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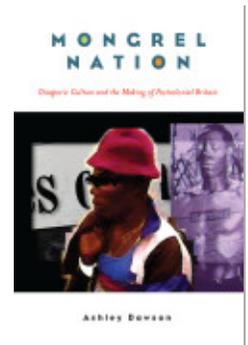
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Conclusion: “Step Back from the Blow Back”

Asian Hip-Hop and Post-9/11 Britain

THE SCALE OF DEVASTATION WROUGHT by the German bombardment of Britain during World War II was immense. During the first month of the Blitz, for instance, seven thousand people died and ten thousand were wounded in London alone. In the face of such devastation, Britons displayed remarkable fortitude. Noel Coward, for example, coolly describes the scene at the Savoy Hotel in his diary of 1941, with the orchestra playing on while the walls of the building bulge as bombs drop nearby. Compare such sangfroid with the state of hysteria provoked by the suicide attacks during the summer of 2005.¹ Although Parliament ultimately scaled back Tony Blair's bid to extend detention without charge to ninety days, plans for national identity cards, secret antiterrorism courts, summary extraditions, the muzzling of free speech, and police “shoot to kill” policies have gone ahead unimpaired by abundant evidence that such policies will do little or nothing to prevent terrorism. Blair's defiant declaration that the July bombers would not destroy the “British way of life” was unnecessary, of course, since the British prime minister, through his increasingly draconian policies, is doing this work himself, unraveling civil liberties that took centuries to establish. What explains the discrepancy between the British stiff upper lip during the Blitz, or, for that matter, during the long years of IRA terrorism, and behavior in today's neoimperial Britain? In addi-

tion, why, despite significant mass protests against the invasion of Iraq, have substantial numbers of the British public gone along with Blair's hyperbolic response to attacks that were, after all, quite predictable given Britain's troop deployments in Afghanistan and Iraq?

The response of the British government to the July bombings was not simply a product of Tony Blair's megalomaniacal ambitions, as most journalists have tended to argue, but rather germinated from the deeply racialized manner in which British identity has been framed for the last half-century. While the July bombings and the "war on terror" in general have helped catalyze particularly unsettling forms of discrimination, there are significant continuities between the policies of the Blair government and those of preceding British regimes in the face of real or perceived threats to national security. Although Blair and the members of his cabinet admittedly never articulate explicit racial animus against any groups, their rhetoric and the policies pursued by the Labour government are driven by a *cultural racism* that hinges on the defense of putatively homogeneous national values against an alien threat. This is not, in other words, simply a matter of the individual foibles of particular leaders, but rather of an institutional and ideological racism that is grounded in exclusionary discourses of national identity disseminated across the political spectrum and deeply inscribed in British culture. While the specific members of British society subjected to this cultural racism have changed over the last half-century, the authoritarian populism that it helps catalyze is surprisingly continuous. Not only is this popular authoritarianism unlikely to protect Britons from future terrorist attacks; it is very likely to spark future aggression by underlining the injustice and inequality that lie at the heart of the British body politic.

Four days after the bombings on the London underground and bus system last summer, Blair attempted to reassure British Muslims in a statement made before Parliament in which he argued that "fanaticism is not a state of religion but a state of mind. We will work with you [British Muslims] to make the moderate and true voice of Islam heard as it should be. Together, we will ensure that though terrorists can kill, they will never destroy the way of life we share and which we value."² Like George Bush following 9/11, Tony Blair was careful not to suggest that all Muslims are extremists. Despite this apparently antiracist move, Blair at the same time establishes a binary opposition between the enlightened values of "our civilization" and the barbaric behavior of

“fanatics.” This binary conveniently cloaks the role of Western powers in catalyzing Islamism. Blair cannot admit that his government has helped prosecute a nakedly imperialist war in Iraq that has involved staggering numbers of civilian deaths and regular infractions of the Geneva Convention. So, instead of framing the July bombings as blow-back from the imperial adventurism he helped initiate, Blair has recourse to the Manichaean tropes of neo-Orientalist discourse.

