

The Long View

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Resisting Co-opted Resistance



Saeed Khan

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Crime: The Vacuous Charge
of Extremism for Advocates
and Activists

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Spectrum Collaboration:
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of the British project

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Walid**

The Spiritual
Malady of
Arrogance

Arzu Merali

The Wrong Side
of Britishness:
Anti-Muslim
Narratives in the UK

In the Name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful

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Cover image: A British healthcare
worker at the 32nd National
Demonstration for Palestine on
Saturday 11th October 2025.
Photo by and © Ali Khadr.

Taking a moral stand against abusive power is invariably an invidious and onerous task. History is replete with the epitaphs of men and women whose consciences were shaken by the suffering of their people, moving them to act against injustice. These heroes and heroines risked their safety, freedom and even their lives to challenge the powerful of their age, seeking to ameliorate the plight of the oppressed.

The precarious lull in the genocide in Gaza that is being touted by its perpetrators and accomplices as some kind of epic peace deal should once again focus our attention on the huge sacrifices that have and continue to be made in defence of the Palestinian people and their right to the sacred land from which their occupiers seek to evict them. The death toll of 70,000 underlines how those in the centre have paid an unimaginable price for their steadfastness, something brought into stark relief by the hundreds of Palestinian political prisoners currently being released after spending decades in captivity.

In the periphery too, the personal cost of resisting the bestial march of brute colonial power has been immense. Ordinary people who have stepped up to implement international law in respect of genocide prevention in lieu of their governments' failure or worse still, complicity, have been incarcerated with some even facing the prospect of deportation.

In the UK, the proscription of Palestine Action and the prosecution of its supporters and activists speaks to the extremes to which the state, unrestrained by ethical considerations, can go to preserve its interests. Our lead essay in this issue by **Saeed Khan**, looks at how governments have historically sought to flip the script and throw back the charge of extremism onto their adversaries. But the term has become so elastic and misused that like the allegation of anti-Semitism, it has lost its value. Though the tools that the modern state possesses to manufacture consent are innumerable and powerful, branding as extremists those who are exercising their conscience and moral duty in calling out a genocide only serves to debase the institution of government and exalt the victims. And even if that process isn't contemporaneous, history is its own judge. Yesterday's villains can easily become today's heroes and their sacrifices an even bigger inspiration in posterity.

Our second essay by **Sukant Chandan** takes as its starting point the current defacing of British streets with the Union Jack (the British national flag) and St George's Cross (the English national flag). Sukant departs from the standard narrative that it is the latest instalment in a culture war led by the far right. For him, the offensive against non-white migrants and the descendants of more recent migrant stock, is a state led initiative with precedents in modern history.

"For those of who know the histories of racism in Britain in the post-Second World War period, we remember well that the British Union Jack and English St George's Cross flags are symbols of aggressive and vi-

olent provocative colonialism and racism on British streets and against us and our families, but also represent and are leading symbols in greater levels of violence on the streets of Ireland, South Africa, Aden and Kenya amongst other places," says Chandan.

To make its racist project more palatable the state often recruits racialised people as a shield against accusations of racism. Never has this been truer in Britain than now with people of colour occupying some of the highest seats in government and in major political parties.

But another, no less important, strategy, according to Chandan, is to entice them into state-led cultural categories of 'British Asian' and 'Black British', "a 'new' kind of non-white Britishness that is presented in such a way that it directly appears to give a 'sense of belonging and home' for non-white people". This status, subordinate to whites but superior to (neo)colonised people of colour, is necessary for separating people of colour from their native communities (at home and abroad) and passively or actively participating in colonial violence against them.

We cannot understand colonial violence without understanding the racism that underpins it. Our third piece, an extract from **Imam Dawud Walid's** latest book, *Islamic Metaphysics of Racism* entitled locates the origins of racism in the same haughtiness that motivated Satan to refuse Allah's order to prostrate to Adam upon his creation. In essence, racism is a spiritual shortcoming that no amount of legislation and delegitimization can eliminate from society (something painfully evident in its powerful reappearance in western societies despite decades of anti-racism efforts).

Our final instalment in this issue is a timely return to the dominant manifestation of racism in much of the world today: Islamophobia. Certainly, Islamophobia is the most prevalent iteration of racism in the UK. Research by **Arzu Merali** for the Islamic Human Rights Commission into the nature and prevalence of Islamophobia in Britain as part of an EU wide project in 2018 identified 10 main narratives. These can be subsumed under four main categories: Muslims as a security threat, Muslims as disloyal, Islam as incompatible with British values and Muslims as segregationist. All of these are in evidence in today's resurgence of racism. The narratives serve to otherise Muslims, placing them outside the mainstream and inside an exclusion zone where they can be legitimately mistreated and discriminated against.

Revisiting these narratives, having now witnessed a genocide of scale against the Palestinians, highlights the warnings contained therein, that otherisation can and does lead to mass violence against the demonised. All of the pieces in this issue speak to the need for justice loving people world-wide to continue their demands for true liberation: for the Palestinians, and for the oppressed everywhere – whether they realise that is what they are, or not.

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When Conscience Becomes Crime: The Vacuous Charge of Extremism for Advocates and Activists

Setting out the concept for IHRC & SACC's annual Islamophobia conference, **Saeed Khan** argues that charging opponents and dissenters as extremists has a long pedigree. Ignoring the cynical definitions of governments must be the rallying call for activists everywhere.

The pantheon of western heroes is replete with individuals who risked their livelihoods, liberties and lives for the higher calling of greater rights, freedoms and virtues to benefit not just themselves, but society broadly. Those who come from marginalized communities are regarded as the mavericks, the risk takers and the trailblazers, elevating their voices for the others who have no voice or representation and gaining a better life. Equally, due credit is given to people who come from elite and privileged backgrounds who appear to set aside a life of ease, not complacent to accept their station in life, to seek social amelioration even for those with whom they share little, if anything, in common. For the lucky ones, society bestows them with recognition and gratitude for their achievements, although such acknowledgment may not be immediate. Rather, a process of rehabilitation may be required, one that could take years or decades, before the individual or the movement he or she is championing will be accepted and lauded. This, of course, presumes, that such a movement ever receives due recognition and legitimacy. Often, these strides of conscience are disparaged and demonized as cases of extremism, radicalism, anti-social behavior, even a threat to society or the state.

The word, conscience, has an interesting

and highly relevant etymology to the issue at hand. It comes from the Latin word, *conscientia*, which means, "shared knowledge" or "with knowledge." It is therefore unsurprising that those who are asserting their conscience are branded as extremists, as the current climate holds in contempt the very idea of sharing knowledge to correct and clarify misinformation, or to highlight atrocities and injustices. The treatment of those exercising their conscience do so as a means to speak truth to power, a purportedly well-established tradition and virtue within western societies. Yet, evidently, such an exercise has its limits and rules, which are invariably determined by those in power and who feel threatened when their conduct and policies are challenged and checked.

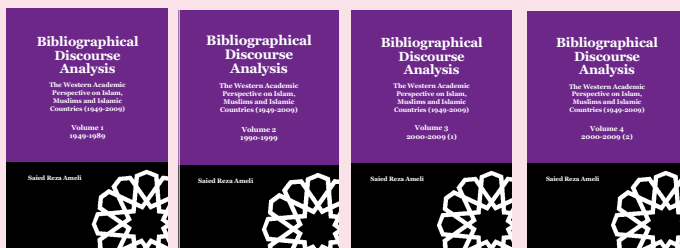
It is an indisputable reality that many prisoners of conscience and others who exercise their conscience only to be branded extremists are people of colour. Nelson Mandela and members of the African National Congress were vilified and branded a terrorist organization, not just within South Africa, but among a litany of western capitals. While there were certainly members of the anti-apartheid struggle that were white, the overwhelming majority of those who suffered most severely, and, of course, the very targets of the reprehensible apartheid policies, happened to be people of colour. Western leaders

unsurprisingly trained their venom and acerb on these leaders, with the inescapable issue of race forming part of their attitudes and policies. Republicans within the Reagan and George H.W. Bush administrations regarded Mandela as a sinister, subversive character, besmirching his reputation and painting him as a dangerous, violent individual, despite languishing in South African prisons for nearly three decades. Similarly, British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher echoed such sentiments, offering the Pretoria government resources to suppress not just the ANC, but the liberties of millions of South Africans under the apartheid regime. It is telling that even after, and despite the end of apartheid by negotiation between Mandela and then South African Prime Minister F.W. DeKlerk, Washington and London maintained their disdain for the former prisoner of conscience, if not the end of apartheid as a system and policy. Years, after, figures like former American Vice-President Dick Cheney remains unrepentant in branding Mandela a terrorist, despite the near universal adulation the late South African freedom fighter and statesman enjoys now. For Cheney, once a purported extremist (in his definition), always an extremist.

The British government's designation of Palestine Action as a terrorist organization was procured to allow the state to "legiti-

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Saeed Reza Ameli's work *Bibliographical Discourse Analysis: The Western Academic Perspective on Islam, Muslims and Islamic Countries (1949 – 2009)* is a ground breaking critical analysis of Occidental Academic preoccupation with Islam and Muslims. These four volumes cover both the changes in interest within academia in what is being studied, to the change in view of Islam and Muslims as the subject of study.

Being mindful of the purposes to which such work is used beyond the academy and its trickledown effect into the social, media and political realms, this work categorises each publication in its bibliography as Islamophobic, Islamophilic, Islamoromic, Islamoveritic and finally neutral. In so doing, Ameli introduces the readers to key new tools of analysis and concepts that can provide sophisticated and nuanced critique of a burgeoning literature of over six decades, and well into the future.

mately” criminalize protest, irrespective of whether such activity was peaceful or not. Images of the elderly and disabled being accosted by a half dozen police officers equipped with flak jackets, masks, helmets and truncheons brings no shame to the state, which leans into its aggressive and oppressive conduct, continuously rationalizing the necessity to prosecute in this manner for fear of anarchy, lawlessness or worse, the assertion and highlighting of issues that reasonable people will condemn as unjust and morally reprehensible.

British government clampdown of Palestine Action protests appears to be an inevitable consequence of the frustration the state has felt in witnessing the constant schedule of demonstrations around the Gaza conflict for the past two years. Every effort had been made to delegitimize the efforts, resorting in distortions and outright defamations, including false accusations of violence, support of terrorism and calls for criminal activity. When none of these allegations could be proven, as no such conduct occurred despite numerous provocations by both state and societal actors, the government took the audacious measure of policing ideas instead of actions. None of the arrested and incarcerated has ever claimed membership of Palestine Action, even if one acknowledges the state’s designation of it as a terrorist organization. But now, a placard in support of a ceasefire in Gaza or calling Israel’s activity a genocide, something that the majority of genocide scholars, including Israeli academics declare, is sufficient for the state to contend is tantamount to “lending material support to a terrorist enterprise,” thus eligible for prosecution.

