2015.

It is worth noting at this point that the agenda had long ceased to be about a better offer for the residents of Newham, it was now all about which personality should hold office. It was as well, because far-left Trots, socially conservative Muslims and disgruntled centrists would have quite a difficult time building common cause around a political programme. Many in the coalition had frankly quite appalling views on a range of subjects not least over Jews and

Referencing the network of institutions in Karachi, the report states that they "have provided recruits for the Hizbul Mujahidin. These madrasas boast of their "mujahid" students martyred in Afghanistan, Kashmir and Bosnia." Darul Uloom alumni were prominent in the successes of the Taliban in August 2021.

As to why that is relevant, simply, the young man seeking prominence amongst Newham's Muslim community was educated amongst them; they have provided him with his world view. There is nothing that he has said or done which suggests that he has disavowed these views.

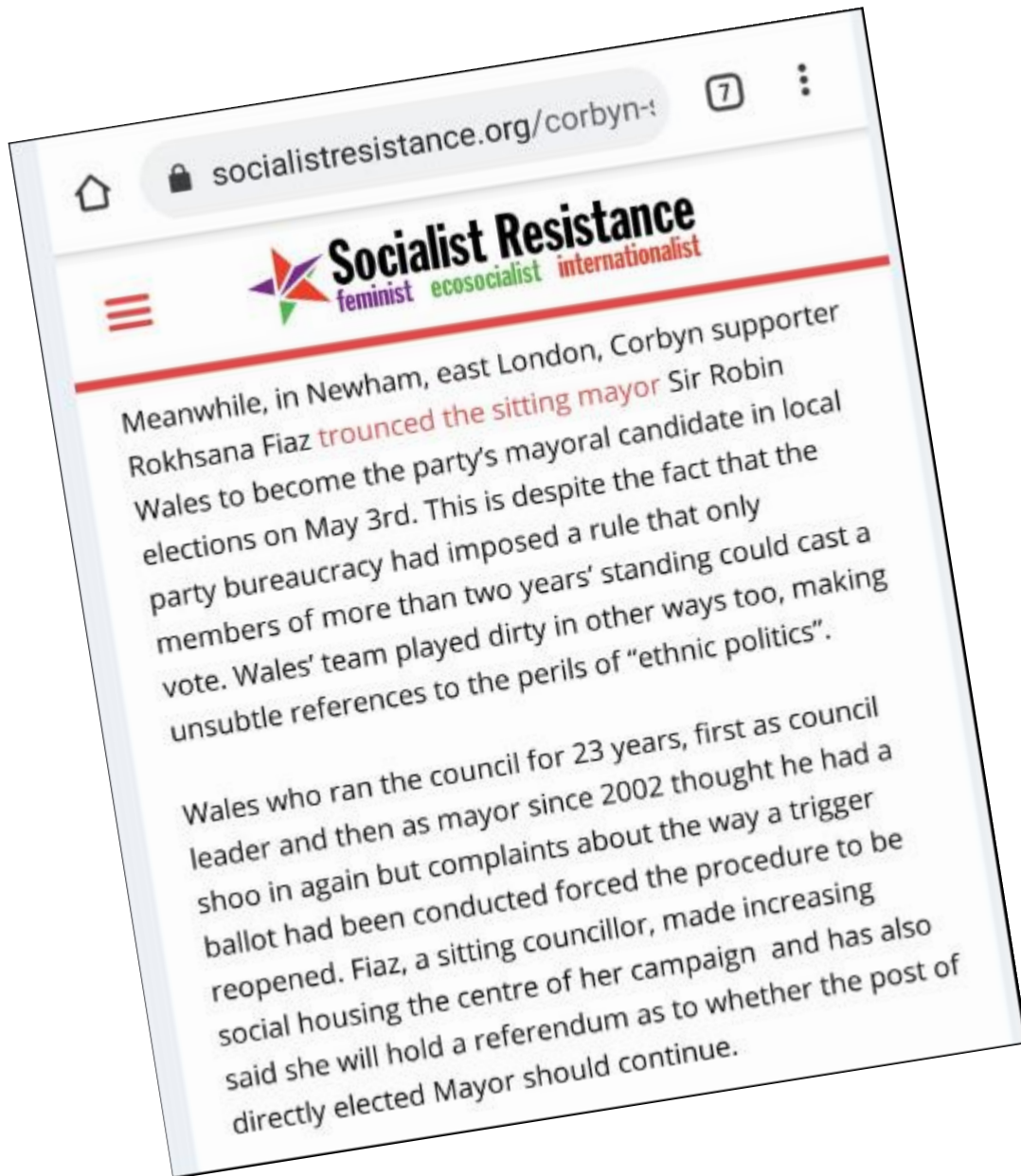
He now heads the mayor's chosen conduit in relations between the council and the Muslim community.