In addition to dampening criticism of British imperialist belligerence abroad, such rhetoric sets up a divide between those domestic (and domesticated) “good” Muslims who fall into line behind “our values,” including the new antiterrorist legislation, and the “bad” Muslims who explicitly attack government measures in their words or actions.³ While this kind of rhetoric about national unity might have some political clout for figures like Bush and Blair in the moments of crisis ignited by their policies, it not only fails to clarify the historical context that catalyzes attacks on the imperial homelands, but actively stamps out such analysis by labeling virtually all dissent a form of terrorism. The British government’s definition of terrorism is very broad and includes many legal political parties at home and abroad; terrorism, in other words, boils down to pretty much any group the government does not favor.⁴ Moreover, fanaticism and terrorism are forms of behavior that characterize only the opponents of Western powers, never those powers themselves. High-altitude bombing sorties against civilian populations by the Atlantic powers have never been seen as terror, despite the similar aims such policies share with those of “terrorists.”⁵ Given the imperial policies that his government has pursued and his use of reductive stereotypes to represent resistance to such policies, Blair’s gestures of inclusion smack of hypocrisy to many in Britain’s Muslim communities.

Hostility toward British Muslims has increased significantly over the last decade and a half. As Afro-Caribbeans preponderantly were during the 1970s, Muslims, and, by extension, Asians in general are increasingly seen as an alien threat, the monstrous Other whose presence helps explain Britain’s postcolonial decline and current vicissitudes. Although what the Runnymede Trust Commission calls Islamophobia was a factor in the wake of the Rushdie affair and the first Gulf War, hostility toward Asians has ratcheted up significantly after 9/11, with the entire community being reinvented as Muslims of Asian descent and increasingly portrayed by both mainstream as well as neo-fascist politicians as a potential fifth column. Not surprisingly, this

trend has helped to generate significant tensions within Britain's Asian community, with some members of other faiths joining in attacks on Muslims. Moreover, although explicit and even coded racial hatred is proscribed in Britain by laws for which the antiracist movement fought long and hard, Muslims are not protected as a group by such legislation. This is because, unlike religious groups such as Jews or Sikhs, for instance, Muslims are a multiethnic group, and Islam consequently is not shielded from incitement to hatred by antiracist legislation.⁶ Neo-fascist agitators have been quick to take advantage of this loophole in the law, with groups like the British National Party running successful local electoral campaigns organized around overtly xenophobic slogans such as "Islam out of Britain."⁷

The distance between such extreme rhetoric and the nationalist posturing of mainstream politicians has diminished noticeably since 9/11. Shortly after 9/11, for instance, former prime minister Margaret Thatcher issued a blanket condemnation of all Muslims everywhere for the attacks.⁸ Moreover, British Muslims are now also blamed for the failure of official British policies of multiculturalism. The bombings, according to this logic, are a symptom of Muslims' failure to integrate adequately into British culture, a failure licensed by multiculturalism's tolerance for diversity. Already in 2002, former chancellor of the exchequer Normal Lamont was warning of the dangers of balkanization created by New Labour's multiculturalist model of a "community of communities." It was quite clear who Lamont was referring to when he inveigled against the moral relativism fostered by multiculturalism. As he put it in an editorial, "Multiculturalism can easily degenerate into moral relativism. Our laws are based on values, and the state has the right to intervene to protect them. Individuals cannot be left alone in their chosen communities, if that involves forced marriages, polygamy, burning books, supporting fatwas or even fighting against our Armed Forces."⁹ Lamont's diatribe is part of a renewed push to abandon multiculturalism and enforce assimilation to a homogeneously conceived normative British identity that is picking up steam despite its anachronistic character. Yet notwithstanding Lamont's thinly veiled references to threatening Muslim alterity, the bombers of last July were all seamlessly integrated into British society. As A. Sivanandan points out, Abdullah Jamal, formerly Germaine Lindsay, was married to a white, English woman; Mohammad Sidique Khan was a graduate who helped children of all religions; Shehzad Tanweer, also a graduate, often helped

in his father's fish-and-chip shop; and Hasib Hussain's parents sent him to Pakistan because they felt he had fallen into the English drinking-and-swearing culture.¹⁰ These young men took their own lives and those of their fellow citizens not because of an irrational urge to self-destruction but, as Khan stated outright in a video made before he blew himself up, because of their anger at Britain's invasion and subsequent destruction of Iraq.

