



THE CENTRE FOR SOCIAL COHESION

Clutha House
10 Storey's Gate
London
SW1P 3AY
Tel: 0207 222 8909
mail@socialcohesion.co.uk
www.socialcohesion.co.uk

Welcome to the November email update from the Centre for Social Cohesion (CSC). 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.

Hizb ut-Tahrir: Ideology and Strategy

The CSC published a new report on Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT), a radical Islamist group that Shadow Home Secretary Chris Grayling MP recently promised to ban. [Hizb ut-Tahrir: Ideology and Strategy](#), by CSC researchers Houriya Ahmed and Hannah Stuart, reveals how HT uses front groups to embed itself into communities and deliberately downplays its intolerant beliefs. Members of HT in the UK have founded schools to propagate the party's ideology and even received government funding.

Based on extensive interviews with former leading members, over a year of fieldwork and previously unpublished internal strategy communiqués from HT's global leadership, the report is the most comprehensive study of the group's activities in the United Kingdom to date. The report concludes with a detailed analysis of the policies the government could adopt to limit the influence of HT in the UK.

Covering the report's findings, the [Sunday Telegraph](#) revealed that the Islamic Shakhshiyah Foundation, an HT charity that runs two primary schools – one in Haringey, North London and another in Slough, Berkshire – received £113,411 of government funds. Stuart is quoted as saying:

“Young people who get involved with Hizb ut-Tahrir's fronts are tricked into believing its radical agenda represents true Islam.”

A week later, the [Sunday Telegraph](#) revealed that Haringey Council has now suspended government funds to the Foundation. Ahmed is quoted as saying:

“This suspension of funding is very welcome. It is quite wrong for the British state to be funding groups that want to destroy it.”

Michael Gove MP, Shadow Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families, [asked](#) a parliamentary question regarding how much funding the Foundation has received in the last three years from the Government.

The report's findings were covered by the [Daily Mail](#), [Evening Standard](#), [Jewish Chronicle](#), [Haringey Independent](#), [National Secular Society](#), charity [newsletters](#) and numerous [online blogs](#). The report has also been covered by leading press in Pakistan, such as the [Daily Jang](#). Ahmed and Stuart were also quoted in Pakistan's [News on Sunday](#) about HT's activities:

“Ideologically HT is no different to al-Qaeda. It is a dangerous and divisive organisation that aims to implement a totalitarian dictatorship that will use violence to spread its rule. HT's strategy is to propagate its ideology amongst all levels of society and to indoctrinate the population with its extremist belief system, which it presents as 'true' Islam. The party's claim is a lie. Its ideology must be challenged and totally rejected.”

Ahmed spoke about the report's findings on [LBC Radio](#) with Nick Ferrari, and about HT's activities on the US chat show, [Secure Freedom Radio](#).

The BNP and the Online Fascist Network

In the context of BNP leader Nick Griffin's appearance on BBC 1's Question Time, [The BNP and the Online Fascist Network](#), published by the CSC in July 2009, was covered by the [Daily Mail](#), [Observer](#) and [Hudson New York](#).

In reference to the BNP sharing a platform with the white supremacist group Ku Klux Klan on a number of occasions, the report's author, Edmund Standing, was quoted as saying in [The People](#):

"The fact they are happy for people such as Arthur Kemp (BNP foreign affairs spokesman) to represent them shows those connections are far from over."

Writing in the [Independent](#) about Griffin's appearance on Question Time, CSC Director Douglas Murray stated that:

"Nick Griffin represents a fascist party which can now claim to speak for almost a million voters [...] The only way to take the BNP apart is to explain that there are legitimate reasons for people in the UK to be worried about immigration and the future of our country but that Griffin is a racist and exactly the wrong person to deal with that. Our government and opposition – epitomised by fellow panellists, Jack Straw and Sayeeda Warsi – have spent years cosying up to Islamic fascists. Now they have the chance to meet the nativist variety this has given succour to. I only wish they knew how to destroy what they have helped create."

The Centre in the Press

The CSC revealed in the [Sunday Express](#) that the Mayor of London's office and the Greater London Authority invited Mohamed Ali Harrath to speak at the Muslim celebration of Eid in Trafalgar Square. Harrath is the subject of an Interpol Red Notice for "terrorism", "counterfeiting" and "crimes involving the use of weapons/explosives". CSC Researcher Alexander Meleagrou-Hitchens said:

"The invitation shows a worrying inconsistency in what the Tories have said about Islamic extremism recently."

Meleagrou-Hitchens also wrote for [Conservative Home](#) on the issue, stating:

"The view set out by the Mayor's office above is entirely inconsistent with previous Conservative Party statements on Mr. Harrath. In December 2008 the Times [reported](#) that Shadow Security Minister, Pauline Neville-Jones, called for Mr. Harrath to be removed from his position as an advisor to the Metropolitan Police."

London Assembly member Andrew Boff then defended the London Mayor's Office and the East London Mosque (ELM) In response, Hitchens wrote for [Conservative Home](#), stating:

"In the past, Mr. Boff has spoken out about prejudices against homosexuals, and I would like to ask him how he squares this with his support for the ELM, which hosts preachers with extreme homophobic views. We are not talking simply about people opposed to civil partnerships here: Khalid Yasin advocates the death penalty for homosexuality; and his fellow Wahhabi preacher Bilal Phillips, whose last appearance at the ELM was in June, teaches that AIDS is a 'divine retribution' for the practice of homosexuality."