Israel, something which later in her term as Mayor would come back to haunt her. After her repeated failures to get into Westminster, this was chance she simply could not afford to miss. Momentum desperately wanted to take control of a London Council and use it as a testing ground for its hard-left policies.

But beyond them, the 'Young Turks' of the Tablighi movement in Newham saw this growing rebellion as their opportunity to not just get their Mosque approved, but to actually take control of Newham by stealth.

These two splits, one in the Tablighi-Jamaat and the other in UK Labour, led these two fringe groups in Newham to become bedfellows in a coalition to defeat Wales and take over a London Council. In recent months, Ms Fiaz has sought to distance herself from her early supporters in Momentum. She wasn't always so squeamish.





Between 2016 and 2018, these two groups held numerous meetings to agree a way forward. They were joined by others eager to advance their own personal ambitions and pursue personal vendettas against Wales who usually would have no truck with either the hard-left or the Muslim hard -right, however this was an opportunity to defeat Wales and they embraced the coalition.



But Fiaz was far from the preferred choice for leader for any of these anti-Wales factions. For the hard-left many found her lacking any genuine left credentials. They knew her past as a Blairite promoter of the Iraq War whilst others accused her of being arrogant, over-bearing with a blinkered vision who lacked experience.

For the Muslim-right, marshalled by Umair and Khan, Fiaz was too secular for their liking. A free-thinker and with a penchant for socialising in wine bars, she was a thoroughly westernised single-woman with a lax attitude towards the observance of Islamic norms. They struggled to placate those within their own movement who opposed any role for a woman in leadership especially one who didn't even wear a hijab!

But the movement sensed blood and despite their misgivings they eventually backed Fiaz. For them a candidate from the traditional white, middle-class Newham Labour intelligentsia that had steered the borough for decades, was simply not possible. Fiaz offered an alternative, an 'identity candidate' due to her ability to project herself as a Muslim and as a woman of colour. As the internal Labour selection process was about to recommence in January 2018, a series of meetings took place between Umair, Khan and the Momentum factions to agree a candidate to take on Wales. Fevered talk of a possible internal challenge by one of the many Muslim Councillors in Wales' administration meant they had to act quickly and agree on Fiaz, or risk being outflanked by a centrist from the Labour frontbench. The large BAME population in Newham^{xx} meant that a BAME candidate had to be chosen. Fiaz took her chance and pleaded with Momentum and Umair/Khan to be allowed to be their candidate. As some of those who supported her at the time now relate, she made a series of promises over positions, policy and crucially how she would ensure they had a leading role in her administration.

Luckily for her a frontbench challenge from within Wales' team failed to materialise and, in the end, despite much consternation and nose-holding Fiaz was endorsed as the deadline came and went. We understand that an agreement was reached that ensured Umair and Khan would have the ear of Fiaz. This mattered because until then the Muslim community saw them as extremist trouble-makers. Mosques and Imams were fed up of the disruption and division they had caused. By now they had lost control of the Newham Tablighi Centre to their rivals, but the ear and patronage of the mayor would give them a base upon which to build their future ambitions.



Planners discuss 'mega-mosque'

The BBC reported on the planning application and a short videoⁱ featuring Emily Buchanan. As part of the report she interviewed this fellow, who just happened to be passing. The BBC has a gift for selecting extremists and portraying them as mainstream!

This is Haitham Al-Haddad.

The Newham Recorderⁱⁱ describes Haddad as a "controversial Islamic preacher". He had placed a video calling for 15,000 protesters to attend the Newham planning meeting in December 2012ⁱⁱⁱ.

The controversy that the Recorder referred to may have something to do with a statement attributed to him; "I will tell you the truth about the fight between us and Jews who are an enemy of God and the descendants of apes and pigs".

He has subsequently disclaimed the statement and blamed it on the mistranslation of what he had actually said. He didn't elaborate to say what words he actually used.

Others have called him "one of Britain's most notorious hate preachers"^{iv} and he has been called "one of the most dangerous men in Britain" by the counter-extremist Quilliam Foundation.

He is the founder of the Muslim Research and Development Foundation (MRDF)^v. He was its first Chair, but was forced to stand down in 2014 by the Charity Commission as they had concerns as to his suitability to act as a trustee.

In his capacity as the Chair of the Fatwa Committee of the Islamic Forum of Europe, (described in The Telegraph as Jamaat-e-Islami in Europe, he appears to have close working relations with The Muslim Brotherhood and to the East London Mosque in Whitechapel^{vi}.

Ed Husain devotes some space to Mr Haddad in his most recent book^{vii} noting his support for child marriages, (that is girl-child to adult-male); the correct method of female circumcision; the Quranic requirement that apostates be killed and the 'evil' of homosexuality.

