



“An Analysis of Trojan Horse Affairs, Measuring the Impact of Hoax Produced by Anti-Muslim Government in the UK”

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Abstract

This paper highlights one concrete example of how the power of *Hoaxes* can provide an extra-ordinary significant impact to the country. The term of *the Trojan Horse Affairs* make this issue more interesting for the author to discuss. The term of *Trojan Horse* generally used in technological science to describe the existence of the *malware* or *viruses* activity, whos hiding in suspicious forms and then damage the core systems on a computer or steal its data. The damage caused by the *Trojan Horse* is usually very severe (*Trojan Horses*, 2019).

In the study of international relations, the term of *Trojan Horse* was also recently introduced to defined the “terrorist operations”. This is because, terrorist operations are also use hidden movements on their actions to attack or stealing data which resulted in fatal damage. For that kind of reason, in the study of international relations, the term of *Trojan Horse* is also synonymous with serious crime, which are usually carried out by the opponents, enemies, or international criminal syndicate (*Trojan Horses*, 2019).

Tracing the origin history the use of the term of *The Trojan Horse* will remind back with the Ancient Greek War, between the *Achaena* (Greek) and Trojan people. This history become phenomenal after the *Achaena* win the war with their clever trick of smuggling its soldier into an unsuspecting wooden horse statue, soon called “*The Trojan Horse*” statue. The Trojan people immediately got killed in the night, when their soldiers were unaware and sleeping. The Achenian soldiers came out from their hiding place and then ended this storys (Mogra, n.d.).

Keywords: the trojan horse affairs, the trojan horse plot, the trojan horses, islamophobhia.

Introduction

England was the first to use the term of “*Trojan Horse*” as a term to indicate the existence of terrorist operations. But indeed the Trojan Horse Affairs in England is related to Hoaxes. Hoax that subordinated by the UK government in agenda to spread *Islamophobia* to people in England. The Trojan Horse Affairs succeeded in turning a multicultural and most tolerant country in the world to a very racist country especially towards Muslims community in 2014 – 2017. The case highlights the continued focus on Muslims as a ‘suspect community’ as the practice of Islam, is interpreted as extrimism, which is perceived as a route to terrorism.

Hoaks or *Hoax* has commonly used as a force in the agenda of attacking some people or enemy especially in this era of globalizations. The increasing of using *Hoax* has rapidly spread

easily along with the increasing of the media distribution and technology informations in various forms and sophistication.

The function of the *hoax* are varies but in the essence are to deliberately misinform or deceive public opinion to believe in false news. In the world of politics, or relations between countries, *hoaxes* usually used to bring down the rivals image, and can mislead the informations to provide changes in accordance with the wish of the *hoax* maker. *Hoax* in practice are very simple, but in the result are very destructable (Septanto, 2018).

Discussion

The Trojan Horse also known as “The Scandal of Trojan Horse” or “The Operation of Trojan Horse” are refers to a scandal involving claims of an alleged conspiracy that there was an organised attempt by some individuals to introduce an Islamist or *Salafist* ethos into several schools in Birmingham, England.

Starting from November 2013, the Birmingham City Council was received a strange document that has since come to be known as the “Trojan Horse Letter”. The city of Birmingham is a city in England which is predominantly inhabited by the populations of the Muslims. The Trojan Horse Letter passed to the Leader of the Council, Sir Alber Bore with no addressee and no signature. It was supposedly written to an unnamed person, describing a strategy to take over a number of schools in Birmingham and run them on strict Islamic principles.

The existence of this letter was firstly ignored by the Birmingham City Government, but it was later leaked to the media in March 2014 (*Report into Allegations Concerning Birmingham Schools Arising from “Trojan Horse” Letter*, n.d.). That letter suggested that there was an organised plot to remove Head teachers and spread an Islamist ethos in Birmingham’s schools, which it referred to as “The Operations of Trojan Horse”. It is not the first time this term has been use to describe Muslims living in Europe.

The Sunday Times media first released an article with a very controversial headline, “*The Islamic Plot to Take Over Our School*”. The content in the article is about the existence of a ‘man from Pakistan’ who is reported to have made a plan to smuggle the Islamization agenda, and to Islamize the whole United Kingdom community trough the public school curriculum (Holmwood & O’Toole, 2018).

The accusation is mainly centered against the Park View Academy, one of the public schools in the United Kingdom, located in the city of Birmingham. Park View Academy is one of the best public schools in the UK with 90% of the students and teaching staff are Muslims (*Trojan Horse*, n.d.).

