

WERE A NEW
TERRORIST GROUP
FORMED FROM
INNOCENT PEOPLE
WHO ARE FED UP
WITH BEING
ARRESTED



Scotland Yard and the return of the bombers

Duncan Campbell writes: Until the weekend's wave of bombings, the thankfully underemployed Anti-Terrorist Squad at Scotland Yard had been using its time profitably by preparing some media weapons. A key item may be a film, *A Time Of Terror*, which would be shown during the early phases of a major campaign. Scotland Yard would be keen to have the film shown on television to encourage vigilance against bombs and the need to provide assistance to police.

The currently available script of the film contains elements of Churchillian rhetoric and civil defence 'we're in it together' camaraderie. Some of this is disturbing in the approach taken to promote public safety. 'Are you sure you are not living next door to terrorists?' viewers may be asked. In the past, terrorists have been unearthed from ordinary suburban terraces, but yet more 'exist dormant throughout suburban London'. Fortunately or unfortunately, 'terrorists fail to appreciate that the British people under attack will stand united'.

Viewers may then be given a somewhat sketchy profile for terrorist spotting: 'young... keep to themselves... women often act as couriers... like to live near underground... may not work regularly... often visit pubs but don't drink excessively... pay for goods in cash'. The film remarks that many more innocents than terrorists would be caught by such a net, but proposes no remedy for the problem that these innocents might suffer simply through conforming to the police model of a standard terrorist.

Such open official encouragement to distrust and inform on neighbours has always been the symbol of an unhealthy society. Nor is it likely that a river of indiscriminating gossip and suspicion will well serve public safety through the early detection of bombers, though it may well be welcomed by the blossoming police intelligence gatherers.