Not a bad resume for an ordinary Muslim that the BBC just happened to meet outside the centre.

ⁱ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/uk-20605751>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.newhamrecorder.co.uk/news/crime/socall ed-mega-mosque-fuels-protest-fears-ahead-of-newham-council-2935820>

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2563170/Anger-extremist-cleric-given-podium-preach-London-university-despite-history-hate-speech-against-women-gays.html#ixzz3UCKPH0Ug>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=37aOxsJol0w>

^{iv} <https://www.globalmbwatch.com/2015/03/23/uk-islamic-electoral-groups-tied-to-global-muslim-brotherhood/>

^v

[https://www.globalmbwatch.com/2018/10/11/amazon-allowed-charity-donations-to-extremist-group-close-to-uk-muslim-brotherhood/;](https://www.globalmbwatch.com/2018/10/11/amazon-allowed-charity-donations-to-extremist-group-close-to-uk-muslim-brotherhood/)

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/amazon-scheme-supports-extremists-vdzsfvsls>

^{vi} <https://www.globalmbwatch.com/2015/03/12/two-uk-muslim-brotherhood-leaders-join-extremists-in-letter-claiming-demonization-of-muslims-in-britain/>

^{vii} Husain E. *Among the Mosques*. Bloomsbury. London. 2021 p258

6 March 2018 · 🌐

Advice to eligible voters #Newham #Labour #RobinWalesMustGo

CANDIDATE VOTERS

All eligible Labour members in Newham will receive a letter in the post from the Electoral Reform Society (ERS) on behalf of the London Labour Party with details how to vote plus candidate statements at the back.

The letter has your unique security codes and a link to the voting website:
www.ersvotes.com/newhamlabour18.
 Go to the website and follow the instructions on the screen.

There are 4 stages to go through

1.
 Use your unique security codes: part one (1) and part two (2) for starting your voting process!



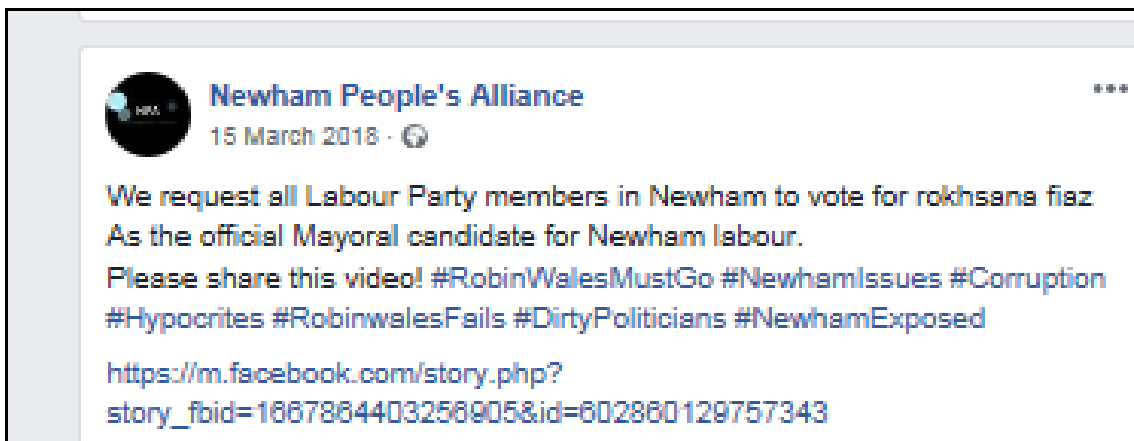
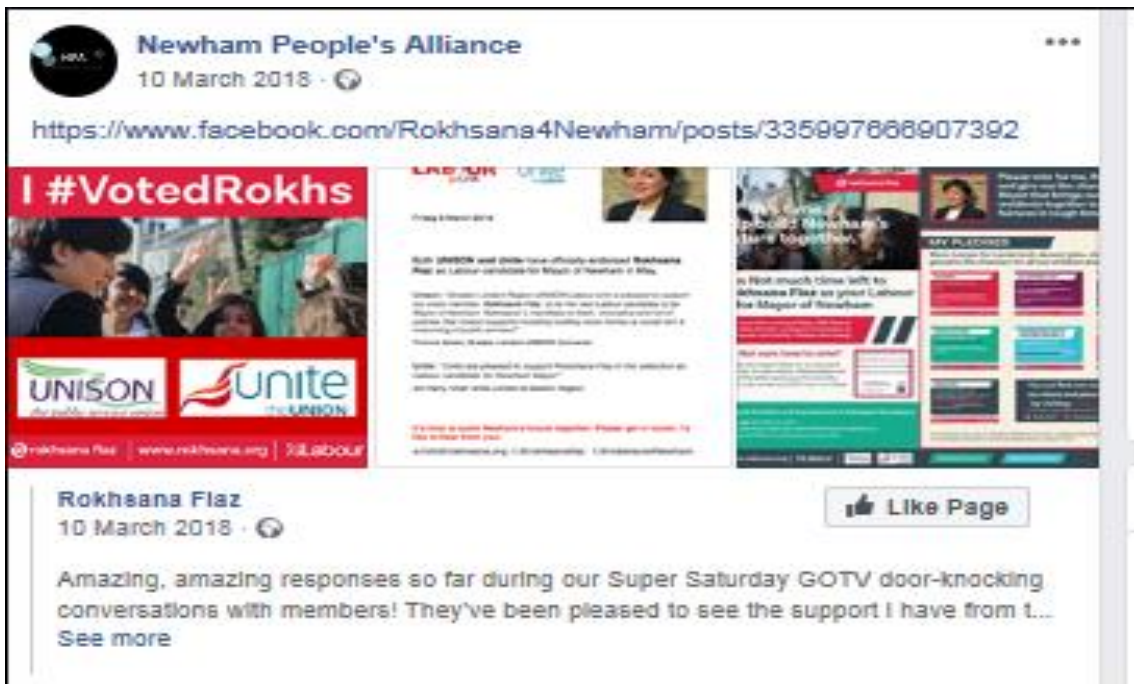
2.
 Your online ballot form will look like this. Click on Rokhsana Fiaz to