Park View Academy was initially managed by the non-Muslims but the schools begin collapse in 1996, until its finally success manageable by the Muslims and receive an appreciation by the Government of the UK as one of the most successful public schools in the UK since 2002. The chief inspector of the British Education Service – Sir Michael Wishaw once said that all schools in the UK should be like Park View Academy. The British Council also gave the authority to Park View Academy to manage two other failed public schools, that is Nansen Primary School and Golden Hillock Secondary School being managed by the Park View Academy (*Trojan Horse*, n.d.).

Despite its success an outstanding rated, Park View Academy continues to be hunted for oblique news posted on the media. Media *the Sun* later released some other article about the same thing named “*Regimes of Hate and Fear*” foster fears and hatred of the British people

towards schools in Birmingham. The schools are reported as hardline Muslim schools that have a hidden agenda to Islamize more schools in the UK.

In *the Sun's* article, covering a statement of a witness who stated that public schools in Birmingham has led to Islamic schools. Student are forced to speak Arabic, female teachers are forced to wear *hijab*, they also introduce with gender segregation, very intolerant with *gays*, other religions along with non-Muslim holydays did not receive any attention, and school trips were arranged in such a way to Mecca and Medina (“Britain: Operation ‘Trojan Horse,’” n.d.).

As a result of the news, the British government withdrew operational funding for 21 schools in Birmingham, and since then the schools has become unfit and neglected. UK Minister of Education – Michael Gove announces new rules that every school in the UK are required to teach British values, not Islamic values. Public schools in the UK that are known to be in practice against the rules will be considered terrorists for opposing the government (“Britain: Operation ‘Trojan Horse,’” n.d.).

Michael Gove also repeatedly stressed that public school in the UK are secular schools. So any kind of prayers or worship calls may no longer be broadcast using loudspeakers. After the news of the alleged planting of extremist Islamic doctrine in British schools, this rule became a crisis rule, the member of parliament even condemned all forms of Islamic practices in the public sphere, because they were considered as an evil invasion.

The British government also took part in spreading the fake news. In several reports said based on the result of the investigations, the government gave a bad title to schools in Birmingham. The investigation was under the direction of the Minister of Education Secretary – Michael Gove together with the Head of Metropolitan Police – Special Section on Counter Terrorism division, and led by Peter Clarke and Ian Kershaw.

Kershaw published a report that the headmaster of Golden Hillock Public School was a “member of a radicalist Islamic group”. The former governor of Golden Hillock school also accused of funding terrorism, an was a former member of the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group who wished to replace the country government with a fundamentalist Islamic state (*Birmingham Muslim School in Small Heath*, n.d.).

Wilshaw reports that there are campaigns organized in these school institutions which are organized and forced according to narrow faith ideologies based on religion through the act of introducing doctrines to British children through some British school curriculum (*Constructing “British Values” within a Radicalisation Narrative: The Reporting of the Trojan Horse Affair*, n.d.).

The overall report of the results of the investigation is summarized under the title “Park View Academy has proven to have organized Campaign to Target Certain Schools” and also reported that there was evidence. Other reports title as “An Islamic Tolerance that is Intolerance and Aggressive”, issue in July – August 2014 (*Extremism in Schools: the Trojan Horse Affairs, diakses dari Website Resmi House of Commons Education Commitee*, n.d.).

Not long after the contents of the report were spread, the British government circulated a warning sign against the existence of Muslim Fundamentalist groups, and this increasingly made the British public worried.

As a result, some teachers in Birmingham get fired and banned from teaching again for the rest of their lives because they were considered involved in the Radical Islamic group, and accused as terrorists. In 2014 they were banned from teaching, their names and their faces plastered on every tabloid spread in Birmingham as terrorists. They also got treated like a

terrorist Muslim groups. They accept harassment, letters of terror, telephone calls, assault, and do not get justice if they report back, non-Muslim parents whose have their children school in public schools that accused protest about the safety of their children and claims has damaging public trust (*Trojan Horse: The Real Story behind the Fake "Islamic Plot" to Take Over Schools*, n.d.). An anonymous letter has done its damage at various levels in Birmingham and nationally.

In addition to investigations carried out by Clark and Wilshaw, there are any other reports by the investigations coordinated by the government, including four separate investigations conducted by the Birmingham City Council; the Institute Ofsted, and the Department of Education, all four launched similiar bad claims against 15 schools country in Birmingham. They justify the claims that there are Islamic Fundamentalist groups hiding inside the top schools in Birmingham (*Trojan Horse*, n.d.). A leaked document claimed dirty tricks were being used to oust non-Muslim staff in an operation called Trojan Horse.

