

***Precipice:
Islam, Multiculturalism and the Unmaking of Liberal Britain***

By Kareem Muhssin
Spokesman, Alliance of Former Muslims (Ireland)

July 2026

“To see what is in front of one’s nose needs a constant struggle.”

– George Orwell

Contents

I: The Structural Erosion of British Liberty.....	3
II: Islam, Islamism and the Limits of Multiculturalism.....	4
III: Institutional Failure and Ideological Capture.....	6
IV: Islam and the New Blasphemy Culture.....	9
V: Parallel Societies and the Erosion of a Common Culture.....	15
VI: Britain, Ireland and the Future of Liberal Democracy.....	19

Part I: The Structural Erosion of British Liberty

Britain's finest export was once a fierce, unyielding independence of mind. This was the culture that forged Milton, Mill, Russell, and Orwell – intellectual dissidents who understood that liberty is not merely the right to echo fashionable opinions, but the courage to defy them. For these iconoclasts, an open society demanded both a moral willingness to risk offence and the freedom to speak truth to power.

Today, that great inheritance is being squandered.

Britain has not become an Islamic state. The danger is subtler and, in some respects, more insidious. Britain's governing institutions bend over backwards to accommodate Muslim sensitivities while treating criticism of Islam as a social problem requiring management, surveillance, and, at times, police intervention. A nation that once stood against fascism, communism, and religious authoritarianism is now reluctant to defend itself against illiberalism when that illiberalism is draped in the language of diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism.

Many commentators explain this decline as a crisis of confidence among Britain's political and cultural elites. There is truth in that diagnosis, but it mistakes a symptom for a cause. Britain's governing class did not suddenly lose faith in free speech, secularism, or equality under the law. Their uncertainty developed gradually through a framework of policies and assumptions that made defending those values increasingly difficult, controversial, and politically costly.

At the centre of the problem lies Britain's long experiment with multiculturalism, which has come at the expense of meaningful integration into wider society. In the shadow of the Second World War, policymakers grew acutely aware of the dangers of racism, ethnic nationalism and sectarian conflict. Concluding that emphasising cultural differences was safer than maintaining a strong national identity, they presented diversity as an alternative to assimilationist models of integration. Citizens were assured that people could retain their distinct identities and worldviews while living harmoniously within a shared national culture.

The promise sounded noble.

The reality proved far more complicated.

Multiculturalism rests upon the belief that diverse cultures can be accommodated within a common society despite their differences. Yet some differences are rooted in fundamentally incompatible conceptions of morality, religion, individual liberty, the rule of law, and the role of the state. These are not simply variations in custom, but conflicts between rival conceptions of how society ought to be organised. A society cannot indefinitely refuse to make judgements between competing cultural values while also

upholding liberal democratic principles that require such judgements. Eventually, these commitments come into conflict.

Nor does acknowledging such differences imply that every individual from a particular culture shares identical beliefs. Most immigrants from traditionally conservative societies adapt successfully to life in liberal democracies; many actively embrace liberal values and contribute enormously to their adopted countries. However, immigration policy operates at the level of populations, not personal anecdotes. When large numbers of people arrive from cultures shaped by fundamentally different assumptions about public life, questions of integration inevitably emerge.

Yet among Britain's cultural and political elite, raising these issues has increasingly become associated with prejudice. Topics that should remain open to debate have gradually been reclassified as moral risks. Officials have become reluctant to distinguish between legitimate criticism and bigotry, and concerns about social cohesion have been systematically subordinated to concerns about causing offence.

Nowhere are the consequences of this more profound than in Britain's failure to confront Islam's political doctrines.

Part II: Islam, Islamism and the Limits of Multiculturalism

Apologists for multiculturalism argue that Islam and Islamism are fundamentally distinct. According to this view, Islam is a private faith concerned primarily with spiritual matters, while Islamism represents a political distortion that seeks to impose religious authority upon society. Historically and doctrinally, that distinction is very difficult to sustain.

Unlike Christianity after the Enlightenment, Islam developed as both a religious and political system. The Prophet Muhammad was not only a spiritual teacher but a statesman, military leader, lawgiver, and ruler. Islamic scripture and jurisprudence address far more than worship and personal morality; they also concern criminal law, governance, warfare, taxation, social organisation, and relations between Muslims and non-Muslims. Islamism is thus best understood not as something separate from Islam, but as the *implementation* of its political and legal teachings.

Britain's experience over the past three decades illustrates the practical consequences of misunderstanding this relationship. Following the 7/7 bombings, the murder of Lee Rigby, the Manchester Arena attack, and numerous foiled terrorist plots, official explanations of Islamic terrorism have tended to emphasise foreign policy grievances, social exclusion, or economic deprivation. However, while such factors may influence

individual behaviour, they obscure the ideological dimension that connects otherwise very different perpetrators.

Organised terrorist violence does not emerge merely from poverty, alienation, or anger. It requires an ideological framework that identifies enemies, justifies violence, and provides a larger purpose. For jihadist movements, that framework is absolutely and irreducibly theological.

In classical Islamic theology, unbelief (*kufr*) and the association of partners with Allah (*shirk*) are treated not simply as intellectual errors, but as profound spiritual offences. The rejection of Allah's authority is regarded as a graver wrong than any injury committed against human beings; thus, violence against non-Muslims derives not from what they may do to Muslims, but from their "abuse of Allah".

Any serious attempt to understand Islamic terrorism must grapple with the religious ideas that terrorists themselves invoke. By framing jihadist violence primarily through the language of poverty, alienation, or foreign policy grievances, policymakers have consistently and fatally misdiagnosed the problem.

None of this suggests that most Muslims are jihadists. The majority of Muslims living in Britain do not seek the establishment of an Islamic state. But that reality reflects the choices and attitudes of individual Muslims, not the absence of political doctrines within Islam itself. The crucial distinction lies between Islamic doctrine and the degree to which its adherents choose to apply it.

