

The Discourse of the West of Muslims of Trinidad and Tobago and their Hijrah to Islamic State

The Discourse of Western Media

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The Hijrah of Muslims of Trinidad and Tobago to Islamic State: questions for Western media

The accounts in Western media to-date on this reality of Trinidad and Tobago (T&T) all suppose that the Muslim population of T&T is in keeping with the western discourse deeply radicalised and they are all seeking to explain why this radicalisation in T&T. Most have concocted simply laughable propositions like the influence of the Nation of Islam, Black Power and the Jihad of 1990. They all therefore need to answer a crucial question as follows: if the Muslim population of T&T is radicalised to the point of undergoing hijrah to the Islamic State (IS) why haven't they abided by the ruling of the IS in Dabiq 15 to launch attacks in T&T on the kaffirun and the apostates chief among them being the Jamaat al Muslimeen? Why haven't the radicalised Muslims of T&T abided by the call of Al Qaeda and especially Anwar Al Awlaki to wage war on the kaffirun via lone wolf and other attacks? Why choose to leave and fight in far off Syria and Iraq rather than here in T&T if we of the Ummah of T&T are so deeply radicalised? The kaffirun of the west who have written on T&T simply cannot ask and answer these questions as it questions their entire worldview of Islam and by extension the efficacy of their war on terror. The answer lies in the history and sociology of the Ummah of T&T. The writers refer to the minority position of Islam in the belief systems profile of T&T some point to the African minority within Islam and some point to the race tensions that continue to divide the Ummah whilst they fail to indicate the causal relations between of all of this and the decision to undertake hijrah to IS rather than to undertake war on the kaffirun and the apostates in T&T. To all the writers Why remains unanswered. What they don't grapple with is the fact that the minority Muslims are overwhelmingly made up of the two major races of T&T Indians and Africans who are all tied to the social order via blood, community, race and the politics of race. Muslims as a visible minority especially since 1990 and 2001 all know that there is grave price their family, friends, community and Din will continuously pay for any attacks on the social order and the interpretation of this price at the personal level varies with family and race. The price paid by members of the Jamaat al Muslimeen before and after 1990 is the living reality to be grappled with by all those choosing to wage war on T&T from within T&T. Perhaps the most painful lesson of the experience of members of the Jamaat al Muslimeen is the willingness of Muslims to aid, call for and take part in

this systematic persecution of fellow Muslims which adds potency to the threat of marginalised un-relenting punishment awaiting those who go too far and their family, friends and fellow Muslims. The threat is palpable. So you spurn the threat of internal war and readily embrace the call to hijrah not only to fight and die given the number of women and children that made the hijrah from T&T to IS. To travel to fight and die in Syria and Iraq was then perfectly acceptable to those Mujahidun but to fight and die a Shahid in T&T was totally out of the question. You are then radicalised to fight and die in Syria and Iraq but not enough to fight and die in T&T the land of your birth. The explanation is obvious where are your ties to Syria or Iraq that will suffer as a result of your decision? There are none. Those that travelled with their wife or wives and children made the journey with the realisation that they were called to war with the enemies of Islam in the furtherance of the Islamic apocalypse. This was a hijrah premised on hope as all are in Islam but hope realised through war and all of those making the journey were aware of this position of IS. The belief that the war was the will of Almighty Allah (swt) was in fact the cement to the motivational matrix necessary to human action in the face of death. This belief insisted that the will of Almighty Allah (swt) will prevail and at least their children will reap the benefit of their sacrifice for there was no concept of the destruction of IS at the hands of the kaffirun and the apostates. The destruction of Islamic State at the hands of the kaffirun and the apostates is of grave impact on those who have made the journey and are still alive as the promise they believed was a promise from Almighty Allah (swt) was and is being proved false on a daily basis. For many death is the only release from this condition of bewilderment and shame for you are literally as a Muslim now divorced from Almighty Allah (swt). To understand this pain and bewilderment one has to be Muslim.

