

Readers Don't Matter At The Guardian

Researched & Published By

Islam Surveyed

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Readers Don't Matter – At The Guardian

This is what the Guardian had to say a few weeks back. [1]

.... People are angry with government, with media, with religion, with migration, with Europe, with big business.comments posted below storiesextraordinary growth in numbers, sometimes running as high as 65,000a day.

*.... Certain subjects – **race, immigration and Islam in particular** – attract an **unacceptable level of toxic commentary**, believes Mary Hamilton, our executive editor, audience. "The overwhelming majority of these comments tend towards racism, abuse of vulnerable subjects, author abuse and trolling, and the resulting conversations below the line bring very little value but cause consternation and concern among both our readers and our journalists," she said last week.*

As a result, it had been decided that comments would not be opened on pieces on those three topics unless the moderators knew they had the capacity to support the conversation and that they believed a positive debate was possible.

[Emphasis added]

In an article published a few hours later Mary Hamilton herself offered further explanation.

....the decision to cut down the number of places where we open comments on stories relating to a few contentious subjects – particularly migration and race.isn't to stop comments appearing at all, but rather to enable us to manage them more effectively.

.... Writers who touch on tricky subjects – race, gender, Israel, migrationcan often find themselves on the receiving end of abuseas well as reasoned debate and criticism.

At their worst, the resulting conversations drive away the commenters who want to speak with moderate voices, because it is those who have an agenda who have the greatest will to stick around.

.... When we talk about improving the comments, we aren't just speaking about censorship or eliminating criticism: what we want instead is to free the voices that struggle to be heard, so that we can listen.

What Is Wrong With This?

These fatuous excuses hide the real reason why The Guardian is restricting comments on certain contentious subjects.

The Guardian gives no figure for "an unacceptable level of toxic commentary" even though it is easy to enumerate "toxic comments". Where a comment has been removed by a moderator from the comment stream there is an empty comment space with a notice saying "This comment was removed by a moderator because it didn't abide by our community standards" and these can be counted. [2]

On posts concerning Islam this runs at 7% of comments. It is also likely, judging from what some commenters say who have had a comment removed but have had another published, that some comments are removed unfairly. Perhaps those that are truly toxic, abusive, racist, threatening, trolling, off-topic, are only 5% or so.

According to Mary Hamilton (executive editor, audience) toxic comments "*drive away the commenters who want to speak with moderate voices*". She thinks only commenters "with an agenda" who can't express themselves "moderately" stick around and dominate the below the line discussion.

Laughable isn't it! Perhaps many of those "with an agenda" can express themselves in a moderate fashion. Perhaps having an agenda means they know something about the subject.

And that's not all. Toxic comments are promptly removed by moderators. So, most of those potential moderate commenters that Hamilton wants to encourage must be driven away not because they read toxic comments but because they see the words "*This comment was removed by a moderator because it didn't abide by our community standards*" and imagine (with shock and horror, one assumes) what was there before.

Not only laughable but ridiculous! What Hamilton is really complaining about is the huge number of sensible and knowledgeable comments, a good number of which are expressed very moderately, on Islam and other contentious subjects that don't agree with her and the Guardian editorial line, and the **massive support these comments get from other Guardian readers.**

Recent analysis [3] of comments on Guardian articles concerning Islam gives the following clear picture.

	% of Readers Comments	% of Readers Votes on Comments
Pro Article/Islam	16	5
Neutral or Unclassifiable	20	6
Anti Article/Islam	64	89
TOTAL	100	100

Nine out of 10 readers are critical of Islam and the Guardian's editorial line on the subject.

The Workload

The Guardian is also keen to point out that allowing comments on articles generates a very significant moderation workload. We are told there is an "*....extraordinary growth in numbers, sometimes running as high as 65,000a day*".

There is a better indication of what's involved. There are on average 993 comments per article [4] on articles concerning Islam, one of the three most contentious subjects.

This count is based on 48 articles published between 24 February 2015 and 5 November 2015, a 254 day period, an article every 5.3 days.

The survey these figures come from [3] probably covered a third if not a half of the all the articles concerning Islam with comments. So we have a workload where Islam is concerned of about 900 comments every 1 to 2 days.

Occasionally, once or twice a year perhaps, the number of comments goes off the scale. An article on the 14 November 2015 concerning the Paris Islamist massacre generated

7155 comments. (The top rated comment on this article can be seen on p10 of this document.)

Do Readers Matter?

Wouldn't you expect a newspaper to respond to contentious subjects that clearly bother a very large number of its readers by increasing or redeploying resources to cover them?

You might even get articles that address readers' concerns or at least take the trouble, in the case of the Guardian, to explain why such a huge number of its readers are wrong and it is right.

All we get is unmitigated humbug (and unfortunate wording!) "... *When we talk about improving the comments, we aren't **just** speaking about censorship or eliminating criticism: what we want instead is to free the voices that struggle to be heard, so that we can listen.*"

Judge Comments For Yourself

The rest of this document gives a selection of top rated (those with the highest number of votes from fellow readers) and typical comments on articles concerning Islam published by the Guardian over the last 18 months.

For each article you are given; (1) the date of the article, (2) its title, (3) the sub-title which often gives the main message of the article, and (4) the total number of comments for that article, and in some cases the author, and then the selected comment or comments.

A bracket at the start of each comment gives the number of readers that voted in support of the comment.

Judge for yourself the nature of published comments in the case of Islam and if they warrant the ridiculous reaction of the Guardian.

Islam Surveyed "picks" are highlighted in yellow! If you are short of time do at least have a look at these!

Notes

[1] <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/jan/31/readers-editor-on-readers-comments-below-the-line>

[2] Open a Guardian article with comments, select show 100 comments or all, then use your browser's text string search feature to find and count the number of occurrences of "comment was removed by a moderator", for example.

[3] *What People Think of Islam, Readers' Comments, LEFT, RIGHT & CENTRE* Researched & Published By Islam Surveyed, December 2015. See: <http://readerscommentsonislam.com/view-download-reports/>

[4] The range of comments that gives this average is 130 to 2753 comments.

For further information about "Islam Surveyed" see: <http://islamsurveyed.com/>

Top Rated and Typical Comments on Guardian Articles Concerning Islam

January 22, 2016

Cameron and Muslim women: a new twist on an old colonial story

The prime minister's intervention implies he bears the white man's burden to 'save' the brown woman. [*Madeleine Bunting, 1419 comments*]

[TOP RATED COMMENT 541 votes] So, an inability to speak English after a decade or more in the country is a good thing, because it is sticking two fingers up to 19th century British colonialism?

[3RD 343] This insane article makes me bristle with anger. It seems the Guardian sees racism and imperialism in everything.

Cameron was making a sensible remark about immigrants who can't speak English: if they are to integrate and be financially independent, they need to learn it. It's sensible – really rare thing for Cameron.

[5TH 315] Sikhs, Hindus, and Muslims in the UK hail from the same background and were all affected by colonialism. When you study how the communities have progressed there are startling differences (Muslims with degrees 20%, Sikhs: 30%, Hindus: 45%).