Indeed, Western observers often assume that because the Muslims they know are friendly and decent, the faith itself must be harmless. In reality, the reverse is true: Muslims are amicable toward non-Muslims precisely insofar as they are *detached* from Islam. If a Muslim takes a non-Muslim as a friend, they are defying clear Qur'anic injunctions to treat them with hostility. Verse 5:51 expressly forbids taking Christians and Jews as allies, warning that "they are but friends and protectors to each other". Verse 9:29 makes it a religious duty to wage war against non-Muslims "until they pay the tribute readily, being brought low".

The peaceful coexistence that multiculturalists celebrate is sustained not by Islamic doctrine, but by ordinary Muslims choosing human decency over religious bigotry. By favouring integration over dogma, these individuals are practising a liberal pluralism that their foundational texts explicitly reject.

Here, multiculturalism encounters a challenge that it is intrinsically unequipped to address. While a pluralistic society can easily accommodate differences in language, dress, and cuisine, it cannot accommodate an ideology that explicitly rejects the legitimacy of pluralism itself. The contradiction is straightforward: multiculturalism proposes that diverse cultures can coexist on a basis of mutual respect and equal

standing, whereas Islam exists to dominate and erase all other cultures. It positions itself as not merely one tradition among many, but the final, superior revelation destined to prevail over competing social systems.

This is the exact trap which Karl Popper warned us against. If a pluralistic society extends unlimited tolerance to ideologies that are inherently anti-pluralistic, it will eventually be hollowed out by its own tolerance.

For decades, however, Britain's political class have behaved as though even acknowledging this paradox was improper. Concerns about Islamist influence, communal segregation, or religious extremism have been treated less as legitimate subjects of debate than as potential sources of offence. Difficult conversations have been postponed rather than resolved. Problems have not been confronted so much as declared impolite.

This cowardice explains a striking feature of modern Britain: the tendency of institutions to treat criticism of Islam as a more pressing concern than the illiberal attitudes and movements that emerge from it. Across the country, authorities have often displayed extraordinary vigilance when confronted with "Islamophobic" speech, while simultaneously exhibiting remarkable caution when faced with organised Muslim intimidation.

When this inversion occurs, the state inevitably fails in its core duties.

Part III: Institutional Failure and Ideological Capture

The gravest institutional failures of recent decades share a single, underlying pattern: the impulse to treat community relations and the avoidance of offence as the ultimate, almost sacred, priorities of the state.

Across Britain, police forces have devoted substantial resources to investigating allegedly offensive online comments, recording lawful speech as "non-crime hate incidents", and visiting citizens over social media posts. Such practices are frequently justified as necessary measures to promote community cohesion. Yet, while a liberal society should oppose prejudice, its defining test is whether it protects the expression of lawful views that many find objectionable. The very purpose of policing – preventing crime, maintaining order, and protecting citizens – is being compromised by an urge to patrol the boundaries of acceptable opinion.

When institutions make the avoidance of offence their primary goal, the fallout is rarely confined to speech alone. This failure manifests with devastating clarity in the grooming gang scandals.

In more than fifty British towns and cities, tens of thousands of vulnerable girls have been raped, enslaved, and trafficked by organised gangs, predominantly of Pakistani Muslim heritage. Victims have been smuggled between cities, filmed for blackmail, forced into abortions, and in some cases subjected to forced pregnancy, religious conversion, marriage, and overseas trafficking. Girls as young as thirteen have been admitted to sexual health clinics with cases of chlamydia, gonorrhoea, and genital warts. These horrific crimes have been driven largely by a supremacist culture in which non-Muslims are dehumanised as *kuffar* (infidels), whose status outside the faith renders them as targets for abuse.

What transforms the scandal from a criminal atrocity into a national disgrace is the institutional response. Police failed to intervene, local authorities ignored warnings, social services dismissed concerns, political leaders hesitated to act, and repeated opportunities to protect victims were missed.

Nowhere was this institutional inversion more grotesque than in a documented case from Rotherham, where neighbours called the police after hearing screams coming from a house. Officers arrived to find a thirteen-year-old girl, virtually naked and blind drunk, inside a room with seven adult Pakistani men who had plied her with vodka. Instead of arresting the adult predators or taking the traumatised child into protective custody, South Yorkshire Police *arrested the girl* for being drunk and disorderly, leaving the men entirely unquestioned.

No single explanation accounts for every failure here. Yet one factor has appeared repeatedly throughout investigations and official reviews: *fear*. Fear of inflaming community tensions. Fear of damaging community relations. Fear of being accused of racism or “Islamophobia”. Officials whose primary responsibility was protecting vulnerable children instead sacrificed those victims to preserve a fragile bureaucratic peace. They were more afraid of accusations than predators.

The murder of Henry Nowak, though vastly different in scale, exposed a remarkably similar dynamic. While Nowak lay mortally wounded after being stabbed five times, police officers prioritised an allegation of offensive speech – accepting his Sikh assailant’s claims of racial abuse at face value. As he fought for his life, Nowak was handcuffed by officers pursuing an allegation that later proved to be entirely false. For many observers, the most troubling aspect of the episode was not the deception itself, but the readiness with which the accusation was believed.

The appalling mistreatment of Henry Nowak was not an isolated error, but the logical consequence of a profound ideological shift within British policing. In recent years, police forces have embraced the language of anti-racism, diversity, allyship, and racial equity. The College of Policing and the National Police Chiefs’ Council’s ‘Anti-Racism Commitment’ explicitly states that being anti-racist does not mean treating everyone the

same or being colour-blind. The traditional liberal principle of applying identical standards to all citizens regardless of race or ethnicity has been discarded; now, officers are conditioned to operate through the lens of race. Thus, a dying man is treated as a suspect purely because he is white.

This erosion of institutional impartiality becomes even more acute as it extends from enforcement to the judiciary. A revealing example lies in the statutory guidance issued by the Sentencing Council, the body responsible for advising judges in England and Wales. The Council stipulates that judges should obtain pre-sentence reports specifically for offenders from ethnic, cultural, or faith minority backgrounds. While proponents argue that this policy addresses systemic disparities in dispensing justice, introducing different procedural expectations based entirely on an offender's demographic group fatally undermines the core tenet of the legal system: that all citizens must stand equal before the law.

