



Tony Blair Renounces Multiculturalism - Sort Of

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British Prime Minister [Tony Blair](#) [declared](#) last Friday that “no distinctive culture or religion supercedes our duty to be part of an integrated United Kingdom.” He listed “respect for this country and its shared heritage,” along with “belief in democracy, the rule of law, tolerance, equal treatment for all,” as the things that “we hold in common” and give “us the right to call ourselves British.”

Philip Johnston, Home Affairs Editor of the *Telegraph*, [termed this](#) a “volte face” and noted that “just eight years ago” Blair “was a multiculturalist champion.” The prime minister’s speech, wrote Johnston, “was the culmination of a long Labour retreat from a cause it once enthusiastically embraced.” It was a retreat, he suggested, made necessary by the force of events: “In re-

cent weeks, Jack Straw, Ruth Kelly, John Reid, and Gordon Brown have all played their part in a concerted revision of the Cabinet’s stand which began in earnest after the July 7 bombs in London last year.”

Blair himself, however, doesn’t seem to have intended his speech to be taken as a rejection of or retreat from multiculturalism. He explained: “It is not that we need to dispense with multicultural Britain. On the contrary we should continue celebrating it. But we need – in the face of the challenge to our values – to re-assert also the duty to integrate, to stress what we hold in common and to say: these are the shared boundaries within which we all are obliged to live, precisely in order to preserve our right to our own different faiths, races and creeds.” In line with this, he called

for an adjustment in how multiculturalism was to be understood: "it is necessary to go back to what a multicultural Britain is all about. The whole point is that multicultural Britain was never supposed to be a celebration of division; but of diversity." He rejected the separatism and relativism that would make for the Balkanization and atomization of British society and rule and law: "The purpose was to allow people to live harmoniously together, despite their difference; not to make their difference an encouragement to discord."

Consequently, he called for grants "to promote integration"; an end to forced marriage ([which the British failed to outlaw last summer](#)); adherence by all groups to the rule of law (in other words, no *Shari'a* in Britain: Blair said, "Nobody can legitimately ask to stand outside the law of the nation. There is thus no question of the UK allowing the introduction of religious law in the UK"); restrictions on preachers coming from outside of Britain (which will do nothing, of course, about home-grown British *jihadists* such as the July 7 bombers); citizenship as part of the national curriculum (with "religious education in all community schools" that "should be broadly Christian in character but that it should include study of the other major religions"); "vigorous" enforcement of "legal requirements" for madrassas; an English requirement for permanent residency; and more.

As positive as all this is, it is rather astounding to realize that these

measures, as mild as they are, have not been undertaken long ago, or that anyone would think them controversial. It is disappointing that Blair defines, at least in this speech, Britain's national character almost exclusively in terms of the "tolerance" that "is part of what makes Britain, Britain." He speaks in a somewhat confused manner about a placard that a Turkish protestor held aloft at a demonstration against the Pope's recent visit there: "Jesus was a prophet but not the Son of God." This placard, says Blair with evident admiration, occupied "an altogether higher plane of theology." He added: "Most Christians are hugely surprised to be told that the Koran reveres Jesus as a prophet." In this he demonstrated a complete lack of awareness of the fact that Islam's reverence for Jesus as a prophet is a manifestation not of Islamic openness to Christianity, but of just the opposite: it is a manifestation of a supremacist theology that strips Christianity of all legitimacy and presents itself as the replacement and corrective of Christianity's deification of Christ. In light of that, Blair would do better to speak not of "the rich Abrahamic heritage we share in common," but of the necessity for Muslims in Britain to reject this supremacist doctrine, which because of the political character of Islam leads ineluctably to what Blair calls the "warped distortion of the faith of Islam" - that is, the Islam that believes it has a right and duty to impose *Shari'a* in Britain.

Blair, breaking new ground as the first non-Muslim Grand Mufti of

Britain, affirmed that “of course the extremists that threaten violence are not true Muslims in the sense of being true to the proper teaching of Islam.” He did not, however, inform his audience where this “proper teaching of Islam” could be found, or call upon any of the mainstream Sunni schools of jurisprudence to repudiate the doctrine, which they all hold, that the Islamic community has the responsibility to wage war against the non-Muslim world in order to impose the rule of Islamic law. But Blair could not be expected to speak about this, even if he knew about it: discussion in Britain of the elements of Islam that give rise to violence and fanaticism have thus far been dismissed as “racism,” despite the patent fact that Islamic jihad supremacism is a religious and political ideology, and not a race at all. That’s why the end of Blair’s speech had an ominous tinge: “The right to be different. The duty to integrate. That is what being British means. And neither racists nor extremists should be allowed to destroy it.” Clearly by “extremists” he meant *jihadists*, but by “racists” it is likely that he meant the most vocal opponents of the creeping Islamization of Britain. After all, the Blair government attempted to pass an “incitement to religious hatred” bill that would have criminalized “abusive or insulting” behavior toward a particular religion. Certainly Islamic *jihadists* and their allies have characterized honest discussion of the violent elements of Islamic theology and tradition as abusive and insulting, truth notwithstanding; Blair’s bill would make deviations from his polite fictions about “the proper tea-

ching of Islam,” no matter how careful, scholarly, and respectful, into criminal offenses.

As Johnston notes, however, the force of events has already compelled the Labour leadership to qualify its hitherto no-holds-barred support for multiculturalism, and has led Mr. Blair to affirm British values to the extent that he did on Friday. It is likely that this process is not over, and that reality will force new concessions from these leaders. As events rush on, they will increasingly see that Blair’s watery vision of mutual tolerance is not enough to ensure national self-preservation, and that multiculturalism must be discarded altogether in favor of a forthright and unapologetic assertion of British and Western civilization as something worth defending, and as something superior in numerous particulars to the alternative offered with increasing stridency by the Muslim immigrants in Britain. At that point, if it is not too late, it will be impossible to criminalize discussion of the violent elements of Islamic theology and tradition, for discussion of them will be an obvious national necessity, inextricable from the defense of the nation. If it is not too late, we may hope that Britain may then reemerge not just as a geographic location for anything at all and nothing in particular, but as a dynamic exponent of the Judeo-Christian civilization that has always been the focus of Islamic jihad efforts. And at that point it will be finally understood that the new defense against the *jihad* will be what truly gives British subjects the

right of which Blair speaks: “the right to call ourselves British.”

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