The London bombings and the myths on "terrorism"*

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The so-called war against terrorism is, in fact, a war between two fanaticisms. To bracket the two together seems outrageous. One is theocratic, the other positivist and secular. One is the fervent belief of a defensive minority, the other the unquestioned assumption of an amorphous, confident elite. One sets out to kill, the other plunders, leaves and lets die. One is strict, the other lax. One brooks no argument, the other 'communicates' and tries to 'spin' into every corner of the world. One claims the right to spill innocent blood, the other the right to sell the entire earth's water. Outrageous to compare them!

John Berger, *The Observer* (17/7/2005)

The London bombings were the catalyst for the transnational elite to launch a huge propaganda campaign —with the usual help of their fellow-travelers in the reformist Left— in order to sling mud at the defensive struggle against them by the self-appointed 'martyrs' of the Arab nation. As I have tried to show elsewhere,[1] the transnational elite has been engaged in the mass murder of the peoples of the Middle East and Central Asia since the first Gulf war, for the sake of integrating the region, with its rich energy sources, into the New World Order (NWO) of capitalist neoliberal globalisation. The cycle of political violence began, as has always been the case in History, with capitalist systemic violence, either economic or political and military. This violence has inevitably led to political counter-violence, which today has spread extensively, following the huge dimensions taken by systemic violence in the NWO in the aftermath of the collapse of the opposing pole represented by the Soviet bloc. In this context, any movement or regime characterised by the transnational elite as 'rogue' because it does not promptly adjust to the NWO faces brutal military intervention, irrespective of International Law niceties.

Within this vicious circle of systemic violence and counter-violence so-called 'terrorism' developed, which often takes the form of blind violence —an inevitable outcome of the present huge asymmetry of power between the political elites and those resisting them. Is it surprising that when the young Arab activist sees Arab women and children being blown up by the transnational elite on a daily basis in Iraq and Afghanistan, or by Zionists in Palestine, s/he has no qualms about doing the same? In Iraq, according to a recently published study based on data collected by the US-appointed Iraqi authorities (who have every reason to underestimate the true number of casualties) 25,000 Iraqi civilians have been killed during these first two years of occupation, whether as a direct or an indirect result of it (37% of them shot by the occupational forces[2]) —not to mention the half million children who died because of the embargo against Saddam. At the same time, the

bloody and massive ethnic cleansing that has been carried out by Zionists in Palestine over the entire post-war period —in blatant contravention of dozens of UN resolutions— never led to embargos and invasions as it did in Iraq! As an exile from Saddam Hussein's regime and co-founder of the London-based Iraq Anti-Occupation Forum[3] put it, "the logic is clear: your security is only assured if ours is. If our women and children are killed, then your women and children are killed."

It is clear that as long as the elites manage to disorientate their own peoples with respect to the real causes of 'terrorism', the cycle of political violence will continue unabated and will spread to every corner of the Earth. In the framework of this campaign of mass disorientation, a series of myths and pseudo-arguments have been used by the transnational elite-controlled international mass media, which are also repeated ad nauseam by neoliberals and social-liberals alike and adopted in a more 'sophisticated' form by the analysts of the reformist Left. The main aim of this campaign is, as Alibhai-Brown stresses, to persuade the public, through the massive lamentation of the victims of 'terrorists' and the parallel blatant indifference towards the many more victims of the elites and the causes of their victimisation, "to condemn one form of terrorism and, in effect, support another".[4] It would therefore be worthwhile to examine some of these myths and pseudo-arguments about terrorism.