The charge that institutions apply different standards is further reinforced by political responses to public disorder. Following the death of George Floyd in the United States, a broad spectrum of British politicians expressed not only support for peaceful protest, but sympathy for forms of civil unrest that would ordinarily attract unequivocal condemnation – vandalism, arson, clashes with police, and outright rioting. By contrast, when confronted with the murder of a British teenager and the equally intense public anger that it generated, these same politicians have appeared more concerned with warning against “division” than examining the institutional failures that contributed to the outrage.

Public disorder no longer appears to be judged by its nature, but by the political narrative surrounding it. Some grievances are treated as understandable expressions of social frustration; others are treated as dangers to social cohesion. Some forms of anger are contextualised; others are condemned. When moral and legal standards are applied selectively, citizens inevitably begin to question whether truth itself has become subordinate to ideology.

Yet the erosion of institutional impartiality does not end with selective responses to crime or public disorder. Increasingly, authorities appear preoccupied with regulating public perception itself. As confidence in official narratives declines, state institutions have responded less by confronting the causes of public distrust than by attempting to manage, suppress, or delegitimise the criticisms directed toward them.

The June 2026 “serious public order incident” (attempted beheading) in Belfast by a Sudanese asylum seeker exposed the raw reality of this. While courageous bystanders were forced to intervene physically to save the victim's life, the immediate response from the political and legal establishment focused heavily on the suppression of information. Senior police officials and political leaders aggressively demanded that citizens cease sharing graphic footage of the attack on social media, framing the digital

dissemination of the event as the primary “toxic” threat to society. It exposes a profound systemic pathology: when faced with the blood-soaked consequences of its own border and vetting failures, the state’s deepest anxiety is not the violence itself, but the fact that the populace can see it.

Power is deployed not to prevent the horror, but to manage the optics and scold the populace for witnessing it.

Yet this obsession with narrative containment does not stop at local incidents; it has driven the state to unprecedented acts of constitutional subversion. The shocking scale of this panic was exposed in July 2025, when the High Court lifted a two-year government “super-injunction” regarding Afghan migration. Following a catastrophic Ministry of Defence data leak exposing the identities of nearly 19,000 Afghan applicants, the state obtained a total *contra mundum* media blackout that legally barred any mention of the injunction’s very existence. Behind this impenetrable veil of secrecy, the government operated a classified, off-the-books immigration scheme costing up to £850 million – completely hidden from parliamentary committees and omitted from official statistics solely to evade democratic scrutiny.

Regardless of one’s position on the merits of Afghan resettlement, the weaponisation of state secrecy to insulate policy from public backlash represents a profound democratic peril. When a government decides that its citizens can no longer be trusted with the truth, it forfeits the mandate of consent and reduces governance to an exercise in narrative management. When the state’s primary reflex to its own administrative failures is to deploy the judiciary to blindfold Parliament and the press, the crisis of confidence is no longer a cultural abstract – it is a hard institutional reality.

The consequences for a free society are devastating.

Part IV: Islam and the New Blasphemy Culture

At the heart of a liberal society lies a simple distinction: people possess rights, ideas do not. Individuals are entitled to protection from discrimination, intimidation, and violence. Beliefs, ideologies, and religions are not. They must remain open to criticism, scrutiny, ridicule, and rejection.

This distinction is not a peripheral feature of liberal democracy – it is one of its foundations. Once a society loses the ability to distinguish between people and ideas, it begins to treat criticism of the latter as an attack on the former. Britain is moving in precisely that direction. Nowhere is this more visible than in its relationship with Islam, which is increasingly treated as a protected identity category whose doctrines enjoy an immunity from criticism rarely extended to other belief systems.

The recent controversy surrounding South Wales Police offers a revealing example. The force faced criticism after instructing its officers to record expressions of hostility toward Islam that extended beyond “legitimate” criticism. This policy effectively placed officers in the position of determining which criticisms of a religion are acceptable. Faced with the prospect of being logged in a police database and publicly branded as a bigot, the chilling effect is obvious: most people will simply remain silent.

This danger was always present within official attempts to define “Islamophobia” and “anti-Muslim hostility”. While such definitions often contain formal safeguards protecting criticism of Islam, public authorities frequently interpret them more expansively in practice. Britain then finds itself facing a paradox. The country formally abolished its blasphemy laws in 2008, yet public institutions behave as though criticism of one particular religion is a crime.

This creates a particular challenge, because Islam differs from modern Western conceptions of religion. It is not solely a collection of metaphysical beliefs concerning God, prayer, and the afterlife. Islamic doctrine encompasses legal, political, social, and military teachings that historically governed entire societies. The Qur’an, Hadith, and classical jurisprudence address fundamental questions of governance, law, warfare, apostasy, blasphemy, religious minorities, and social order.

When critics argue that Islam is incompatible with liberal democracy, they are referring to traditional doctrines that place divine law above popular sovereignty, prescribe capital punishment for apostasy and blasphemy, treat non-Muslims as legally subordinate to Muslims, and restrict freedoms of religion and expression. To dismiss such concerns as objections only to “Islamism” is to sidestep the more fundamental question: whether Islam itself is compatible with modern liberal values.

Recent polling suggests that this tension cannot simply be attributed to a small fringe of activists. A 2024 survey of British Muslims found that 52 per cent supported making it illegal to display images of the Prophet Muhammad, while 32 per cent supported making Islam the national religion and implementing shari’ah law in Britain. Such findings undermine the comforting assumption that “Islamism” is entirely distinct from ordinary Islamic opinion.

These figures do not mean that most British Muslims are extremists. They do, however, suggest that significant numbers hold views that are incompatible with freedom of expression and the separation of church from state. The challenge facing liberal societies is therefore not confined to a handful of organised activists, but rather the persistence of beliefs which, while often peacefully held, remain impossible to reconcile with a fully pluralistic political order.

Britain confronted an early warning of this tension during the Rushdie Affair of 1989. Demonstrations against *The Satanic Verses*, public book burnings, and demands that a novel be suppressed because it offended religious sensibilities exposed a conflict that multiculturalism failed to resolve. Rather than firmly defending the principle that all ideas must be open to criticism, public institutions instead adopted the language of sensitivity and community cohesion.