Muslims are a visible minority in T&T but the dominant schools of jurisprudence of Sunni Islam all insist that in order to fully expedite the Din a Muslim has to live in the Muslim lands and it's our duty to move to the Muslim lands for the proper and acceptable practise of our faith. Those of us living in the west are then less than the ideal and necessary Muslim and we must leave the west to end this unacceptable compromise. The very said schools of jurisprudence teach that war with the enemies of Islam is compulsory on all Muslims therefore part of our duty as Muslims to take part in whether as combatants or as supporters of the logistics

of war in both cases it is acceptable and compulsory Jihad. How then does a Muslim end his sojourn in a kaffir society and obey the call to jihad? Al Qaeda never answered that question to Muslims in T&T as they insisted on war in your minority position exonerating your compromised Muslim practises. Islamic State posed and answered the question to Muslims in T&T where you move to the Khilafah and waged war on the enemies of Islam towards the realisation of the Islamic apocalypse making you the vanguard of Islam today. The discourse of IS resonated with specific Muslims highly motivated to respond and they made the hijrah to the Khilafah. The answer lies within Islam not the causal, binary social sciences of the kaffirun. Now the kaffirun wants to impress upon us that they can teach us how to prevent “radicalisation” within Islam. A position that reeks of racist, colonial, imperial arrogance driven by the north Atlantic fear of Islam. The challenge for Islam is to learn from the ability of the Islamic State to propagate false ideas as truth and with this false discourse motivate Muslims to buy into their discourse and the agenda it drives. Thereby paying a very high price for so doing.

The abiding question arises with the collapse of the Islamic State if Muslims from T&T so inclined to undertake the hijrah but now forced to remain in T&T will now abide by the moral order to evade turning T&T into an operational zone as demanded by Dabiq 15? This question also arises with citizens of T&T returning from their sojourn with the Islamic State especially faced with grappling with the backlash they expect from the state and the social order. What they expect will impact their interpretation of what they are exposed to and the choice of action they make in response. The lesson of the run up to the events of 1990 testify to this where the means to conciliation were spurned by the worldviews of the parties caught up in zero sum games as winning the game trumped peace and reconciliation. To refuse to address the issue of the threat posed to T&T outside of the discourse and worldview of Islam signals the refusal to respect Islam thereby rejecting any attempt at peace and reconciliation clearing a path for a military solution again zero sum games. Any refusal to accept the reality that we are a Muslim minority without the means to pursue a winnable military engagement thereby taking war off the table for Muslims sends the message that we are in fact in denial constituting a lunatic fringe. And in the era of neo-Nazi final solutions to Islam in the west we are then inviting our destruction. As

Muslims we must then act for a grave threat is now posed from within Islam to Muslims.

Sura 109: The Unbelievers

In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate

Say: 'O Unbelievers

I serve not what you serve and you are not serving what I serve, nor am I serving what you have served, neither are you serving what I serve.

To you your religion, and to me my religion.'

The Discourse of the western media

It's necessary and instructive to deconstruct the discourse that drives the articles on the number of Muslims of T&T that travelled to Islamic State to understand the range of possible responses that the west will champion to deal with this T&T reality.

"The Spectre of ISIS: Trinidad's unfolding jihadi nightmare" dated August 8, 2018 by Sanjay Badri-Maharaj

http://www.idsa.in/idsacomments/the-spectre-of-isis_sbmaharaj_080816

Sanjay Badri-Maharaj insists that the successful recruitment efforts of IS in T&T is the product of an internet campaign supported by the Jamaat al Muslimeen and its affiliates such as Jamaat al Islami al Karibi, Waajihatul Islaamiyyah and Jamaat al Murabiteen on the ground in T&T. The author is then insisting that these organisations are facilitators of IS in T&T without clear evidence presented. What is most revealing is his quotation from Dabiq 15 at the beginning of the article but he fails to question this position of his by the statement of IS in the said article he quoted from in Dabiq 15 that the Jamaat al Muslimeen is the premier apostate of Islam in T&T. The author then has an agenda to insist that the Jamaat al Muslimeen is an effective instrument of IS in T&T and he hopes the accusation sticks because of the events of July 27th 1990. Statements that impact national security without evidence is an attempt to destabilise. The author then presents his next core position which is that the Muslims of African descent in T&T are more susceptible to embracing Islamic extremism unlike the Muslims of Indian