Activism borne of conscience is a manifestation of agency; individuals and groups strive to bring attention to issues, causes and conflicts. The branding of such efforts as extremism requires a rebranding of their rhetoric and impetus. There is nothing more egregious and effective than usurping and redefining the terms and the motivations for conscience-driven campaigns. During the past two years, several slogans and chants among pro-Palestinian protesters have been reframed as terroristic, anti-Semitic and a threat to public safety thousands of miles away from the conflict in question. The phrase, “From the River to the Sea, Palestine Will be Free” is an aspirational statement that bears no ambiguity. It simply states that the area between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea will one day enjoy liberation and self-determination for all its inhabitants, be they ones who already possess it or those who seek it and have been deprived of it for decades. It makes no claims, explicitly or implicitly, of displacement, replacement, occupation or annihilation of any people; in fact, it doesn’t mention or single out any specific group. Yet, the phrase has been demonized as a categorical example of anti-Semitism. It is claimed to be an uncoded threat of violence against supporters of Israel to justify its proscription from demonstrations and even university campuses under the

pretext that it makes some students “feel” unsafe. The proverbial bar has been reduced from *being* unsafe to the more nebulous standard of *feeling* as such.

The rebranding of “From the River to the Sea...” from a peaceful, inspirational chant to a threatening screed would be risible enough were it not highly hypocritical as well. The irony is not lost that in its 1977 platform, the Israeli Likud party explicitly stated that “between the Sea and the Jordan there will only

Black civil rights leaders were also, at least initially, regarded as extremists, despite purportedly preaching non-violence and civil disobedience

be Israeli sovereignty.” Moreover, the Likud Party was created under the leadership of Menachem Begin, who became Prime Minister of Israel that year. Begin was the leader of the Irgun (Etzel), the Zionist paramilitary outfit that targeted British rule in Mandate-era Palestine as well as the Arab community resident there. The Irgun was responsible for the 1946 bombing of the King David Hotel in Jerusalem that killed 91 people, including British, Arab and Jewish civilians. The Irgun was also responsible for the 1938 attack on an Arab market that killed 18 people, and the hanging of two British sergeants in retaliation for the British execution of Irgun members. In addition, the Irgun was responsible, along with another Zionist group, the Lehi, for the murders in and decimation of the Arab village of Deir Yassin in 1948.

Condemnation of agents of conscience is also countered by rehabilitation of the reprehensible. Perhaps no one typifies this reversal better than Menachem Begin himself. His Irgun was designated a terrorist organization by the British during the Mandate era. He authorized and led campaigns that targeted and killed British officials, British soldiers and British civilians, not to mention the hundreds of thousands of Arabs he and his group murdered and displaced. But within thirty years of Begin’s classification as Public Enemy Number One, he became Prime Minister and was recognized and feted by Whitehall and other Western capitals alike. The “former” terrorist was now not only regarded a legitimate world leader but also awarded the 1978 Nobel Peace Prize with Egyptian President Anwar Al Sadat after signing the Camp David Accords. Doubtless, it will be bewildering to those whose conscience is mocked, belittled, delegitimized and even criminalized to see the abdication of conscience by those who will transform extremists into heroes, but cynicism is an unavoidable part of the equation.

In some cases, the conversion of villain to hero, extremist to paragon of conscience, is a

function of time as much as it is a matter of agenda. During the early 1960s there was perhaps no individual that was seen by the state as a bigger threat to society than Malcolm X (El-Hajj Malik El-Shabbaz). Arguably the most visible and prominent member of the Nation of Islam, Malcolm X was highly influential in greatly expanding membership into the Nation and encouraging black liberation and dignity in the face of systemic and societal racism. But Malcolm was not only critical of America for its bigotry and the dehumanization of his community. He also directed his opprobrium toward the mainstream civil rights movement that was personified and led by Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. Malcolm contended that King and other black leaders in that space were accommodationists and were guilty of sanitizing the institutional nature of anti-black racism. Malcolm argued that any progress that King would make, including passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, would be a pyrrhic victory as it would address and rectify the underlying cultural, political and economic causes and deployments of racism.

Despite his efforts to empower his community and imbibe it with a sense of dignity in the pursuit of justice and equality, neither the state nor society saw him as an agent of conscience. Even the mainstream black community saw him and his views as extremist, perhaps because he did not identify with the heavily Christian conventional civil rights movement that was led by Baptist preachers like King and Ralph Abernathy, among others. Malcolm proffered that their Christianity was imposed upon them and their slave ancestors as a means to sever blacks from their cultural and religious roots in Africa, and as a means of social control, a perspective that was ill received by many Blacks for whom the Church was a central social and spiritual institution.

Interestingly, the other Black civil rights leaders were also, at least initially, regarded as extremists, despite purportedly preaching nonviolence and civil disobedience. Like Malcolm, King was surveilled, beaten, imprisoned and deemed a threat. While both Malcolm and King were assassinated, their legacies have diverged considerably. Malcolm, murdered in 1965 by members of the Nation, with a strong suspicion by many that the US government was involved, has had a glacial metamorphosis of his image and memory. Thanks in part to a corpus of literature and the 1992 eponymously titled movie, Malcolm has moved beyond the reductive trope of dangerous firebrand to a highly complex, thoughtful, significant figure in the civil rights movement. While still regarded by many as an extremist, Malcolm now is seen by some as an agent of conscience.

By contrast, the rehabilitation by the state of King occurred more quickly, robustly and completely than that of Malcolm. King almost immediately became a martyr and was lauded as a man of peace, nonviolence. He offered a convenient juxtaposition to Malcolm, who was categorized as the “violent” one, de-

spite Malcolm never calling for violence; all he said was for the ability and right of blacks to defend themselves if confronted with violence, rather than employ the unrealistic- and purportedly Christian- notion of “turning the other cheek.” King was given the significant honour of having his birthday in January recognized as a federal bank holiday. In addition, King is the recipient of a second major recognition by way of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial on the National Mall in Washington, DC. Ostensibly meant to be a monument to the entire civil rights movement, the statue is only of King, and the reduction of the movement to a single individual is inescapable. There were thousands that perished in the civil rights struggle and hundreds that played a significant role, including Rosa Parks and Malcolm X, as well as others that are still branded as perhaps unredeemable, yet critical figures in the movement, such as members of the Black Panther Party like Huey Newton, Bobby Seale and H Rap Brown. The legacy of King has been laundered by the very power structures that vilified him before, but for whom he is now the acceptable face of the civil rights movement and the gold standard for behaviour in their estimation: peaceful, safe and willing to work with and within the system, without questioning its validity and legitimacy. It also begs another important, understandably cynical, question: whether the acknowledgment by the power structure of a person of conscience and the concomitant retraction of the “extremist” designation has any value, as the very system being challenged is being given recognition for its reversal. The system that labels someone an extremist arguably should not be presumed to have gained some enlightenment in changing its perspective since in both cases, it is exercising an agency that it deprives of the person of conscience throughout.

The large-scale Gaza demonstrations have continued unabated in several cities around the world, but perhaps none as consistent, frequent and massive as the regular marches in London, UK. These protests have been overwhelming in both their size and in

their peaceful nature, serving as a constant reminder to the atrocities occurring in Palestine and demanding a suspension of arms sales and distribution to Israel, a ceasefire and an end to the genocide. The crowds, in the hundreds of thousands are armed only with placards and their voices and are comprised of a diverse mosaic of religious and ethnic backgrounds. They include Palestinians whose families are under siege or have

The British government over the past two years, irrespective of political party in power, has been consistent in its demonization of people of conscience who are exercising their lawful right to protest an atrocity.

been annihilated, as well as Holocaust survivors, all calling for Israeli accountability and British government intervention to end the destruction rather than to provide further complicity with it.

The British government over the past two years, irrespective of political party in power, has been consistent in its demonization of people of conscience who are exercising their lawful right to protest an atrocity. It shows that political affiliations, barely able to maintain civility in parliamentary proceedings, have shown unique unanimity in condemning and even criminalizing the protesters for their advocacy and activism. Conservative Home Secretaries like Priti Patel and Suella Braverman accused the demonstrators of being terrorists, or at least, terrorist sympathisers, and considered deportation even for British citizens engaged in these marches. The matter not only did not abate under a

Labour government; it arguably intensified, with Home Secretary Yvette Cooper designating a leading organizer in the protests, Palestine Action, a terrorist entity, threatening to arrest anyone showing support for the group. To date, hundreds have been arrested by British authorities, merely for carrying signs or voicing support for Palestine Action, including the elderly and disabled, and pensioners including Holocaust survivors. The number of such arrests is far greater than recent demonstrations in London by far-right, anti-immigrant groups, despite such rallies being riddled by violence and even injuries to security and police forces. These incidents serve to affirm that the state, while relatively silent on fascist, racist and violent protesters and their bigoted message, is reluctant to categorize them as extremist, while it condemns people of conscience with incarceration.

While the state has demonstrated its contempt for and willingness to police and stifle conscience-based advocacy, non-governmental entities have proven to be no less complicit or vicious in their efforts. Journalists like Asa Winstanley have been the targets of campaigns to cancel his coverage of Israel's atrocities and the frequent weaponization of the charge of anti-Semitism to silence Zionist activities. Academics have also been affected, including David Miller and the termination of his faculty appointment at the University of Bristol. Justice came at great cost and after great effort to reverse a deeply troubling decision by the university's administration. And in the United States, activists like Mahmoud Khalil have been branded extremists, terrorist sympathisers and supporters and even detained for deportation simply for organizing demonstrations for Gaza. Khalil has been released from detention, but the Trump administration has persisted in searching for some way to remove him from the country.

