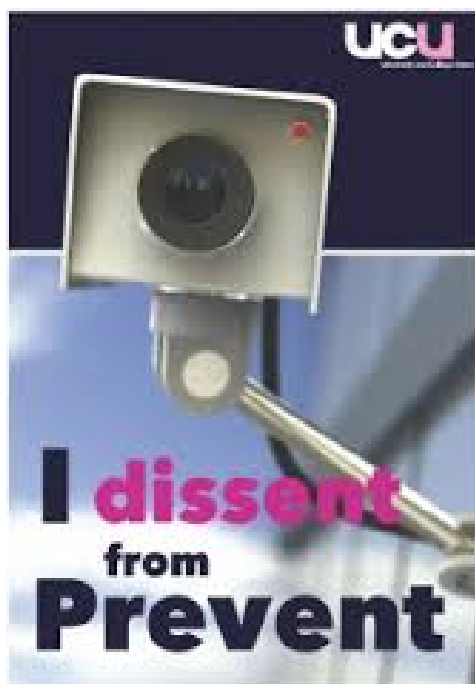


## Discussing PREVENT with Dr Kay Inckle (2 of 2)

### Part II of interview with *Kay Inckle* by *Ronda Daniel*

*This discussion surrounded both the current political climate, as well as the current state of sociology, in the discussion of Prevent, 'The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act', implemented in 2015.*



Kay: I remember when the Prevent legislation was first being developed that I received an e-mail by accident, and which was later recalled, about staff responsibilities to identify risks of 'radicalised' students and it made me really angry. It is also interesting how this word 'radical' has become associated with violence and destruction, it's never seen as transformative, creative and positive. Is it a bad thing to be a part of the radical left or the radical pacifist movement for example? UCU (the lecturers union) is actively against the Prevent legislation on the grounds of impediments to freedom of speech and freedom from surveillance and policing in the classroom. But for me the Prevent legislation is also based in racialization, labelling and stigma – all things that sociologists should be opposed to. And really, if we are concerned about the prevention of violence then we have to question their priorities with this legislation – 2 women die per week at the hands of their male partners or ex-partners, and 1 in 3 women is sexually assaulted. Women are more at risk from their partners and family members than they are terrorists. Shouldn't we be more concerned with this? Where is the prevent legislation for violence against women??!!

I also remember these kind of racialized stigmatisation process from when I was growing up. In my time, Black British people and Irish Catholics were subject to similar labelling, they were defined as a threat. Black people in general ways, and Irish Catholics as specifically as bombers and terrorists. Fears were created and spread which enabled all kinds of social and state violence to be committed against these groups – the Guildford four and the Birmingham six for example. And now, we are encouraged to be suspicious of 'Arab' 'Muslims' without any apparent recollection of the kind of horrific consequences of this kind of state-legitimated prejudice. This government criticises ISIS for their beheadings, and yet completely contradicts that by being 'best friends' with Saudi Arabia, who use beheading as a form of state execution. To me, this legislation will just fuel Islamophobia, and increase prejudice against racialized minorities.

The other aspect of it which really concerns me is the hypocrisy of our apparent opposition to violence, while at the same time being one of the primary arms traders in the world. The UK has a huge arms industry. In fact Britain was selling president Assad of Syria the components to construct the chlorine bombs he used against the civilian population. This same population we also once hailed as part of the 'Arab Spring' who were 'supporting our values of democracy'. We allowed that democratic opposition to be annihilated and we conveniently forget that the first British people going out to Syria were not terrorists but were medics and supporters of democracy. There are more than 13,000 Syrian children who have died in that conflict. We are directly responsible for some of this, selling weapons to Assad and saying we can do nothing, and then years later joining in bombing the country and 'negotiating' some kind of settlement with those who wish to keep Assad in power. It is inhuman. And I think the prevent legislation is enmeshed in all of this. For example, after 9/11 in the US, the country was pretty much permanently on 'red alert' status which indicated immanent threat, and this is a political tactic to keep people in a state of fear. When people are frightened, it's easier to strip their rights away in the name of 'protection'. In the UK at the moment we are seeing a similar stripping away of rights: legislation is making it harder for councils to boycott corporations, there is increasing surveillance, trade unions are being restricted, immigration legislation is being tightened. We need to be less afraid and more clear about how we are all responsible for what we've created and for what is happening in the world. We are in no position to take the moral high ground. On one hand we argue that ISIS are evil and immoral because they kill people who do not share their values, and yet our response is to kill them. Violence and killing only creates more of the same and it is time we did something different.

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