PeoplesAlliance/

With the anti-Wales candidate having finally been chosen, the different factions met in early-2018 to make the final push against Wales. They had mobilised social media to great effect in the re-run selection process.

The most effective Facebook page was that of the NPA. They provided a platform to Momentum and its supporters to mobilise against Wales, giving detailed instructions on where to go and who to vote for.



Selected speakers from the Momentum/Umar coalition were invited onto cable and internet-based broadcasting media aimed exclusively at the South Asian community.



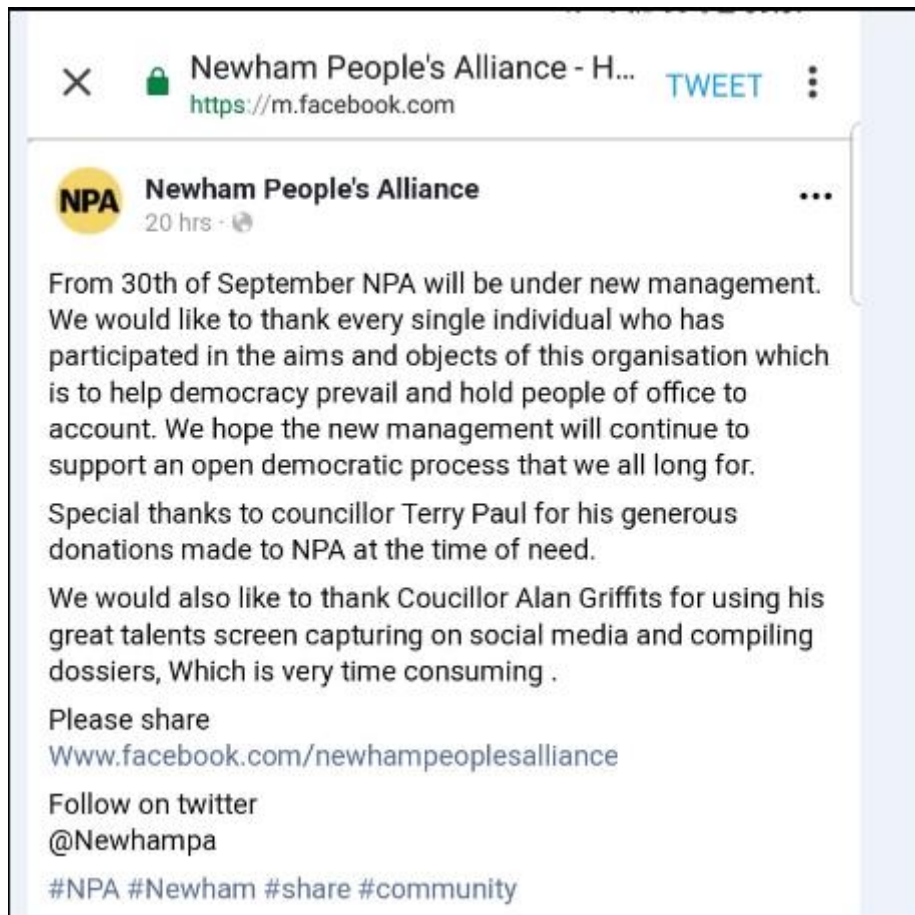
Councillors John Whitworth and Julianne Marriott speaking on Bangladeshi internet TV. Posting from Cllr John Gray re-posted by Newham People’s Alliance.