The key issue is the progress made by respective women. The better the women are integrated the better the whole community does. If you stand in the way of progress of women then you suffer.

January 18, 2016

Cameron has alienated the very people he must ally with: Muslim women

The prime minister's rhetoric won't just upset Muslim women – it has an anti-women tone in general. [*Deborah Orr, 1210 comments*]

[TOP RATED COMMENT 569 votes] I think that it's time to let go of the idea that Islam can only be reformed from the inside, especially given that there's no sign of it happening. We in the west – including moderate Muslims – should stop tip-toeing around it for fear of causing 'offence'.

.... Everyone should be free to believe what they want, and everyone else should be free to openly question that, with no fear of violence.

.... It's absurd to sit around waiting for Islam to reform itself from within, when it's plain to see that it's moving in the opposite direction. Those Muslims who want to publicly speak out can only do so if they're ready for immediate martyrdom at the hands of their grim-faced coreligionists. The conditions created by these lunatics are such that Islam can't possibly reform. The process can't even begin.

January 12, 2016

Let's tap into Islam's heritage of critical education to defeat extremism in schools

There are more effective ways to protect Muslim pupils than the government's Prevent strategy, says a Muslim educator. [*Abdullah Sahin, 599 comments*]

[TOP RATED COMMENT 140 votes] And exactly what parts of The Koran and the Hadith are actually open to criticism?

This is the fundamental problem with Islam in the Western world. Muslims believe that Islam is the perfect solution for humanity. Perfection cannot, by definition, be criticised. It is extremely, extremely difficult to have a sensible, objective discussion with people on a topic, if that is their starting point.

[3RD 111] Unmitigated sophistry, coming from a religion that punishes, or even executes, apostates.

For this country to move forward and embrace true integration, we must become secular and remove all religious influence from our laws and schools.

January 10, 2016

After Cologne, the uneasy question: is cultural coexistence still possible?

Liberalism must defeat those looking to exploit the NYE events or a benign European Union will be lost. [*Will Hutton, 2286 comments*]

[TOP RATED COMMENT 377 votes] No. Islam and democracy are incompatible, always will be. 'There's no such thing as a democratic Muslim', as an imam said.

[2ND 311] The Arabs coming over are in no way interested in becoming good Germans. They want to continue with their present cultural identity, just set within the material comfort and security of a western state.

Like water and oil, these two cultures will not mix.

January 8, 2016

Let's not shy away from asking hard questions about the Cologne attacks

Just because xenophobes are fanning the flames doesn't mean we should censor the discussion about the assaults in German cities on New Year's Eve. [*Gaby Hinsliff, 6127 comments*]

[TOP RATED COMMENT 2131 votes] Finally, after several days of refusing to report the biggest story of 2016 so far because it does not fit with its highly ideological driven narrative, this paper is allowing comments on a story which has shown its contempt for victims of sexual assault.

It's predictable enough that the first writer to tackle this does not ask why the Mayor of Cologne and many on the left are blaming the victims themselves for their own rapes.

.... Please never print another article on women's rights ever again, you have no credibility on this issue and owe those on the opposite side of the political spectrum who have now been proved correct a massive apology. I write this as a guardian reader and buyer of 17 years and someone who has always voted for left of centre parties (both of which I won't be doing ever again).

[3RD 990] "Let's not shy away from asking hard questions about the Cologne attacks" – and this article does exactly that.

January 5, 2016

Diversity could be the making of Europe – let's talk about it

Refugees are transforming the cultural mix of our societies. We need new ways to confront our fears. [*Natalie Nougayrède, 1727 comments*]

[TOP RATED COMMENT 522 votes] I have read some deluded and out of touch articles in the Guardian, but this one is written by someone whose bubble is so thick it could never be burst,

"Saying that migrants, whatever their cultural background, must abide by laws as much as be protected by them, may be stating the obvious but it also raises sensitivities and should therefore be part of that debate."

No, it should not be part of a debate – and don't try to kid us with vague statements within an article that effectively says refugees and migrants should do as they please and indigenous populations should do whatever they can to make them welcome.

Multiculturalism can only work if two cultures are compatible – if one is centuries less mature than the other it will not and cannot work.

... What the author is advocating is exactly how the Rotherham scandal was allowed to evolve. It is why backward hate preaching was/is allowed. It is why sexism is so rife in society.

[2ND 503] There isn't a single practical suggestion made here, just lots of buzzwords and no explanation as to why diversity is intrinsically a good thing. Homogenous countries such as Japan and South Korea are doing perfectly well.

Why do only European countries need to be 'enriched' in larger numbers year on year, regardless of the wishes of their citizens?

December 15, 2015

Merkel is wrong – demanding Syrians assimilate could backfire

With even the French saying that assimilationism has failed, perhaps it's time Germany realised multiculturalism could be the answer. [*837 comments*]

[5TH 356] Multiculturalism in Sweden has been a disaster if you measure it by crime, employment, education outcomes and the like.

[6TH 355] Do any Muslim countries support multiculturalism? Would Saudi Arabia, for example, allow 500,000 Christians to move there, build churches, drink alcohol, wear whatever they feel like, and so on? I don't think so.

The idea that any country would or should allow hundreds of thousands of people to suddenly turn up, for whatever reason, and with the idea that they do not have to adhere to that country's traditions is ludicrous.

[7TH 333] I'd love to see what would happen to European women if they refused to change their own cultural values when they are in "Muslim" countries.

[9TH 326] Why is so wrong to ask immigrants to assimilate into their host community? Why should the host community lose its traditions, identity and values to accommodate people who have just arrived? This premise is absurd and leads to division and alienation.

December 11, 2015

With Islamophobia on the rise I fear for my friends and family

Donald Trump's comments are no joke – they are helping to fuel a wave of hate crime that, as I know from my own experience, makes all of us less safe. [*Sadiq Khan, 1853 comments*]

[TOP RATED COMMENT 516 votes] *"We must do more to challenge Islamophobia. As mayor of London, I'll make tackling hate crimes – including Islamophobia... – a top priority for the Metropolitan police and ensure they get the resources they need to make a real difference. I'll work with the police and community organisations to improve the way we report and record Islamophobic crimes – so we have the best possible information to act on"*

Really? Why is everyone insistent on pandering to this cult/religion, the police resources should be spent investigating murder/rape and working and walking the beat in order to help people feel safe. You will not get my vote.

This country is not an Islamic one, we are fed up of Islam being put on some sort of pedestal as some sort of inscrutable way of life if they want to go talk about made up fairy tales, fine, but maybe you should spend police resources on ensuring Islamic hate preachers, problematic mosques and groups of growing radicalised members are being monitored rather than monitoring everyone else in case someone says something that could be considered remotely offensive to Muslims.

[4TH 359] *"Tell Mama, the organisation that monitors Islamophobia, revealed there were 115 attacks in the week after the terrorist attack on Paris – a spike of more than 300%"*

A lot less than the number that died or had their lives ruptured by the Paris attacks.

"Islamophobic Attacks", all non-fatal and a lot likely to have been verbal or merely perceived. Not nice, but inevitable and – forgive me – inconsequential, in the scheme of things.