Before mid-September, 2025, many people around the world, and many Americans over the age of 30 and/or politically liberal, would be excused if they did not know the name, Charlie Kirk. But his rather public and graphic assassination has inadvertently and ironically made him a far more prolific,

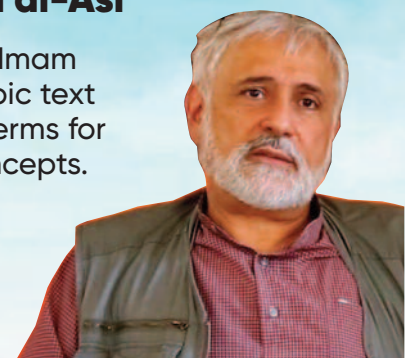
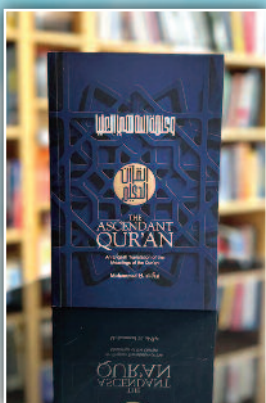
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household personality. The 31 year-old self-described conservative activist founded the powerful Turning Point USA (TPUSA), an organization designed to advocate right-wing ideas and ideology primarily to university-aged people. With thousands of collegiate chapters across the United States, TPUSA has grown into a multi-million dollar enterprise, with a stated mission to, “to identify, educate, train, and organize students to promote the principles of freedom, free markets, and limited government.” Kirk often aggressively asserted Christian principles, which made his and TPUSA’s message appealing to Christian nationalists and others who see Christianity as synonymous with right-wing politics and especially President Donald Trump’s MAGA (Make America Great Again) movement. Kirk’s statements, promulgated in person on college campuses and by way of a highly popular podcast, have been regarded as racist, misogynistic, anti-LGBTQ and Islamophobic, perhaps explaining his nearly cult-like following among conservative Americans. At a September event at a Utah university, Kirk was assassinated by a sniper’s single rifle shot.

The reaction to Kirk’s murder was understandably sharp and at the same time menacing. Almost immediately, his adherents presumed that the killer was from the political left; even President Trump reflexively, and bereft of any supporting evidence, charged that the radical left was behind this despicable act. A two-day manhunt that involved the FBI and several other local, state and federal agencies finally yielded the suspect, who was identified by his own family and who turned himself over to authorities himself. His identity came as a shock to many due to his demographic and ideological orientation. Tyler Robinson is a white, 22 year-old from a conservative family, whose father was both a police officer and Christian minister, and who identifies with a far-right wing political group, the Groypers. It appears, therefore, that there is an emerging schism within the so-called MAGA movement, or, put in another way, Kirk was more a casualty of political cannibalism than a victim of some broader, polarized culture war between right and left.

Kirk was quick to brand protesters of conscience as extremists, terrorists, and anti-American. His views on Gaza were fully aligned with the Israeli narrative, including the denial of Israeli actions being a genocide, and accusing the murder of hundreds of thousands of Gazans, including women and children as being the fault of Hamas. He made his assertions under the guise of being a champion of free speech, and engaged students, particularly detractors in a quasi-debate format that generally involved in him cutting off his interlocutors mid-sentence and engaging in smug and snarky one-word retorts, to the adulation of his supporters. Yet, his fans, including most of the Republican leadership in the country, lionized him as an intrepid defender of free expression and American (read: Christian conservative) values. And in death, Kirk has acquired a ha-

giography unmatched among non-politicians or leaders. Republicans have expressed a public sorrow that includes lamentations and histrionics, and have proposed honouring Kirk with such unprecedented gestures as having his body lie in state at the US Capitol rotunda in Washington. President Trump ordered all flags throughout the country to be flown at half-staff, and Vice-President JD Vance personally authorized his airplane, Air Force Two, to fly Kirk’s casket from Utah to his hometown of Phoenix, Arizona. Most significantly, however, is the categorical sanctification of Kirk’s memory and legacy as a man of conscience, despite ample evidence that his perspectives and pronouncements could be construed as extremist.

While it is understandable, perhaps even

The current political climate has exacerbated the typecasting of anyone seeking to challenge the status quo as being an extremist. In Great Britain, politicians of principle like Jeremy Corbyn were brought down for daring to advocate for Palestinians.

expected, for Charlie Kirk’s followers and fans to consider his ideology and approach to be the antithesis of extremism, the extent to which there is a demand for others to conform to such a conceit is unprecedented in recent American cultural and political history. It is insufficient for people to be silent about Kirk’s right-wing perspectives; it is expected that they accept them as dictum and even grieve him as a martyr in the same emotion and depth of sorrow as his most ardent supporters. The mode of mourning has become a litmus test of American allegiance and even a talisman against potential reprisal and re-priming. For those who are neither silent nor full-throated in their commiseration, internally sincere or not, have been recipients of an opprobrium that defies the long-held tradition and right to free speech, ironically, the very principles Kirk purportedly championed himself.

Those who either have offered their criticisms of Kirk’s highly problematic rhetoric and views, even if not having expressed their happiness that he was killed, a questionably appropriate yet constitutionally protected opinion to hold, have faced scorn, threats and even professional retribution. Commentators like Matthew Dowd were terminated from their position on MSNBC as a panelist and analyst merely for delineating the irony that Kirk had been on the record for stating that gun deaths were an unfortunate but necessary price to pay to maintain the Second Amendment of the US Constitution that ensures the right to bear arms. Others have faced similar reprisal for social media com-

ments, and the Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth has demanded that anyone at the Pentagon that is critical of or insufficiently mournful of Kirk’s murder will face punishment. It is irrelevant whether criticism of Kirk is being offered as a matter of conscience or to provide a rejoinder to the uncritical image being proffered by both media and ideologues alike. In today’s cultural climate, refusal to accept the extremism of an ideologue runs the risk of being branded an extremist oneself.

The reaction to Kirk’s murder also exposes another, arguably more nefarious phenomenon. For some who strive to have their conscience guide their politics and highlight issues and causes of concern, there is often the naivete that only one side of the political or cultural aisle is involved in normalizing extremism and worse, branding conscientious activism as extremist. The Kirk episode has shown how quickly the other mainstream sources of political and cultural power capitulate in the face of pressure, real or perceived, from more authoritarian sectors. While it is difficult to assess the motivations as to why there has been such an abdication of the duty of opposing the unilateral assertion of the Kirkian conservative ideology, be it for financial or other reasons, there is an indisputable chilling effect of the ability for people to oppose such right-wing extremism. Media outlets that have defined themselves as centrist or left-leaning have been as complicit in parroting the conservative point of view as those voices from where it can be fully expected. Even sports teams and musicians have interrupted their events to recognize and offer condolences to Kirk and his family. Several American football teams, for example, reserved a moment of silence before kick-off on the Sunday following Kirk’s assassination, and even Chris Martin of the band Coldplay, an artist well known for supporting progressive causes, made sure to acknowledge Kirk’s passing at a concert soon after the murder.

The current political climate has exacerbated the typecasting of anyone seeking to challenge the status quo as being an extremist. In Great Britain, politicians of principle like Jeremy Corbyn were brought down for daring to advocate for Palestinians. Most disturbing, but perhaps without surprise, Corbyn was removed from his position as opposition leader not by the Tories but by others within the Labour Party in what could best be described as a case of treachery and mutiny. It was accompanied by a continuing purge of any Labour member that shares Corbyn’s humanitarian concern for Gaza or Palestine as a whole.

Corbyn’s treatment demonstrates that there is no immunity from ostracization and removal, even for those who seek to work within the structures of power. The race for mayor of New York City has taken on an unusual amount of controversy and has garnered attention on an international scale, in part because some attribute to it an international dimension. New York is not only America’s largest city; it is also home to the largest Jewish population outside Israel. 33-

year-old Zohran Mamdani, a New York state assemblyman has catapulted in the polls to become the clear frontrunner ahead of the November 2025 elections. He won the Democratic primary in the heavily Democratic city, topping the incumbent Eric Adams, a politician addled with corruption allegations before being absolved by President Trump, who ordered his Justice Department to drop investigations into possible criminality by Adams. Mamdani also bested Andrew Cuomo, the former New York state governor who had to resign that post amidst multiple accusations of sexual harassment against him. Mamdani has campaigned on a platform to bring affordable housing, free to heavily discounted public transportation and reasonably priced groceries to New Yorkers as issues of conscience.

Yet, Mamdani has consistently been branded an extremist for espousing such pledges, including by members of the Democratic establishment, many of whom are either backing Adams or Cuomo despite both candidates claiming they would accept assistance by President Trump for a possible victory. Such Democratic leaders, with barely two months remaining before the election, refused to endorse Mamdani, the winner of their primary and the clear front runner in the race. New York is well represented at the national level, with the Senate Minority Leader, Chuck Schumer, and the House Minority Leader, Hakeem Jeffries, both hailing from the state. But Schumer has not been willing to endorse Mamdani yet (at the time of writing) because despite the Democratic Party's rhetoric of being the party for the common man, they see Mamdani's plans as radical, extremist and a threat to the status quo which the establishment appears to share with Republicans and Trump. Jeffries endorsed Mamdani at the time of publication, just about a week before the election.

Of course, it would be difficult for Democratic Party leaders to admit their own hypocrisy by voicing objections to Mamdani's stated platform and pledges. Instead, they have tried to paint Mamdani as an anti-Semite, anti-Israeli danger for being the sole outlier among obsequious New York City

candidates who feel the reflective need to establish their pro-Zionist credentials by offering uncritical support for Israel. When Mamdani tried to assert that he was running to be the mayor of an American city and thus felt no need to travel to Israel, a vow made by all his political rivals in the primary debates, he was accused of being unfit to represent New York City, a metropolis with a large, but hardly majority Jewish population. In fact, the Jewish community is rather divided on the issue of Israel with a majority of young Jewish New Yorkers supporting Mamdani and either sharing his views that Israel is committing a genocide in Gaza, or subordinating Israel as a campaign issue in favor of local political concerns.

In the United States, the extent by which the state seeks to stifle conscience and claim it to be an extremist position has reached unprecedented levels. Secretary of State Marco Rubio has audaciously proposed the revocation of American passports from US citizens should they express criticism of Israel, including speaking out about purported war crimes and crimes against humanity being committed in Gaza and elsewhere. While an obvious violation of the US Constitution's First Amendment and its guarantees of free speech, not to mention an unlawful restriction on a citizen's right to travel, the audacious lengths being taken to prohibit certain streams of activism further blurs the line between purportedly liberal democracies and those governments traditionally labelled authoritarian regimes.