Decades later, this selective deference has hardened into an overt asymmetry within British public discourse. Christianity can be mocked. Atheism can be mocked. Capitalism, communism, monarchy, and nationalism can all be mocked. Public figures, political parties, and cultural practices are subjected to relentless criticism every day. Criticism of Islam, by contrast, frequently attracts investigations, professional sanctions, activist campaigns, media denunciations, and social ostracism.

Nobody formally declares such criticism illegal. Instead, the new blasphemy culture operates through a network of informal controls. On an everyday level, it relies on soft enforcement through corporate HR departments, university bureaucracies, and hate-incident databases, fostering a climate of self-censorship. From there, it is a short step to outright state coercion, as public authorities weaponise existing public order legislation to penalise actions that breach religious taboos.

A striking example of this occurred in the prosecution of Hamit Coskun, a Kurdish-Armenian secularist who burned a copy of the Qur'an outside the Turkish Embassy in London. Coskun was violently attacked with a knife, yet the Crown Prosecution Service relentlessly pursued *him* instead, initially charging Coskun with intent to cause distress “against the religious institution of Islam”. While his ultimate acquittal at the High Court – thanks to the heroic efforts of the Free Speech Union – was a vital victory for freedom of speech, the state’s aggressive determination to prosecute him exposes a deeply troubling institutional reflex: treating the peaceful defiance of a religious text as a greater threat to public order than the physical violence used to suppress it.

In 2026 Britain, merely referencing Islamic history can get you arrested. Video footage from Leeds captured police officers detaining and cuffing a man who was taunting a “pro-Palestine” march with abrasive criticisms of Islam. When the man demanded to know the legal basis for his detention, the arresting officer provided a response that should horrify us all: because he had “called Muhammad a rapist and a killer.” The irony of this state-enforced reverence is that the speaker’s crude barbs are directly anchored in mainstream Islamic scripture: the canonical hadith literature, including *Sahih al-Bukhari* and *Sahih Muslim*, explicitly details Muhammad’s consummation of marriage to a nine-year-old child, Ayesha, alongside his aggressive military campaigns and targeted executions of Jewish and Christian populations.

Eighteen years after parliament formally binned Britain’s ancient blasphemy laws, law enforcement has effectively reconstituted them on the beat. By transforming neutral

civic officers into the enforcers of Islamic orthodoxy, the state has rendered the reading of Islamic history a punishable offence.

The ultimate manifestation of this surrender is when the state fails to protect its own public servants, effectively permitting religious mobs to dictate the national curriculum. In 2021, a religious studies teacher at Batley Grammar School showed a caricature of the Prophet Muhammad from *Charlie Hebdo* to initiate a classroom discussion on the nature of blasphemy. The response was immediate and terrifying: aggressive protests outside the school gates, death threats, and public intimidation. Rather than defending academic freedom, the school's headteacher issued an "unequivocal apology", with the local council and police abandoning the teacher to his fate.

Structurally, the case bore a chilling resemblance to that of Samuel Paty, the French schoolteacher murdered just months prior for the exact same educational exercise. Though the British teacher survived physically, he suffered a form of civil execution. Cleared of all wrongdoing, he and his family remain entirely isolated, living under assumed identities in hiding to this day – a living testament to the fact that in modern Britain, exercising open inquiry can cost a citizen their entire life.

Where the state does not actively abandon its citizens to religious intimidation, it acts as an auxiliary to it. This capitulation reached a humiliating nadir in 2023 at a school in Wakefield, after a fourteen-year-old autistic boy accidentally scuffed a copy of the Qur'an on school grounds. Following a barrage of death threats directed at the child, a public meeting was convened at a local mosque. What followed resembled a de facto sectarian tribunal: the boy's terrified mother was made to stand before the congregation to plead for her son's safety and beg for forgiveness.

Appallingly, senior representatives from West Yorkshire Police and the school's headteacher sat on the panel alongside the imam, offering no defence of the law or civil liberties, but instead nodding along as community leaders declared that Muslims would "not remain silent". This was a chilling spectacle of state abdication, where secular public authorities sat cowed in a place of worship, effectively legitimising the extra-legal policing of religious offence.

The annual spectacle of thousands gathering for Islamic prayers in Trafalgar Square further illustrates this growing institutional deference. Britain is not lacking in mosques. London alone contains hundreds of places of worship where Muslims can pray freely and without interference. The occupation of one of the nation's most recognisable civic spaces therefore cannot be explained purely in terms of religious necessity; rather, it signals the growing confidence of a movement increasingly accustomed to public accommodation.

Across Europe, as Islamist activists and organisations have become more assertive, political and institutional elites have become more reluctant to challenge them. The

result is a dynamic in which policies of accommodation are interpreted not as gestures of goodwill, but as evidence of weakness.

Critics may regard such concerns as speculative or alarmist. Yet some Islamist organisations have openly described their ambitions in terms that go far beyond the peaceful exercise of religious freedom. A particularly revealing example emerged in the 1991 Explanatory Memorandum of the Muslim Brotherhood's American network. The document described the Brotherhood's mission in the United States as:

a kind of grand Jihad in eliminating and destroying the Western civilization from within and 'sabotaging' its miserable house by their hands and the hands of the believers so that it is eliminated and God's religion is made victorious over all other religions.

Defenders of the Brotherhood frequently argue that such language should be understood in a non-violent or historical context. Whatever interpretation one adopts, the memorandum is significant because it reveals how Islamist activists have conceived of their long-term objectives. The language is not that of pluralism, integration, or mutual accommodation. It presents Western civilisation itself as an adversary to be weakened and ultimately supplanted by Islam.

Whether one interprets the Trafalgar Square prayers as an expression of religious freedom or as evidence of a broader trend of Islamic public assertiveness, the political reaction to criticism remains revealing. When Conservative MP Nick Timothy condemned the event as an "act of domination", Education Secretary Bridget Phillipson instinctively branded his comments as "racist". Once again, focus shifted from the substance of the criticism to the supposed moral failings of the critic. The accusation of racism thus functions not as an argument, but as a warning – a pre-emptive strike designed to mark the limits of permissible speech and scare future dissenters away from the topic entirely.

