

'Not Ordinary Yorkshire Lads as we know them Jim'

According to an article in the Guardian, two '[ordinary Yorkshire lads](#)' went on holiday to Turkey, from whence they travelled on to Syria, presumably to join ISIS. Their names were Hassan Munshi and Talha Asmal. What is ordinary in Yorkshire has evidently changed out of all recognition in my lifetime. In my day, ordinary Yorkshire lads didn't go to Turkey, let alone to Syria, no doubt to the benefit of both.

The elder brother of one of the ordinary Yorkshire lads, Hassan Munshi, was another ordinary Yorkshire lad called Hammad, who, as it happened, was the youngest person ever to be convicted of terrorism in Britain. Apparently he conspired to murder non-Muslims: and you can't get more ordinary than that.

The use of the term 'ordinary Yorkshire lads' put me in mind of a mother whom I once heard on the wireless describe her 16 year-old son, just convicted for his 250th burglary, as 'a good boy really.' She must have been using the words in a severely technical sense. The real boy, as against the merely apparent boy, wouldn't harm a fly, and actually had a very strong sense of *meum* and *tuum*.

According the parents of the two ordinary lads, Hassan and Talha had promising futures. But terrorism is supposed to be the inevitable product of an unjust world, of lives so desperate, impoverished and blighted by injustice that there is no future for them, isn't it? Obviously the parents have

not been reading the Guardian attentively; they have let the side down by their ill-judged statement.

It was a relief, however, to know that the police were carrying out their main duties promptly and assiduously: 'West Yorkshire police said they had been supporting the missing teenagers' families...' Only then did we learn that they were performing their auxiliary duties such as 'carrying out extensive enquiries alongside the north-east counter-terrorism unit.'

The main function of the police nowadays is to express their sympathy for the victims of the crimes they know they are not going to solve. As they put it, 'Our thoughts today are with...' Police spokesmen, or persons, sound like Church of England clergymen without the upper-middle class diction. They are particularly moved by senseless murder, sensible murder moving them to much less compassion; and of course there are the robberies or burglaries that go tragically wrong and end in the deaths of the persons who were in the wrong place at the wrong time. My advice to readers is always to be in the right place at the right time.

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