

Authorship of French terror outbreak points toward London

by Christine Pierre

A series of arrests in France and in London over the first week in November, constitutes, finally, important victories in the fight to dismantle the "Islamic" terrorist network which has been active in France since July 25, when the St. Michel RER train station in Paris was bombed during rush hour. Police experts in the French capital believe that they have reached the nerve center of the terrorist deployment, even though parts of the network are undoubtedly still at large.

Painstaking work over months by the police led to the arrest in Paris of Boualem Bensaid, a man suspected today of being the organizer and the leader of the terrorist network which has been active in France. It was a friend of Khaled Kelkal (whose fingerprints were found on the container used in the failed bombing attempt against the Lyon/Paris TGV high-speed train on Aug. 26) in Lyon, Nasseridine Slimani, who led police unknowingly to Bensaid before being arrested himself. Three other persons were arrested in Villeneuve d'Ascq, a city near the northern capital of Lille. Police found in their apartment all the paraphernalia necessary to build the bombs which have wreaked terror in France since July—a camping gas container of 13 kilograms, emptied out of its gas and refilled with different sorts of powder, 3-inch nails, and ball bearings. The police also found an alarm clock in the process of being converted into a detonator.

What led police to the arrest of this entire network was the imminence of another bombing. Indeed, phone taps in the area where Bensaid lived, allowed police to overhear a conversation between Bensaid and the Lille network, in which Bensaid gave them the order to blow up a marketplace, on a Thursday or a Sunday. They were speaking about the Wazemme marketplace, the largest in the Lille area.

Police investigations into this network are still ongoing, but it is already evident that it is a foreign network operating in France, thanks to logistical and manpower support given by Muslims in the poor suburbs. Bensaid, alias Mehdi, is a 28-year-old Algerian student who arrived in France last July. He is said to have been accompanied by another man, who is believed to be higher up in the chain of command and in contact with the leader of the network. Bensaid is

also suspected of having had a role in the murder of Imam Sahraoui, the Algerian moderate and founder of the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), who had been condemned to death by the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) just weeks before in a meeting in London.

Ali Belkacem, one of the men arrested in Lille who was in telephone contact with Bensaid, is suspected of having had a hand in two of the bombings (St. Michel and Musée d'Orsay) and also in the murder of Sahraoui. Police also found in his apartment a 9 mm automatic pistol, which had been used during a shootout with police by Kelkal and two other members of this gang back in June, when they refused to submit to a police roadblock.

The London angle

However, the most interesting element of this entire investigation is the London angle in the terror wave. Indeed, phone taps of Bensaid led police to another coordinator and financier of this network, a man using the alias Abou Fares, who has lived in London for several years. Abou Fares, whose real name is Rachid Ramda, obtained a residence visa as soon as he arrived in London, in spite of the fact that he had been condemned to death in Algeria, accused of having participated in a bombing at the Algiers Airport. In London, he became the head of the official GIA publication, *Al Ansar*. Bensaid was in direct telephone contact with Abou Fares and had talked to the others in the network about Abou Fares's role in financing the network. French police have in their possession Western Union receipts confirming money transfers from Fares to the network in France.

In recent days, especially since the summit meeting between French President Jacques Chirac and British Prime Minister John Major on Oct. 29-30, Scotland Yard and MI-5 have collaborated with French authorities to investigate these networks. Judge Jean Louis Brouguières, who has overall responsibility for the investigation, flew to London in early September. Abou Fares and four other people have been arrested and are presently being interrogated by Scotland Yard and MI-5, while in France, judicial authorities have issued an international arrest warrant against Fares and are filing a demand for extradition.

French public awakened

However, the most interesting question still remains: Why has London become over recent years, the center of regroupment of Islamic radicals, and why do British authorities grant asylum and visas to people, such as Fares who are known to have been involved in terrorist acts? To the readers of *EIR* this will come as no surprise, because we have exposed over many years the artificial creation and manipulation of radical Islamic currents by British intelligence. The French public, however, was brusquely awakened to this fact in recent days, reading it in the French press, which has daily been denouncing the existence of an Islamic terror international based in London.