descent and he uses the key concept of the Muslims of African descent being converts to Islam with the logical conclusion being that the Muslims of Indian descent are the “original”, “core” Muslims of T&T. The exemplar of this propensity of Muslim converts of African descent to embrace Islamic extremism is then the Jamaat al Muslimeen. Racist discourse that has been used in T&T within the Ummah since the 1970’s the author wields as a weapon in his discourse to demonise the Jamaat al Muslimeen and Muslims of African descent in T&T. The author insists that it must be noted that the rural poor and persons from the rural areas have not heeded the call of the Jamaat al Muslimeen, the call of IS and that of the criminal gangs of T&T. In T&T the “rural” areas are predominantly populated by Indo Trinbagonians which leads to the conclusion that the author is in fact demonising the urban African population of T&T as the pool from which criminality is spawned and flows impacting the social order. The author moves to discredit the Sunni Muslim credentials of the Jamaat al Muslimeen by insisting that the discourse of the Muslimeen is a mixture of Islam and Black Power to appeal to the urban African poor. In this racist discourse the author presents no evidence to support and buttress his discourse. The author then destroys his discourse of the Muslimeen by insisting that there is a trend amongst Muslims of Indian descent to embrace Islam extremism which is disturbing as these Muslims are “usually moderate and well integrated into society”. The author insists that from the position of groups as the IS these Muslims of Indian descent are far superior recruits than the Muslims of African descent as they are “generally better educated and wealthier than the Afro-Trinidadian converts” and more importantly they “offer a potently attractive source of skilled and motivated manpower”. The Muslim of Indian descent is then an inherently superior asset to Islamic extremism than the Muslim of African descent making this trend of Muslims of Indian descent embracing Islamic extremism the gravest threat posed to T&T outstripping that of the Muslim extremists of African descent. The author states that young Muslims are recruited by Salafist doctrine via the internet and through an “aggressive campaign in many of Trinidad’s 85 mosques”. The author is then positing the existence of a recruitment campaign for IS within the Ummah of T&T. Is the Muslimeen and its affiliates running the recruitment campaign for Muslims of Indian descent especially in the Masjids dominated by Muslims of Indian descent and organisations other than those of the Muslimeen and its affiliates? Given the terrain of Islam in T&T this position is faulty at best which

means in keeping with the author's position that there are recruiters with access to Muslims of Indian descent doing the recruiting. The author insists that an effective recruitment tool in T&T is the discourse of the inability of Muslims in T&T to practise Islam in the manner it is supposed to be hence the need to undertake hijrah to IS. The author insists that this discourse is a lie as Muslims are nor denied the right to practise Islam in the prescribed manner in T&T but admits that the lie is a potent recruitment instrument. A contradiction in terms as the discourse can only be a potent recruitment tool in his estimate if it resonates with an issue within Islam of grave significance.

The author has accepted the reality that Muslims of all race groups have accepted the call of IS to undertake hijrah but failed to express the reality that Muslims of both genders and of various socio-economic groupings have made the journey. The author admits that at the time of his article no study was done to uncover the reasons for Muslims of T&T accepting and acting upon this acceptance of the call of IS. His article is then largely speculation and at the time of writing of this article no study has been done neither is there in the public domain profiles of all those who travelled to the Islamic State. What exists is the experience of Muslims of T&T of the entire process which remains silenced in the public domain for various reasons.

"Caribbean to Caliphate-The Trinidadians fighting for the Islamic State" by Amandla Thomas-Johnson

<http://www.middleeasteye.net/essays/caribbean-caliphate-trail-trinidadians-fighting-808370626>

The author is seeking to explain the high rate of Muslims of T&T undertaking hijrah to the Islamic State through the life of the poster boy of IS from T&T Shane Crawford. The author did this by relying on stated discourses he was exposed to by a small group of listed and quoted respondents which impacted the conclusions the article presented. The prime reality is Shane Crawford was created by the propaganda arm of the Islamic state and the IS myth of Shane Crawford impacted the story of Shane Crawford in T&T before the myth. The IS myth of Shane Crawford is a filter through which the reality of Shane Crawford in T&T before the hijrah is massaged and formed into the discourse of Shane Crawford that gives continuity and realism to the IS myth. To-date no one has

