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Amis demands Muslims join in 'factory siren' over terror plots

Riazat Butt
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[The Guardian](#)

Martin Amis last night fired another salvo in the war of words over Islam, condemning an "abject failure" by Muslims to vigorously denounce suicide bombings.



'Retaliatory urges' ...
 Martin Amis

At a debate at Manchester University, where the novelist is head of creative writing, he told a packed auditorium that only a machine would not have experienced "retaliatory urges" upon learning in August last year of the alleged plot to bomb transatlantic aircraft, in which, Amis said, 3,000 people could have died.

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permanent factory siren of disgust for these actions," he told students, staff and members of the public, including Afzal Khan, the first Muslim to be lord mayor of Manchester. He acknowledged Muslim efforts "to put their house in order" were made more difficult by the jihadis' "monopoly on intimidation".

But there was less assent when he went on to speak of a "distorted sympathy" towards Palestine. "I have sympathy for Israel. It's not nothing to have six million of your number murdered in central Europe in the last century. Don't you think that this has had a psychological effect on this race or religion, or whatever you want to call the Jews?"

"Palestinians have never suffered anything as remotely terrible as that. There is an inexplicable numbness about Israel."

The debate comes in a robust polemic between Amis and Terry Eagleton, the university's professor of cultural history.

In an interview after the plot was exposed, Amis said Muslims should be made to suffer. Eagleton denounced him in a new preface to his 1991 book *Ideology*, and had been in the line-up for last night's event, *Literature and Terrorism*, but event organisers said a diary clash forced him to withdraw.

Instead Amis was joined on stage by novelist Maureen Freely and former Islamist turned author Ed Hussain.

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