A frequently repeated myth is that Al-Qaida terrorists do not have any real political demands and are only motivated by an 'evil ideology' of hate against the West's values, liberties and way of life —an Islamic ideology which supposedly aims to achieve global domination. However, as serious students of Islam stress,[5] in reality, what has been labelled 'Islamic fundamentalism' is often a form of nationalism in religious disguise. The Qur'an prohibits aggressive warfare, permits war only in self-defence and insists that there must be no coercion in religious matters. It is also historically established that for centuries Islam has had a much better record of religious tolerance than Christianity (see e.g. the Ottoman empire's tolerance of other religious denominations). As even anti-terrorist experts admit, it is not western values but western policies against the Arabs which unite an overwhelming majority of Muslims in the Middle East against the West.[6] Anyway Al-Qaida, amid their religious rhetoric, have made it crystal-clear through their statements what their main demands are: the withdrawal of US and other western forces from the Arab and Muslim world and an end to support for Israeli occupation of Palestinian land and for the client regimes of the West in the region. Osama bin Laden himself raised the obvious question in his US election-timed video: if it was western freedom al-Qaida hated, "Why do we not strike Sweden?"[7]

Another relevant myth (frequently repeated by the reformist Left) is that terrorism is a straight blow to democracy. However, if this 'argument' could have seemed plausible to some in the past, surely it is silly even to mention it now, in the aftermath of the events leading to the invasion and occupation of Iraq. Even the caricature of 'democracy' which we enjoy in the present representative system was clearly debased a couple of years ago, when the elites not only did not bother to ask their peoples before taking the crucial decisions to launch their 'wars' against terrorism and Iraq, but they even provocatively ignored the millions of citizens demonstrating in the streets of London, Rome etc demanding the abortion of the invasion. The outcome is that, today, it is the citizens themselves who pay the deadly price for a decision they were not involved in, whereas the actual decision-takers in the political and economic elites, who 'happen' to benefit from the invasion and are

responsible for the bloody cycle of violence, have taken due care to become almost invulnerable to the blows of the Arab avengers, thanks to the supreme technology at their disposal.

Another silly assertion, which is repeated ad nauseam by the mass media and the various 'experts', is that the 'terrorist' attacks are not carried out by the poor, the hungry and the marginalised and therefore one could not talk about a 'people's resistance'! In other words, since these actions are not being carried out by starving Ethiopians, surely they cannot constitute a people's resistance according to these sage priests of resistance, who, by analogy, would easily have rejected many 19th century revolutionaries for the same reason (Bakunin and Marx included), as well as several important revolutionaries of the last century (Lenin, Mao and Che included)[8]!

Finally, another pseudo-argument, also adopted by the reformist Left, is that the terrorist acts should be assessed on the basis of who objectively benefits from them. There is no doubt, of course, that the elites exploit similar activities to enhance their control of the populations even further, through the various anti-terrorist restrictions of civil liberties, which are already being used to fight any internal resistance to the New World Order of neoliberal globalisation. However, although terrorism is not only morally unjustifiable but also incompatible with the democratic project and therefore, on both grounds, should be rejected (as I have attempted to show elsewhere), still, the question raised by this sort of supposedly 'Leftist' argument is this: given that the elites could surely exploit such activities to their benefit, should the peoples avoid resisting against the elites, using any means available at their disposal, so that they will not give the elites the chance to exploit them?

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[1] Takis Fotopoulos, "Iraq: the new criminal 'war' of the transnational elite", *Democracy & Nature*, Vol. 9 No. 2 (July 2003).

[2] Terry Kirby & Elizabeth Davies, "Iraq conflict claims 34 civilian lives each day as 'anarchy' beckons", *The Independent* (20/7/2005).

[3] Mundher al-Adhami, "Not hate, vengeance", *The Guardian* (16/7/2005).

[4] Yasmin Alibhai-Brown, "The hypocrisy of Blair's call on Muslims", *The Independent* (18/7/2005).

[5] See e.g. the article of Karen Armstrong, author of *Islam: a Short History* (Weidenfeld & Nicholson 2001), "Fundamentalism is often a form of nationalism in religious disguise", *The Guardian* (11/7/2005).

[6] Seumas Milne, "It is an insult to the dead to deny the link with Iraq", *The Guardian* (14/7/2005).

[7] Ibid.

[8] A similar point is made by Adrian Hamilton when he stresses that 'although much has been made of the middle-class back-ground of the bombers, such fac-tors have always been true of revolutionary cadres', A. Hamilton, "It's too convenient to blame it all on religion", *The Independent* (21/7/2005).