Subscribers are encouraged to tune in to hear Cllrs John Gray and John Whitworth on Sky Channel 827.

Support for the NPA campaign, it seems additionally came from sources on Labour’s right-wing, (Councillors Paul and Griffiths). Some readers might be surprised at these two names, who it appears, lent their political expertise and offered financial support to the NPA in order to oust Wales.

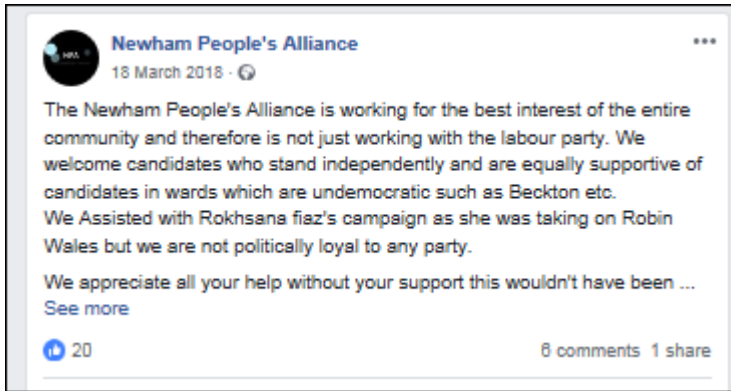




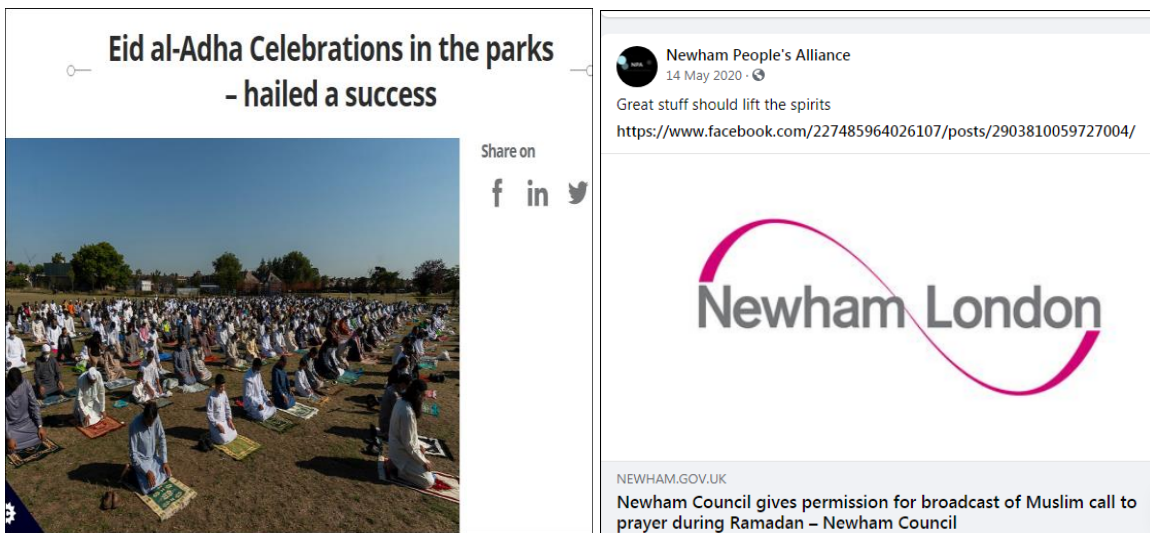
Cllr Paul has denied this however, stating that he “gave no financial support to the organisation” and that he “didn’t know who they were”. He has described the assertion as “lies”, though quite as to why the NPA would lie about this we are unsure. So, for the sake of clarity, we’d like to recap. People that Cllr Paul had never met, in an organisation that he knew nothing about, publicly thanked him for a donation which he didn’t give.

Their polarising campaign was eventually successful and Fiaz won the selection by 300 or so votes, thus bringing to an end the era of centrist progressive politics in Newham. In came a Momentum and Islamist backed candidate who would go on to take the authority in the direction of increased taxes and cuts in services. In the same election campaign that brought Fiaz into office with the support of the NPA, they were campaigning against mainstream Muslim Labour candidates regarded as socially or politically liberal.

This should not have been a surprise as it is exactly what they said.