Those who are guided by their conscience to bring to light crucial issues and causes face tremendous challenges, not only in their efforts to change public opinion and policy, but also in their demonization. Being branded as extremists simply for asserting and defending human rights is both demoralizing and potentially dangerous. While it might not deter the resolute from persisting in their struggles, the designation of extremism is invariably accompanied by societal and state recriminations. Ostracization, economic privation and reputational harm are the relatively minor consequences that are deployed. The state has the full force and authority at its disposal

to surveil, securitize, criminalize and punish people, either into capitulation, conformity or worse, erasure. For those that persevere and manage the actions taken against them, there is the added and ironic consideration that their efforts may effectuate the desired shift in perception and even policy. In doing so, activists may also experience a shift in attitudes toward them by renouncing the moniker of extremism, even gaining them societal and state recognition of being heroes. As activists are not dissuaded by being branded extremists, as this does not impede their motivation to exercise their conscience, similarly, they will not be concerned to receive the equally arbitrary approbation from the very same source. If anything, such recognition may prove confusing as the motivations of the brander are fundamentally problematic and circumspect. The power structures already demonstrate their capriciousness, contradictions and moral bankruptcy by being the purveyors of the injustices and iniquities in which they engage. As their condemnation is thus empty, so too is their approval. History is replete with heroes that were once villains, and there are villains that are being marketed as paragons of virtue and moral rectitude. Neither dynamic is particularly helpful, constructive or ultimately relevant for the conscience-driven activist. Strategically, the priority remains effectuating the change to the conditions being challenged. Such focus is the mark of the truly conscientious.

Saeed Khan

is Professor of Near East & Asian Studies & Global Studies and Director of Global Studies at Wayne State University, Detroit, USA. He will be co-chairing the 2025 IHRC and SACC Islamophobia Conference 'From Freedom to Comfort: How the State Redefined Conscience as Extremism' which will be held on 6 December 2025. Find out more on the IHRC website, and find the proceedings of the previous ten years conferences here. Khan is a regular contributor to *The Long View*. His most recent publications include "What's Going on Here? US Experiences of Islamophobia between Obama and Trump", co-authored with Saied R. Ameli for Islamic Human Rights Commission publications.

IHRC Publication

What's Going on Here?

US Experiences of
Islamophobia between
Obama and Trump

By Saied R. Ameli
and Saeed A. Khan



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Race-Riot Brexit-Britain & Full Spectrum Collaboration: "Empire 2.0", The Final Success of the British project

With the British state and its population intensifying racist violence on racialised people, **Sukant Chandan** looks at the strategies employed by the state to keep targeted communities disunited and confused about the situation and the possible solutions required to ameliorate them.

Introduction: A New Era of Non-White Participation in British/English Nationalism

For those of who know the histories of racism in Britain in the post-Second World War period, we remember well that the British Union Jack and English St George's Cross flags are symbols of aggressive and violent provocative colonialism and racism on British streets and against us and our families, but also represent and are leading symbols in greater levels of violence on the streets of Ireland, South Africa, Aden and Kenya amongst other places.

*Some will hate you, pretend they love you now
Then behind they try to eliminate you*
(Bob Marley, *Who The Cap Fit*, 1976)

These flags are the leading symbols of this global racist violence, so it is fascinating to see what is a new cultural and political development in the current visuals of African, Caribbean and Asian-heritage colonised non-white people literally dressing themselves up in these flags and joining far-right racist communities and their events. The levels of recruitment of colonised people led by the right-wing into Britishness that we are seeing is a new cultural wave.

Historically, it is the more liberal wings of the British state that have had more success in manipulating and forcing non-white people into Britishness or colonial assimilation and integration. Historically it is the process of leftist and liberal recruitment of non-white people into Britishness that has been the precondition for right-wing and the far-right Brits to be able to recruit large numbers of non-whites. But whether non-white people are in a liberal or right wing of colonialism, they are still embedded in the main problem: British colonialism. It is the left and liberals of British colonialism that have and continue to pool masses of non-whites into Britishness and in so doing become active participants in pushing the new

British colonial racist offensive in Britain and across the world (most violently manifested in British wars on colonised lands).

In recent weeks we have seen non-white people's community buildings being attacked by racists using the Union Jack. What was possibly less predictable was that the response of the non-white people who were attacked themselves raising the same British flag! This seems to be some kind of attempt to plead to the Brit colonialists that they should be accepted into the British club because they themselves choose to join the very thing that has a genocidal attitude towards them.

We are all witnessing the mass-based white supremacist racism and colonialism of the British population surge onto non-white colonised communities in a way that has not been seen for a long time, perhaps never before. Never before have the 'whites' been so openly hostile and aggressive. This British state-led racist offensive has two main characteristics: 1) "Empire 2.0" (British colonial civil service name for Brexit) or the great and seemingly victorious reset of the British Colonial project which could have only happened if 2) the British Colonial project successfully recruited non-whites into its project and, in so doing, destroyed all opposition to the British racist colonial state.

Racism is taking on an increasingly naked form, with the current Starmer administration using rhetoric and policies daily that cannot be distinguished from what is understood as 'far-right' tropes and discourses which basically seeks to construct a scapegoat in the 'othered' new non-white migrant (often additionally racialised as 'Muslim'), whose scapegoating is presented as addressing the 'legitimate concerns' of the 'British' population. If we look into the histories of these 'far-right' narratives and policies, it is consistently the British state that has led it.

Roots of the Sellout

He'll deny all of his brothers and sisters in Africa, in Asia, in the East, just to be a sec-

ond-class American.

- Malcolm X, January 1963.

However confusing it might be to some, in the colonial circus and pantomime of the 'culture war' the masses of white Brits will see the 'liberal' wing of British people as an enemy that is in league with the non-white migrant and/or 'Muslim invader'. And it is mostly this liberal wing of the British colonial state that has done the most efficient recruitment of non-white colonised people back into the very same project that is leading colonial and racist violence across the world - the British state and its various forms of Britishness.

The focus and critical explorations here will be on two major strategies of British colonial mass co-option and recruitment of non-whites into the British project around: 1) the state-led cultural categories of 'British Asian' and 'Black British', or simply some 'new' kind of non-white Britishness that is presented in such a way that it directly appears to give a 'sense of belonging and home' for non-white people and (not so) indirectly 2) the precondition to that inclusion is to fail colonised people globally and facilitate their demise. That's what led Malcolm X to quip that this type of colonised person will accept a second-class position under the colonial state and culture and in the process will erase the entire non-western humanity that is under attack from the same genocidal racist community the sellout has chosen to join.

On April 3 1964 in Ohio, Malcolm X in a speech which has been since called 'the Bal-lot or the Bullet', urged us to be in unity with humanity and reject colonial assimilationism of any kind, it might be instructive here to replace the 'American/Americanism' with 'British/Britishness': *"No, I'm not an American. I'm one of the 22 million black people who are the victims of Americanism. One of the 22 million black people who are the victims of democracy, nothing but disguised hypocrisy. So, I'm not standing here speaking to you as an American, or a patriot, or a flag-saluter, or a flag-waver - no, not I. I'm speaking as a victim of this American system. And I see America through the eyes of the victim. I*

don't see any American dream; I see an American nightmare. These 22 million victims are waking up. Their eyes are coming open. They're beginning to see what they used to only look at. They're becoming politically mature."

At the time oppressed people globally had a relative tendency to unite and radicalise and engage in effective struggles compared with our times where we find non-white people in Britain are colonially divided so much so that they are being systematically targeted with little to no resistance such as the race riots of August 2024 and the racist offensive this summer. This wasn't always the case and a very different picture was painted by the oppressed in England in August 2011.

August 2011 Uprising as Anti or Counter British/English

The August 2011 Black-led Black and poor youth uprising against racism and capitalism was a moment in which oppressed youth responded to a racist police killing in Tottenham of Mark Duggan and went on to rise up against capitalism and the police over a period of several days. Poor white youths engaged in direct actions against police and capitalism across the country which saw no racist incidents during the uprising. Their anger and action was towards the state and capitalism and in solidarity with communities oppressed by the same.

August 2011 was not a 'British' uprising, but arguably an anti-British one, one that contended with, rejected in many ways and pushed back notions of 'Britishness' and 'Englishness' by a cultural movement that has its roots in anti-colonial Jamaican and Caribbean-based sound-system and cultural practices of the oppressed: Grime, Dubstep, Road Rap and other grassroots sound-system cultures. The British state has successfully infiltrated and recruited non-white youth back into Britishness through these cultural genres and also through Drill, not least via its leading cultural colonial arm, the BBC, but also through naked racist policing.

This cultural strategy is part of the political strategy that rewards the leading colonial agents with colonial largesse in the form of Orders and Members of the British Empire, funding, platforms and such.

Brexit. Empire 2.0

However, it was Brexit and the manner in which colonised people allowed themselves to be bamboozled that was the most stark example of this colonial divide and rule and effective outcomes for this colonial assimilation. In the realm of British colonial hegemony, a thing can be seen and defined by different sections of the population in different ways, but the social results of the dynamics always mean the refinement and strengthening of the colonial state and power. Brexit is such an example. Brexit was seen by masses of white Brits to mean the expulsion of all non-Brit, non-English migrants, be they from the rest of Europe or outside.

What was always going to happen was that the British state was going to remove some European migrants and instead bring in a lot more of the people from the colonies to supply the colonial service class that props-up the running of British society. As a result of this mass sellout to Britishness and the connected absence of any sensible guidance in non-white communities, many non-white people wrongly thought Brexit would work in their favour, believing that it was a move against other white European migrants in Britain. Some non-whites seemed to like being flattered as the 'most preferred' colonial service-class of wage-slaves, over the poor white workers from East Europe and other Europeans.

White Brits, having witnessed even more greater numbers of African and Asian labour from the colonies come to visibly run whole sections of British society (education, health, security, retail, transport), and are beside themselves and are trying to 'get their Brexit done' in the growing demand for mass deportations or 'remigration' of all non-whites. The Enoch Powell moment and its con-

nected mass demands for a Ministry for Repatriation is back, this time with no resistance. As a formal project of the British state going forward, since 2016 Brexit Britain is 'trying to get Brexit done' which points in only one direction: an increasingly hostile state-led by a mass-based racist violent offensive against all non-white people.

What is our problem?

Speaking to Malcolm X's point that some will accept a dehumanised status within the west if that means acquiescing to colonial genocide elsewhere, we see now the absence of any anti-colonial capacity in the greater numbers of non-white people trying to enter into forms of British colonial assimilation and integration that we have not seen previously. Malcolm X continues a critical assessment of that colonised person who falls into colonial assimilation by his internalisation of dehumanisation and inferiorisation.

"Also this type of so-called Negro, by being intoxicated over the white man, he never sees beyond the white man. He only can see himself here in America, on the American stage or the white stage, where the white man is in the majority, where the white man is the boss. So this type of Negro always feels like he's outnumbered or he's the underdog or he's the minority. And it puts him in the role of a beggar—a cowardly, humble, Uncle Tomming beggar on anything that he says is—that should be his by right."