The supreme irony of this development is that those most harmed by it are dissidents from Islamic societies themselves. Ex-Muslims, secular reformers, and women challenging religious misogyny possess an intimate familiarity with Islamic doctrine; our criticisms are directed not at Muslims as people, but at teachings concerning apostasy, blasphemy, women's rights, and gay rights. Yet our voices are systematically marginalised because we challenge the narrative that Islam is a "religion of peace". As a minority within a minority, our difficulties come not from wider society, but from intense pressures within our own communities; our existence thus poses a direct challenge to multicultural frameworks, which deny internal oppression and attribute minority grievances to the host society to preserve the illusion of harmony.

When public authorities seek dialogue with people from Muslim backgrounds, they eschew these genuinely progressive voices in favour of organised religious bodies and self-appointed spokesmen, who represent the most conservative ideological currents.

Official efforts at inclusion thus empower the most sectarian forces within minority communities while sidelining the brave dissident voices that challenge them.

The real-world consequences of this institutional abandonment are illustrated in a stark, brutal form by the experience of Nissar Hussain. A former Muslim who converted to Christianity, Hussain and his family endured months of threats and harassment from parts of Bradford's Muslim community. In November 2015, the campaign culminated in a savage attack where Hussain was beaten with a pickaxe and a baseball bat as he exited his car. This was not merely an assault upon an individual; it represented a deliberate attempt to enforce religious conformity through fear and violence. Ultimately, Hussain, his wife, and their six children were forced to abandon their home under police protection – all for a decision that, in a liberal society, should have been entirely unremarkable: the decision to change one's religion.

Cases such as Hussain's expose a fundamental tension. Freedom of religion necessarily includes the freedom to *leave* a religion; yet in modern Britain, exercising that freedom can carry a price that the state is either unable or unwilling to prevent.

For generations now, dissidents, secularists, and freethinkers from Muslim countries have sought sanctuary in the West precisely to avail of the right to speak freely. Yet, upon arrival, many discover a surreal reversal: the very institutions they once trusted to protect them are now weaponising "hate-speech" legislation and public order acts to arrest, prosecute, or silence them for offending the belief system that they escaped. In a cruel twist of civilisational cowardice, the West is importing the very theological tyranny which these refugees risked their lives to flee.

This total inversion of state protection manifests with equal clarity in the targeting of other minority groups. Many Jews report feeling unsafe in parts of Britain where anti-Israel demonstrations have crossed the line from political protest into overt ethnic hostility. Week after week, central London is handed over to mobs chanting historic genocidal slogans (e.g. "Khaybar, Khaybar, ya Yahud!") and harassing Jewish passers-by, while the Metropolitan Police stand by under the banner of protecting "peaceful protest". This is not a neutral application of liberal assembly laws; it is an explicit hierarchy of state protection. The message is loud and clear: some minorities are shielded from the slightest hint of offence, while others must simply accept abuse as the background noise of a multicultural society.

Much of the contemporary impunity allowed on British streets can be traced directly back to the institutional surrender of May 16th 2021. On that day, a convoy of vehicles draped in Palestinian flags drove deliberately into the Jewish residential areas of St. John's Wood, Finchley Road, and Golders Green. From loudspeakers, men who had travelled from Blackburn blared vile antisemitic abuse and genocidal threats, screaming "fuck the Jews, fuck their daughters, and mothers, rape their daughters."

Despite international outrage, the subsequent judicial response exposed the raw reality of two-tier justice. Initially, it seemed that the Crown Prosecution Service would prosecute the four men involved. Yet, after the defendants appeared in court, the CPS systematically dropped all charges. Because the state had officially assumed, and then abandoned, the case, the defendants were legally insulated from any subsequent private prosecution. The total collapse of the case sent a signal to Jew-hunting jihadists: when antisemitic intimidation is wrapped in the banner of Palestinian activism, the state's judicial mechanism will actively engineer an escape hatch.

When authorities investigate offensive online speech while simultaneously tolerating mass public calls for “jihad”, the double standard becomes undeniable.

Yet despite all of this, the existence of two-tier policing is flatly denied by Keir Starmer and the political establishment. In fact, the Attorney General, Lord Richard Hermer, recently broke his silence to angrily denounce allegations of a double standard as “frankly disgusting”, warning that making such allegations may itself be treated as a form of “incitement” or a “toxic” threat to public order. The loop is thus perfectly closed: the state attempts to criminalise the diagnostic vocabulary to insulate the pathology from exposure. The public is not only forbidden from witnessing institutional decay; they are legally barred from naming it.

A healthy liberal democracy does not fear criticism of religion. It does not shield belief systems from scrutiny. It does not conflate criticism of ideas with hostility toward people. Above all, it does not permit ideological sensitivities to determine which truths may be discussed openly. Yet this is the direction in which Britain is moving.

The result is not tolerance.

It is fear *disguised* as tolerance.

Part V: Parallel Societies and the Erosion of a Common Culture

Apologists for multiculturalism argue that Britain's current difficulties stem not from diversity itself, but from the failure of successive governments to integrate diverse communities effectively. They claim that the practical pillars of cohesion – housing policies, language access, economic opportunity, and anti-discrimination laws – have simply been underfunded, poorly implemented, or ignored. This is a fantasy. The problem of multiculturalism lies not in the implementation, but the model itself: integration has become difficult precisely *because* multiculturalism encourages separate identities instead of a single, unifying national identity.

Successful integration – from the arrival of French Huguenots in the seventeenth century to the post-war settlement of European displaced persons – has always rested upon a straightforward bargain: the host society offers security, opportunity, and participation in national life; in return, newcomers gradually adopt the language, norms, and foundational civic values of their adopted country. Multicultural theory fundamentally weakened that bargain. The preservation of cultural distinctiveness came to be celebrated, while discussion of cultural adaptation became uncomfortable. Inevitably, the long-standing expectation that newcomers should assimilate into a common culture was entirely abandoned.

With that expectation gone, integration ceased to be viewed as a shared social obligation and became a matter of mere personal preference. The logical climax of this shift is an institutional culture that actively suppresses the host nation's heritage to accommodate minority sensibilities.

