

100 Years of Conflict 1918 – 2018

[These are my views as a woman living in England, on how the culture and spirit of my country has changed over 50 years. Why the country does not feel protected or strong any more, how it has lost, and is losing its values and decency, and how we are daily losing our free speech.]

Memorial sites, like graveyards, can sometimes be extremely cold places. A small stone plaque with an etched name and a date of birth and death can hardly seem to do justice at times to a life which has touched this earth, and then swiftly left. And then, there are those places where the reality of death as a result of war hits home, and other people's lives can become real and very relevant in your life today.

Such was my revisit last month to Alrewas, in Lichfield, and the National Memorial Arboretum which houses one of the largest memorial sites in the UK dedicated to all branches of the armed forces, and those organizations who are connected to them.

You can read the full list of memorials here: [[Link 1](#)] and [[Link 2](#)]

This time around there was also an exhibition which thoughtfully and audibly recounted the life stories of some of the lives of those who had died or been injured in serving their country. Images of transparent falling autumn leaves continually transposed themselves over the walls and floors of the museum. As you walked around and looked into the eyes of those living and departed, and listened to the accounts of what life was really like and how it is presently experienced in various war zones across the world today, you received a much better understanding. It was however a mixture of

emotion and reality, and was something to be cautious of.

There was a large mural which covered one wall and which, from a distance, looked like a forest of tall straight trees; but when you looked closely it was made up of thousands of faces of people who had died, together with the faces of their friends and families. They are the faces of people from all walks of life and religion. It was also like looking through a matrix, a magic eye, with the truth disguised behind an image.

The staff and the volunteers make sure that every guest is welcomed with care and sensitivity and directed to the appropriate location they wish to visit. Some visitors are parents or relatives of young men and women who have recently died fighting in conflict. They come bringing wreathes of red poppies.

The arboretum is an ongoing work in progress as it continually records and etches the names of young men and women who have passed on.

One new memorial that I noticed was one commemorating the destruction of the Twin Towers and was dedicated to those who have died through acts of terrorism. The memorial looked very small in relation to the other memorials and I remembered how the towers had once stood so tall against the skyline in New York City.

Another new memorial is called 'Still Water' and is dedicated to British victims of overseas terrorism. I thought about the 30 British holidaymakers in Tunisia who were gunned down in 2015 by Islamist gunman Seifeddine Rezgui. Three of the dead were personally known by a work colleague of mine. Yes, the reality of terrorism had certainly come close to home. There are a growing number of people in the UK who now know someone who has been attacked through an act of terrorism.

On leaving the arboretum I also passed through the book shop and noticed one solitary book on the top shelf all alone in

the corner. On the cover of the book was the face of Fusilier Lee Rigby who was murdered in 2013 whilst off duty. In a London street he had been intentionally run over and then butchered to death. His murder was reported as being carried out by Islamic extremists, Michael Adebolajo and his accomplice Michael Adebowale.

In 2015, [Adebolajo, sentenced to 45 years](#), attempted to claim compensation of £20,000 after he lost two teeth in a scuffle at the prison.

I wondered if the solitary book was there because people had continually been purchasing it, or if the book was there all alone because people were avoiding it.

The more popular books being purchased were about life during the two World Wars. My own thoughts are that there is a certain comfort in remembering the togetherness and the unity that people experienced during World War I and II. Despite its obvious horrors, people were also more sure they knew who the enemy was and what they were fighting for.

Later that evening, as I happened to listen upon a speech being made by Prime Minister, Theresa May at the UN General Assembly in New York, I watched her stand in front of a stone cold marble wall so similar to the ones I had seen that day, and I listened with a strange irony to how she stated in one sentence how we should support freedom of expression and a free and open media, and then on the other hand how we should call out those who have hate speech, most especially in relation to all forms of anti-Semitism and Islamophobia.

A small dagger pierced my heart. There was some hatred in her words that ignored the truly noble and the most vulnerable of people.

The dedication that was so solemnly being made, offered truth, but with certain clauses. It appeared to be a weak attempt at appearing strong, and by holding up Islamophobia alongside

anti-Semitism it conveyed that together these were the most two persecuted groups in the United Kingdom. It also offered some advantage because of recent allegations made against her own party and the opposing Labour party in the UK who have been accused of anti-Semitism. It was using political correctness to your own advantage.

Phobia

According to Meriam Webster Dictionary the word phobia first came into print in 1786, along with such words as disorderly conduct, idealize, imposing, Masonic, uncaring and self-respecting. Phobia is understood to be a logical or illogical strong dislike or fear of someone or something. Many of us have a dislike of something, like spiders or heights. When is a dislike deemed logical or illogical and subsequently a phobia? Does over-exposure to the dislike cure a person of their fear?

Islamophobia, a word which first came into print in 1923, is listed thousands of times on the internet and hatred towards Muslims is considered to be a very real and threatening problem. Could it ever be sensibly suggested that based on the facts of attacks being made on the streets of Europe against innocent civilians that people have a dislike, and also a logical fear towards Islam because it is linked to terrorism and brutality without it being labelled a phobia? What is the motive behind people using this term, and why does the Prime Minister now continually favor its use in her speeches?

This year The Muslim Council of Britain wrote to Theresa May urging her to launch an enquiry into Conservative Party Islamophobia. This was due to former London mayor and foreign secretary Boris Johnson publicly making derogatory remarks about the Burka which were subsequently considered as dehumanizing Muslim women. [[Link](#)]

One could say 'never mind' that the current [London mayor](#),

[Sadiq Khan](#), saw no problem in allowing some very dehumanizing images of President Donald Trump to be flown during his recent visit to the UK. However, in fairness he did condemn recent anti-Semitic posters which appeared across London, labeling them offensive.

What is happening in the United Kingdom is people are becoming exposed to a religion, which regardless of its link to terrorism is not prepared to accept any type of humor or criticism that can be happily directed towards other groups in the country. There is indeed a fear of reprisals. In this respect it is at odds against our true values of free speech and openness. A certain respect is being demanded, and a certain secret impatience is admittedly growing.

The prime minister was fueling the flames of this particular division.

Who is truly, noble, pure and righteous?

For the believer, the answer is no-one other than Jesus Christ, who is also the defender of the most weak and vulnerable in society, including unborn children. I have always loved that he is the defender of the widow and the orphan. War leaves lots of widows and orphans. Yet believers themselves are these days compromising with lots of immoral laws which are being implemented within society. Being labelled conservative or liberal does not necessarily let you know who is right or wrong either and it does not put you on the right hand side of God. These days politics appears to be, as some say, two wings of the same bird.

My trip to Alrewas, was however revealing. Somewhere in that mural, in that matrix which was made up of thousands of faces from various cultures and religions lay some true heroism. As in life, the truth is chiselled in some people's hearts and knowing who is who is not always an easy matter.

With Remembrance Day this year commemorating 100 years since

the First World War, we will indeed remember them, how can we forget? Yet, since time has begun, there has been conflict. There is an enmity between those who love the truth and those who don't. There has always been a spiritual battle, and for some reason it seems to be coming to an ultimate conclusion.

Yearning for the truth, has become a matter of life and death. Where will you stand, and how will you be remembered?

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