

Racist reprisals feared for London terror bombing

Mike Ingram
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Possible racist reprisals against ethnic minorities throughout Britain are feared after the terrorist bombings in London on July 7 were blamed on four British Muslims. On July 12 police carried out raids in Leeds and Dewsbury, West Yorkshire, and a controlled explosion in the Burley area of Leeds, as part of investigations into what are now believed to have been suicide bombings of the London Underground network and a bus, killing more than 50 commuters.

Claiming to have identified the remains of three of the bombers, police searched their homes in Leeds. Searches reported finding a “significant amount” of explosive material at one address.

Immediate police appeals for calm among local communities did little to allay fears of a racist backlash. Though the media has been careful to stress that only a “minority” of Muslims engage in terrorism, this has been coupled with pointed demands in the media for Muslim organisations to be firmer in their condemnation of the bombings.

Despite the fact that every Muslim organisation in Britain has come out strongly against the atrocity carried out in London, the *London Evening Standard* editorialised, “But the challenge for Britain’s Muslim leaders is to define being a good Muslim as one who supports the British authorities as they try to track down terrorists, not one who feels the remotest fellow-feeling towards perpetrators of crimes that are likely to include Muslims among their victims.” The paper adds that “racial incidents almost doubled in the days after the bombings.”

Charles Moore in the July 9 *Daily Telegraph* rejected London Mayor Ken Livingstone’s statement that “Islam and terrorism don’t go together.” On the contrary, Moore argues, they must indeed be linked in the same way as “the words ‘Irish’ and ‘terrorist’

went together.”

Moore says, “If fanatics can persuade people that their religion insists that they kill others (and often themselves) in its service, then they will obey. And whereas the IRA, though utterly sadistic and fanatical, kept in mind a political aim which, once achieved, would mean that they need kill no longer, the religious fanatic lacks even this check on his behaviour.”

Though Moore too acknowledges that “the vast majority of Muslims are not terrorists,” he clearly implies that they could be colluding with terrorism. “So we have in our midst a religious minority in a state of ferment, and somewhere inside it is a number of people (though a tiny proportion of the whole) who want to kill the rest of us... Instead of subjecting our entire population to the loss of liberties and increase of bureaucratic power which identity cards involve, we should develop a strategy that works out much more precisely where the danger lies, and seeks it out,” Moore says, before outlining where he sees the danger.

Questioning the “methods of the police,” Moore says that Metropolitan Police Commissioner Ian Blair’s “approach to policing Muslims appears to be to seek the consent of those he supposes to be community leaders before ‘going in.’ It is surely not right that they should veto on whether or not an inquiry is pursued, and it must be asked whether all of them *could be trusted not to protect some of those who merit police attention*” (emphasis added).

It is no surprise that in such a political climate a few right-wing thugs have taken it upon themselves to seek “revenge” upon Muslims in a number of attacks across the country.

In the space of a few days at least four mosques have been either partially firebombed and others had their windows smashed and doors vandalised. A Sikh temple

in Belvedere in the South East was also attacked.

Highly inflammatory messages have been posted on a web site by supporters of the racist Combat 18 organisation. One message from someone in Nottingham read, “At last action has been taken ... yesterday in Liverpool a mosque was set on fire. Action is being taken but this isn’t enough. Let’s burn every mosque down.”

There have been a number of reports of people being racially and physically abused in London and other areas.

By far the most serious is the killing of an Asian man in Nottingham in the East Midlands. Kamal Raza Butt, who had been staying with a friend in the city for about six weeks, was found unconscious in the Meadows area of the city on Sunday after allegedly being subject to racial abuse by a group of youths. After being taken to hospital he was pronounced dead on arrival. Six youths have been arrested for the killing, which the police are treating as racially motivated.

The Muslim Council of Britain reports that it has received racist email messages, at one point shutting down its mail systems. One warned, “It’s time for a war on Muslims throughout Britain.”

The racist British National Party issued a leaflet for the Barking by-election where it is standing a candidate, depicting the blown-up London bus and declaring, “Maybe now it’s time to start listening to the BNP.”

Though an extremely small minority of the population are involved in these right-wing attacks, they underscore the politically criminal character of the terrorist action in London. Far from doing anything to counter the criminal activities of Bush and Blair in Iraq or elsewhere, the bombings serve only to spread fear, anger, confusion and political disorientation.



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