In reference to hate-preacher Anjem Choudary's cancelled March4Shariah protest on 31 October 2009, Ahmed told the [Daily Express](#):

"I think they are just doing this for publicity. Anjem Choudary is a ridiculous man. But that does not mean his ideology is not dangerous."

Murray's monthly column for [Standpoint](#) outlined his experience at the latest Conservative Party conference. Describing a panel with Shadow Culture Secretary Jeremy Hunt MP at the conference, Murray said:

"Hunt told us of an initiative launched that day — MyConservatives.com — through which people could keep in touch with the party. 'Like what?' I wondered. The first campaign, Hunt informed us, was aimed at helping people save their local pub. I help my local pub by drinking in it. I don't expect the government or political parties to assist me. But it provided an interesting comparison. Just two days before Hunt and I spoke, the Irish voted 'Yes' in their second referendum on the Lisbon Treaty. The vote made the likelihood that Britons would get a vote on Lisbon even more remote...To no avail I pointed out how strange it was that while the Conservatives might help you save your local pub, they would do nothing to save the sovereignty of your nation."

Writing for the *Guardian's* [Comment is Free](#), Murray discussed the Government's counter-extremism PREVENT strategy and accusations that it is used for "spying" on British Muslim communities. Murray argued that PREVENT is not about spying, and criticised members of the Government-funded Quilliam

Foundation for claiming that the Government “should use” information gathered on Muslims as part of its PREVENT agenda. Murray stated:

“This anti-extremism organisation seems entirely unaware of the tenets of the society it is paid to extol. Anyone who has any knowledge of how counter-terrorism was practised in Northern Ireland or elsewhere knows that the bar for monitoring people (let alone, as the Guardian has reported, the collection of information on innocent peoples' personal lives) has to remain exceedingly high for society to retain any semblance of freedom.”

As a member of NGO Monitor's International Advisory Board, Murray signed a [letter](#) alongside Elie Wiesel, Prof. Alan Dershowitz, R. James Woolsey, Elliott Abrams, Prof. Judea Pearl and Tom Gross criticising Human Rights Watch (HRW) for vilifying Israel. The letter was published in the [Guardian](#), and requests an independent evaluation of HRW. Murray also signed a petition requesting Prime Minister Gordon Brown to reject the recent United Nations Goldstone report into Operation Cast Lead in Gaza late last year. This was covered by the [Jewish Chronicle](#).

Media and Public Appearances

Murray made a [short film](#) for BBC 1's This Week programme on the need for greater political leadership in the UK over the war in Afghanistan. The film was followed by a studio discussion with presenter Andrew Neil as well as regular guests Labour MP Diane Abbott and former Conservative MP Michael Portillo. Murray also spoke about Afghanistan alongside Labour MP Eric Joyce for the Nicky Campbell show on BBC Radio 5 Live.

Murray was a keynote speaker for the Fondazione Magna Carta at the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Rome. He addressed key NATO commanders, the Italian Foreign Minister and other members of the Italian Parliament on the role of democracies in promoting human rights.

He also spoke at two fringe events at the Conservative Party conference. He was interviewed in the Freedom Zone by Alex Deane of Big Brother Watch on civil liberties and national security. He also appeared alongside Jeremy Hunt MP at a panel discussion that was [broadcast](#) on the BBC World Service. Murray spoke to multiple media sources, including Channel 4 News, about his views on the party conference.

Murray spoke to the Young Britons Foundation at Wellington College, which also hosted speakers from the Conservative Party, such as Daniel Hannan MEP, the Party Chairman Eric Pickles MP, Paul Goodman MP and Douglas Carswell MP. He also spoke alongside Labour MP Hazel Blears on a panel for the *Independent* newspaper at Manchester University.

Murray was interviewed by LBC Radio regarding Communities Minister John Denham MP's comments that he feared a rise in radicalism amongst disillusioned, white working class men, and to Sunrise Radio on Nick Griffin's appearance on Question Time. He was also interviewed by the same station about extremist group al-Muhajiroun's proposed rally for Shariah law in London.

Houriya Ahmed was interviewed for a BBC World Service broadcast on East Asian minorities in the UK, discussing the importance of integration and shared British values. CSC Researcher Robin Simcox was interviewed for [BBC Oxford News](#), discussing the threat to civil liberties posed by a police database which monitors domestic extremists who have not been charged of any crime. Alexander Meleagrou-Hitchens spoke to Network Europe radio on how white supremacist groups are reported in the European press.

Campus Tour

As part of the Centre's regular campus tour, Murray addressed students at the University of Surrey and spoke alongside Oliver Kamm and Alan Mendoza at the University of Oxford Union on the need for interventionism in foreign policy. He also spoke to the Institute of Ideas at their 'Battle of Ideas' conference.

Forthcoming

Murray will continue his tour of university campuses and will be speaking at University College London this month.

Press enquiries: 0207 222 8909 / 07538 248610 / pressoffice@socialcohesion.co.uk

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