- Malcolm X, January 23, 1963

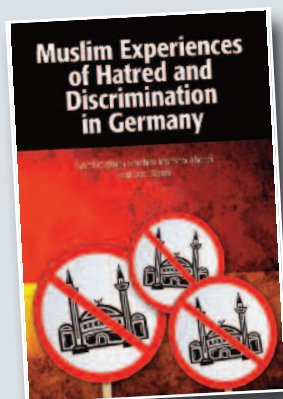
Malcolm X frames the problem as one of a racist and colonial state and power that cannot be reformed but must be rejected in full and overturned through oppressed peoples' struggles. This goes to the root of the entire conversation. What is the problem that we are facing and what are the possible solutions? Malcolm X talks about 'Uncle Toms', an explicit reference to those who sell out their fellow colonised and enslaved. The problem is the racist colonial system and power and those who maintain it. The solution is its destruction by any means necessary at the hands of those who are most exploited

IHRC PUBLICATION

Muslim Experiences of Hatred and Discrimination in Germany

SAIED R. AMELI, EBRAHIM MOHSENI
AHOEEI AND ARZU MERALI

Available from shop.ihrc.org



Using the state of the art Domination Hate Model of Intercultural Relations, the authors of this long awaited analysis of Islamophobia in Germany chart the demise of the ideas of citizenship, equality and new Germanness.

The authors argue that Germany is uniquely poised in Europe to lead other nations in good practice or bad. The current situation is veering dangerously to the bad - with laws, policies and public rhetoric all imbued with and reproducing Islamophobic narrative and practice.

Alongside analysis, the research sets out a comprehensive set of recommendations looking at media, policing, political narrative, citizenship laws, employment, education and many other aspects of the German state. It also presents fieldwork and statistics based on the DHMIR survey of the experiences of Muslims in Germany.

and oppressed (the 'field slaves' - Malcolm X, 'the wretched' - Fanon) by it to build a new society based on freedom of people and the land. Or, as leading radical Black Power pioneer Stokely Carmichael (Kwame Ture) remarked in October 1966, "...we were never fighting for the right to integrate, we were fighting against white supremacy."

Because of the particular histories of colonisation, displacement, enslavement and genocide, (not least by the Brits) the resistance to all this has included clear and 'radical' articulations of the problem and solutions by the oppressed in all of the Americas but especially in the contexts of the Caribbean and the USA. The different demographics and sophistication of colonial corruption in Britain has meant that there is, relative to the Caribbean and USA, an absence of clear anti-colonial voices. Instead there's a constant preponderance of confusion-inducing and illusion peddling in the lie of the impossibility of the reformability of the colonial racist system into something that is not racist. Indulging in British reformism and integration does two interrelated things: on the one hand it erases the colonial reality and oppressed humanity in terms of colonial wars and resistance to it, and on the other hand it fails to attempt to define what the nature of the state, government and system it is that we are dealing with.

To use Malcolm X's phrase, on the basis of genocidal violence and mental and cultural-genocide, the "Uncle Tom" peddles the illusion that somehow the colonial system is something 'post-colonial', or a system just 'struggling' with its imperialist past, and if only the system accepted the non-white assimilation then it could really be a better reformed system. This results in such extreme colonial-borne irregularities such as overlooking one of the greatest anti-colonial revolts against Britain through the period of the 1960s-1990s: the Irish Revolution. This constant erasure of one of the most significant anti-colonial revolts should be central to understanding everything about Britain and its ongoing colonial wars or 'humanitarian interventions' in Afghanistan 2001 and Libya 2011 etc.

While nothing is ever totally clear-cut and without contradictions, the struggle against racism in the USA context has produced many clear thinkers and actors against the colonial state. A leading light in this community is Black Panther Party Field Marshall and Black Guerilla Family co-founder George Jackson. What is striking in such revolutionaries is their constant, frequent and clear depictions of the colonial system and culture that needs to be countered and destroyed. To quote George Jackson from his seminal prison writings collection 'Blood in My Eye', "*As a slave, the social phenomenon that engages my whole consciousness is, of course, revolution.*"

This opening clearly defines the system as the problem, the subject as the oppressed slave by the system in the form of George Jackson (himself advocating as a resistant representative of the oppressed peoples), and

the process towards and the actual solution to the problem: revolution. George Jackson and others like him show that it's not a complex intellectual endeavor to define and communicate the problem of the oppressed to oppressed peoples. This manner of clear, honest and direct definitions of the social relationship under the British state is something that is nearly always absent in so-called 'radical' voices in Britain.

What about the possibility of great radical voices in Britain that have existed against

While we have clear definitions from Malcolm X, George Jackson, Stokely etc of what the system is, what our position in it is, and how we get free: has anyone advocated similarly in Britain and been a part of organising oppressed communities in this regard?

British racism and colonialism itself? Who has helped to warn and guide communities away from British colonial projects of co-optation and corruption? Have they existed and to what effect? At this point it might be useful to return to the challenges of colonised peoples in Britain and those who present themselves as offering support and solutions to them in the realm of culture and politics. Colonised people migrated to the 'heart of whiteness' due to the economic needs of the British colonial centre, they were organised by the British government to become a new colonial class of non-whites to do jobs in Britain that were 'beneath' that of white Brits. 'Wage-slavery' is a Marxist concept which states simply that a powerless worker under capitalism is forced to work or die, he either sells his labour for a wage or he and his family will perish in a system of wage-slavery. Add to this the fact that the colonial state invites a whole demographic class to prop-up the British economy and society, so that perhaps the correct term in this sense is 'colonial wage slavery' in the colonial centre, in Britain.

While we have clear definitions from Malcolm X, George Jackson, Stokely etc of what the system is, what our position in it is, and how we get free: has anyone advocated similarly in Britain and been a part of organising oppressed communities in this regard? What we find in general is that most voices and campaigns have focused on incremental improvements to the collective status of de-

pendent colonial wage-slaves. Before we go into some concrete examples of this, to return to George Jackson and his framing of these issues:

"The slave - and revolution: Born to a premature death, a menial, subsistence-wage worker, odd-job man, the cleaner, the caught, the man under hatches, without bail—that's me, the colonial victim. Anyone who can pass the civil service examination today can kill me tomorrow. Anyone who passed the civil service examination yesterday can kill me today with complete immunity. I've lived with repression every moment of my life, a repression so formidable that any movement on my part can only bring relief; the respite of a small victory or the release of death. In every sense of the term, in every sense that's real, I'm a slave to, and of, property.

Revolution within a modern industrial capitalist society can only mean the overthrow of all existing property relations and the destruction of all institutions that directly or indirectly support existing property relations. It must include the total suppression of all classes and individuals who endorse the present state of property relations or who stand to gain from it. Anything less than this is reform."

Colonial service-class, or resistance?

It's perhaps interesting to compare this framing and advocacy of George Jackson's with that of Claudia Jones'. Claudia Jones is a significant person in the histories of anti-colonial socialist politics of the Caribbean, the USA and Britain. Seen as a radical threat in New York as she was a Harlem-based communist leader, the colonial state expelled her, and the Brits brought her to London. In London Jones became an anti-racism activist. She was well tuned-into global anti-colonial struggles and, along with her lover and comrade Indian-Punjabi Maoist Abhimanyu Manchanda, felt a close affinity to the anti-colonial resistance in Africa and Asia. However, like nearly all similar people of left, socialist and communist persuasions there was only an inclination towards making reformist demands within the system, to try and create conditions whereby colonial wage-slaves in Britain are treated less worse. There was never an advocacy that oppressed communities should engage in resistance and struggle to form independent-resistant communities to overturn the whole British system and replace it with anti-colonial communities entirely. Or at the very least support the global anti-colonial struggles and be the section of it active and resistant against the British colonial state while being in Britain.

In 1964 Claudia Jones sums-up the framing of oppressed people in Britain as demographically a worker-class propping up a colonial society for the colonisers:

"whether as tenants waging anti-discrimination struggles; clubbing together to purchase homes to house families the large majority of whom were separated for years

until the necessary finances were raised: whether as workers fighting for the right to work, or to be upgraded: or as cultural workers engaged in the attempt to use their creative abilities on stage, screen or television, or to safeguard their children's right to an equal education; or as professionals, students, or in business pursuits, the West Indian immigrant community has special problems, as a national minority. While the workers are heaviest hit, the disabilities cut across class lines." (Claudia Jones, *The Caribbean community in Britain*, in Kwesi Owusu's *Black British Society and Culture*, 1999)

In contrast to George Jackson, Claudia Jones does not define the nature of the state and society, and instead positions the community as a 'minority' to be treated better for the benefit of wider society. The question arises that despite Claudia Jones' close associations with and support to global anti-colonial struggles, why did she become a reformist activist when in Britain? This might be rooted in part to the relative lack of anti-colonial assertiveness and combativeness of a lot of western left-wing cultures including that of the Moscow-aligned communist culture in which she was embedded. Stalin's leadership towards these communist groups in the west including in Britain was to engage in colonial structures and elections, to not develop the independent grassroots resistance of the oppressed and to not advocate the dissolution and destruction of the British empire. A lot of people who come out of these communist traditions tend to integrate into the colonial state and structures and become some kind of bureaucrat or careerist.

As greater numbers of people from the former British colonies were brought to Britain to be a new colonial service-class, Indian and Pakistani workers were also starting to organise against racism in society, but were also doing so on the basis of accepting that they are exactly a source of cheap labour to be used for a racist society but on the basis of their discrimination and abuse of all kinds. They accepted that they are a colonial wage-slave class here. The Indian Workers Association (Great Britain) played this similar

reformist role, however one figure associated with this community presented a counter-model to this colonial integration. That was Shaheed Udham Singh.

Udham Singh dedicated his life to avenging the British massacre at Amritsar in 1919 by eliminating Michael O'Dwyer a British ruler of Punjab by shooting him in 1940 in London. Udham Singh had only come to the 'west' to exact justice for the oppressed against the colonialists, and he delivered. Udham Singh is deeply revered by Punjabis, Sikhs and North Indians as one of the greatest anti-colonial heroes, but his example didn't change the general reformism of the political communities to which he is connected such as the IWA(GB)s. If an anti-colonial struggle is not built in communities, then the de facto reality and oppression is that the colonial state is the dominant force that increasingly exploits and oppresses.

