

We condemned the ideology behind Christchurch. Why didn't we do the same after Sri Lanka?

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The carnage in Sri Lanka which left more than 300 dead may have been carried out by 'Buddhists', according to the BBC Today presenter Nick Robinson on the morning after those hideous bombings. We all grope slowly towards meaning, don't we? We look for precedent, we search for clues. I did both when I heard of the murders and came to a different conclusion to Nick. Someone had attacked Christians and westerners in a series of suicide bombings: that gave me an inkling. Perhaps — just perhaps — it wasn't Buddhists. Perhaps it was instead the fanatics responsible for the vast majority of terrorism outrages in the world (Global Terrorism Index, 2000-2013) and 92 per cent of all terrorism murders in the United States since 1992 (Cato Institute, 2017). Yes, I thought, it's probably them again. I didn't find it a terribly hard call to make.

Compare Nick's reaction, and indeed the overwhelming reaction of the western world leaders and liberal media, to the murders in Sri Lanka and the murders in Christchurch. In the latter case, everybody was clear firstly that it was terrorism and that Muslim people had been targeted, and they were happy to say as much. But they did not stop there. With great alacrity they also identified the poisonous ideology behind the Christchurch attack: racism, Islamophobia and white supremacy. The far right. Many commentators over here, including LBC's in-house cretin James O'Brien, went further and suggested that those of us who find certain aspects of Islam a little difficult to swallow were directly responsible for the murders. The ideology was seized upon and rightly eviscerated.

Now look at what happened in Sri Lanka, and how we reported it. Of 20 world leaders, ex-leaders (Obama) and hideously useless also-rans (Hillary) who took time to condemn the atrocity, only one — Xavier Bettel of Luxembourg — mentioned that the victims of the attack were Christians. None of the 20 — none — mentioned the word Islam. So in one attack we were rightly enjoined to stand in solidarity with the victim group, who were not merely identified but lionised, and also enjoined to condemn the ideology behind the attack, which was very clearly explained in every broadcast. In the other, the victim group was not named and nor was the ideology. Why should that be?

We have got ourselves in a terrible irrational tangle over Islam and its confected opposite, its specious other, Islamophobia. It may well be that under our current definition of the term, it would be Islamophobic — and therefore a hate crime — simply to state this plain and simple fact: the murders in Sri Lanka were carried out by Muslims in the name of Islam. It is an article of faith for the liberals, who still cleave to the ludicrous idea of multiculturalism, that there are two things: Islam, which is a religion of peace followed by million upon million of pacific souls and must therefore be respected, and this other thing, non-Islam, which is what is followed by a

minuscule proportion of nutters and extremists and has nothing to do with the religion itself, or is instead a grotesque perversion of it.

This is wishful thinking taken to surreal levels and an obviously false dichotomy. There are indeed million upon million of peaceable Muslims. But the gap between those two supposed opposites is not so wide as you might think. Almost one in four British Muslims, for example, thought the 7/7 attacks in London were justified (NOP poll, 2006). A year earlier, another poll suggested that 37 per cent of British Muslims thought Jews were a 'legitimate target'. A poll for BBC Radio 4 in 2015 reported that 45 per cent of British Muslims thought that imams who preach violence against the West were still part of 'mainstream Islam'. You take my point? And that is only Britain, where our Muslim community has been exposed to the undoubted transcendent virtues of mutual toleration and representative democracy. A worldwide poll from Pew Research in 2013 reported that only 57 per cent of Muslims in the world disapproved of al Qaeda.

The inconvenient truth is that a fervent commitment to Islam led those benighted savages to murder Christians in Sri Lanka and that a sizeable proportion of Muslims worldwide are not entirely averse to such despicable actions. You cannot quite separate Islam from the horrors carried out in its name, no matter how well intentioned you may be. Nor, for that matter, can you separate Islam from the appalling treatment of women, gays, apostates and Christians in states which call themselves Islamic. Islam, as it is practised today, is in general neither peaceable nor tolerant and it seems to me absurd to pretend that it is.

One man got it right on the Sri Lanka atrocity. Rauff Hakeem, from the Sri Lankan Muslim Congress, was prepared to say what the vacillating western leaders would not say: he called for Sri Lankan Muslims to enter a period of introspection, adding: 'We are ashamed and outraged. We must try to address issues within the community.'

Those were painfully honest and heartfelt words and worth far more than the bovine platitudes bestowed upon the victims by Theresa May et al. And also a reason for hope, amid the shattered limbs and the destroyed lives. Rauff clearly grasps the point rather better than the western world, which, in its paroxysms of political correctness, engendered partly through fear, blinds itself to the unpleasant realities. And nor, we should add, are the large majority of blameless, peaceable Muslims, most of whom are as outraged as we are about these remorseless attacks. You cannot solve a problem by pretending that it doesn't exist.