

THE HENRY JACKSON SOCIETY

IMPACT: The Henry Jackson Society is a neo-conservative think-tank that has been described as having an “anti-Islam agenda.” The HJS claims British University campuses are breeding grounds for “Islamic extremism,” and labels Muslim-led community, advocacy, and legal rights groups critical of its work as “extremist.”

- The Henry Jackson Society (HJS) is a **British think-tank** “working across borders and party lines to combat extremism, advance democracy and real human rights.” The HJS was founded in Cambridge, United Kingdom, in 2005. The **HJS states it does “not represent any specific political party or persuasion,” but has been described as right-wing, neo-conservative, and illiberal.**
- The HJS’s **international patrons include former NATO commander General Jack Sheehan, ex-CIA director James Woolsey, and Richard Perle.** A *Guardian* article described Perle as “one of the Pentagon advisers credited with persuading George Bush of the case for invading Iraq.”
- A 2015 investigative report by Spinwatch and The Cordoba Initiative describes the HJS as **having an “anti-Islam agenda.”** The report states the **think-tank “often resorts to cultural attacks against Islam,” and that the ““War on Terror”, and anti-Islamic tendencies, were becoming the keystones”** of the HJS’s activities.
- In 2011, the **Centre for Social Cohesion (CSC)**, self-described as the “first think-tank in the UK to focus exclusively on issues of radicalisation and extremism within Britain,” **merged with the HJS. CSC was described by a number of academics as an “anti-Muslim think-tank.”** In 2010, CSC published a report claiming “British university campuses are breeding grounds of Islamic extremism.” In 2008, **under the directorship of Douglas Murray, CSC published a report titled, Islam on Campus,** which included a survey whose methodology was described as ‘deeply flawed’ by UK student groups. **Murray currently serves as the Associate Director of the HJS.**
- In 2013, academic researcher Hilary Aked noted that **“Student Rights,” a project of the HJS, was “contributing to a climate of fear and suspicion concerning the UK’s 100,000 Muslim students.”** In 2013, the **group raised alarms about alleged “extremist” Muslim speakers on UK university campuses.** Far-right groups, including the **English Defence League (EDL), responded to these claims with intimidation, harassment, and demonstrations outside Muslim-related event venues.** It also led to several campus events being cancelled amidst fears for student safety. **Raheem Kassam, who served as the editor-in-chief of Breitbart News London during 2014-2018, served as as director of Students Rights** during the publication of these reports. Kassam served as Marketing Director and Associate Fellow at the HJS.
- In 2010, Kassam noted that **Student Rights worked “closely” with the “counter-extremism think-tank,” Quilliam Foundation.** Former Quilliam managing director, Ghaffar Hussain, later served on Student Rights’ advisory board. **Quilliam and the HJS have shared the stage together at a number of events** and former Quilliam staff have moved on to join the HJS.
- The **HJS has accused UK universities of “failing to do enough to combat extremism on campus,”** and targeted the National Union of Students (NUS), claiming that the NUS campaign, ‘Students not Suspects,’ “exacerbates, and even facilitates, this problem.” The **HJS is a proponent of the controversial Prevent program,** which is a part of the UK’s counter-terrorism strategy. Prevent requires public authorities to have “due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.” A **UN human rights expert described Prevent as “dividing, stigmatizing and alienating segments of the population.”**

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- David Miller, a Professor of Sociology at the University of Bath and the co-founder of [Spinwatch](#), stated that that the **HJS's drift towards the right "coincided with a hefty rise in donations."** Spinwatch discovered **one of the HJS's donors to be [Nina Rosenwald](#)**, "whose Abstraction Fund donated \$10,000 to HJS via a U.S. fundraising arm, the American Friends of the Henry Jackson Society."
- In 2014, following complaints against two parliamentary groups that received support from the HJS, the office of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards called on the HJS to "make available on request a list citing any commercial company which had donated more than £5,000..." The **HJS refused to disclose its donors and pulled its funding from the two groups.**
- The HJS **routinely publishes reports describing Muslim-led community, advocacy, and legal rights groups as "extremist."** In one report, the HJS **accused the [Islamophobia Awareness Month \(IAM\)](#) campaign of providing "a platform for extremism across the public and charity sectors."** In a 2017 report, the think-tank claimed the non-profit, Muslim Engagement and Development ([MEND](#)), was an organization of "Islamists masquerading as civil libertarians." In 2014, the HJS published a **report claiming that "Islamist extremists and their sympathisers" use charges of Islamophobia as a cover "to exploit legitimate grievances in order to deflect opposition."**
- In 2014, the HJS **hosted a screening of the film 'Honor Diaries' produced by the anti-Muslim organization, [Clarion Project](#).** In January 2015, the HJS published a report on 'honour'-based violence against women in the UK, claiming that it was "predominantly a problem in minority South Asian communities." Academics noted that before this, "HJS had never shown any substantive interest in women's rights in the UK."
- In a 2018 report, the **HJS argued "separating Islamist extremists from the rest of the prison population is the only viable solution to prevent the spread of radicalisation to other prisoners," reinforcing the problematic and false notion that "radicalization" is unique to Islam.** In another 2018 report, the HJS argued that "Islamist extremists exploit the UK charitable sector," claiming that British taxpayers have given "more than £6 million to charities that ...have been...used by extremists to further their radical agenda."
- In 2014, the HJS co-hosted an event with One Family UK featuring [Mosab Hassan Yousef](#), the son of a Hamas leader who is known for cooperating with Israeli intelligence and converting to Christianity. During the event, Yousef stated: 'Killing is a way of worship in Islam [...] This is the real nature of Islam; 'Beheading people? This is not new. Mohammed beheaded people in the past. Basically it's part of their religion;' and 'People who say that Islam is the religion of peace, they just don't have the courage to face reality or see things for what they are'. The HJS did not disavow Yousef's inflammatory comments.
- In May 2009, the **HJS hosted a speech by Siv Jensen**, the head of the Norwegian Progress Party. In her speech, Jensen "**criticised British immigration policies, falsely claiming the UK had 'introduced Sharia courts' in several areas.**"
- In November 2008, the **HJS hosted [Brooke Goldstein](#), Director of the Legal Project at the [Middle East Forum \(MEF\)](#), to discuss "Islamist lawfare in the US, the UK and in Europe** as well as the threat it poses to democratic values such as freedom of speech and assembly." In May 2009, the **HJS's director, [Alan Mendoza](#), took part in a Washington conference, sponsored by MEF, entitled 'Libel Lawfare: Silencing Criticism of Radical Islam.'** A Center for American Progress report describes MEF as a "far-right think tank that is known for its anti-Islam views and hawkish foreign policy recommendations."