[5TH 234] Trump is a fool and I would not like his finger within a hundred miles of the nuclear button.

But over the Muslim issue he is not advocating violence or breaking any of our laws.

Oh and about all these thousands of names on the petition to ban him I'd just love to know if there are many from people who sympathise with the murder of cartoonists and apostates or approved of the fatwa against Rushdie.

Now that is real criminal incitement to violence. So are we monitoring the people who enter our country to find out their attitudes about apostasy, punishments for homosexuals etc? Should we admit anyone who is advocating murder.

December 1, 2015

As a Muslim woman I was never fearful in Britain. But today I'm afraid

Since the Paris attacks, people who look like me are given hell every day. I no longer think it will get better. [1511 comments]

[TOP RATED COMMENT 903 votes] We are all still waiting for this "terrible backlash" against Muslims, that we are all told that is inevitable due to our inherent Islamophobia. Been waiting for years.

Basically, most people are too intelligent to blame the majority for the actions of the minority, despite the apparent hope that we aren't.

Globally, Muslims have more to fear from other Muslims than from non-Muslims. In the UK, they are probably as safe as they are anywhere in the world.

November 24, 2015

Are Islamist terrorists pious conservatives or drug-taking hedonists?

Jihadist leaders are often highly intelligent and fanatical; their foot soldiers are often the opposite, motivated by a love of violence and a sense of revenge. [Usama Hasan, 727 comments]

[TOP RATED COMMENT 251 votes] "all terrorists forget the core Islamic teachings of compassion, forgiveness and humanity that would preclude any act of terrorism."

But they pay close attention to the other core Islamic teachings of subjugating infidels, waging violent Jihad and treating women as second class citizens. As an Imam, you'll be fully aware that these things are fully justified in Islamic teaching – so why condescend us all?

November 23, 2015

Why the Sun's 'jihadi' poll is dubious – and its headline dangerous

A survey on British Muslim sympathies doesn't stand up to scrutiny, yet it has been aggressively reported by the Sun just when hate crimes are soaring. [Miqdaad Versi, Muslim Council of Britain, 762 comments]

[4TH 207] "Regulation may not be the answer, but my hope is that improved religious literacy and basic decency is."

What the flying fuck is "improved religious literacy?" I would prefer if the parables of ancient desert peoples were finally put in the bin quite frankly.

November 17, 2015

The Guardian view on defeating Isis: winning hearts and minds

The terrorists want to divide by fear. The best defence is to build solidarity by expanding our common home. [299 comments]

[TOP RATED COMMENT 192 votes] More of the usual about Muslim feelings of alienation and lack of inclusion.

Why don't the Sikh, Hindu or Chinese communities in the West complain about underachievement at schools, lack of jobs, or not having a voice in government? Why do we not have to deal with such extremism in those communities?

Pigheaded western policies in the Muslim world make the problem much worse than it would otherwise be, but that doesn't distract from the fact that there is currently an extreme rot eating away at the heart of Islam itself.

Perhaps part of the solution would be to recognize the cancer emanating from Saudi Arabia, and start treating that vile nation as the horror that it is?

November 15, 2015

Mindless terrorists? The truth about Isis is much worse

They deal in chaos, but they work from a script. The failure to understand that is costing us dear. [2648 comments]

[TOP RATED COMMENT 534 votes] It is critical that we understand what is really going on, starting with an acknowledgement that Islam – the moderate kind – has an integral role to play. If you tell your kids that the Qu'ran represents the words of God, then they're uniquely vulnerable to someone telling them that all the words in the Qu'ran are true, including the ones that don't match with 21st century democracy and liberalism.

It's absurd to carry on insisting that all this has nothing to do with the 'religion of peace'. And it's condescending in the extreme to behave as if any acknowledgment of this will unleash some sort of Fourth Reich in Europe – it won't.

It's possible to distinguish between people (who deserve respect) and their ideas (which don't). No one, of any religion or none, should be afraid to walk the streets of Europe. But it's not 'far-right fear-mongering' to point out that Islam is diametrically opposed to every value that defines us, even when it's not being used to actively harm us.

This weekend the Guardian ran a piece called "*Terrorism has come about in assimilationist France and also in multicultural Britain. Why is that?*" – this sort of wilfully inane questioning has gone on far too long. We all know why, and it's not about our policies.

[2ND 415] The problem is that silent majorities are irrelevant when there is a motivated violent minority. Hitler's Germany, Stalinist Russia, Maoist China, Cambodia under Pol Pot. What do they have in common? The violent minorities prospered, and the silent majority (who just want to be left alone) suffer and are slaughtered.

November 14, 2015

Parisians had got used to the 'new normal', but this is an attack on a terrifying scale

We thought we were on guard against potential attackers, but we had not fathomed the scope of their potential action, nor the depth of their hatred. [7155 comments]

[TOP RATED COMMENT 571 votes] Maybe the Guardian wasn't aware of the depth of the threat but the majority of Europe was.

Time for Europe to remember its core values. Time to take a stand for secularism. No more symbolic gestures or sharing of hashtags. Actual measures to get these bastards. And to root out the sympathisers in their communities. Europe needs to think strategically about what sort of society it wants in 50 years.

And no more apologist articles Guardian. No more "fears of a backlash" bullshit. Remember the value set upon which this newspaper was founded. The communities who spawned these motherfuckers are the enemy of those values.

November 5, 2015

The integrated school that could teach a divided town to live together

Can you solve conflicts between ethnic groups by forcing them to interact? A remarkable experiment is taking place at Waterhead academy in Oldham – and the results could change how we fight prejudice. [315 comments]

[TOP RATED COMMENT 112 votes] Ban all religious schools in the UK. Separating children aged 4 or 5 based on their parents' often lapsed sky fairy of choice is backwards, illogical and wrong. It creates divisions in society. Here in Scotland it is the reason for so much hatred, especially in west central Scotland.

[7TH 46] This could be any Northern town with a sizeable Muslim population, and whilst I applaud the efforts from this school, the cultural requirements of Islam will always be a barrier to meaningful friendships and integration.

My eldest invited a Muslim classmate to his party at a laser game venue, before he was allowed to go his parents rang up with a boatload of questions such as "What do they cook the chips in?" 'Does the Pizza have real Ham on it?', 'Will the children be given alcohol?' (they're 8!!!), and can I message you about his "requirements", and on they went.

If it's so difficult to let your kid even go to a birthday party what's the rest of it going to be like? It's the religions that create all the discord.

October 4, 2015

How brave Muslims are being silenced

The most vocal attacks on a group fighting Islamophobic attacks are not racist yobs but friends of the Islamist right. [Nick Cohen, 810 comments]

[TOP RATED COMMENTS 261 votes] It is indeed ridiculous, on the face of it, how the (so called) "liberal" left defends extreme Islam, even though the latter rides roughshod over so much that the left claims to stand for (homosexuality and equality for women being the obvious examples).

It appears that the left's wish to support any group or process that undermines the security and culture of the civilised West trumps any other principle that they would otherwise stand for.

[5TH 157] Why do people on the left defend mainstream Islam?

