

Press Release

National Pride and Racism Come Together and Must Go Together

The Euro 2020 football tournament was said to unify the country, but in the end further exposed the divisions that pride in national identity is bound to foment. England is being accused of being systematically racist in the wake of the abuse black football players received.

A temporary feeling of national pride was never going to fix the serious fractures that centuries of nationalism had nurtured. When British people feel that they are better than the French because they are not British, then it's inevitable that English will soon feel that they are better than Scottish or Welsh, for the same reason. Moreover, regions and cities will soon feel superior to other regions and cities, and even neighbourhoods will soon be unified against their neighbours. None of this is a dystopian fantasy, rather it is the reality that has been accepted as normal by many people in the world today.

Yet joining tribes with people who coincidentally have similarities with you, whether place of birth, residence or skin colour, is anything but natural. Human beings are distinguished from all other animals by our minds. We are able to think and develop concepts about life, the universe and our role within it. Forming tribes with others on the basis of things that we did not think about nor choose is not befitting of intellectual beings. Doing so is demonstrably detrimental to our wellbeing and that of our societies.

The racism that is so endemic in Britain and other parts of Europe and America is merely an extension of the same tribalistic sentiment that is encouraged by all the flag waving, but rightly shunned with the knee taking. The contradiction is evident for all to see. Stopping racism requires more than a declaration of its evil, as the root cause must also be addressed, that is the tribalistic affinity with others over coincidental matters. If the government is promoting a sense of national pride while at the same time acting surprised by the rise in racist abuse, then clearly one must question what good this nationalism is doing.

The idea of the world being divided into nation states is a 17th century European invention. Then those European nations turned their sights on the rest of the world to impose national borders through colonialism. Their divisive concept has wreaked havoc throughout the world ever since.

Islam does not tolerate racism in any of its guises, nor does deliver the contradictory message of nationalism and pride in accidents of birth. It is no better than shallow tribal pride that Prophet Muhammad (saw) said about: «دَعُوها فَإِنَّها مُنْتَنَةٌ» **“Leave it, for it is rotten”**.

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