I obviously do not intend to suggest that concerns about Islamic militants in Britain and elsewhere in Europe are totally unfounded, any more than Stuart Hall and his colleagues intended to argue that there was no criminal behavior taking place when they anatomized racial scapegoating in pre-Thatcherite Britain.¹¹ In *Policing the Crisis*, Hall and his colleagues argued that sensationalist media representations of black crime combined with invasive U.S.-style saturation policing of black communities and a politically touchy judiciary during the 1970s to create what they called a "moral panic" around the racialized figure of the mugger. In addition, they stressed that the broader context for this moral panic was the organic crisis of social democracy in Britain, a crisis most apparent in the failure of the state to provide means of material incorporation for the spatially and economically marginalized black communities in Britain. Under such circumstances, some members of the black community did indeed turn to the illegal economy, including predatory behavior such as criminality, but the political and media firestorm around mugging was entirely disproportionate to the "real" phenomenon of mugging. Instead, the moral panic concerning mugging was manipulated by politicians such as Enoch Powell and Margaret Thatcher to provide an explanation for the various forms of economic, social, and political dysfunction triggered by the crisis of accumulation that began in the late 1960s and that ultimately precipitated the dismantling of the Fordist-era social contract. Blacks were thus scapegoated for a much broader crisis; their demonization helped cement white working-class consent for the evisceration of social democracy in Britain in the years that followed.

The recent wave of popular authoritarianism regarding British Muslims shares many structural parallels with the moral panic that took place during the organic crisis of the 1970s. Very similar forms of economic and cultural marginalization in the context of a broader crisis are at play. Although some British Muslims, notably those exiled from East Africa during the early 1970s, have done well in economic terms over the

last thirty years, the majority of the Asian population in Britain arrived to work in dying industries such as textiles in the Midlands or in the vertiginously downsized service industry. The neoliberal orthodoxy of both Tory and Labour governments since the Thatcher era has kept these groups at the bottom of Britain's economic pile, trapped on run-down public housing estates with often violently xenophobic members of the white working class. It is thus not so much the case that these second- and third-generation British Asians have failed to assimilate as that the neoliberal state has refused to grant them significant access to mainstream British society.

Equally if not more important than this domestic economic cul-de-sac, however, is the global crisis of neoliberal ideology. Although the so-called Washington Consensus has begun to unravel as a result of its own internal contradictions, it is indisputably from within the Muslim world that the strongest resistance to neoliberal policies has come. Hegemonic neoliberal policy during the 1990s took the form of tacit Western support for authoritarian secular regimes in the Muslim world that imposed the West's conditions of structural adjustment and guns-for-oil on their populations with seeming impunity. As these regimes abdicated any autonomous, popular nationalist role, anti-imperialist uprisings such as the Iranian Revolution and the Palestinian intifada, as well as conflicts in Somalia, Bosnia, Chechnya, and, most of all, Afghanistan, helped forge a transnational vanguard of young Islamists.¹² Media networks such as Al Jazeera and the Internet, as well as more low-tech equivalents like newspapers and videocassettes, helped knit Muslims around the world together into an emotionally resonant imagined community. This virtual version of the transnational Arabic community or *umma* transmitted abundant evidence of the horrors of the Pax Americana over the last decade, from the unending nightmare in Gaza and the West Bank, to U.S. military bases near the Holy of Holies and Bush Sr.'s betrayal of the Shiite uprising against Saddam Hussein in 1991. Political Islam is thus a symptom of and response to an organic crisis that, as David Harvey has suggested, has obliterated the legitimacy of secular states in a significant portion of the postcolonial world and, in tandem, has shattered U.S. neoliberal ideological hegemony, leaving nothing but the brutal military power whose bloody overreach we have been witnessing in Iraq.¹³

It should be no great surprise that the contradictions of these neoliberal policies and the even more brutal overt imperialism that has

followed in their wake have generated significant ferment within Britain's marginalized Muslim communities. If, as critics such as Tricia Rose and George Lipsitz have argued, hip-hop culture originated in the United States as a response to the displacement caused by "urban renewal," economic recession, and the fiscal crisis of the state in the 1970s, contemporary Asian hip-hop in Britain similarly offers a critical counterpoint to contemporary social and political orthodoxies, including the explicitly imperialist form of neoliberal culture that emerged following 9/11.¹⁴ Indeed, British Asian youth culture is increasingly a vector for a radical anti-imperialist politics. Groups like Fun-Da-Mental and Asian Dub Foundation tackle Islamophobia head-on, asserting a sense of pride in Muslim and Asian identity while also advancing a cultural politics of unity with other racialized ethnic groups in Britain. In addition, these groups have played an important role in dismantling official rhetoric concerning the threat of terrorism following 9/11. Perhaps most significant, however, is the sense of critical transnationalism that emerges from the music of these bands. While tapping into a similar sense of a transnational community as vanguardist Islamist movements, these bands eschew religious dogmatism, and thereby suggest the possibility of alternative forms of politicized Islam working in solidarity with the global justice movement. Such groups may be read as harbingers of alternatives to the fratricidal twins of market and religious fundamentalism.