The colonial state uses immigration policies and the political games around it to ensure that colonised people never become independent and collectivised on the basis of their common interests with other colonised peoples. A senior British government figure - a 'senior whip' - raised this issue of managing different sections of colonised peoples' migration into Britain on the explicit basis of who would be more subservient to British colonialism:

"Why should mainly loyal and hard-working Jamaicans be discriminated against when ten times that quantity of disloyal [sic] Southern Irish (some of them Sinn Feiners) come and go as they please?" (*The 1951-1955 Conservative and Government Racialisation of Black Immigration*, By Bob Carter, Clive Harris and Shirley Joshi, Quoted in *Black British Culture and Society*, Ed. Kwesi Owusu, 1999)

Here we can see the colonial ruling classes exploring how they can recruit colonised people into serving their interests on the basis of being 'loyal' to the British system. An interesting insight into the shifting strategies of British state colonial divide and rule and recruitment is through the ethnic categories as options for people participating in the census which takes place every decade

or so. In the 1981 census, ethnic groups were identified according to where the head of the household was born, be it a country in the Caribbean, Africa or Asia etc. By the time of the 1991 census the categories change to, not where people were born but, if people are 'Black-Caribbean, Black-African, Black-Other, Pakistani, Indian, Chinese, Bangladeshi, Asian-other'. This is a subtle but profound formal de-linking of communities based in and connected to the homeland and peoples in the periphery to shift them to a self-identity connected to the colonial centre and those who reside in that colonially privileged place. By the time of the 2001 census the terms 'Black British', and 'Asian British' were introduced in the form as ethnic categories indicating the bureaucratic and cultural formalisation of identities explicitly tied to Britishness i.e., contemporary British colonialism and racism.

Colonised Migrant youth cultures and Britishness

These ethnic and racialised categories introduced into colonised communities by the British authorities - here in the form of the census - have its cultural and academic reflections. In British TV and media, in the academic institutions there, the British colonial state developed subjective voices from Caribbean, African and Asian colonised communities that constructed notions of Britishness and Britishness-forming onto migrant colonised youth in the colonial centre.

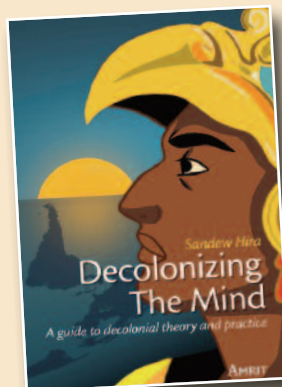
Self-identifying as 'British' or 'English' was not at all commonplace amongst non-white youth through the 1970s, '80s and '90s. The adoption of Hip-Hop, Reggae/Ragga, Jungle DnB by colonised youth in Britain shows that they were explicitly tying themselves to an anti-colonial Black Power militancy via Rastafari-centric anti-colonial, anti-British Reggae and Ragga. Rastafarianism is an African Christian Orthodox Church. Horace Campbell's *Rasta and Resistance* (1985) brilliantly presents the Rastafari movement as an espe-

FROM AMRIT PUBLISHERS

Decolonizing Mind - a guide to decolonial theory and practice

By Sandew Hira

Available from shop.ihrc.org



In different parts of the world a new decolonial movement is growing that challenges long time narratives in knowledge production and social struggle and transforms activism and social movements. It is driven by key factors such as the fall of the west and the rise of the rest, the collapse of the socialist bloc and in general the crisis of Western civilization.

Hira develops a comprehensive, coherent and integral theoretical framework that draws on different contributions in the decolonial movement, and deals with the practical implication of decolonial theory for decolonial activism.

cially Jamaica-based youth autonomous-community building movement through cultural and social resistance to colonialism and racism. Bob Marley's music is the most well known cultural form of this movement. Rasta sees 'Babylon system' and the 'police' being symbols of a system of colonial oppression that must be resisted in this particular Afrocentric spirituality that takes one further out of Britishness into a philosophical, justice and independence-oriented life and community. It has its own counter-cultural language which sits in Jamaican patois and adds to the already creative witticisms of the language of the oppressed. Hip-Hop is a similar anti-colonial grassroots movement borne out of young people in anti-colonial struggles of African and Native communities in the settler colonial entity known as the USA.

Take the likes of Jah Shaka and Joi Bangle. Aswad and Ragga Twins. Rebel MC Congo Natty and Original Nuttah UK Apache. No one was pushing Britishness or Englishness, everyone pushing a Jamaican-based outlaw rebel-culture - the 'raggamuffin' and rude boy and rude gyal - heavy on Patois-chat and respect for Rastafari. Everyone openly celebrated Malcolm X and Marcus Garvey and named our community centres, and put their portraits up in the halls where we held our sound-system parties. And we all communicated through independent mass anti-British state communication systems and networks called Pirate Radio, which was ultimately destroyed by the British state and the BBC by the 2000s.

Despite the relative confusions and the trajectory of greater division and victories of the state, youth were still positively aware of militant anti-colonial struggles in Palestine, South Africa, Grenada (Maurice Bishop), the Caribbean (Walter Rodney), Africa - South Africa and Zimbabwe (Walter Rodney) and celebrating who we thought symbolised this strident and articulate anti-colonial Black radicalism in the figure of Louis Farrakhan but then especially Khalid Abdul Muhammad, Public Enemy ("supporters of Chesi-mard" Assata Shakur, lyric in Rebels Without a Pause, 1989) were the greatest

music band in the world at the time, educating us in radical Black Power socialist politics. Chuck D in Public Enemy spoke to that when he declared the racists were against our majority presence on this earth in their 1990 album title: 'Fear of a Black Planet'. This was of course not the whole picture, and as always is the case in the realm of cultural communities of music and arts, all kinds of problematic forms of Britishness and Englishness were growing. It is for this reason that the mass lived experiences of radical cultural communities and histories have to be revived and reasserted for new generations.

In 1987 Paul Gilroy correctly identifies a lot of aspects of this grassroots colonised Caribbean and Asian youth communities and cultures in his book *Ain't no Black in the Union Jack*:

"Black cultures form only some of the forces which contribute to the emergence of a black Britishness", Gilroy continues: "cultural resources of the Afro-Caribbean communities provide a space in which whites are able to discover meaning in black histories" (p217)

Gilroy introduces a concept called 'black Britishness' and 'black Britain in which he argues that Afro-Caribbean communities 'provide a space' in which whites are able to discover something that brings them together in something new which is 'black Britain'. Gilroy then says that this *"shared culture, overdetermined by its context of the urban crisis, mediates the relationship between the different ethnic groups that together comprise black Britain."*

It seems it is this 'overdetermined context of the urban crisis' that brings together the white Brit and colonised youth into a new 'black Britain'? But it is not true that the urban crisis in which non-white youth were living was a leading or more powerful force for cohesion than what we understood as the oneness of our condition, oppression and resistance with the Irish, Palestinian, South African and Black and Native youth in the USA throwing rocks at racist white colonial police and militaries. As such we were not leaning into anything 'black British', but

something counter to that along the lines of the Black Power culture in Hip-Hop and Rasta in Reggae which Gilroy explores. But Gilroy again chooses to lean into some kind of constructed 'Britishness' that wasn't necessarily actually there amongst most youth, by highlighting Tim Westwood as a leading figure in this emergence of Asian and Black youth forming fusions of Hip-Hop and Reggae/Ragga (which would create Jungle by the end of the 1980s).

Tim Westwood and his facilitation into Hip-Hop communities is a good example of how British colonial-capitalism recruits and oppresses grassroots Black cultures which oppose British racism and the state. There is a constant class of people in grassroots culture who are capitalist-oriented, who want to use the people and their culture to enrich themselves at the community's expense by often allying with British institutions, funding and frameworks. This class of the 'sell-out' compradors to the system often push 'British' identity because it is where they can make some money in a junior relationship to Britishness as power, as in money and platforms.

By 1987 Tim Westwood was chosen by British institutions in the media to be the gatekeeper for Hip-Hop. By the 1990s Westwood would take a leading role in the BBC in this regard, as the BBC was helping to end Pirate Radio and develop the colonially divisive cultural wings to deepen splits between Asians and Caribbean and African people by pushing BBC Asian Network and BBC 1Xtra in the early 2000s. More recently Tim Westwood has been under investigation for sexual harassment and assaults of young women at the height of his career, with many criticising the BBC for what appears to be a cover-up. The exploitation of humans and girls is a constant of capitalist-colonial systems and behaviour and cannot be separated from Britishness.

It is exactly through these dynamics of co-option and oppression that any kind of Britishness is imposed on the community, be it on colonised communities in Britain, or colonised communities in the periphery like



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in Gaza or Ireland. Anti-colonial youth cultures of Hip-Hop, Ragga and Jungle in Britain wasn't practised at all to provide white kids with feelings of social and cultural inclusion in our spaces, rather it was a radical articulation of a universal struggle against colonialism and racism from our position in the colonial centre, like Malcolm X and Public Enemy were in the colonial centre, and we were quite conscious of our positioning as common to that of Malcolm X and KRS One (another pro Black Power radical and popular Hip Hop artist from New York's Bronx).

Gilroy goes on to say *"a political relationship between Afro-Caribbeans and Asians on which the future of black Britain may depend is being created in these cultural encounters."* Perhaps Gilroy was correct here, but in a much more devastating and negative way than what he may have intended to mean, speaking to what has happened to this point whereby these 'British' projects have resulted in a near total collapse of any ability for non-whites to give any meaningful response while they are targeted by a mass violent British racist campaign. All the OBE's and MBE's of the non-white colonial class that postured as left and radical have in sum total brought the community to its most vulnerable and weakest position.

Grassroots: Failed and Sold-Out to Britain since the 1980s

The period from 1979 to 1981 saw a lot of Asian and African youth-led uprisings against British racist society and authorities. It is often seen as a high point of struggle against racism. However the radical high point was arguably the late 1960s into the 1970s where the type of Black Power anti-colonial politics that even Malcolm X himself pushed in Asian, African and Caribbean communities in Britain had been defeated as a political possibility in terms of actually being adopted in struggles of non-white communities here. Both Obi Egbuna and Roy Sawh, early radical Black Power leaders in London, were both imprisoned under the

1965 Race Relations Act. Culturally, the children of migrants from British colonies were increasing in their numbers and confidence, their coming of age in the late 1970s in the 1980s was evidenced in-part by films like *Babylon* (1980) featuring Aswad and Jah Shaka, and the emerging Hip-Hop, Ragga and Jungle movements with Pirate Radio encompassing all.