challenged this IS myth of Crawford on the simple grounds that IS constantly utilises lies, half-truths and innuendo in its propaganda wars why then do the article writers and so-called researchers accept and run with this myth without due diligence being done. The pertinent question then should have been: what was the impact of Shane Crawford on the landscape Islam in T&T before he left for Syria? The sole informant named and quoted on the path of Crawford to hijrah fed the IS myth of Crawford but stopped at self-incrimination and in doing so spun the discourse of the T&T hijrah to IS. This discourse insists that it is predominantly a phenomenon of Muslims of African descent who are converts to Islam lacking in the fundamental grounding in Islam necessary to resist the call to extremism. Crawford was the quintessential example of this process. In this discourse the Muslims of Indian descent being non-converts to Islam are well grounded in Islam and able to resist the call to extremism. The discursive agent in the article states that Muslims of African descent feel disenfranchised within Islam in T&T as a result of the racist divide between Muslims of Indian and African descent within Islam in T&T. The insistence that the overwhelming number of Muslims that left and are leaving for IS are Muslims of African descent for this the author points to the Jamaat al Muslimeen but he doesn't say what role the Muslimeen plays in recruitment but the Muslimeen is under the spotlight. The author notes the position on the Muslimeen in Dabiq 15 but fails to note the contradiction between the IS position of Dabiq 15 and his on the Muslimeen. The article reflects the racist discourse used within Islam in T&T towards the racial segregation of Islam. Finally, the author in the search for explanations of the discourse of the African propensity in T&T to criminality and extremism that they bring to Islam as Muslims of Indian descent are immune to the call of IS the author turns to the kaffirun to explain a Muslim reality. One is quoted as stating that those who left for IS "feel marginalised from the society", "some of them have been engaged in criminal activity" and "some have spent a long time in remand". Did this informant interact with every single Muslim who left T&T for IS? How does he know this with certainty? Is he repeating a discourse swallowed without the ability to verify its accuracy? The conclusion then is that the Muslims of African descent in their embrace of extremism is reflective of the condition of the African race in T&T within the social order. As was the case of the kaffirun analysis of the events of July 27 1990 the fact that Muslims have embraced a discourse and acted upon it within Islam is totally irrelevant.

"Political scientists expose hotbed of Jihadi radicalism in Trinidad and Tobago" by Geoff McMaster April 25, 2017

<https://www.ualberta.ca/news-and-events/newsarticles/2017/april/political-scientists-expose-hotbed-of-jihadi-radicalism-in-trinidad-and-tobago>

The article is a report on research done in T&T by Andy Knight and John McCoy, both academic members of staff of the University of Alberta, Canada, on "radicalisation" in T&T. Early in the article Knight states that whilst he was attached to the University of the West Indies, St Augustine a Muslim scholar who Knight describes as his colleague took him into what the scholar described as an Al Qaeda "sleeper cell" in Trinidad. Knight found the many women in hijab at the "sleeper cell" to be unusual but what set off his interest was the number of persons moving from Saudi Arabia to the "sleeper cell" and back. This led to Knight's conviction that it was necessary to now study "radicalisation" in T&T. For this study he teamed up with McCoy and the conclusion of the study is that T&T was "a hotbed for recruitment of Al Qaeda and its offshoot ISIS." The discourse is then rolled out in the article no different from other western media which illustrates the attempt to create a hegemonic western discourse on IS and T&T. The main plank is the events of July 27, 1990 with the trailing concepts being the Nation of Islam and Pan-Africanism which indicate that Knight and McCoy are toeing the Muslim of African descent line. So the race tension in the Ummah between Muslims of Indian and African descent pushes Muslims of African descent to seek the Khilafah. So the identity of those who left for IS was stated as follows: "but the bulk were converts from the Afro-Trinidadian community who grew up impoverished." The article through statements made indicate that Knight and McCoy are insisting that they know the modus operandi of the recruiters in T&T which in turn establishes the existence of recruiters on the ground. And they spoke to a returned IS fighter who told them what it was like to walk around armed in the Khilafah. What is amazing about this article is the apparent lack of an operational knowledge of Salafi-Jihadi discourse and practise of Knight and McCoy and the fact that they are Kaffir did not hinder their ability to be walked into an Al Qaeda sleeper cell and to speak of the methodology of the recruiters in T&T. This speaks volumes to the operational indiscipline of IS in T&T which enabled Knight and McCoy to state in the article: "What's clear is the country simply doesn't have the security and intelligence apparatus to confront the threat

head on, said McCoy.” The government of T&T needs then to hire Batman and Robin to save us. The reality on the ground simply doesn’t fit into the neat, simplistic, imaginary box of Knight and McCoy.

Did the propaganda arm of IS manufacture the myth of Shane Crawford to entice Muslims to undertake hijrah to the Islamic State or did the volume of Muslims of T&T knocking on the door of IS for entry spark interest in the Muslim population of T&T? Did this flow of travellers then present IS with the opportunity to boast to the world that they were present in an operational zone in the Caribbean which afforded access to South, Central and North America? To-date there is no poster boy from Guyana. By this act of propaganda IS placed more spotlights on the Muslim population of T&T and Crawford became a listed celebrity marked for a meeting with a drone. The western media has pursued the discursive line of IS expressed in Dabiq 15 doing all in their power to embellish the IS myth of Shane Crawford including the Islamic State persona of the ideal mujahid they manufactured for him much to the detriment of T&T and Muslims in T&T. A persona that demands deconstruction whilst the T&T state answers with silence.