The former Prime Minister, Tony Blair even made unfounded claims about the situation in Birmingham. While making a speech on the international stage, Blair claimed that there was a direct link between the kidnapping of 200 girls in Nigeria by Boko Haram and the extemism that he alleged was evident in Birmingham's schools. Completely unsubstantiated, it is again necessary to stress that there was no tangible evidence of extremism uncovered in any of the schools investigated in Birmingham. However the Ofsted investigation did uncover any handful of incidents in a small number of school governance related to radical Islamic groups (Allen, n.d.).

The 2017 Trojan Horse Affairs in the UK was revealed as a slander echoed by the anti-Islamic Birmingham government to bring up public debate. The Trojan Horse Affairs became a state media to criticize multiculturalism in the UK and finally justified the expansion of their counter-Islam agena, because it considered its breadth the spread of Islam in Britain as a disruption to government.

The government concerns especially after seeing the minority ethnics groups of Muslims in the UK began to show rapid progress in the world of educations and then entering into politics. This is considered to threaten the social, security, and political order in the UK.

The *hoax* was ex posed after several independent researchers and academicians published the results of their investigations into irregular media reporting. Among the writings published by Tom Benner and Tahir Alam stated that documents involving witnesses, could not be explained who the real witnesses are, and the Islamic phrases used by the witnesses were like statement narrated by the people who did not understanding anything about Islam. *Ikhwanul Muslimin* claimed to be an intruder who infiltrated the Muslim community to recruit members and build radical Islamic groups. But in fact, the *Ikhwanul Muslimin* played an important role insetting up and running the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) community, according to the role of *Ikhwanul Muslimin* in Britain that was ordered directly by the British Prime Minister in 2015 – David Cameron. In addition, a succession of inquiries also failed to discover who sent the anonymous letter in 2014. The letter sent to the Birmingham City Council in 2013 was anonymous and cannot be find who's the origin sender of the letter. A series of investigations failed to find who sent the letter in 2014 (*Tribunal Upholds Ban on UK School Director Accused of Promoting Islamist Teaching*, n.d.).

A government-appointed inquiry found no evidence of terrorism or radicalisation at schools in Birmingham but concluded that there were people in positions of influence who

espouse, endorse or fail to challenge extremist views, who headed one government-appointed inquiry.

Some facts were discovered following the news spread on the media about the images of the Public Schools in Birmingham City: the issues that says parents reported that their children got pushed to learn an Arabic or Urdu language at several schools, indeed at old know, the Arabic was implemented following a government initiative to have modern foreign language on the curriculum. The choice of modern language was to study Arabic or Urdu at several schools. Arabic or Urdu were not a compulsory subject; the method of teaching Arabic is also done through reading and listening Qur'an, so that Muslim's student could also learn the Qur'an and simultaneously know the Qur'an in addition to learn Arabic, there was increased Muslim's student having to learning the Qur'an by the heart.

School trips to Mecca and Medina are also available at school as a form of pilgrimage or *umrah* which is only open for Muslim student. Muslim children have been taken to Saudi Arabia as part of a school trip paid for in part by school funds. Oldknow has organised ten-day school holidays for the last three years to Saudi Arabia, open only to Muslim children. The trips were organised by an Arabic teacher who had formerly taught at Jeddah International Preparatory School, and they were described by the chair of governors as a foreign language holiday. However, the letter to parents stated that it is also for 'Umrah', a form of pilgrimage. Days were spent in Jeddah, Medina and Mecca (only Muslims may visit the latter two). A small group of senior staff selected children from the list of those who applied, but there was no protocol. The trips cost £1,000 per child and a letter was sent to parents stating that the school would pay 40%. However £1,000 the trip fee was not cheap, and to accommodate all student to Mecca was also not easy at all, the protection was not sufficient enough if it was stifled or forced to all students if the children travelled free. The trips were indeed is very expensive, even after the £400 subsidy by the schools, so the allegations that this trip was force is unacceptable (*Report into Allegations Concerning Birmingham Schools Arising from the "Trojan Horse" Letter*, n.d.).

In context of Michael Gove's statement regarding public education institutions in the UK lead a debate in the commons. He repeatedly emphasised that these were "secular" schools". Public education institutions in the UK is a secular institution being rejecting. There is significant emphasis throughout the UK 1944 Education Act, accordance with this Act every pupils in each school is given a place to participate everyday in acts of collective worship. It is very concerning that Michel Gove, the head of the British Education Office did not know about this. Even in the UK there has been a religious education advisory board of its own that is responsible for the supervision of the collective worship in public schools. He stood up to condemn this pernicious invasion of Islamic practice into secular space.

