

Press Release

Debate Rages over whether Hizb ut Tahrir should continue to appear on University Campuses

Following the Government's announcement that it would stop “no-platforming” of controversial figures on university campuses, Labour backbencher Jo Stevens submitted a written question to the House of Commons asking whether ministers supported the principle of no-platforming “extremist Islamist groups, including Hizb ut Tahrir, the Muslim Public Affairs Committee and far right groups such as the British National Party and the English Defence League.” Universities Minister Sam Gyimah replied that “does not support blanket no-platforming of individuals or organisations who are legally exercising their right to freedom of speech.”

Unfortunately, a tabloid newspaper saw fit to use the story to regurgitate old and untrue accusations about Hizb ut Tahrir, which remain baseless and totally discredited. As media representative of Hizb ut Tahrir in Britain I wrote to the editor of the newspaper - <http://www.hizb.org.uk/media/press-releases/letter-editor-mirror-regarding-lies-hizb-ut-tahrir/>

We have said before and will continue to say that it is not Hizb ut Tahrir that spreads terror and hate, causing fear and division; rather it is the government policy of muscular liberalism, those in the media who spread it, and ultimately the failure of secularism itself.

The newspaper also claimed that Hizb ut Tahrir’s “views are so extreme that computers in Parliament are blocked from accessing its homepage.” Were Ms Stevens allowed access to our website, then perhaps she might see for herself that equating Hizb ut Tahrir with “far-right racists” is not only intellectually lazy, but reveals a failure to understand our party and Islam more generally. The organisations that she mentioned in her question are all currently subject to a National Union of Students’ “no-platform’ ban, again tarring all with the same broad brush.

I myself discovered Hizb ut Tahrir whilst attending a university meeting held by a black civil rights group. I asked the organisers whether I - a white Englishman - could join their organisation, but was ironically dismissed because of my colour. A member of Hizb ut Tahrir present outside the meeting argued that bonds between people based on race, colour, ethnicity or geography were weak, divisive and inferior to association by ideas and values. It was on the grounds of opposing racism that I first came into contact with this movement.

What I learned about the Islamic ideas espoused by Hizb ut Tahrir is their intellectual, reasoned foundation. This eventually led me to accepting Islam, and to even end-up as a prisoner of conscious in Egypt for upholding these beliefs.

That these beliefs appear strange from the standpoint of today’s dominant secular liberal norms is no surprise. But their failure to comply with the status quo would be a poor reason to discount them. We make no apology for tirelessly advancing a way out for the Muslim world from poverty, corruption, backwardness and poor governance by calling for a vision that stands apart from the repeated failures of socialism, secularism, capitalism and Western intervention.

Hizb ut Tahrir takes up a challenge against the political and economic system that seeks to impose itself as the 'mainstream' in the Muslim world, often by force. Even with 'muscular liberalism' trying to impose values on Muslims in these islands, we do not generalise the genuine problems Muslims face to the average person in Britain, but instead focus our criticism and anger on the political class that makes and supports such policies.

What we see unfolding in front of our eyes are attempts to stifle debate and discourse through the policing of thought. Is it any wonder that the people's views are so easily manipulated and disregarded, such that they have become akin to a political football, kicked around by powerful self-interested elite groups.

During the Brexit debate, open honest debate about the weakness of the capitalist economy and the need for free trade gave way to puerile xenophobic and racist propaganda. With regard to Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan and Yemen the notion of terrorism took primacy, instead of an open and honest debate about the role of colonialism in the world and how a foreign policy is placed for the interests of the elite.

The level of discourse has become so closed and ludicrous now that we are living in a post fact era where fact has no bearing on the situation today. One only has to look at the silliness of Ofsted interrogating primary school Muslim girls about their headscarves, their claim that it is a symbol of sexualisation, the calls to ban all headscarves, or Facebook's seventy-one gender options; debate about which is practically non-existent - we must only hear and obey.

With a government and "mainstream" media that are so obviously anti-Islam, wasting no opportunity to paint Islam and Muslims in a negative light to frighten anyone who would be tempted to consider its teachings; one has to wonder whether the values that people are being governed by are so weak that they can't stand a debate against a young student, a lady choosing to wear hijab to please her creator, or a city professional who feels the economy is in crisis.

How are people expected to know the truth about Islam, if even university students and professors are to be banned from hearing about it from Hizb ut Tahrir on campus?

This is in contrast to the Islamic way of life, as for one to adopt the Islamic creed, one is obliged to question the reality and rationally come to a conclusion about the truthfulness of the Quran and the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him. Islam teaches values and principles that Muslims are not afraid to debate, from women's rights, politics, foreign policy and jihad, to economics and even Bitcoin.

However, we will not resort to hiding behind fabricated slurs about the secular system and its fruits, rather we are happy to present the facts of Islam and secularism, their respective creeds, values and practice, and let the one with the distinguishing mind decide what the best system is for humankind.

Yahya Nisbet

Media Representative of Hizb ut Tahrir in Britain