If I came on this board and said that a man was worth 2 women (Sharia law), premarital sex was a crime (haddith and Sharia), husbands could strike wives to discipline them (read your Haddith and Koran) and that homosexuality was wrong (punishable by death according to Muhammad in the Haddith), I would be ripped to shreds.

But yet, the left defends mainstream Islam. Why?

September 28, 2015

How the hijab – and H&M – are reshaping mainstream British culture

Hijab-wearers are appearing everywhere from fashion chains to the Great British Bake Off – it's a celebration of the diversity of Britain and good news for ordinary Muslims. [2075 comments]

[TOP RATED COMMENT 609 votes] I'm a liberal but I just can't force myself to celebrate that a particular brand of organised religion is becoming increasingly relevant in our day to day lives. I just can't. I'm sorry.

September 24, 2015

The Guardian view on Muslims in the west: marginalised by mistrust

Ministers should stop boasting about supposed British values. The debate about security in a diverse society needs to be framed in the language of human rights. [770 comments]

[TOP RATED COMMENT 355 votes] So nationalism is bad, but Muslims all showing pride and togetherness in their religious grouping is fine and dandy?

[4TH 299] Simplistic analysis that completely fails to concede how fundamentally many Muslim communities have sought to distance themselves from British values. I'm talking about tolerance of other faiths, female equality, homophobia etc things I hold sacred as secular lines in the sand in a free liberal democracy.

The Guardian has fallen into the same lame liberal narrative that frees Muslims of any responsibility for their own position in society. The police are blamed by the families of silly little teenage Isis bride wannabes for failing to stop them. Schools are blamed for being too intrusive or too unobservant. It's time to stop blaming anybody else but.....

September 23, 2015

It's time the media treated Muslims fairly

When a study finds that nearly all stories about Muslims are negative it's clear this is the last acceptable form of bigotry – and it's tearing society apart. [*Miqdaad Versi, Muslim Council of Britain, 2294 comments*]

[TOP RATED COMMENT 426 votes] Maybe a little integration might help the Muslim population, just a thought.

[3RD 371] The followers of Islam are writing their own headlines! Forty years ago Muslims use to rub along with the people of other faiths. They lived side by side as neighbors, now they can't seem to live in harmony with anyone out of their own tribe or family. Stop blaming the messenger for writing the headlines you created!

[10TH 228] This is essentially the same article that has been appearing on this site for years. It pushes the narrative of victimhood. It does not address the suffering caused worldwide by zealots in the name of Islam – including the suffering of their fellow-Muslims.

Some Muslims are wreaking havoc worldwide. Should the press ignore this? Look the other way?

September 21, 2015

We took Huguenots, Jews, Vietnamese. So why not Syrians?

Throughout its history Britain has helped refugees – and in return has benefited from their dynamism. [1537 comments]

[2ND 284] Huguenots integrated and assimilated. Jews, Hungarians, Vietnamese have [mostly] integrated and assumed the British way of life.

Some traditions/cultures do not want to adapt to the host society, but believe that their culture/tradition is superior and that the host society should adapt to their way of life – or at least accommodate it – even when it is in utterly contrary to our established values and way of life.

July 31, 2015

Why I disagree with having a women-run mosque in Bradford

I don't want to see even more gender segregation than there already is. We can strengthen our community by having Muslim men and women working together. [28 comments]

[TOP RATED COMMENT] *"There are some very good examples of female scholarship emerging in the Muslim community within Bradford and beyond."*

That would be scholarship about, say, the development of empiricist philosophy within the Scottish Enlightenment, the Barbary incursions, the Norse influence on the vowels of eastern England? Or is "scholarship" here being used in a special sense about just one book not subject to the principle of a priori examination that would be normal in other fields?

July 27, 2015

Why must Britain's young Muslims live with this unjust suspicion?

In Britain, young Muslims are made to feel that they are on the wrong side, forced to constantly explain and apologise for extremism in which they have no part. [1723 comments]

[6TH 281] Part 1000 in a never-ending series called *"why muslims are always victims and their religion has nothing to do with anything bad that happens"*.

[7TH 247] Reading this I can appreciate how difficult it is to be a young muslim but I still wonder about the never ending stream of articles appearing in the Guardian which further the 'poor me' narrative. Are they truly representative of the muslim community?

Are there not muslims out there who can tell us how they are mobilising within their communities to make them less insular, to connect with the people around them? Is there no one that can appreciate why Islam frightens the hell out of people and reflect on that?

Personally I suspect that there is something in the religion that creates an inability to self-analyse, to empathise with others, a sort of 'group-victim' mentality which is cultural, and explains an awful lot about the roots of radicalisation.

July 24, 2015

I'm a Muslim woman, Mr Cameron: here's what your radicalisation speech means to me

For the first time in my life I feel like I don't belong. British Muslim communities have so many worries about your plans to tackle extremism, so why don't you communicate with us? [2495 comments]

[TOP RATED COMMENT 935 votes] If you are appearing Westernised, you should have no problems. It is the "men only" mosques, women compelled to hide their faces, children not allowed to mix with non-Muslims, and the impression some Muslims give of despising Western culture, while freely enjoying its benefits.

There is also the issue of forced marriages, and the fact that places in the Koran talk about killing infidels. These are some of the factors which lead us to fear Islam.

We do not claim the west is blameless, but we do not see a large part of the Muslim world trying to be members of our society. In fact many of them seem to want to create the sort of culture their families came here to escape.

July 19, 2015

Boosting citizenship among Muslims will help tackle extremism

A sense of pride in the UK and a belief in the power of communities underpin an initiative by Citizens UK to build wider Muslim participation. [Dominic Grieve, 126 comments]

[TOP RATED COMMENT 56 votes] Where are the mass protests by the Muslim community condemning what is being done in their name? We see and hear the protests and anger when Muslims believe someone has insulted their religion or their Prophet but on this issue of terror attacks, nothing.

The article refers to *"that many of the overwhelming majority of British Muslims, who condemn the actions of groups such as Islamic State, fear speaking out and taking public action because they believe that whatever they do or say will always be misrepresented"*

Given the Muslim community's readiness to protest vociferously on many other issues, I find this difficult to accept.

The article asks why there is a void of participation in public life from the Muslim community and goes on to refer to the commission making recommendations and a timetable of implementation, it also indicates that some of the recommendations may require direct action by the Government.

I cannot be the only person who is tired of the rest of the community having to constantly fit itself around one small part that somehow sees itself as deserving of special treatment and which shows no inclination to proactively engage.

[7TH 38] *"Yet we must not confuse the extremist violence of a tiny minority with the teachings of a great faith and the values of a peaceful majority."*

There is no confusion. The jihadis that commit acts of extreme violence on a daily basis are following a perfectly plausible reading of their doctrine and example of the Prophet. They clearly justify their actions with reference to their faith. It's counter productive to pretend this is not the case and it is only by facing the truth that we can start to address the problem.