London "sets the tone for fundamentalist movements," serving to provide "logistical and financial support to the terrorists," Alexandrine Bouilhet and Thierry Oberle wrote, in an article in the Paris daily *Le Figaro* on Nov. 3. Entitled "The Providential Fog of London," they said: "It is there that one can find the intermediaries between Bensaid and his leaders in the Algerian resistance led by Djamel Zitouni and Mohamed Said. London has become, in recent years, the place where Islamic propaganda in Europe is elaborated and disseminated. Parallel to this ideological activity, Britain has also transformed itself into a formidable fundraising network to finance the guerrillas in the Algerian resistance. Financial capital of the Arab world, London has never been shocked at the intensive fundraising activity carried out by the Islamists."

Bouilhet and Oberle gave some indications of the intensity of Islamic political life in London. There are presently some 19,800 Algerians living there, most of whom have nothing to do with politics. Of those, however, 400 are known to be members of the FIS or the GIA. Muslims have 800 houses of worship in the country, which is well and good, but two of them are "officially" known to be close to the GIA terrorists—the ones at Regent's Park and at Finsbury Park.

In London, the radical Islamists carry out their activities publicly. Bouilhet and Oberle recalled the fact that "it is in the course of a non-official meeting in London, that Abdelkrim Deneche publicly threatened to kill Imam Sahraoui." The authors also note the large number of Islamic publications, 30 in total, which are based in London, among them *Al Ansar*, the bulletin of the GIA. *Al Ansar* is published partly in London, printed in Sweden, and faxed from there to the European capitals. They also note that "the editorial board of *El Hayat*, property of a rich Saudi, is also ensconced in London. In this paper are regularly published the GIA communiqués."

The 'afghansi'

Even more to the point was an article published in the French daily *Le Monde* on Nov. 7, by its London correspondent, Patrice de Beer. De Beer wonders why Britain has

allowed all this on its territory, and targets the "afghansi" terror networks of terrorism as being behind Abou Fares, which he attributes to the founding role of the U.S. CIA. De Beer wrote, "According to an expert on Middle Eastern questions, the GIA and *Al Ansar* (publications of Abdelkader Benouif [alias Abou Fares, alias Rachid Ramda] and Abdelkrim Deneche) had links to the Afghans. Mr. Benouif himself was a veteran of the Afghan resistance. Formed during the war against the Soviets starting in 1979 (with the help at that time of the American CIA) the fanatic mujahideen have grown throughout the world, often linked to terrorist actions to promote their warrior vision of Islam."

De Beer then questions Britain's role. "Yet one knows the powerful reputation of MI-5 in its struggle against Irish terror. Since the cease-fire declared by the IRA in August 1994, the British Special Services have had plenty of time to follow the terrorist movements linked to the Middle East, those which had attempted to blow up the Israeli Embassy in London. . . . Were the British ignorant of the activities of the *Al Ansar* group? If yes, it is minimally a failing of an Interior Ministry which is a fierce partisan of law and order. If not, was it a matter of maintaining contact with those circles, to promote eventual negotiations or to better control them? Whatever it might be, the British were not ignorant of the background of Abdelkader Benouif, when they granted him political asylum."

A French report

A report from the DST, France's domestic secret services, leaked by the *Journal du Dimanche*, went further, noting that at the heart of the afghansi is the group headed by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, the most radical of the Afghan resistance veterans, which had been largely set up and promoted by Great Britain.

The uncovering of the London track was due to the groundwork laid by this news service and its founding editor Lyndon LaRouche. Indeed, since the very beginning of the terror wave, and while in the midst of virulent attacks against France for restarting its nuclear tests, LaRouche's associates in France, insisted repeatedly to police that they consider the attacks against France, including those against the nuclear tests (e.g., from Greenpeace), in the financial domain (the "London gnomes," as Prime Minister Alain Juppé called them), and the "Islamic" terror wave, as coming from London. *Nouvelle Solidarité* in France and *EIR* in the United States pointed to the role of the veterans of the Afghanistan War in international terrorism, insisting on the fact that it was those who had created them, i.e., the British in liaison with some American networks, and who were still pulling the strings on those movements (see *EIR Special Report*, "New Terror International Targets South Asia," Oct. 13, 1995). Paris has yet to go a step further, to denounce the British oligarchy as coordinating a centralized effort to destabilize the French Republic.