A vivid example emerged recently in guidelines titled 'Sharing the Journey' issued by local councils across northern England, which instructed schoolteachers to refrain from asking students to draw or reproduce images of Jesus, Muhammad, or any other figure considered a prophet in Islam. In the name of promoting inclusivity, public authorities effectively imported Islamic prohibitions on figurative art into state-funded classrooms. The irony is profound: a country with an expansive, centuries-old tradition of portraying biblical scenes in art now requires non-Muslim children to comply with a foreign theological restriction regarding the depiction of Christ. It represents a form of pre-emptive capitulation, where the survival of a common culture is sacrificed to appease the threat of selective offence.

This municipal surrender of secular democratic norms has penetrated the machinery of local government. In March 2026, during a Bristol City Council meeting, Green Party councillor Abdul Malik stood up and recited the *adhan* – the Islamic call to prayer – in Arabic at sunset, effectively converting an English civic chamber into an impromptu mosque. Malik made his move during the thirty-minute monthly slot reserved for the public forum, when ordinary citizens are permitted to speak directly to their elected representatives; thus, instead of local residents raising concerns over potholes, housing, crime, or other pressing issues, the window was hijacked for an Islamic ritual. Democratic participation was sacrificed on the altar of multiculturalism.

The institutional asymmetry is absolute: had a Christian prayer been imposed to displace a public forum slot, the secular left would have fiercely condemned it as a theocratic encroachment. Under the banner of "diversity", however, the establishment met the disruption with compliance, signalling that the rules of a neutral public square are entirely negotiable.

Across Europe, these questions are increasingly being confronted head-on. Denmark has just announced plans to prohibit the public broadcasting of the *adhan*, with the

country's Immigration Minister arguing that the sound conflicts with Danish cultural identity and social norms. Indeed, unlike prayer conducted within a mosque, the public broadcasting of the *adhan* extends beyond the voluntary participation of worshippers into the shared civic space, making it virtually unavoidable for those within earshot. It is therefore not merely an expression of religious belief, but the imposition of a religious proclamation upon the wider public.

Whether one agrees with the Danish policy or not, it reflects a broader willingness to reconsider assumptions about multicultural accommodation that were, until recently, widely regarded as politically untouchable.

Britain, by contrast, has shown little appetite for such a reassessment. Public institutions continue to organise themselves around the assumptions of multiculturalism, even as the reality on the ground increasingly resembles parallel societies. In districts such as Tower Hamlets, one can walk through neighbourhoods where the ideal of a shared national culture is entirely absent. Large concentrations of people sharing the same religion and similar cultural backgrounds have produced communities that operate largely within their own distinct social, legal, and linguistic frameworks.

In these Islamic enclaves, the reality is not multiculturalism – it is a self-segregating *monoculturalism*.

At the ideological centre of these parallel societies sits the infrastructure of the British mosque network. Far from functioning merely as places of worship, a significant and unpoliced faction of these institutions operates as sovereign ideological echo chambers where subversion is routinely cultivated. Every week, pulpits throughout the UK are used to disseminate deep hostility towards Western civilisation and the perceived enemies of Islam, targeting Christians, Jews, atheists, sexual minorities, and apostates with severe religious condemnation. This regular drumbeat of intolerance occurs without meaningful state recrimination, insulated by a political class terrified of breaching communal boundaries.

There is a direct link between this unchecked vitriol and outright terrorism. During the late 1990s and early 2000s, the Finsbury Park Mosque in North London served as a European nerve centre for international terror. Under the leadership of Abu Hamza al-Masri, whose fiery, radical sermons explicitly urged the killing of non-Muslims, the mosque nurtured such figures as shoe-bomber Richard Reid and Al-Qaeda conspirator Zacarias Moussaoui. Decades later, the pattern persists through a systemic refusal by mosque elders to challenge radical elements within their walls. The official statutory inquiry into the 2017 Manchester Arena bombing revealed that the leadership of Didsbury Mosque – attended for years by Salman Abedi and his family – displayed a “wilful blindness” toward the jihadist exploitation of its premises.

By allowing religious spaces to be used as operational and logistical hubs for jihad, the multicultural state subsidises the destruction of its own social fabric. This institutional abdication has allowed an alternative civic order to solidify.

The emergence of Shari'ah Councils offers a revealing illustration of this phenomenon. Although these bodies possess no formal legal authority within the British legal system, they have increasingly functioned as parallel forums for resolving disputes relating to marriage, divorce, inheritance, and family matters among Muslim communities. Defenders argue that participation is voluntary and reflects the legitimate exercise of religious freedom. However, strong communal pressures blur the distinction between voluntary choice and social expectation. The human cost is borne disproportionately by vulnerable women, with reports continually exposing how these councils sideline domestic abuse allegations and trap women in abusive marriages.

By allowing Shari'ah Councils to operate, the British state sanctions the normalisation of a competing legal framework that fractures the fundamental principle of one law for all. In a democratic state, the rule of law must be absolute: no one can be allowed to bypass secular justice by appealing to a religious tribunal.

This systemic fracturing is not merely facilitated by the state; it is actively celebrated by it as a showcase of diversity. Nothing exposes this more vividly than the designation of Bradford as the UK City of Culture 2025. To Whitehall bureaucrats and funding bodies, the city serves as a glittering, multi-million-pound poster child for the multicultural experiment. Yet to the native working-class population who actually live amidst its plainly divided neighbourhoods – and to the dissidents forced to flee their homes under police protection – the award is rightly regarded as a cynical joke. It represents the ultimate triumph of technocratic spin over lived reality: an official decree celebrating cohesion in a city defined by deep-seated Pakistani Muslim enclaves that possess little interest in assimilating into the wider British fabric.

There is nothing inherently unusual about immigrants preserving aspects of their heritage. The crisis arises when communities refuse to fully integrate into the broader culture around them. A cohesive society cannot be a random collection of groups who happen to share map coordinates. If people share a zip code but reject the shared values and social contract that form the bedrock of the nation, they are merely occupying the same territory, not building a home together.

True integration requires strict reciprocity: a common civic language to manage disagreements peacefully, backed by an absolute commitment to democracy, civil liberties, and the rule of law. Without a baseline agreement on these core civic ideals, diversity inevitably results in tribal fragmentation. Without a strong, singular constitutional framework where the rules of the state supersede the preferences of the tribe, a nation devolves into a mere geographic holding pen.