If nothing else, it is clear that Fiaz enlisted the help of a group which had no commitment to the Labour Party, or its values, and which at times was downright hostile. On becoming Mayor she remained pensive but in early 2019 Fiaz began her 'pay-back' to the Umair/Khan group. Ramadan celebrations were held at the Council's Dockside building, once a hub for secular local government, it was transformed into a haven for faith-based groups vying to influence Council policy. To the outsider this may not mean much, but its effect was to enhance the prestige of the Umair/Khan TJ faction in the local Muslim community. In 2020, for the first time, mosques were allowed to issue the call-to-prayer from their buildings during Ramadan^{xxi}



This was followed by an endorsement of MEND^{xxii} to hold an open exhibition promoting its work in the Dockside building. MEND, a group which the British government refuses to engage due to their links to extremism^{xxiii} clearly did not bother Mayor Fiaz.

This was followed by the formation of a new Muslim organisation by Umair/Khan which would become the main conduit for the borough's 100,000 Muslims and their dealings with the Council. The 'Newham Muslim Forum' was a front for Fiaz backers to gain credence within the local Muslim community.

The Newham Muslim Forum (NMF) was formed as a company and headed by one Muhammed Uddin^{xxiv} in 2019. He now appears as the representative speaking for the Muslim community at council events.^{xxv} (Interestingly the two officers of the company are Mohammed Uddin -Secretary and Mohammed Razan Uddin – Director. It is unclear whether these two names are one or two people.)



NEWHAM MUSLIM FORUM COMMUNITY INTEREST COMPANY LONDON

Newham Muslim Forum Community Interest Company is a community interest company situated at International House, 12 Constance Street, London E16 2DQ. Incorporated on 2019-03-06, this 1-year-old company is run by 1 director and 1 secretary.

Director Muhammad U., appointed on 01 June 2020.

Changing the topic to secretaries, we can mention: Muhammad U., appointed on 06 March 2019.

The company is officially classified as "activities of religious organizations" (SIC code: 94910).

The latest confirmation statement was sent on 2020-03-05 and the due date for the following filing is 2021-04-16.

Newham Muslim Forum Community Interest Company Address / Contact

Office Address	International House
Office Address2	12 Constance Street
Town	London
Post code	E16 2DQ
Country of origin	United Kingdom

The Forum was supported by Umair and Anas Khan, part of the local Delhi-supporting TJ faction. They have been feted by the borough and their credentials as Muslim leaders were enhanced by being seen as gatekeepers between Fiaz and the Muslim community.

“Anas Khan of the Newham Muslim Forum said: “We are the only area in London that have been able to coordinate closely and work with the local authority to put safety measures in place and host open air Eid prayers across the borough.”

“We would like to thank the Mayor and her team, assistant director Mohamed Hammoudan & his team...”

As mentioned earlier, Khan and Umair were involved in altercations at the Riverine Centre and we understand that they were arrested by Police in December 2017 for criminal damage to the property. There has to be some irony in the fact that Khan who had been arrested for criminal damage, became a member of the Newham Police Gold Group thanks to a



recommendation from the Council. These two reactionary and relatively obscure Muslim figures, were now catapulted into positions of prominence by Fiaz’s administration.

Khan now works as an Imam at mosque/community centre in Plaistow and just for good measure is also a member of his local Labour Party branch. He subsequently began his ascent of the local party bureaucracy.



The community centre in Plaistow run by Khan is frequented by high-profile visits from local dignitaries.



Mayor Fiaz and Lyn Brown MP attending an event at Darul Jannah with councillors Whitworth, Gray and Anamul Islam in supporting roles.

Khan and Umair have successfully supplanted the largely defunct Newham Muslim Alliance run by former councillor Abdul Karim Sheikh and Cllr Zulfiqar Ali. An attempt by other mainstream Muslim Labour Councillors to promote moderate Muslim voices failed, as they were outflanked by Fiaz's promotion of Umair/Khan NPA and the Newham Muslim Forum.

Part Four. Whither the Markaz?

Two trends have taken root in contemporary Newham Labour, trends which are both antithetical to social democracy. They appear on the surface to share the *Islamo-Leftism* evident in Stop the War and recently referenced by President Macron in France. The apparently pro-feminist, pro-choice, pro-gay pro-etc etc of the atheistic Left, combined with the socially conservative anti-gay, anti-feminist, theologically driven politics one would normally expect on the Religious Right. But neither this group of people nor their religion is rooted in European history, so reactionary social attitudes are ok because they are somehow anti-imperialist and therefore progressive. (We don't claim that any of this makes sense.)



Both trends, brought with them elements of antisemitism. The anti-racist, anti-Zionist atheists (who thought that by definition they could never be anti-Semites) and reactionary Muslims who brought historical prejudices with them, (see Sadruddin and Haitham Al-Haddad above).

These trends went unaddressed by the wider Labour Party and seeped into the 'normal' discourse of Newham Labour.