At the same time, since the 1970's the British authorities were encouraging people from non-white communities to become community bureaucrats for the state on the basis of taking funding and diverting and demobilising the grassroots. Often opportunists emerging out of the younger generations would talk a language of radicalism, posture against the older gatekeepers who were close to the authorities, to only then themselves become close to the authorities and their funding and directly help to fail the youth and grassroots in their own communities. This period saw a string of legal reforms to give a bit more space to non-white people in society, creating a whole new British colonial economy for non-white assimilation and integration into Britishness. This was of course necessary to ensure that the new generations of non-white youth are increasingly divided and divorced from any struggles of people against colonialism, and instead identify as English and British.

Whereas Walter Rodney and Malcolm X kept tying non-white communities in Britain to the Caribbean, Asian and African-based militant anti-colonial peoples struggles, Stuart Hall in 1987 in his work *Minimal Selves* argues: *"migration is a one-way trip, there is no 'home' to go back to"*. This positioning is in total counter-opposition to those like Malcolm X, George Jackson, Fanon and others.

The entire anti-colonial culture exists to prioritise our solidarity and unity with actual oppressed people in their struggles against British, French, USA and other colonialisms, very much always 'returning to' and 'going back' to these revolutionary frameworks. Middle-class Jamaican-born Stuart Hall quotes his mother saying to him, *"hope they*

don't think you are one of those immigrants over there", which is an interesting admission when exploring the following where he says:

"a new conception of ethnicity as a kind of counter to the old discourses of nationalism and national identity ... The slow contradictory movement from 'nationalism' to 'ethnicity' as a source of identities is a part of a new politics. It is also part of the decline of the west' - that immense process of historical relativisation which is just beginning to make the British, at least, just feel 'marginally' marginal."

Did it look like in 1987 that the West was in decline? Even if it did, does that change the reality that a global system is still dominated by colonial-capitalism and its states and as such, the ongoing challenge remains the same? Hall says these new constructed ethnicities are part of something exciting and new. Non-migrant youth cultures in this period were not anything especially new, they were still explicitly tied to radical anti-colonial struggles especially those in Africa, the Caribbean and USA.

A non-white youth from a migrant background can often see in their own non-white anti-colonial heritage and ancestry something that directly informs who they are and how they act. Colonised migrants' backgrounds aren't necessarily a conservative drag on the youth. Instead of seeing a liberating radicalism in migrant heritage, what is often more promoted is that transformation into some kind of western-based thing is more dynamic, trendy and pioneering than re-formations in cultural mass expressions of contemporaneous anti-colonial realities of non-white youth in the British colonial centre.

One of filmmaker Gurinder Chaudhary's first projects was a programme backed by Third World Reels for Channel 4 broadcasted in 1989 called *"I'm British, But..."* which platforms a series of South Asian young people in different British cities and British-occupied Ireland/Belfast. The narrative of the programme is that they consider themselves 'British' and explore that in relation to racist exclusion and discrimination.

MUSLIM UNITY

With struggles for liberation still ongoing around the world, the late **Imam Cassiem** provides some context for Islamic activism within all of them.



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South Asian youth music and culture which had fusion elements with Hip-Hop and Reggae was showcased on the programme as well. As stated earlier, the erasure of Ireland is apparent in this work. One wouldn't go to the heart of occupied Palestine and not mention the situation and struggle of the Palestinians, so why does this happen to Ireland and the Irish?

Putting this aside, like Gilroy and Hall, Chadha similarly tends to identify first and second generation colonised youth in Britain as naturally leaning towards something embedded in a 'Britishness', and that this Britishness can be reformed to be inclusive and hence the creation of 'Black British' and 'Asian British / British Asian'. Once again, the very real historical and contemporary connections and relationship to a growing violent British racist and colonial state are erased and instead what is constructed is a special place for non-whites that is somehow positively defining a new Britishness based on the island of Britain but stripped of its history of oppression and resistance to it. Chadha further developed these themes in her popularly received films *Bhaji on the Beach* and *Bend it Like Beckham*. Not surprisingly, she received the Order of the British Empire from the British Queen in 2006 for her work in film.

Chadha grew up in a significant colonised community in Britain: Southall in west London. Since the 1960s this hitherto conservative white English area transformed into one dominated by migrants from the Indian side of Punjab (a border that the British imposed in 1947). Also, large communities of Pakistanis, other Indians and Afghans arrived and since the late 1980s, a considerable Somali community. Asian grassroots youth resistance in the 1970s and 1980s, to racist attacks and police in Southall was conducted by those who did not consider themselves to be and did not want to be English and British, and as such had no time for British structures and authorities. However, the British project also successfully defanged the radicalism of the youth from the early 1980s and as with other communities, the poten-

tials of anti-colonial struggle of the youth ever since has been sabotaged and scuppered by the British collaborator class.

The 'Southall Youth Movement' claimed to represent a new generation of radical youth in Southall, but they were by 1981 doing what they criticised the elders for, for example in the IWA UK (a pro-Labour Party faction of the IWA, whereas IWAGB's are generally not supportive of the Labour Party): taking British funding and positions to enrich themselves and their careers, and in so doing failing the community.

Whereas Malcolm X and George Jackson talk of a murderous racist system, some of these activists instead talks of a 'mature democracy' in Britain (Grover, 'Palestine Action is part of Britain's proud history of protest. Proscribing it is an assault on democracy', 29 June 2025, *The Guardian*). This concept infers that democracy has simply become diminished, giving the impression that there is some hope in parliament standing up' to the home secretary. Meanwhile Malcolm X reminds us that we are 'victims of democracy, nothing but disguised hypocrisy.' The colonial collaborator class versus the anti-colonial militant. The American and British versus the Mau Mau and George Jackson. This type of framing actually throws a light as to how the potential of an anti-colonial resurgence around Gaza and Palestine since October 2023 has failed and instead diverted us into dead-end British structures and processes.

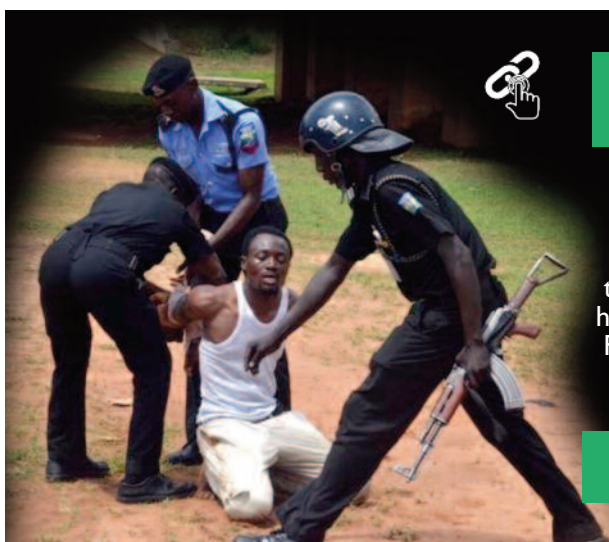
*Working inna de factories
Sometimes sweeping de floor
Unsung heroines an heroes
Yes they open de door
They came a long time ago
But now it seems we've arrived
(Asian Dub Foundation in New Way New Life, 2000)*

Not so long before sweeping floors in Britain, our grandparents were being genocided in the colonies. No justice there, except Udhham Singh's small but profound contribution. So where had we arrived in 2000

after all the death and injury of being colonised, and the ongoing humiliations of serving Britain in extremely menial jobs because the 'whites' don't want to do them? Did we just forget about the continuing supply of humans from the 'third world' into Britain to continue the colonial wage-slave class, what about their conditions and their rights as they continue to be oppressed by Britain and Britishness as they are targeted as 'criminals' arriving on 'small boats' and 'migrant hotel' residents soon to be thrown into concentration camps on army bases? When exactly on the timeline did we 'arrive' at some good place?

The only door that seems to keep opening are the vaults of racism and colonialism. And to remind everyone vengeance was visited on colonial Britain and Western domination in the early 2000s with the Second Intifada, the rise of open anti-colonial radical Chavez in 1999, the end of the British project that was Israel's occupation of Lebanon. But then the British wars on Afghanistan, Iraq, Sierra Leone, arrived along with all the racism necessary to deliver all this globally and in Britain itself. Colonised Muslim youth rose up against the rising far-right in the summer of 2001 in Bradford, Burnley and Oldham. All the while in this new Eldorado of Britishness, Stephen Lawrence's killers were still being protected by Britain and the quest for justice was frustrated by those who pushed British structures over justice. In the early 2000s, the British state gave up on its moment of 'multiculturalism' of the 1980s into 1990s, but it was this project of British multiculturalism that laid the basis of the divisions and collapse of the anti-racist capacity of non-white communities in the late 1990s and 2000s.

By the 2000s African, Caribbean and Asian youth were still running and enjoying Pirate Radios, we were still Junglists pushing into the new Grime movement, but at the political level we were allowing ourselves to be divided along anti-Asian and anti-Muslim lines. We failed to unite with the Muslims under attack. We failed to stop the infiltration of white, British and English cul-



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tural power into our music and cultures, but culturally we were still relatively united and that unity saw its last hurrah in the graphic and spontaneous anti-colonial Uprising of August 2011 whose soundtracks were the music and cultures that we the grassroots made together. But the divisions between Black and Asian youth were a direct result of a long and successful British colonial state policy that increased the colonial sell-out class that was designed to deliver our failures and divisions. Because of these factors the grassroots youth have not been able to develop their united interests in a struggle against growing British racism since the 1980s.

Conclusion: Full Spectrum British Resurgence.

By 2000 in *Frontlines and Backyards* Stuart Hall says:

"Afro-Caribbeans and Asians were treated by the dominant society as so much alike that they could be subsumed and mobilized under a single political category. But today that is no longer the case. Today we have to recognize the complex internal cultural segmentation, the internal frontlines which cut through so-called Black British identity. And perhaps where these internal divisions are most acutely registered, where these lineaments of change are explored most vigorously concerns young people and their cultures." (p136, in *Black British Culture and Society*, Ed Kwesi Owusu, 2000)

As the years and decades have moved-on from Malcolm X and Walter Rodney, and the resultant continuous victories of British racism and colonialism, we find ourselves in the violent stark form of exactly that. Caribbean, African, Asian and all non-white people are increasingly attacked every day by racists and the racist state. Rather than what Hall is arguing that somehow the experience of Afro-Caribbeans and Asian youth is not one that unites them, we are clearly seeing a British racist offensive that is demanding

more confidently the expulsion of entire non-white communities and as such *'Afro-Caribbeans and Asians are being treated by the dominant society as so much alike.'* Although there is a commonality of experience of non-white youth under the growing intensity of this new British racist offensive, we are not seeing any counter response at the grassroots because of what this piece is trying to explore: the project of Britishness as the great racist colonial project against all non-white colonised people.