This leaves modern Britain confronting a question it has spent decades trying to avoid: how much cultural cohesion can a liberal democracy lose before it completely disintegrates?

Part VI: Britain, Ireland and the Future of Liberal Democracy

None of this means that Britain is doomed. Nations are capable of correcting course. Political mistakes can be reversed, institutional cultures can change, and cultural confidence can be recovered. But recovery begins with absolute honesty. It begins by recognising that multiculturalism cannot succeed when one of the cultures it seeks to accommodate exists to negate all others. That, I have argued throughout this essay, is precisely the challenge posed by Islam.

The choice facing Britain is not between uniformity and diversity. Western societies have always contained differences. The real choice is between a form of diversity grounded in a deeply shared national culture, and one that gradually dissolves the very assumptions upon which liberal democracy depends.

It is a choice that no Western nation can afford to avoid, nor should any assume that Britain's experience is unique. Ireland, in particular, would be wise to reflect carefully upon the lessons of the British landscape. The historical context and scale may differ, but the underlying institutional tendencies are already deeply familiar: the growing reluctance to discuss immigration and integration honestly; the routine stigmatisation of dissent as a moral failing; the increasing accommodation of group sensitivities over common civic norms; and an expanding political impulse to restrict free speech in the name of managing social friction.

In a chilling replication of the British state's speech-policing apparatus, the Irish Government has persistently attempted to rail-road draconian "hate speech" legislation onto the statute books, culminating in the heavily contested Criminal Justice Bill 2022. Though the Irish electorate voted two-to-one to abolish its archaic blasphemy laws in 2018, the political establishment immediately sought to replace them with a subjective, state-enforced orthodoxy that would effectively reinstate them through the back door. This legislative overreach sparked fierce resistance from free speech advocates – including the Alliance of Former Muslims – who recognised that vague, open-ended definitions of 'hate' would inevitably be weaponised by sectarian actors to shield Islam and other religious dogmas from scrutiny.

While a massive public backlash ultimately forced the Justice Minister to strip the speech-criminalising provisions from the Bill in September 2024, the episode reveals a striking irony: in its rush to mandate a superficial social cohesion, the Dublin establishment unwittingly created the very legal mechanisms that would silence some of

the most vulnerable minorities in the country – namely, Ex-Muslims and liberal reformers within Muslim communities.

Recent events have demonstrated how closely intertwined British and Irish jurisdictions have become. The attempted beheading in Belfast was carried out by a Sudanese asylum seeker who had relocated from the Republic. Had the attacker remained a few miles further south, the victim could just as easily have been walking the streets of Dublin. The existence of a border does not transform Islamic terrorism into a uniquely British problem, particularly when that border is among the most permeable in Europe. If anything, the attack illustrates how artificial such distinctions have become.

Yet a widespread assumption persists within Irish public life that, because Ireland has played only a limited military role in the Middle East and is broadly sympathetic to the Palestinian cause, it faces little risk from Islamic terrorism. This assumption rests upon the belief that jihadist violence is primarily a reaction to Western foreign policy and military intervention. Yet movements such as ISIS and Al-Qaeda do not distinguish between nations according to their geopolitical conduct: rather, they divide the world into the House of Islam (*Dar al-Islam*) and the House of War (*Dar al-Harb*). For the committed jihadist, Irish people are no less legitimate targets than British, French, or American citizens. National sympathies offer no protection against an ideology that regards unbelief itself as a sufficient justification for violence.

The belief that Ireland is somehow exempt from the problems experienced elsewhere in Europe is already contradicted by the country's own experience. In 2018, Japanese university student Yosuke Sasaki was murdered in Dundalk by Mohammed Morei, an asylum seeker who reportedly pledged allegiance to ISIS. In 2022, Yousef Palani murdered Aidan Moffitt and Michael Snee in Sligo explicitly for their homosexuality – a capital crime in Islam. In 2024, Father Paul Murphy was stabbed in Galway by a seventeen-year-old Muslim who became radicalised online. In 2025, Abdullah Khan stabbed a member of the Gardaí (police) in Dublin, shouting “Allahu Akbar” as he did so. While differing in their specific circumstances, these attacks demonstrate that Ireland is certainly not insulated from Islamic terrorism.

Nor can the threat be dismissed as the work of isolated extremists. A 2013 report by the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation identified at least twenty-six individuals from Ireland who had travelled to participate in the Syrian conflict. Given Ireland's relatively small population, the project's lead researcher, Professor Peter Neumann of King's College London, concluded that the country was “probably the biggest” contributor of foreign fighters on a per capita basis in Europe. Far from being immune to jihadism, Ireland has produced a significant contingent of jihadists willing to fight and die for the cause overseas.

The recruitment of Irish Muslims into ISIS was facilitated by the jihadist group ‘Liwa al-Ummah’, founded by Irish citizen and former Tripoli Brigade commander Mahdi al-

Harati. Among those recruited were Hudhaifa el-Sayed, Shamseddin Gaidan, Alaa Ciymeh, and Hisham el-Habbash, all of whom later died fighting in Syria. Investigative reporting further revealed that two senior officers of the NUIG Islamic Society travelled to Syria to fight for ISIS, where both were ultimately killed. These cases demonstrate that Ireland's encounter with jihadism has involved not only terrorist attacks, but organised recruitment networks and domestic radicalisation.

The illusion of Irish exceptionalism suffered perhaps its gravest blow in November 2023, when Riad Bouchaker brutally stabbed three young children and their carer outside a primary school in Parnell Square. From the day of this barbaric onslaught to his conviction for attempted murder in July 2026, official narratives have focused almost exclusively on Bouchaker's history of psychiatric illness and socio-economic grievances. Yet, the targeted nature of the attack and his deliberate actions just prior to it – including entrusting his passports to a mosque – strongly point toward an ideological undercurrent that both the state apparatus and mainstream press have assiduously avoided interrogating.

The atrocity horrified the nation and sparked the most serious civil disorder witnessed in Dublin for decades. For many, it shattered the comforting assumption that Ireland could indefinitely remain insulated from the crises of immigration, integration, and social cohesion already confronting much of Europe.