Newham's only Jewish councillor came onto the council as a fervent Momentum supporter, only to experience the worst antisemitism of his life at the hands of his Momentum colleagues^{xxvi}. He went so far as to report six of his colleagues to the Labour Party, under Corbyn, (though, for some reason none of the allegations were upheld).

Attitudes that we once thought had been consigned to history resurfaced on Facebook and on social media.

A Newham Labour Facebook page curated by Cllr John Gray became the site of antisemitic tropes. Nothing was done to challenge them or remove them.

It was left to the lone Jewish councillor to raise the issue, even then he was told not to rock the boat. When eventually the matter was addressed and an outside academic engaged to

conduct an investigation, Fiaz was heavily criticised for turning a blind eye to anti-Semitic messages posted on a site to which she made regular contributions^{xxvii}.

As noted above, the site was administered by her long-term political ally and the then Statutory Deputy Mayor, Cllr John Gray^{xxviii}.

Professor David Hirsch, submitted his report. Before it became public, Gray, it appears, was offered the opportunity to resign, or be sacked. He appears to have taken the former option.

It was evident that Fiaz had attempted to delay and even avoid that outcome, relying as she did on Gray for political support. But with the new leader at the head of the Labour Party, the winds had changed and Fiaz was unable to retain Gray without losing much of her own political capital.



The anti-Semitism on the Newham Labour Facebook page was only the tip of the iceberg and is directly attributable to the coalition she and Gray built to secure the mayoral nomination. Fiaz remains under investigation by the Labour Party following a complaint by Councillors Clark and Peppiatt, (and for an unrelated complaint of bullying by 26 Newham councillors). Having commissioned a report on antisemitism in Newham Labour, the mayor appears to have prevented its publication and any action on its findings for several months, only taking action when she was forced to.



As we write one councillor has been suspended by the Labour Party for antisemitic postings, (Nazir Ahmed^{xxix}) and a second (Mushtaq Mughal) is being investigated for the same^{xxx}. These were not isolated backbenchers; they had the active support of their colleagues, one was Chair of the Labour Group and the other the Deputy Chair of Council. Subsequently councillors Riaz Miza and Suga Thekkeppurayil have been noted for their indulgence of antisemitic content in their social media.

Fiaz has had three years in office and it's clear that she has lost control of the agenda and roughly half of the Labour Group. She struggles to deliver on her policy aims; she U-Turned on the abolition of free school meals, and charges for bulky waste collection. She narrowly avoided an embarrassing defeat on emissions-based-parking charges.

Her attempts to force 50% social housing in new developments has seen developers skipping Newham entirely. Having based much of her electoral appeal on allegations of corruption she spent £200,000 trying to uncover it. Only to find that there was none and £200k went down the drain.

She finds herself assailed by the competing Momentum factions operating in East and West Ham.

She is on the defensive with south Asian shopkeepers who feel betrayed over on-street parking in major shopping areas. A new organisation (Newham People Power) were able to raise 10,000 names on a petition in two months in opposition to new residential parking charges. Despite the activity of her Tablighi allies, she is losing the sympathy of the mosques for whom the benefits of having a Muslim, any Muslim, Mayor are getting slimmer.

The honeymoon is over. Her clumsy approach to policy implementation has squandered the goodwill she had. She has introduced a new parking tax. And despite the maximum possible council tax rises over three years, she has spent the huge budget reserves left by the outgoing Wales administration (over £50m) and still struggles to balance the books.

Service cuts are not only inevitable but are taking place right now; we are informed that a round of voluntary redundancies being planned.

Cuts in services are opposed by large groups of residents. The decision to cut the City Farm led to a petition of over 40,000 signatures opposing the plan.

Whether it is because of service cuts or inept management, Newham has experienced a massive epidemic of fly-tipping and the borough is now reported as the filthiest in London^{xxxi}.

She is living proof that lack of ability should not be an impediment to ambition.

For three years, the Riverine site has been left without attention whilst a Court Order remains pending.

We understand there is a protracted legal battle between the Umair/Khan faction and the pro-Pakistan faction over control, with legal costs estimated in excess of £1m. We have been unable to confirm it, but understand that an injunction has been given in respect of the site, preventing the trustees from exercising full legal control of the land.

Privately we are told that leaders in the Newham Muslim Forum/TJ Delhi Faction are urging a hard line against any development urging Mayor Fiaz to deny anything that might reward the Raiwind faction.

In October 2020, reports emerged that the site was to be discussed at a meeting of Newham's Strategic Development Committee, but the meeting was cancelled and no papers have since become available. The Riverine Centre has not been on the agenda at any subsequent meeting.

Open Newham submitted an FOI request. The council were unable to provide a response within the prescribed time and sought an additional month to respond. We continued to seek details of any contact by the council with the Trustees of the Temple Mills site, or indeed anybody else with regard to the development of the site.

