

Homophobia - Statement on Orlando (USA) Tragedy leading to the murder of at least 49 people

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Das Theke Das Hajar Statement on Orlando Tragedy

Das Theke Das Hajar condemns absolutely the violence in Orlando, leading to the murder of at least 49 people. That it was a clearly targeted mass killing, taking place inside Pulse, a Gay nightclub, shows that despite the periodic advances made in a number of Western countries by the LGBTIQ movements, homophobia and other forms of hatred of people of marginal sexualities remain very strong.

At the same time, Das Theke Das Hajar condemns unequivocally the attempts to turn the tragedy into another act of Islamophobia. Not only Donald Trump, but also Hilary Clinton, as well as numerous elements of the so called liberal political spectrum in the USA, have sought to show that this was a targeted action by what is often called “Radical islam”.

What is true is that it was a case of violence on people of minority sexual orientations. But it has been hailed by Christian fundamentalists as well, some of whom have called this God’s punishment. Meanwhile, Republican Presidential Candidate Trump called Syrian refugees—who, it bears repeating, are fleeing the violence and oppression of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS)—« the all-time great Trojan horse » that threatens « our entire way of life » because the refugees are « sick with hate » and « no different than this maniac ».

Sensing a radical right vote bank slipping out of her hand, the Democratic hopeful, Hilary Clinton, responded : « If [Trump] is somehow suggesting I don’t call this for what it is, he hasn’t been listening, » in NBC’s programme, Today. She went on : « I have clearly said we face terrorist enemies who use Islam to justify slaughtering people. We have to stop them and we will. We have to defeat radical jihadist terrorism, and we will. »

Meanwhile, the reality is, Mateen, the killer, was born in the USA and was a US citizen. He procured his weapons legally in the USA. Mateen—who worked as a prison guard and fantasized about joining the NYPD—launched his attack after being brought up as an American, and his violence has about as much relationship to the totality of Muslims globally, as the violence by numerous White, Christian citizens of the USA has to all Christians and their beliefs. Rather, the 2016 murders should be seen as heirs of events like the 1973 New Orleans arson at a gay nightclub, killing 32 persons, or Eric Rudolph’s actions of the 1990s, when he bombed abortion clinics and a gay bar. Last weekend, when Mateen carried out his terrible killings, James Howell was trying to attack a Los Angeles gay pride event, armed with three assault rifles and explosive chemicals. Only the fact that the police were tipped off and arrested him prevented another equally terrible tragedy.

The conclusion is simple. This is a severe case of homophobia. But it is not specific to Islam.

In this context, it is necessary to condemn Narendra Modi’s hypocrisy. He has condemned the

Orlando killings. Yet in India, his party is firmly opposed to the scrapping of Article 377.

Murderous homophobes, from any religion or none, from any country in the world, do not represent their entire country or community. But they do represent a deep-rooted aggressive heterosexism that we must oppose as part of any opposition to sexism. We must unite to condemn and oppose homophobia, transphobia, and Islamophobia, rejecting attempts to pit one oppression against another.

P.-S.

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