Fun-Da-Mental is undoubtedly the seminal band in the wave of politicized post-bhangra Asian dance music that took off in the early 1990s.¹⁵ The group released their first LP, *Seize the Time*, in 1994. Although they have often been compared to the United States' Public Enemy, such comparisons tend to obscure the complicated local character of the band's intervention. Formed around core members Aki Nawaz (aka Propa-Gandhi) and Dave Watts (aka Impi D), Fun-Da-Mental appealed to Muslim youths in Britain who were alienated from mosques as well as official community leaders by their opposition to music, dance, and videos, including the popular bhangra music that had become the soundtrack for Asian youth culture in Britain during the late 1980s.¹⁶ In addition to heading up Fun-Da-Mental, group leader Aki Nawaz is a cofounder of Nation Records, probably the most important independent Asian record label in Britain over the last decade. Fun-Da-Mental's music conveys a fierce sense of British Muslim pride, constructing an identity matrix through references to a pantheon of

international black and Asian leaders, including, as the group's first album title suggests, the Black Panthers, but, above all, Malcolm X and the Nation of Islam. These references to the Nation of Islam are particularly important in forging black-Asian unity, solidarity enacted in the multiracial composition of the band itself and, more broadly, in the British tradition of antiessentialist antiracism. With these references to the Nation of Islam and its incendiary counterreading of Western history through the lens of white oppression comes a powerful rhetoric of self-defense that, in the wake of 9/11 and 7/7, seems chillingly prophetic:

Stop the world 'cause we're living like slaves
 God only knows how I've been managing
 Look at me now, I've got them panicking
 Blood'll be dripping from those headless chickens

This is the world of greed like it never was
 We've had enough, it's time to get tough
 Look who's afraid, not me or mine
 But the devils that worked us in the sunshine

They don't like anybody like me
 X was in the X, Luther King was next
 But they're only two from millions
 My people been treated like aliens
 Los Angeles was just a rehearsal
 First we've been looting, next we'll be shooting
 Here comes another Huey P. Newton
 Making them angry 'cause they can't ban me.¹⁷

From its opening loping rhythms cut across by an accelerating sample of Malcolm X's defiant rhetoric, this track oozes anger. Frequent references to the pride instilled by militant self-defense alternate with a catalog of the historical wrongs inflicted on people of color, including slavery and the assassinations of Martin Luther King and Malcolm. In addition, the group also articulates a critique of the West's domination by the cash nexus and the moral decadence that such materialism spawns. Moments of self-defense cited by the group include the Los Angeles uprising of 1992 following the acquittal of the four white police officers who beat Rodney King, events that had taken place the year before *Seize the Time* was recorded. In addition, the singer's citation of

“letting off bombs” suggests a reference to the first Palestinian intifada, which was winding down after six years by 1993. The reference to Malcolm X’s famous line about the “chickens coming home to roost” following the assassination of Bobby Kennedy could not, in retrospect, be more ominous an articulation of political Islam’s intent to bring neoliberal oppression and militarism home to the imperial heartland.

It is important to note that Fun-Da-Mental’s overheated rhetoric has cooled noticeably as “clash of civilization” discourse has come to dominate the public sphere in Britain and the United States. After releasing the inflammatorily titled EP *Why America Will Go To Hell* in July 1999, the group’s main subsequent release, the October 2001 album *There Shall Be Love*, is an entirely instrumental recording, bereft of the fiercely condemnatory lyrics of their earlier work. It seems that the group has determined that the militant rhetoric and, most of all, the advocacy of violent resistance in their earlier work may be counterproductive in the struggle for global social justice, a movement in which they have taken an active role since 2001. Yet it is worth taking their earlier work seriously inasmuch as it articulates a sense of righteous anger that is carefully justified in historical terms. This seems significant given the ascription of irrationality that tends to characterize media accounts of Islamism. Such an analysis of Islamism is, of course, part of a long-established Orientalist tradition, anatomized in devastating detail by Edward Said, of representing Islam as the benighted, feminized, unhinged foil for the rational, masculine, and modern West.