July 13, 2015

Younger generation of British Muslims showing shift in attitude to gender roles

Thinktank report shows majority of 16 to 24-year-old UK Muslims disagree that "a husband's job is to earn money, a wife's is to look after the home and family". [130 comments]

[TOP RATED COMMENT 59 votes] *"Recent analysis of the labour force survey found that Muslim women were 71% more likely than white Christian women to be unemployed, even when they had the same educational level and language skills, with discrimination being a key factor according to Dr Nabil Khattab, lecturer of sociology at the University of Bristol."*

How does he reach that conclusion that the key factor is discrimination? There is no evidence presented. In Fact...

If you read his research then you find that *"Survey data showed that the unemployment rate among Muslim women was 18 per cent, compared with 9 per cent for Hindu women"* So why do Muslim women have twice the unemployment level as a comparable visible minority? Could it be something to do with the culture of the group?

Without evidence looks like someone playing out the victim card... once again.

July 5, 2015

Life for British Muslims since 7/7 – abuse, suspicion and constant apologies

The London bombings shocked us all. But in the decade since, our community has been unfairly demonised. [Mehdi Hasan, 1382 comments]

[2ND 258] Well if you think that's bad try being an atheist or a Christian or an apostate in many Muslim countries.

The fact is that you have chosen to follow a belief system that manifests itself across much of the world through totalitarianism, persecution of minorities, violence against non-believers and suppression of free speech.

You can do all the radio interviews you like and write all the columns you can about how moderate most Muslims are, but you can't change the fact that across huge swathes of the planet the most terrible evils are carried out in the name of the religion you follow. I do feel sorry for moderate Muslims having to confront this fact every day of their lives, but I suggest perhaps your anger is pointed in the wrong direction.

June 27, 2015

It's not the religion that creates terrorists, it's the politics

The radicalisation hypothesis steers us away from the real causes of terrorism – and enables the west to maintain its denial about a role in helping create it. [Giles Fraser, 2378 comments]

[TOP RATED COMMENT 562 votes] And here it comes again: *"nothing to see here folks. These Islamic terrorist attacks carried out by Islamic fundamentalists have nothing to do with Islam."*

Like clockwork.

June 24, 2015

By scapegoating Muslims, Cameron fuels radicalisation

Ministers foster terror with their wars. Now they attack liberties at home in the name of British values. [*Seumas Milne, 1,585 comments*]

[5TH 244] Surely, as the Guardian is so keen to promote equality within this country, this article should be a discussion about how Islam in the UK needs to undergo a radical reformation which allows for equality for all members of its faith within society which makes it compatible with Western Liberal values. That includes gender, sexual orientation and non-Muslims.

Why is it that everyone feels compelled to tell Christians how they should be willing to adapt and tolerate others in society, but addressing anything to do with Islam is looked upon as scapegoating and Islamophobic? The only people who can end this is the British Muslim community themselves, and that requires them to look at what their beliefs actually represent.

At the moment there is a genuine Fascist revolution going on in the Middle East in the name of Islam. British Muslims may hate ISIS as well, but until they address the issues within Islam as mentioned previously, there is always going to be questions asked.

June 19, 2015

Remember, prime minister: British Muslims hate Isis too

By ignoring the good work we are doing, ministers risk demoralising those who are fighting radicalisation every day. [*Sayeeda Warsi, 782 comments*]

[2ND 319] Poll finds 27% of British Muslims have sympathy for Charlie Hebdo attacks, and 11% have sympathy for those who travel to join ISIS.

Al Jazeera Arabic poll finds 81% of Muslims in the middle east support ISIS. Obviously only a minority of Muslims become extremists, but the data suggests we seriously underestimate the sympathies and ideological support of extremism both home and abroad, sadly.

June 18, 2015

Want to understand the appeal of Isis? Think like a young Muslim outsider

Whether escaping stifling familial expectations or yearning for a macho hierarchy, there are reasoned – if unsettling – reasons for Isis recruits' haste to join [*Sadakat Kadri, 887 comments*]

[TOP RATED COMMENT 332] There's a difference between being a lonely disaffected teenager and wanting to join a murderous death cult that brutally beheads people, commits genocide and regularly commits atrocities.

There's no excuse for anyone wanting to join a medieval organisation like ISIS.

[2ND 278] Want to understand the appeal of ISIS? Read the Koran. Followed by the Life of Mohammad. Then, before dropping off for the night, read up on the wars of conquest fought to spread Islam from 632 AD. That should sort it.

[3RD 209] There is a narrative being put forward that the those joining ISIS have attitudes totally different from that of the previous generation and there is bewilderment as to how such intolerance could have arisen.

Actually the warnings about the problems with a SIGNIFICANT minority of UK Muslims over Enlightenment, liberal values were there in neon signs a mile high at the time of Rushdie.

Thousands in the streets inciting his murder and I seem to remember about 30% in a poll of UK Muslims agreeing that the Fatwa should be enacted.

June 17, 2015

The roots of radicalisation? It's identity, stupid

The common thread that links the Bradford sisters, Talha Asmal and Thomas Evans is a search for belonging. The answer is to build a value system everyone can buy into. [*Shiraz Maher, 844 comments*]

[3RD 142] I know many tolerant and lovely Muslims, many are my neighbours and the extremists are a minority, but one that cannot be ignored.

The inescapable problem for Muslims growing up in the UK is that British culture and society is not compatible with Islamic culture.

We need to find a way for Islam to exist comfortably in the mainstream but it has to be said the leg work needs to be done by Muslims themselves to adapt and not for British society to adapt to it.

The current situation where two societies exist uneasily alongside each other within one country is neither acceptable or desirable.

June 6, 2015

Those drawn to Isis are hardly deluded

We are the dupes if we think no British citizen could be illiberal enough to be seduced by Isis's fanaticism. [849 comments]

[TOP RATED COMMENT 263 votes] *"Those drawn to Isis are not deluded as to its intolerant and brutal nature"*

".... that is precisely what they find appealing, along with the promise of power, adventure and a glittering afterlife."

I can't help thinking that part of the appeal is that the brutality is persuasively packaged as the enacting of true Islam. In other words, not only can one be brutal and bloodthirsty but, at the same time, one can take great pride in being so – because in being so one is faithfully carrying out one's religious duty.

May 17, 2015

Losing their religion: the hidden crisis of faith among Britain's young Muslims

As debate rages over the radicalisation of young British Muslims, are we overlooking a different crisis of faith? Ex-Muslims who dare to speak out are often cut off by their families and fear for their lives. A brave few tell us their stories. [*984 comments*]

[2ND 173] I am a woman who was raised as a Muslim but now completely rejects Islam. Like the people in this article, I can never tell my parents this - the only people I can confide in are my siblings who are similarly agnostic or atheist. I am no longer a

Muslim but I have to pretend to be. I don't unquestioningly embrace Western values either, but I do value freedom of expression, individuality and gender equality- which above all things, the western world values.

[3RD 117] A friend of mine describes himself as an 'atheist Muslim', in that he doesn't believe in God, is quite anti-Islam, but still has to pretend to his family that he is a devout Muslim. He knows his family would disown him if he told the truth, and prefers keeping it a secret so he can still see them. It's a desperate situation. I hope that in the future more families will be able to accept their children for whatever they believe in...

