



The Forgotten Generation

British Muslim Foreign Fighting in the Bosnian Civil War

Researchers

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Additional information

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Description

After the demise of the British Empire, British Muslims' radicalism still followed an overarching anti-colonial inspiring principle. Actual radical anti-colonial practices, though, manifested in different forms and colours. Black Power-inspired organisations, Islamist parties and Salafi-Jihadist networks alternatively led radical struggles in Britain while all claiming to be unique bearers of the anti-colonial banner. Yet, the specific transition mechanism from one shape of radicalism to another and when radical practices generate violence, remains mysterious. The project seeks, then, to investigate how did British Muslim radicalism change in time since decolonisation.

Using recently opened archival sources in Western European languages, Arabic and Bosnian-Croat-Serbian and interviews with ex-British Muslim activists, and returned mujaheddin, this research exploits a global history method to explore the many shades of anti-colonialism in Europe. From the first case of violent radicalism in the shape of Black Power-inspired street vigilantism in the London East End to the icy Bosnian battlefields of the early 1990s, in which first British Muslim mujaheddin stumbled into early Salafi-Jihadist intellectuals, this research sets to journey through British Muslims' radical underground to understand the ruptures and continuities of anti-colonialism in the transition from imperial polities to nation-states.

Besides generating new empirical evidence, this work hope to contribute to the current understanding of European political violence. The existing historiography has insisted on 'white' European anti-colonial groups as the Irish IRA, the Basque ETA, or the Italian Red Brigades. 'Black' anti-colonial struggles typically refer to the non-European world and focus on struggles for independence in ex-colonies. This research instead attempts to imagine how a 'Black' European anti-colonial radicalism might look like, with its variants and mutual interactions.

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