It is precisely these stereotypical assumptions that provide an ideological cover for the current Anglo-American project of bringing democracy to the Middle East through the military occupation of Iraq. Yet, as Robert Pape argues in his recent book *Dying to Win*, suicide bombing is not, as Orientalist discourse so often represents it, the product of an irrational self-destructive urge, but rather is a calculated strategic response by vanguardist groups who often have significant support from civilian populations in areas occupied by what appears to them to be a colonial power.¹⁸ Lacking the massive means of military destruction deployed by powers such as the United States, UK, and Israel in their campaigns of airborne extermination, suicide bombers resort to low-tech solutions that purposely target civilian populations. The logic behind such bloody stratagems is that democratic governments are relatively vulnerable to campaigns that massacre civilian populations and, in doing so, bring home the violence of imperial policies abroad, sap-

ping popular support for expansionist policies. Pape's conclusion that suicide bombing reflects classic anticolonial nationalist struggles rather than the religious fundamentalism to which it is often ascribed is lent support by Fun-Da-Mental's lyrics on *Seize the Time*, all of which refer to struggles for self-determination such as the African-American civil rights movement and the Palestinian intifada, as well as more local black British resistance against neofascist hooligans. It is an index of the power of neo-Orientalist discourse today that Pape's findings and the anger that smolders throughout Fun-Da-Mental's *Seize the Time* should continue to seem so startling.

If Fun-Da-Mental have backed away from their radical rhetoric to a certain extent in the post-9/11 period, their confederates in Asian Dub Foundation (ADF) have grown more militant. ADF was formed when the organizers of a community music project in London's predominantly Bangladeshi East End neighborhood decided to form a band with some of their star pupils. On early albums of the middle to late 1990s such as *Facts and Fictions* and *Community Music*, ADF focused on Britain's imperial history in South Asia and on the ways in which this history overdetermined contemporary social relations and state legislation in postcolonial Britain. Recent albums such as *Enemy of the Enemy* (2003) and *Tank* (2005) have, however, seen an increasing awareness of the international contradictions that characterize neoliberalism as it has evolved from the multilateral, trade-based mode of exploitation in the Clinton and early Blair era to the military imperialist formation in contemporary Britain and America. While the group has always displayed a notably composite sense of identity, evident in their syncretic musical blend of dub, rap, rock, and Asian musical styles such as bhangra, recent political conditions have pushed their analysis of the nexus of contemporary domestic and international social relations to a new level. In "Blowback," for example, the group anatomizes the Machiavellian behavior of imperialist powers like the United States and UK toward erstwhile client regimes such as that of Saddam Hussein, noting the role that jingoism plays in legitimating a clamp down on domestic entitlements as well as civil liberties:

Step Back from the Blow Back
Plans that were hatched with the strings still attached
See there's always a catch
When you're livin' thru a blow back

You're wonderin' why you need places to hide
Keep one eye to the sky when you're waiting for the blowback
Sink into the mud watch out for the scud
Cos oil is thicker than blood in the world of blowback
From ally to madman from client to badman
From Gommorah to Sadaam
Starring in the blowback
Invisible sins Invisible Kings
The shit we're in gonna drown in the spin
Permanent warfare
Burning up welfare
Add up add up
Their share of the hardware
Rights disposed of
Government gloves off
Flick of the wrist
Summary justice
Feel the kiss of the U.S. fist.¹⁹

By now this sort of analysis has become relatively conventional on the Left, with critics such as Frances Fox Piven noting the important function of neoliberal imperialism in providing domestic legitimation for the Right's agenda.²⁰ More original, perhaps, is ADF's take on Al Qaeda in "Enemy of the Enemy." Not only does ADF make the link to blowback from the U.S. proxy war in Afghanistan during the 1980s on this track; in addition, the group evokes the double standards that characterize the behavior of imperialist regimes on the international stage. In the name of battling Communism and, now, Islamism, powers like the United States and UK have unleashed campaigns of terror that repeatedly put the lie to pious notions of human rights, suggesting, as ADF puts it, that "what your life is worth depends on where you live." These double standards are all too evident today, as imperial powers engage in devastating saturation bombing campaigns in the name of spreading democracy while ignoring the "collateral damage" inflicted on civilian populations, whose lives never register in the Western media—although they feature prominently in the electronic *umma* that binds together contemporary Muslims.