May 17, 2015

Why Islam doesn't need a reformation

Those who are calling for a 'Muslim Martin Luther' should be careful what they wish for. [*Mehdi Hasan, 1821 comments*]

[4TH 288] OK, so Islam doesn't need a reformation. Jolly good, well done.

It clearly needs an Enlightenment though.

[5TH 220] What a silly article. When people say that Islam needs a reformation they mean that it needs to accommodate scientific rationalism and logic. That process was not accomplished by Luther and Luther is not a model in terms of his doctrinal beliefs.

Over 500 years, Christianity has reconciled itself to changes in society and successfully disassociated itself from most, if not all, medieval attitudes and prejudices. It has made peace with secular states and non believers or unbelievers.

Islam has done none of these things.

April 26, 2015

The Guardian view on Lutfur Rahman: ethics must trump ethnicity

The sectarian politics of victimisation and electoral fraud that were practised in Tower Hamlets threaten to eviscerate democracy. [*256 comments*]

[TOP RATED COMMENT 156 votes] Should this article not include a couple of sentences to the effect that: "*Several of this newspapers columnists were so taken in by this man and his cronies that they closed their ears over many years to evidence based warnings of what was going on in Tower Hamlets.*"

They were as vocal as Rahman himself in screaming 'racist' and 'Islamophobe' at those who warned of what was going on and their stance regrettably contributed in no small measure to its continuance and the poisonous community relations that will now persist in Tower Hamlets for many years'.

[5TH 99] Nobody perpetuates identity politics in the UK more than the Guardian. Also, have they eaten humble pie for previously calling the complaints against Rahman a smear campaign?

April 5, 2015

Diversity and immigration are not the problem. Political courage is

Last week, nine British Muslims were arrested on the Syrian border as Nigel Farage tapped into his constituency's unease about modern Britain. We need our leaders to respond to this unease with reason – and a positive vision. [*Kenan Malik, 403 Comments*]

[2ND 77] What on earth is the concept of 'community of communities'? I'm afraid that multiculturalism is an experiment carried out mainly on the working class of this country. It seems to have failed. No matter which way you hang it the Muslim community does not do integration.

[5TH 60] I can't think of any western society that has changed as rapidly as Britain in the last twenty years. Defending diversity and immigration, as the author suggests we do, is to simply exacerbate the problem. What is needed is a total end to unskilled immigration and a huge effort to integrate the cultures we have already taken in.

[6TH 58] Diversity and immigration is the problem. Political courage is severely lacking in even talking about it.

March 12, 2015

Farage's Muslim 'fifth column' remarks must not go unchallenged

Ironically the Ukip leader, like the Muslim extremists he castigates, is dividing Britons from each other, by virtue of faith and identity. [*689 comments*]

[TOP RATED COMMENT 245 votes] 27% of British Muslims sympathise with the motives of the Charlie Hebdo killers, and 40% of British Muslims support the barbaric and thoroughly inhumane Sharia law.

Nigel Farage is absolutely correct to call out a "fifth column" of people living within the UK who desire the destruction of democracy, the subjugation of infidels and the forceful imposition of Sharia law. This is only a statement of fact.

[4TH 155] Sorry Guardian, but outside Guardian HQ, lots of people do see a 'fifth column' of a very small minority of Muslims who do want to kill us.

Last year in Cardiff, I witnessed people openly waving the black and white IS flag, in full view of protestors (protesting about Palestine perfectly legitimately) and policemen.

It is a tiny minority, but it is an issue nonetheless, and the 'liberal' (and I use the term loosely, as many are not liberal at all) wish to bury ones head in the sand isn't working.

March 6, 2015

Isis destroys Iraqis' heritage, but it can't erase their identity

Demolish the symbols of a people's history and you can more easily conquer a whole society. Yet it doesn't always work. [*229 comments*]

[TOP RATED COMMENT] "*Isis is a morbid symptom. It is neither Islamic, nor is it a state.*"

Oh for fuck's sake. Isis IS Islamic. It is clearly a morbid symptom of the kind of aggressively monocultural Islam propagated in Saudi Arabia and now being spread across the Muslim world. Why say it isn't? What's the point?

Until a person can carry out non-Muslim religious ceremonies publicly in Mecca or just stand up there and say 'Islam isn't the truth' without being killed or imprisoned, violent

Islamism of the type used by ISIS will remain a problem. We all know that. Everybody knows it, but our politicians and business leaders and journalists, with rare honourable exceptions, won't say it, because the Saudis have too much money.

February 15, 2015

Our response to the Copenhagen attacks will define us

We are in perilous territory. Free speech must be defended, but without resorting to provocation for its own sake. [*Hugh Muir, 2,321 comments*]

[TOP RATED COMMENT 510 votes] Already we have useful idiots questioning whether it is 'helpful' or 'necessary' to depict images of Mohammed.

It starts with self-censorship regarding so-called 'blasphemy'. Then we stop feeding school children pork in case it causes offence under the pretext that it is too costly to make separate provisions for those who find pork 'offensive'.

Soon we'll be telling people not to consume alcohol in public, or dress 'appropriately' – so as to not cause offence, natch....

Thus we slowly appease and accept the Islamists agenda.

We need to make a stand for our hard and long-earned freedoms and liberties and state that those who do not accept our society are free to go elsewhere.

25 January 2015

Lady Warsi launches bitter assault on coalition strategy towards Muslims

Lady Warsi has delivered a blistering critique of the government's approach towards Britain's Muslims, warning that failure to engage properly with communities across the UK has created a climate of suspicion and undermined the fight against extremism. [*3094 comments*]

[424] And what does she mean by "engage"? Roll over and sell out all we value about our culture and democracy in order to appease fanatics who chose to live here and would impose their values on us? No thank you.

It should have been like it or lump it from the start, in no uncertain language, if Muslims want the benefits of living in the UK they can adapt or live where there is a Muslim state.

25 January 2015

Why Eric Pickles' letter to mosques was right and wrong

The communities secretary was right in thinking that an evolutionary process of cohesion is underway. But he was wrong in thinking he was the man to address the problem. [*Hugh Muir, 259 comments*]

[9TH 86] We need new voices to be the spokespersons for British Islam. Liberals and reformists who know exactly what Pickles was trying to say, are the Muslims Britain needs to hear from in the media.

The MCB, Warsi and the like are stuck in the groove of the 'grievance narrative' They do far, far more harm than good.

20 January 2015

Dear Eric Pickles – why single out Islam for this patronising treatment?

You question our loyalty for no reason other than our spiritual beliefs. Will you ever sit down with the diverse peoples who make up Britain and really listen to us? [2879 comments]

[4TH 871] ... The pattern of violence and aggressive disregard for human suffering that is persistent in Muslim history and contemporary attitude toward non-believers reflects the message of the Quran, which is one of personal superiority and arrogance.

.... There is simply no other religion on earth that draws such sharp distinction between its own members and others, or devotes as much time of its holiest text toward condemning and dehumanizing those who merely choose not to follow its dogma.

[10TH 601] "Dear Eric Pickles – why single out Islam for this patronising treatment?"

