



THE CENTRE FOR SOCIAL COHESION

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Welcome to the May email update from The Centre for Social Cohesion. The CSC is the first think-tank in the UK to specialise in studying radicalisation and extremism within Britain. The Centre is an independent, non-partisan think tank.

A Degree of Influence

The Centre's latest report, *A Degree of Influence: The funding of strategically important subjects*, received coverage on the back of last month's release and an exclusive story with the [Daily Telegraph](#). The report was covered extensively in the [Guardian](#), [Times Higher Education](#) and [BBC News](#), with its findings also provoking debate in an article on the *Guardian's* [Comment is Free](#).

A Degree of Influence featured in a range of online media outlets on both sides of the Atlantic, including [Harry's Place](#) and [Tax Payer's Alliance](#) in the UK, and [Commentary](#) in the US. It was covered extensively in the regional press relevant to the universities, including the [Cambridge News](#) and London's [Camden New Journal](#), as well as student newspapers at the universities of [Edinburgh](#), [Cambridge](#) and [Lincoln](#).

Robin Simcox, author of the report and a Research Fellow at the Centre, wrote an article for the [Henry Jackson Society](#) outlining the *A Degree of Influence's* findings, saying:

"The UK government should be aware that the regimes keenest to fund the UK higher education system are also those most keen to shut down academic debate domestically – even extending to the torture and imprisonment of students. There needs to be much greater scepticism on the purposes behind donations from Saudi Arabia, Iran, China and the like. Academic neutrality is under threat; and a generation of future leaders would not thank us for turning a blind eye."

Douglas Murray, CSC Director, also highlighted the report in an article on [Conservative Home](#).

Press releases

The Centre issued a [press release](#) exclusively exposing the Islamist revolutionary group Hizb ut-Tahrir Britain (HT) – who have always maintained that they are a non-violent group - as promoting a violent jihadist agenda. The CSC discovered footage of Chief Media Advisor of HT Britain, Imran Waheed, addressing a crowd in London in which he rejected any possible peace with Israel, and claimed jihad was the only way to solve the current Middle East crisis:

"There will be no peace and no negotiations with the illegitimate entity of Israel which has usurped the Muslim lands...only one solution to the occupation of Muslim lands, one solution to the cries of the widows and the orphans, one solution to avenge the death of the elderly and the children...fight in the way of Allah those who fight you! Al-Jihad!"

The Centre's discovery was covered in the [Daily Telegraph](#) and the [Daily Mail](#).

The CSC also issued a [press release](#) highlighting that Mohammed Sawalha, one of the trustees of the North London Central mosque, was a signatory to the Istanbul Statement supporting jihad in Israel.

The Centre in the Press

In the wake of the arrest of Pakistani students in the north west of England, CSC Director Douglas Murray wrote an extensive piece for the [Sunday Telegraph](#) on the threat posed to the UK by radicalism on UK campuses, and highlighted the ways the CSC are combating this. Murray wrote:

“Last summer the Centre for Social Cohesion (CSC), in conjunction with the polling company YouGov, released a survey of Muslim student opinion in the UK. Forty per cent of Muslim students polled supported the introduction of sharia into British law for Muslims; a third supported the introduction of a worldwide caliphate instituted in accordance with sharia; and a third believed that killing in the name of their religion could be justified. This is the sea in which Muslim students who go on to carry out acts of terror are able to swim. But instead of engaging with the problem, Bill Rammell, the Minister for Higher Education, attacked the poll for finding out these things and declared that the problem of radicalism on campus was in fact ‘serious, but not widespread’. It is just one example of a government that cannot make the moral distinction between firefighter and fire.”

In his monthly contribution to the cultural and political magazine [Standpoint](#), Douglas Murray discussed the shortcomings of the traditional labels of left and right wing:

“What this lexicon has no way of denoting is the increasing number of us who now lie across rather than down those old political tracks. It has, for instance, no satisfactory way of describing those of us who are happy with the success of most 1960s’ rights achievements but believe such rights should be defended and even fought for at home and abroad by a state which restricts immigration while interfering in our life and pocket as little as possible.”