Running parallel to this hypocritical rhetoric of democratization and human rights abroad are the gaping holes in the political constitu-

tion of the European Union. While the EU has conveyed remarkable freedom of mobility and domicile on European nationals and has arguably helped initiate progressive models of international conflict resolution since its consolidation in the early 1990s, it was created with a *cordon sanitaire* thrown round it, one that all too glaringly keeps out the increasingly immiserated and politically oppressed citizens of the predominantly Muslim nations that surround its southern flanks. As Etienne Balibar has pointed out, the exclusionary character of EU citizenship has made the sizable migrant population of the EU, a kind of twenty-sixth member country with a majority Muslim population, into a stateless people.²¹ The result, as Balibar observes, has been a recolonization of social relations, one that affects Muslims who have European citizenship almost as much as it affects those who do not have legal residency, since they are all increasingly perceived as part of a potentially hostile fifth column intent on destroying European civilization. Politicized Asian youths such as the members of ADF are only too aware of this new apartheid at the heart of Europe. As the band notes in their song “Fortress Europe,” this hard-line policy of sealing Europe off to migrants and the blowback they threat to bring with them ignores the root of the problem: military neoliberalism. The dystopian future of overweening computerized state control ADF outlines in “Fortress Europe” is not that far from being realized; while proclaiming its adherence to a progressive regime of “managed migration,” Blair’s Labour government has simultaneously normalized policies of long-term detention, deportation, and dispersion that criminalize unwanted (read poor, unskilled) immigrants, renegeing on the country’s Geneva Convention commitment to rights of political asylum.²² As ADF’s “Fortress Europe” suggests, the popular authoritarianism, hard-line immigration tactics, and antiterrorist legislation that have proliferated in the EU only serve to augment the militancy of young nonwhite Europeans. Recent measures that would permit the expulsion of foreign nationals to countries engaging in torture would abrogate Britain’s commitment to the UN Convention Against Torture, giving contemporary critics cause to sneer, as Frantz Fanon did in the context of the Algerian War, at the racialized character of European humanism.²³ Indeed, increasingly virulent attacks on multiculturalism such as those that have saturated the public sphere in Britain following the July bombings and legislative moves to allow expulsion of British nationals who express criticism of

the government that can be construed as “condoning terrorism” seem calculated to deepen the alienation and anger that economic, social, and political marginalization have generated among British Asian youths during the neoliberal era.

The anti-imperialist cultural politics of engaged artists such as Fun-Da-Mental and Asian Dub Foundation point toward a radically different and truly postimperial Britain. Of course, social programs to establish genuine economic and political equality within Britain are a basic prerequisite for such a new dispensation. In order for such policies to be implemented, popular authoritarian ideologies that cemented consent during the early stages of neoliberalism would have to be rolled back. But, in tandem with such policies, Britain would need to sever its dependent relation with the United States in order to forge a genuine postcolonial politics. Unfortunately, instead of pursuing such an autonomous direction, Britain’s leaders are playing the role of obedient lapdogs to U.S. imperial power. As in the United States, such imperial policies have inevitable and significant domestic ramifications, including the attempt to squelch all dissent.

The antisystemic cultural politics of Islamists are not going to go away by themselves. Indeed, neoliberal imperialism feeds such voices by generating the conditions of endemic economic deprivation and of political oppression that stimulate rebellion. The danger of criminalizing all expressions of political Islam within Britain and Europe more broadly is that it leaves vanguardist Islamists as the only voices of anti-imperialism. Indeed, we only need to look at the policies pursued by Western imperial powers and their indigenous client regimes in the Koran belt over the last fifty years to understand the folly of such a strategy. In addition, as the Blair government’s behavior during the “war on terror” makes clear, policies that erode civil liberties in the name of antiterrorism inevitably have wider implications. As George Monbiot recently argued, restrictions on civil liberties that are passed in name of combating “terror” almost without fail are used by politicians such as Blair to silence anyone who questions government policy, no matter how nonviolent their criticism.²⁴ The popular authoritarianism to which black and Asian Britons have been subjected over the last half-century thus inevitably has ramifications beyond these so-called ethnic minority communities. The voices of activist artists such as Asian Dub Foundation and Fun-Da-Mental offer a potent rebuke to contemporary

military neoliberalism, one that will be far more conducive to progressive politics in the long term than current official policies in countries such as Britain and the United States that increasingly seek to silence all dissent. The stinging criticism such groups offer of Britain's imperial legacy makes them part of the chorus of voices that have sought over the last five decades to decolonize Britain and, in so doing, to make of it a truly mongrel nation.