Yeah, what about all those Mormons running around shooting cartoonists?

16 January 2015

Paris attacks: in this debate fear is the factor that dare not speak its name

Whether it's blaming foreign policy, the cartoonists or invoking free speech, we're all searching for ways to cope with our terror. [Jonathan Freedland, 1032 comments]

[TOP RATED COMMENT 533 votes] We have to face up to the fact that Islam in Europe and the West is a problem, not simply a 'challenge'.

[2ND 517] But the problem is not just the small number of jihadis. As the excellent Panorama last week pointed out the problem is also the large number of conservative Muslims who hold the same ideology as the jihadis: that Muslims are superior to unbelievers, that sharia is best for the whole world, that apostates and blasphemers and homosexuals should be punished, that women aren't equal to men etc.

The vast majority of these conservative Muslims are not terrorists, but they are ripe for radicalisation and their beliefs do fundamentally contradict those of western societies.

15 January 2015

This cruelty to Saudi blogger Raif Badawi is a cruelty to all Muslims

The Saudi regime is showing that it demands a greater degree of obedience among Muslims than is expected of westerner. [Deborah Orr, 550 comments]

[TOP RATED COMMENT 459 votes] "One thing that has emerged in the wake of the Paris killings is the large degree to which westerners do respect the idea that Muhammad should not be represented figuratively"

No - this is wrong - it has finally woken many up to the fact that medieval, fascist types are using their 'offence' to impinge upon our liberty.

If you are a Muslim don't read the effing thing.

11 January 2015

Paris attacks: unless we overcome fear, self-censorship will spread

We take on the powerful – and ask you to admire our bravery – only if they are not a paramilitary force that may kill us. [Nick Cohen, 2073 comments]

[TOP RATED COMMENT 783 votes] With a few admirable exceptions, Guardian comment pieces have been the usual trope of "don't blame Muslims", which insults the readership – no one but idiots blames "Muslims", and most of us understand that discrimination is real and exists.

But the Guardian has never really challenged the illiberal ideology of Islam because to do so is just too intellectually difficult for journalists who see themselves as left wing, and cannot bring themselves to criticise an ideology followed by people they see as oppressed by the west.

[2ND 771] I'm sorry to have to say it, but we have to face the terrible reality of our situation: When our ancestors fought and defeated the Nazis, they had to fight the Germans as a whole.

By the same token, we cannot defeat the islamofascists without also defeating the Muslims as a whole. Therefore, the only long-term solution to the problem, in the absence of the reform of Islam, is to eject the Muslims who won't accept the Western secular state from the West. [*The Observer*]

9 January 2015

The Paris attackers hijacked Islam but there is no war between Islam and the west

France faces difficult days ahead, but let's not hand the extremists a victory they could not achieve for themselves. [*Tariq Ramadan, 1591 comments*]

[2ND 1530] No right-thinking person believes all Muslims are responsible for these atrocities, but the situation is not helped by the eagerness among Muslim commentators and intellectuals to absolve the religion itself of blame, to talk only about poverty and jobs and to point fingers at 'the West'.

There is a common tone in these articles that demonstrates a frightening absence of self-analysis. Where are the Muslim academics, historians, theologians and social scientists asking what it is about their religion that means mass murderers are committing atrocities in its name on a daily basis?

21 December 2014

Heroes of 2014: Innes Bowen, the woman who mapped British Islam

The Radio 4 producer's book, *Medina in Birmingham, Najaf in Brent*, is enormously important to understanding the UK today. [*Andrew Brown, 342 comments*]

[4TH 165] "You can't understand today's Britain without reading this."

The more I understand about the ideology known as Islam, the more I see the need to oppose the idea that it can ever be said to be part of Britain.

16 December 2014

Before he flew the black flag, Monis was just a desperate man with a violent past

Modern Islam is a potent grammar for capturing and expressing grievance. Lone wolves like Sydney Siege gunman Man Haron Monis must tap into its symbols to sustain their fantasies. [*292 comments*]

[TOP RATED COMMENT 146 votes] There is no modern Islam, Islam needs a reformation but will not get it. there is a worldwide Islamist movement running along

the lines of their war Lord prophet where people have to be conquered and subjugated by the sword.

Muhammad lived that way, and they wish to lead their lives the same, trying to spread Islam by violence if they must. Loners or groups, they all use scripture to justify their acts.

16 December 2014

Pakistan's sickening massacre isn't about religion – it's about intimidation

To survive as a country Pakistan needs to map out a road to peace, with the army, politicians and the people rallying under a unifying cause. [*1025 comments*]

[TOP RATED COMMENT 833 votes] Of course it's about religion and one religion's desire to dominate and exert its will with extreme violence. Denying it is akin to burying your head in the sand.

16 December 2014

Germany's 'pinstripe Nazis' show the immigration debate is overheated

Hyping every crime involving a Muslim as a security threat is unhelpful – government and the media must behave responsibly. [*Simon Jenkins, 443 comments*]

[TOP RATED COMMENT 206 votes] In my working life, I have worked alongside many, many people of, shall we say, 'muslim heritage'.

I have to say that, the more 'islamic' they were, the harder they were to get on with. Those who didn't bother, or who only paid lip-service, included many splendid people I'm proud to have known. The problem is Islam, not race.

[2ND 198] *"Somehow the temperature has to be reduced before the lid blows."* At last someone on the Guardian gets it.

We need to drastically reduce immigration, and aggressively promote integration, by asserting a common set of core enlightenment values. No more pandering to minority cultures, and the liberals' beloved multicultural experiment must be thrown down the toilet.

19 November 2014

Schools accused of failing to protect children from extremism

Ofsted chief Sir Michael Wilshaw is to say seven schools in Tower Hamlets must take more action to protect students. [*793 comments*]

[ANOTHER 240] Yup. Welcome to the results of forty years of multiculturalism, a pernicious, self defeating and destructive ideology which encourages the separation of communities who know little of each other and have massively different beliefs and standards.

5 November 2014

Why I don't believe people who say they loathe Islam but not Muslims

It is psychologically unnatural to claim that you hate an ideology without hating the people in whose lives it is expressed. [*Andrew Brown, 1070 comments*]

[ANOTHER] This is nonsense. Islam is a vile, backward belief system that not only threatens world peace but represses its adherents. But Muslims are not vile! They are as much the victims of this medieval voodoo as anyone else, particularly the women.

19 October 2014

'Violent' Muslims? 'Amoral' atheists? It's time to stop shouting and start talking to each other

The logic of blanket statements falls apart when you're confronted with the diversity of the religious and nonreligious experience. [970 comments]

[ANOTHER 193] The apologists for Islam are becoming ever more desperate in their attempts to defend the indefensible. Name-calling, illogical cultural relativism and the ever present threat of violence have run its course. Time to put the "teachings" of 7th century desert nomads into the history bin where they belong.