CSC Researcher Alexander Meleagrou-Hitchens also appeared in [Standpoint](#), writing an article discussing the Istanbul Statement and the gradual, but positive, shift in government attitude towards defeating Islamism: “There have recently been signs of an encouraging shift in attitudes towards Islamism within sections of the British government. Though there are still plenty of insiders claiming that ‘non-violent’ Islamists are our best defence against the violence that their ideology inspires in others, at least the error of this has been recognised by some.”

Meleagrou-Hitchens also wrote an article for the [Daily Star](#), Lebanon’s main English language newspaper, in which he denounced the decision taken by Lord Alderdice and Clare Short MP to invite Khaled Meshaal, head of Hamas’ Political Bureau, to address an audience of British parliamentarians and lords at Portcullis House, Westminster. Meleagrou-Hitchens said:

“There is a lot that Hamas needs to change before it can be considered a legitimate interlocutor. In the continuing refusal of many people in the UK to demand anything of the movement, the message to other organizations deliberately targeting civilians is clear: If you continue to kill innocents and refuse to denounce violence and violent rhetoric, you will markedly increase your chances of getting exactly what you want.”

CSC Director Douglas Murray was quoted on the [BBC News](#), [Daily Telegraph](#) and the [Times Online](#) commenting on plans to allow schools to schedule teacher training days on religious holidays, saying that:

"This idea is very regressive because people are being treated according to the background they're born into. This is the opposite of what we want to do, and risks fragmenting society."

Murray reviewed Kenan Malik’s new book *From Fatwa to Jihad: The Rushdie Affair and its Legacy* for this month’s [Literary Review](#), describing the book as “interesting, but frustrating”, and saying that:

“Malik’s outrage at the fundamentalists is evident throughout. The book is often interesting. What is less savoury is Malik’s positioning of himself. As a former Revolutionary Communist Party and Living Marxism type, Malik has migrated politically. But he is careful to ensure that whilst being ‘right’ about Rushdie and the significance of free speech, he is even now not seen to be ‘on the right’. This leads – and in fairness Malik is hardly alone on this – to strenuous attempts to distance himself from those who have made similar arguments...elsewhere he lands

in a very strange place where he describes Turkey's AK, and even more so Tunisia's Nahda, parties as having 'largely [shed] their Islamist trappings' and claiming that in the process they are 'often becoming better democrats than the secularists they toppled'. To which, at its kindest, one might add: 'For the time being'. ”

Murray was also the subject of a feature length article and interview in [Elsevier](#), the leading Dutch political magazine, and was interviewed for the Italian website [l'Occidentale](#).

Preventing campus radicalism

The CSC had been in contact with City University for the last two months encouraging them to reconsider their decision to allow Anwar al-Awlaki, who supports al-Qaeda and has served as spiritual adviser to three of the 9/11 terrorists, to address students at City University Islamic Society's annual dinner. Eventually the CSC was successful in persuading City to remove al-Awlaki from the event, a decision covered by the [Evening Standard](#).

Alexander Meleagrou-Hitchens described the efforts made by the CSC to highlight to City University some of al-Awlaki's views for an article on [Harry's Place](#).

Media and public appearances

CSC Director Douglas Murray appeared on BBC 2's [Daily Politics](#), the lunchtime political discussion show, discussing the Chancellor of the Exchequer's budget, the British economy, Secretary of State for Education Ed Balls, and foreign office leaks. Murray also appeared on [BBC Asian Radio](#) to discuss the controversy over allowing teacher training days to be placed on religious holidays for the Asian network's lunchtime discussion show.

Murray also spoke on the BBC World Service against a representative from Human Rights Watch, criticising Britain's decision to attend the United Nations' Durban conference on racism being held in Geneva – a forum which had previously been used almost solely to denounce Israel.

Murray spoke at the College of Law, at the City of London, discussing Iran, diplomacy and the rule of law. He also spoke at the Jewish Free School on multiculturalism and pluralism.

Upcoming

Douglas Murray will be debating at the University of Durham on Hamas and the Middle East. He will also be addressing policy makers, journalists and leading members of American think tanks on libel tourism for the Middle East Forum on Capitol Hill, Washington D.C.

The Centre for Social Cohesion is an independent think tank

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