The same misconceptions that encourage complacency about Islamic terrorism at home also shape Irish perceptions of jihadist movements overseas. Recent reactions to the Israel-Hamas conflict provide a revealing example. Within Irish political, media, academic, and activist circles, opposition to Israel has hardened into an unquestionable moral orthodoxy. While criticism of any foreign state is entirely legitimate, this intense sentiment has been accompanied by a remarkable reluctance to confront the explicitly illiberal nature of movements opposing Israel – primarily, jihadists who are openly committed to religious authoritarianism and sectarian violence.

Expressions of sympathy for Hamas or Hezbollah have too often been excused, minimised, or contextualised in ways that would be unimaginable for any other extremist movement. Hamas – whose explicitly stated goals are to annihilate the Jews and restore the Caliphate – are depicted by much of the Irish Left as an anti-colonial movement, thereby obscuring its jihadist character. Emerging from the Palestinian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood, its 1988 founding Charter framed the conflict with Israel not as a territorial dispute, but as a cosmic religious struggle incorporating antisemitic themes drawn from classical Islamic tradition – including a notorious hadith from *Sahih al-Bukhari*, describing a future battle in which Muslims will fight and kill Jews in the lead-up to the Day of Judgement.

To interpret the conflict solely through the language of anti-colonial resistance is to be utterly blind to the power of religious ideology. Whatever one's views on Middle

Eastern geopolitics, it should be possible to recognise that Hamas does not seek an end to Zionist occupation and the establishment of a Palestinian state, but rather the total destruction of Israel and its replacement with an Islamic political order.

The danger here extends far beyond foreign policy misjudgement. A political culture that views illiberal actors through the comforting lens of victimhood gradually loses the capacity to recognise extremism, even when it stands in plain sight.

This is precisely the domestic blindness that has taken root within the Irish state, exposed vividly when warnings are raised from within its own legislature. In October 2025, independent Senator Sharon Keogan broke the taboo of Irish public life by explicitly warning the Seanad (Senate) that Ireland risked allowing the Muslim Brotherhood to “flourish unchecked” due to government inaction. Keogan urged the Minister for Justice to initiate a comprehensive probe into the group’s “concerning footprint” across Irish institutions, explicitly contrasting Ireland’s naive passivity with the aggressive countermeasures taken by nations like France and Italy to curb the movement’s influence.

Far from indulging in abstract speculation, the Senator’s intervention was prompted by a crisis at the heart of Ireland’s multicultural project: the sudden, prolonged closure of its largest mosque, the Islamic Cultural Centre of Ireland, based in Clonskeagh. What the political establishment and mainstream media attempted to downplay as a routine “management dispute” was, as Keogan explained to the upper house, a fierce struggle for control between figures linked to the Brotherhood and more integrationist Muslims. The dispute followed internal splits, senior resignations over the mishandling of Gaza charitable donations, and warnings from other Muslim groups, revealing divisions that extended far beyond ordinary administrative disagreements.

These concerns were not new. As early as 2006, a leaked U.S. diplomatic cable recorded allegations from prominent Irish Muslims that senior figures at the ICCI were closely aligned with the Brotherhood. The cable also noted the ICCI’s close links to the Brotherhood-affiliated European Council for Fatwa and Research – then headed by Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi, who defended the killing of apostates as crucial to the survival of Islam and described the Holocaust as God’s punishment upon the Jews. Nor did later events dispel those concerns. Following the overthrow of Mohamed Morsi in 2013, Hussein Halawa, imam of the ICCI, publicly urged Muslims to do whatever they could to restore the Brotherhood to power in Egypt, repeatedly referring to the movement in terms of “us” and “we”.

Against this background, the Clonskeagh crisis assumed a significance far beyond an ordinary management dispute. It exposed to public view what years of warnings had already suggested: that a transnational Islamist network had quietly built a European nerve centre on Irish soil.

Yet, the response to Keogan's warnings perfectly illustrated the systemic pathology she sought to diagnose. Rather than investigating how a global fascist movement – outlawed across much of the Middle East – had successfully captured the representative monopoly for Ireland's 82,000-strong Muslim population, the political establishment met the revelation with a wall of protective silence. To acknowledge her thesis would require Irish elites to admit that their decades of "interfaith dialogue" and state patronage had not fostered inclusion, but had instead subsidised the very forces that make inclusion impossible.

By turning a blind eye to Islamism for the sake of diversity, Ireland is repeating the same mistakes that have fractured liberal democracy in Britain. In both cases, a refusal to confront subversive actors undercuts the very foundation of the state.

That said, Ireland is not yet where Britain is. Its demographic transformation has occurred more recently, its institutional pathologies are less deeply embedded, and many of the tensions that have come to define British public life remain in their formative stages. But early symptoms should not be mistaken for a different disease. If Ireland offers a warning of how these dynamics begin, Britain demonstrates where they can lead when left unchecked. Once a state loses the confidence to uphold a common civic order and enforce a single standard of law, it begins to surrender the very conditions upon which peaceful coexistence depends.

This is how societies descend into civil war. A nation does not need to march formal armies into the field before it begins to fracture; it merely needs to allow its territory to be carved into self-governing enclaves with incompatible legal frameworks and competing loyalties. When the state abdicates its monopoly on violence by tolerating sectarian tribunals and organised intimidation, it creates a security vacuum. That vacuum is compounded when public institutions direct their coercive powers towards policing the speech of the law-abiding. Eventually, citizens, concluding that the state is either unable or unwilling to protect them, will seek to protect themselves.

This is not a distant dystopian fantasy; it is the logical terminus of the road Britain is currently travelling. To avert it, Britain must find the courage to bring its failed experiment with multiculturalism to an end and to reverse the institutional habits that it has fostered over decades. It must restore the expectation that all those who live in Britain subscribe to a common culture grounded in freedom of speech, secularism, equality before the law, and democratic self-government. No liberal democracy can indefinitely accommodate an ideology that exists to negate the very principles upon which it rests. The warning signs are clearly visible; the question is whether they will be recognised before it is too late.

In the sobering words of Winston Churchill:

Men occasionally stumble over the truth, but most of them pick themselves up and hurry off as if nothing had happened.