All media accounts have singularly failed to deal with the security requirements which must be satisfied for entry into the IS in its short heyday. The foreign and local media paint a picture where you want to go to IS and all you do is simply go. But go where and how? To answer this question, you must enter the shadow world of recruiters, enablers, financiers, the door keepers of the Islamic State and their security apparatus known for its mercurial brutality driven by paranoia buttressed by dramatic spontaneous inconsistencies and arbitrariness. Those from T&T had then to run this gauntlet and the only tried and tested way to successfully run this gauntlet was to be referenced by an organisation of repute with IS, to be properly financed and to be rigidly disciplined Muslims undertaking hijrah who obey without question. Those traveling to IS who fail to make the grade will simply fall along the way including at the gates to the Khilafah. How then Muslims of Africans descent of limited financial means and most of all “converts” were able to make the jump? Answer the question experts of the west as your discourse describes a manufactured reality of your making for your perceived benefit! The effectiveness of recruitment is exponentially enhanced when the means to transport the recruited to their desired destination exists. What use is the commitment to go to IS and you simply cannot command the

resources for those so committed to go. Remember you have to move people from T&T to Turkey at minimum, house them there until they are handed over to the structure of IS, moved through the transition zone to IS's territory and then successfully admitted to IS. No mean undertaking and in T&T it was done repeatedly. Think about that reality! Especially since it was sustainably accomplished supposedly by Muslims of very limited financial means and lacking in the fundamentals of Islam. Propaganda masked as analysis for personal and geopolitical gain.

<http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/islamic-state-interview-with-an-extremist-recruiter-a-999557.html>

To-date the most profound article on the hijrah of Muslims of T&T to the Islamic State from the local print media was written by Miranda La Rose of the Newsday. This article potently indicates the heterogeneity of the terrain falsifying those attempts at creating a homogeneous, single track reality. The article follows:

Newsday 24 August 2016

Dad calls ISIS son's death 'happiness'

Miranda La Rose

THE DEATH of Trinidad-born Mikail Ali, 27, during an air strike last week in Syria is happiness for his immediate family, but not so for some of his friends and comrades who were mourning the loss of someone brave and popular. "This is happiness. We know where they are going" Mikail's father, Ali, told Newsday yesterday during an interview at his San Juan home. Ali said his son died on August 16 somewhere between Aleppo and Raqqa from shrapnel during an air strike. At the time he was fighting for the Islamic State (IS), also known as ISIS. Another of his sons, who is also in Syria, Ali said, called him and gave him the news. Asked how Mikail's mother took the news. Ali said, "She is happy for her son. Friends are coming and crying, and she is consoling them. We know where he has gone. We are happy. Only a Muslim will understand that" Mikail is survived by his wife. Asked who is taking care of her in Syria, Ali said not to worry about that and that she was being well cared for. She told family members who offered to travel to Syria to bring her back home to Trinidad that she does not want to return and that they must go to live with her instead. Mikail and his brother and

their families, Ali said, left Trinidad a year and a half ago to fight for IS. He said when they left, he expected that they would have lasted three months at the longest. So it was no surprise when he got news that Mikail had died. He said he would normally talk to his sons once a week. Mikail was pursuing Islamic studies in Saudi Arabia. He and his wife had initially gone to Egypt to study where he was among the top five - topping the five - to be selected for a scholarship to study in Saudi Arabia. It was during a break from school, Ali said, that Mikail and his brother, who became impassioned over the devastation being wreaked on Muslims by the war, joined the fight for IS. "They said they would like to fight to help Muslims. We all have to die" Ali said, contending that Muslims were fighting to survive in a world that was against them. Yet, quoting an anonymous Russian commander fighting against the jihad, he said, "How do you defeat an enemy who looks into the barrel of a gun and sees paradise?" Ali said that while over 700.000 Muslims have been killed in the war no one says anything, but if one American was killed. it becomes a war. Meanwhile. friends of Mikail remembers him as being "popular, brave and someone who could take chances" Mikail attended El Socorro Islamia TIA Primary School and Barataria South Secondary. One colleague said Mikail and his brother were not the only two who left to join in the fight. He said they were associated with a mosque in Cunupia, the membership of which appeared fractured on the issue of IS. "It is a whole set who gone" he said, noting that from San Juan alone about 50 people or more have gone over the past two to three years. "Many are brilliant guys. They leave to go to one destination, then make their way to Syria" one man said, noting that just "a few days ago" one of his friends came crying to him telling him that his son was leaving to go and fight for IS, and he could not change his son's mind.