

Press Release

The Times Publishes Misleading Propaganda about Hizb ut Tahrir

Your article, 'Extremists Hizb ut-Tahrir targeting inner-city youth in Birmingham,' in The Times on 22 September 2018 reads like a masterclass in misleading propaganda, which would appear to be one in a series of recent pieces of a similar nature.

There is much for us to ignore about this piece, but I'd like to take the opportunity to expand on some of your points.

The first is about the overtly misleading nature of the article, which reads as it is for manufacturing opinion to aid the government's renewed attempts to get greater powers to silence dissenting voices.

In labelling our organisation an "extremist group", it would have been less misleading to add that this label is used by secular governments who consider that anyone who questions the validity of secularism is an 'extremist' - a cowardly slur that avoids any real debate on secular ideas and their harmful effects on society.

Your article stated that Hizb ut Tahrir is banned in some countries - but you didn't tell your readers that the reality of these countries is that they are mostly repressive dictatorships who use the label of 'extremism' to abduct, torture and even kill political critics of the system.

Your article chose not to inform your readers that in the past even the government's own advisors have been forced to admit in private what they rarely admit in public - which is that the theories of 'radicalisation and extremism' that are peddled and used to attack Islam and the work of our organisation are flawed - and probably even counter-productive. (<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/journalists/andrew-gilligan/7908262/Hizb-ut-Tahrir-is-not-a-gateway-to-terrorism-claims-Whitehall-report.html>)

Your article used innuendo, describing our campaign [#StandForNothingFallForAnything](#) as a 'recruitment drive' in an area that is 'linked to terrorism' - but chose not to say the party youth have run this campaign up and down the country in many neighbourhoods where Muslims live, particularly those areas troubled by secular gang violence.

Your article implied something covert saying some of the campaign materials did not mention the name Hizb ut Tahrir - but ignored what was said to your journalist in email correspondence, that all of the members of the party who were active in the campaign are well known in their communities as being active with the party; that it was widely advertised on Hizb ut Tahrir's UK website and social media; and that we wrote to mosques and community leaders informing them of purpose of this particular Hizb ut Tahrir campaign.

Finally, on the point of misleading your readers in an overtly politicised way, when you alleged that a Birmingham organiser defended a Manchester Imam who called for jihad, it would have been less misleading to have actually quoted from the email correspondence that you had with the party about this specific Press Release: "*The press release about the Imam's Statement accuses the BBC of stifling sensible discussion about Jihad, so as to encourage the*

incorrect view that Jihad is akin to terrorism, which it is not. Civilians in Syria who picked up arms to defend themselves against the murderous President Assad should not be blamed for that, as their objective is to defend their lives against attacks. From your selection of quotes, it appears that your article may also add to confusion about jihad, further preventing sensible debate and so doing more harm than good.”

The second point is regarding the clear aim of such reporting - and that is to silence views like ours that challenge the dominant norms.

We have become used to the British government and apologists for secularism at home (which includes sections of the media) using bullying tactics to silence criticism, as well as the UK and other Western governments giving their blessing to regimes across the world to try to stem the revival of Muslims.

But we are unashamed of this campaign - which was overtly provoking ordinary citizens, Muslims and non-Muslims, to challenge the dominant thinking about secular society and its impact within the UK and across the world. These people are ultimately all victims of a secular elite - which includes the government and their media apologists - who exploit them and who feel threatened by challenging ideas - and so do everything in their power to avoid and prevent such scrutiny and debate. We believe ordinary citizens, Muslims and non-Muslims, deserve the opportunity to really discuss and debate these fundamental ideas that society is founded upon, but which are considered beyond discussion by the state.

We are unashamed of our position on the Blessed Land - Palestine, where Hizb ut Tahrir has consistently called for the armies in Muslim countries to be part of the plan to liberate the occupied lands of the Blessed Land - Palestine. A ‘state-level’ military occupation requires a state-level response, which includes military preparation, not the actions of individuals nor the inactions of international institutions. This is nothing new and Lord Carlisle knows well that this has been a very prominent part of the party’s call here when he was the government appointed reviewer of terrorism legislation.

We are very clear on the language we use and why we use it. We do not recognise ‘Israel’ as a legitimate state because it is based on the occupation of the land of Palestine and the displacement of its people... We in Britain use the term “Zionist entity”, so as to be clear that we do not generalise the issue of occupation to all Jewish people.

When Muslims speak of Zionism in Palestine they really do mean the illegal occupation of the land of Palestine, and not a general slur against all Jewish people. Muslims feel great pain at the horrible injustices of the Zionist occupation, as they readily identify with the victims of this foul colonial project. So when a poet spoke on the subject, your journalist knew full well that this was the context - and his adjective for a destructive political philosophy has nothing to do with ‘hate speech’ - a term that is increasingly being used to silence discussion on the issue.

I am aware you spent weeks trying to construct your angles, willfully ignoring much of our correspondence - and I am aware that the line between journalism and propaganda can sometimes be a fine one. Sadly, this article was nowhere near that fine line!

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