We learned that the removal of the hard standing for cars is no longer required by Newham Council, but they did not give a reason for this change. So, a car park accommodating several hundred vehicles remains on site for a centre that is officially shut. This seems strange when the council is charged by the court to enforce an order effectively closing the site.

Reading between the lines of an unusually opaque response from Newham, it is evident that there had been no communications with the Trustees between May 2018 and Spring 2021. It also appears that our FOI caused some anxious activity in the corridors of power. We learn from Newham Council that they,

“are speaking to the Trust who own the land as to what future proposals might entail and a time frame for next steps and actions. It is a large site and a viable strategy is required.

“The precise details of these negotiations would be subject to legal privilege and is therefore exempt under Section 42 of the Freedom of Information Act. This exemption covers communications between lawyers and their clients, to ensure the confidentiality of the communications.

“It is acknowledged there are public interest factors for disclosing the details of these negotiations including greater transparency and disclosure may improve your understanding of how this matter is being addressed. However, legal privilege is a fundamental principle of English law and is intended to protect confidential communications between lawyers and clients. It ensures that there can be free and frank communication between lawyers and clients in a safe and confidential space. The negotiations remain ongoing and we would not wish to jeopardise reaching the best possible resolution for this site by disclosing the details publicly at this stage.

“In all the circumstances, it is considered that the public interest factors in favour of

maintaining the exemption outweigh the public interest factors in favour of disclosure, particularly as this remains an active and ongoing negotiation.”

So, there we have it. For three years, Mayor Fiaz did nothing. Now Newham are speaking to the Trust and those discussions are so sensitive that they cannot tell us, even the parameters of the conversations.

A concern about such a complete refusal to share any information is that it gives grounds for breeding innumerable conspiracy theories. The trouble is, that some of them might be true.

Chief amongst these concerns are that a development, not wholly unlike the previously rejected planning applications, will suddenly be approved by Newham to the long-term detriment of the borough.



In the wake of her haemorrhaging support in the South Asian community (22% swing against Labour to Tories in East Ham Central by election), Fiaz has engaged in her own brand of dog-whistle politics, using Palestine as the issue. Anas Khan was prominent in the cause. It doesn't matter how much you're paying in additional tax or on parking fees that she promised she would not introduce, if she can intimate that she is strong on Palestine she becomes immune from criticism from within the Muslim community, or so it seems, she hopes.

Her key agents in this are the ‘Delhi Faction’ of TJ members, currently running Newham Muslim Forum. Will they want pay back?

Having campaigned for the abolition of the role of the mayor in order to get elected, Mayor Fiaz suddenly decided that she didn’t *really* agree with the idea of abolishing the mayoralty, and she is now seeking a second term in office. It seems likely that the NEC of the Labour Party will choose the candidate, but in the unlikely event that it goes to the membership, she will need the support of Newham Muslim Forum.

Newham Labour has experienced a new form of entryism. Nationally the party has begun to address the far-left entryism. In places like Newham the new variant has been left unchecked. It is plausible that this is because of a fear of accusations of Islamophobia. Bizarrely, the Labour Party has adopted a definition of Islamophobia which precludes the criticism of an ideology.

If this is the case it is cowardice of the highest order, which first abandons principle and then betrays those socially and politically liberal Muslim members of the Labour Party who have consistently battled against the reactionaries in the Muslim community. They are hung out to dry whilst the party embraces the more numerous, or more vociferous, reactionaries.

So here are some unanswered questions that the residents of Newham have a right to know:

1. What plans do Newham have, if any, for the regeneration of this strategic site which has been left undeveloped for 30 years?
2. Is the council discussing or considering any joint venture or joint development of the site with the Trustees or any other group or organisation? Particularly the Raiwind faction of TJ?
3. Alternatively, is Newham interceding, working towards, or in any other way supporting the ‘Delhi Faction’ of Tablighi Jamaat with a view to a new or joint development proposal?

Both CLPs in Newham have been suspended by Labour’s NEC. It seems that Newham Labour has become synonymous with factionalism, antisemitism, membership ‘irregularities’ and incompetence. The trouble is, no-one inside Newham Labour seems capable of turning the ship around and no-one else seems to care.

About the author(s). Clive Furness is a member of the Labour Party and for 21 years was a councillor in Newham. He is cited as the author of this report. However, much of the substance and the detail of the document is the result of the efforts and contributions of Muslim Labour Party member(s) in Newham. For reasons that we hope are obvious, neither the names, the sex nor the number of these individuals will be made known.

A background paper on the progress of the mosque development can be found at <https://www.opennewham.co.uk/the-riverine-centre/the-riverine-centre>

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