The truth, presumably known to Gove, is that there is no such thing as a state secular school in England. This position was set out succinctly in the evidence of Dr Marius Felderhof, of the standing advisory council on religious education, responsible for oversight of collective worship in state schools. At the regulatory inquiry he reminded the panel that every state school, including non-faith schools, must place at its heart an acknowledgment of the divine.

He pointed that Gove must know that it has been a requirement in law since the 1944 Education Act for every child in every school to participate every day in an act of collective worship. Current guidance begins with a preamble: "The government is concerned that insufficient attention has been paid explicitly to the spiritual, moral and cultural aspects of pupils' development, and would encourage schools to address how the curriculum and other

activities might best contribute to this crucial dimension of education (Faux, n.d.). This damaging misrepresentation of the facts cast a pall over the entire regulatory process and poisoned the public about what real happened and was reinforced by the secretary of state of education itself. That perception has never been correct.

Sam Solomon and Elias Al Madqisi also said that Trojan Horse Affairs is the Hoax of their book, it received a lot of support, including Geert Wilders who recommended the book to Western governments and political elites to overcome the problem of Islamophobia. Even after 3 years the allegations have arisen, there is still no evidence that state school institutions allegedly forced the *Salafiah* Islamic doctrine on their students to create terrorist groups.

Until 2017 independent investigations helped bring these news to the truth, and clear the names of teachers and Muslim students to be able to go to school as usual. This success also did not escape the efforts of Tahir Alam who is a central figure in an Islamic school in Birmingham. Tahir Alam is well known figure in education circles in Birmingham, a former Park View director which runs three academies in the Birmingham. He is accused of orchestrating a plot to promote hardline Islamist religious teaching in British school. He was banned from a management position at any independent school after the government he was held the most responsible for inviting extremist groups in Birmingham schools.

Tahir Alam received £ 20,000 of public donations and a legal team working for support and help him free on his case. But in his effort to appeal the allegations of extremism, he got rejected by the court. Tahir Alam stated that he has been unjustly vilified and slandered unfairly, and he will lodge an appeal. He is very much determined to pursue it to the highest court in UK as possible. These efforts then paid off, in 2017 cases dropped on educators in Birmingham were dropped, and declared a mistake. Teachers who have been banned from teaching for life, it was decided to re-teach and be given permission to make a living again.

Conclusion

This paper is more than just academic research, but it also briefly considers the story of the Muslim community in England, especially the city of Birmingham, now, and in the future. Understanding their contribution to the city of Birmingham, and the stereo-type of the Muslim community that is often misinterpreted in the West, that in the future they will face situations like this, which therefore require honest and open dialogue about this Muslim community especially within the elite, leaders, government institutions, policy makers, apart from their own social community. They deserve a safe and comfortable life now and in the future.

An anonymous letter has done its damage at various levels in Birmingham and nationally. It also created one of the most serious scandals that ever happen in the UK. The Trojan Horse Affair thought confined to a few of Birmingham's many schools, raised many issues about school governance, leadership, school ethos, and improvement, curriculum and equality, the relationship between religion and education, and political ideology and systems of education. The impact of these events on current and future Muslim growing up in the UK and elsewhere and how to safeguard and protect them from discrimination are of concern. Among these wide ranging issues radicalisation requires special attention which is the focus of this paper.

The language used to talk about the issues of "radicalisation" and "extremism" is itself the subject of considerable debate. There is also a difficulty in understanding fully these issues because there is a lack of an objective or universally accepted definition. The word of "Extremism" is defined as a vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including

democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of different faith and beliefs.

Internationally, the focus of Muslim youth identity has always become significant with concerns related to the nature of radicalisation, extremism and inter-culturalism. All these have been deepening sense of cultural, social and political *Islamophobia* in wider Western Europe society. All the time, Muslim communities suffering the most in inner areas, habitual neglected, forgotten and ultimately abandoned. Racialisation centres on the anti-conservative Muslim, which is seen as a problem for multiculturalism as well as a security concern. Words matter, and the idea of the Muslim community as a Trojan horse is widely evident in British counter-terrorism policy. The promotion of British values actually is very familiar to anyone aware of the British counter-terrorism strategy. It has roost in the community, and that is why the narrative is so problematic.

It is an ironic twist. This kind of *hoax* will always adversely affect their daily lives. Always accused as terrorists and seen as a threat to their religious background. High schools for this must also play a role in facilitating misunderstandings like this again, to build trust in the Muslim community and good relations with state and city officials. The role of academics can help correct these misunderstandings little by little and unite diverse groups so that they have a strong commitment to create justice, tolerance and cooperation. One of these articles is expected to help encourage other academics and general readers to understand the Muslim community is not a terrorist threat.

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