8 October 2014

The Sun's 'Unite against Isis' campaign is a proxy for anti-Muslim bigotry

You, Muslim! Is your Islam 'British' enough? Are you standing up to extremism? If not, you are Part of the Problem, apparently. [Nesrine Malik, 1593 comments]

[THIRD 1251 votes] But a tiny minority of Muslims are proving to be an enemy within, aren't they? They undeniably exist. A few have joined IS. They are happy to listen to anti-British hate-speech at their mosques, they bring up their children to think of mainstream society as inferior and contemptible. Why aren't you directing your fury at them?

.... Bloody hell. You behave as though mainstream society should just ignore this in order that some Muslims are not 'offended'. I mean, really?? You are quite comfortable with things continuing to escalate and pour contempt on people like Sara Khan who are trying to help?

[4TH 1225] People aren't deaf to muslim condemnation of extremism, it's just that the condemnation isn't very loud. In fact it's a whisper compared to the accompanying screams of 'Islamophobia!'.

5 October 2014

My faith has been hijacked by extremists. After Alan Henning's murder, we must reclaim it

Could the senseless killing of Alan Henning lead to a watershed moment, a chance for a new narrative of hope? [Sara Khan, 883 comments]

[TOP RATED COMMENT 612 votes] *"If Muhammad – a man who was sent as a "mercy to the world" – were alive today..."*

...he'd be on trial at the Hague for crimes against humanity.

25 September 2014

The niqab is no reason to deny a girl an education

A school in Camden has barred a pupil for wearing a veil. This is not how a liberal education should work. [Gaby Hinsliff, 1910 comments]

[TOP RATED COMMENT 2068 votes] No-one is denying her an education. She is being asked to abide by a dress-code which applies to all students, to aid identification and allow communication.

Why should she be exempted?

[SECOND 1279v] The full face veil is a political statement, not a religious one.

[THIRD 1172v] "the school is stupid" No, the school is quite sensible. It expects pupils to abide by its dress-code. A stupid school would pander to people like you and her.

[6TH 848] *"A school in Camden has barred a pupil for wearing a veil."*

Not quite. The school barred her after she repeatedly disobeyed school rules which prohibit inappropriate dress that does not allow teacher-student interaction.

Seems perfectly reasonable. I assume if she and her parents decide she is able to obey the rules, she can continue her education.

19 September 2014

British Muslims shouldn't feel obliged to speak out against Isis atrocities

In Europe, Britain leads the way in religious tolerance. But that could easily change – and prejudice seems to grow by the day. [*Remona Aly, 1333 comments*]

[TOP RATED COMMENT 958 votes] No they shouldn't be obliged to make their position clear. But then no one else is then obliged to believe that there isn't a high degree of tacit support either.

Muslims are absolutely entitled to not make their position clear on these or any other matters. And other people are absolutely entitled to draw their own conclusions.

26 August 2014

Tolerance is bigotry's counterpart in keeping Muslims divided

Every time a controversy plays out, more conditions are added to our being 'tolerable'. We deserve our rights – including to places to practice our faith without political interference. [*386 comments*]

[TOP RATED COMMENT 321 votes] Very anti-white. Which majority black or Muslim countries would you like to put forth as an example of tolerance and inclusion of minorities or women? Pakistan? Saudi? Nigeria? The very notion of tolerance and multiculturalism is a white, Western one.

[3RD 275] Speaking as someone whose politics are left of centre, I certainly don't celebrate the fact that we have increasing numbers of people in this country who are deeply hostile to Western culture, and who want that posture accepted as *"all part of the rich tapestry of multiculturalism."*

[4TH 220] *"Islam is the religion of peace, equality, brotherhood and respect. Those who don't believe this are Islamophobes."*

Yes, I've noticed this peace and brotherhood spreading itself around the Middle East lately, and closer to home with street marches calling for the execution of cartoonists and film makers. It's people like you, who utterly fail to see the impression you make on the rest of the world, who are to blame for the suspicion with which Islam is treated in any modern society.

18 August 2014

It's no longer only Christians who shape UK foreign policy

Britain is a multicultural nation and its minority communities are having an increasing influence on its voice in the world. [897 comments]

[TOP RATED COMMENT 455 votes] ... and the vast majority of people in the UK, who are irreligious? Where do they fit in within this fatuous "diversity" pluralism? Once again, multiculturalism prioritises cultural and religious zealots at the expense of the vast majority of easy-going, reasonable people.

[5TH 267] That's the same old story: let's appease UK's Muslims by supporting the causes they are sympathetic to, and thus buy their loyalty. That simply doesn't work.

8 August 2014

We must be intolerant of intolerance

The flying of a jihadist-style flag over a London housing estate is a call to resist those who would Balkanise public space. [Hugh Muir, 1017 comments]

[A TOP RATED COMMENT] No one will say it but Islam is inherently intolerant, hateful towards difference and others and incites violence. I was raised in the faith and I know.

[ANOTHER] Islam does not do 'shared space' or 'tolerance'. As a non-believer you have already sinned against God and only when you 'revert' (take note of that term) to the natural order of Islam will you be saved.

Saying there are 'moderate' Muslims is like saying there are moderate 'fascists' or moderate BNP supporters and no doubt there are but the ideology tends to tip over into intolerance and fear of others, of difference and yes, violence too.

22 July 2014

Muslims aren't shocked to discover we are watched. But we won't be scared

Can revelations about 'sting' operations move the government beyond 9/11-era discrimination? Because you can't stop terrorism by alienating a generation of people. [237 comments]

[A TOP RATED COMMENT] All this talk of "communities". The most natural thing in the world would be for some of those emigrating from Muslim-majority lands to gradually integrate and intermarry with the local population. And it would also be the most natural thing in the world for some to decide that Islam was not the religion for them after all.

These two, natural things cannot happen when Islam contains laws that explicitly prohibit them. Stay apart, stay separate, you are different, the locals are ungodly, you are 'oppressed', don't leave the group, it is 'us and them'.

More integration, and less self-segregated "communities", please. The suspicion would start to melt away.

30 June 2014

Not all Muslims are jihadists – and it's a shame such reassurances are needed

One would be forgiven for thinking there is an exodus of British Muslims going to fight in the Middle East. This is far from reality. [811 comments]

[A COMMENT] I find it annoying when you are trying to denounce radical Islam, you are often met with 'not all Muslims are terrorists'. I'm aware of that, but what are you going to do about the ones that are radical.

[ANOTHER] it is predictable that we're heading towards civil war. The fact that most muslims are perfectly nice people is neither here nor there.

Ultimately they'll rally as an umma and the UK will cease to be a secular democracy and will become hell.

9 June 2014

The Trojan horse row shows the failure of Michael Gove's centralism

Wielding the blundering cudgels of Whitehall is not the answer. These schools must be governed through local accountability. [*Simon Jenkins, 298 comments*]

[ANOTHER] *"Running an English school in a community that is near 100% Muslim is exceptionally difficult and delicate."*

Well this is the problem in a nutshell. This is why so many thought the kind of primary immigration that was going on for decades would be massively destabilising to the kind of society we had and aspired to. Race doesn't come into it.

Polly Toynbee came close to advocating 'bussing' to ensure an ethnic mix in schools (although presumably not for the schools she and the likes of Dianne Abbott educated their children)... but given relative birthrates that can only ever be a short term fix. No wonder Scotland wants out.

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