The very reason we have reached such a vulnerable place is down to how the British colonial project refines itself through co-optation and recruitment through the frameworks of an apparently flexible and 'diverse' Britishness that has been exactly designed to produce a new vicious violent racist surge. The effectiveness of British racism is that it is able to achieve its aims from the deployment of a colonial political class that appears to be liberal and left and 'anti-racist'.

As has been argued in the context of the Americas there is a diversity of radical and revolutionary anti-colonial voices and frameworks to draw upon. In the context of Britain there are hardly any. But anti-colonialism is anti-colonialism and it's not a great challenge to appreciate James Connolly, Frantz Fanon and George Jackson to understand the British context. To attempt to push an anti-colonialism against the British state in Britain means contending with a seemingly endless supply of people on the left who push English and British nationalism.

Left-wing MP Zarah Sultanah dons the England football top and in so doing tries to repackage a leading colonial cultural symbol and institution of Britain as something good for us and the non-white children and girls. Why not raise an anti-racist symbol and cultural movement instead of an English nationalist one? England football tops and St Georges Cross' are literally the uniform of those attacking, abusing and raping women in racist attacks currently. RMT Trade Union leader Eddie Dempsey is a campaigner for anti-immigration laws and supporter of Brexit, while another RMT leader

Mick Lynch was reported as saying *"English people should be allowed to be proud to be English in England"*. It doesn't matter what attempt at mitigating rhetoric and posturing one does after promoting a colonial Britishness and Englishness, as doing so only serves at best to confuse people into a sense of greater precarity and lack of self-confidence in the context of rising violent British racism.

The complex strategies of hegemony that the British state has employed and the connected and relatively less numbers of restless colonised peoples as compared to the USA, means that it is a lot more challenging to develop any consistent anti-racist and anti-colonial discourse in Britain let alone an actual struggle of communities. Cultures of resistance are eradicated and put in the colonial museum by means of two main British state-recruitment drives, 1) the invitation of millions of colonised people to the centre to run the society (security, retail, education, transport, health, care homes etc) for the British and the political culture of acceptance of the state and peddling illusions of reforms, and 2) the curation of a colonial class of 'reformist' collaborators who are promoted as the non-white community's saviour and hope. History has already exposed the problematic nature of this entire colonial infrastructure as we can now more accurately see its outcome in that the British state and its population are openly intensifying racist violence onto everyone. Will this growing British terror result in any development of anti-colonial solutions to the growing pressures in our communities? Or will the colonialist and his class of compradors ensure that we remain confused and divided at the feet of the insurgent lynch-mob Brit?

Sukant Chandan

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The Spiritual Malady of Arrogance

In this exclusive extract from his forthcoming book, *Islamic Metaphysics of Racism*, Imam Dawud Walid outlines how arrogance is part of the root cause of the exceptionalism inherent in what we term racism today.

Arrogance (*Kibr*) is the first spiritual malady that undergirds expressions of racism at the individual level, which then expresses itself at the societal level through racial or ethnic stratifications that can lead to structural racism in society. In fact, according to Shaykh Ahmadou Bamba (may Allah have mercy upon him), ‘arrogance is the most grievous of all the spiritual maladies.’ One proof of this view is the prophetic saying that *None will enter Paradise who has in their heart a morsel of arrogance.* *Kibr*, which begins in the spiritual heart, eventually expresses itself through outward arrogance (*takabbur*) in speech and actions. In the Qur’anic narrative, the first being to display arrogance – in which it could be stated was the original act of racism in creation – was Satan.

In the creation story of the human being, the Qur’an mentions the existence of creatures prior to the father of humankind, Adam (peace be upon him). Allah (mighty and sublime) states:

And remember when your Lord said to the angels, “Surely I am making a vicegerent in the earth.” They replied, “Will you make one in it that will make corruption and shed [different types of] blood while we glorify You with praise and extol Your holiness?” He said, “Surely I know what you do not know.”

He taught Adam the names of all things, then He presented them to the angels and said, “Tell Me the names of these, if what you say is true?”

They replied, “Glory be to You! We have no knowledge except what You have taught us. You are truly the All-Knowing, All-Wise.”

Allah said, “O Adam! Inform them of their names.” Then when Adam did,

Allah said, “Did I not tell you that I know the secrets of the heavens and the earth, and I know what you reveal and what you conceal?”

And [remember] when We said to the angels [and those present with them], “Prostrate before Adam,” so they all did except Iblis, who refused and acted arrogantly, and he became from among the unfaithful.’ (Qur’an, 2:30-34)

This narrative mentions three unique forms of creation – angels, Iblis, and Adam (peace be upon him), who is the progenitor of the human race.

The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ stated, describing the different constitutions of the three, that *‘the angels were created from light, the jinn were created from a mixture of fire, and Adam was created as has been described for you.’*

Allah (mighty and sublime) states regarding Iblis:

And remember when We said to the angels [and those present with them], “Prostrate before Adam,” so they all did except Iblis; he was from the jinn, so he rebelled against the command of His Lord. Will you, then, take him and his progeny as your guardians rather than Me although they are your open enemies? What an evil substitute

for these wrongdoers.’ (Qur’an, 18:50)

Regarding the creation of Adam (peace be upon him), Allah (mighty and sublime) says: *‘And most certainly We created the human from clay of black mud moulded into shape.’ (Qur’an, 15:26)* Hence, it is presented in the Qur’an that prior to Adam (peace be upon him), who was fashioned from clay, there were distinct creatures other than humans, which were angels made from light and jinn made from fire.

Regarding Iblis, who was from the jinn race, Allah (mighty and sublime) mentions, after his refusal to follow his command, that he acted arrogantly. Iblis’ arrogance in action was also accompanied with conceitful speech: *‘He said, “I am better than him. You made me of fire, and You made him from clay.”’ (Qur’an, 38:76)*

Imam ‘Alī bin abī Ṭālib (may Allah ennoble his countenance) said, regarding Iblis’ statement: *‘He found pride in himself over Adam due to his creation, and showed prejudice towards him due to his origin. He is the leader of the tribalists and the predecessor of those who display arrogance. He set the foundations of tribalism/racism.’* Al-Ḥakīm al-tirmidhī (may Allah have mercy upon him) stated, regarding Iblis’ speech:

‘He invoked his material being, fire having light, and light having honour and might. Thus, he was saying “I have more right that he [Adam] prostrates to me.” He invoked the makeup of Adam that he was created from clay, clay is from dirt, dirt is

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from the earth, and saying “earth is my area that I walk upon and my homestead to own. thus, he should prostrate to me, and be under my feet, and submit to my desires.”

Therefore, Allah described him in the Revelation, and warned us to beware of his character. He said in s rah al-Baqarah, *ayah* 168, “*And do not follow the footsteps of the Satan. Surely, he is a clear enemy for you.*”

Within this framework, the primary attribute of Iblīs, the father of racism, is arrogance – starting with the false judgement that outward traits can make one inherently superior over others. Moreover, anyone who makes such arrogant assessments of themselves while looking down at others is in fact treading on a satanic path.

At a basic level, the attribute of arrogance afflicts the heart of the one carrying racist attitudes, manifesting through speech, such as name calling, racial slurs, or language that seeks to diminish others’ inherent dignity. An example of such racist arrogance is narrated about an event which took place in Khorasan, Persia, in which a *sharīf* used vile racist language towards a Black shaykh. The *sharīf* was an open committer of moral indecency who showed animosity towards the shaykh, who had been previously enslaved but was emancipated by his master due to his noble character and obedience to Allah (mighty and sublime). One day, the *sharīf* left home while openly intoxicated and witnessed people seeking blessings (*tabarruk*) from the shaykh. He scolded, berated and physically hit the shaykh, then said, ‘You black son of a heathen, black chap! My grandfather is the messenger of Allah ﷺ, your grandfather is a heathen, yet you are praised and elevated by the people while I am put down and belittled?! This should not be!’

The shaykh responded: ‘Yes, I am a son of a disbeliever just as you said, and I am black just as you stated. However, my heart has been illuminated by faith in Allah (Blessed and most high) and regardfulness, so the people see the whiteness of my heart over the blackness of my face. They love me while I am the son of a disbeliever, because

I left the path of my father and followed the way of your father, the messenger of Allah ﷺ. You left the path of the messenger of Allah ﷺ and followed the path of my father, so your heart has been blackened by corruption and recalcitrance, which has caused the people to see your blackened heart over your white cheeks. They loathe you because you are upon the path of my father, while they treat me like the sons of your father, because I am on the path of your father. Meanwhile, again, they treat you like the sons of my father, because you are on his path. Regarding your strikes, I pardon you for hitting me, though I necessitate the punishment for you being publicly drunk. I pardon your bad manners towards me for the sake of the sanctity of your grandfather.’

This story is connected to the meaning of Allah’s speech:

‘O humankind! Surely, We created you from a single male [Adam] and a single female [Eve] and made you into different nations and tribes in order that you know each other. Surely, the most honourable of you with Allah are you who have the most regardfulness. Surely, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware.’ (Qur’an, 49:13)

Slightly veiled aspects of racial arrogance also manifest when a person sees others as being beneath their racial or ethnic group, or considers that others are not authoritative nor fit to hold positions of prominence or religious authority. Such slights often take place without explicit slurs or physical confrontations. Such attitudes in Western societies, including among some Muslims, seems more pervasive in this current era rather than overt racial slurs. This phenomenon, however, is not a new one, and in fact existed among the earliest generations of Muslims; thus, such attitudes cannot exclusively be posited as by-products of European colonialism of Muslim lands.

Another instance of this type of racism in times of old was a slight which was made based upon the phenotypical appearance of one of the descendants of the Prophet ﷺ, known as Imam ‘Alī al-Riḍā (may Allah be pleased with him). While he temporarily

resided in the city of Nishapur in Persia, he entered a bathhouse across from his domicile. When the servant of the bathhouse went to fetch water for the Imam’s bath, a Persian man came into the bathroom and began barking orders to the Imam, assuming that he was a servant or a slave due to the blackness of his skin colour. The Persian man’s false perception was based on arrogance.

Also, a personal example of this relates to a meeting that I had in Detroit, Michigan, with a scholar who is a *sayyid*, and another scholar of Persian ancestry. The *sayyid* told the scholar as he entered the room I was in:

‘Brother Dawud is one of the most active brothers in the Muslim community. He is African American and from Detroit, but *mā shā’ Allāh*, he is intelligent, speaks Arabic and is eloquent.’ The Persian scholar gave a cringey smile in my direction, given that this comment not-so-subtly implied that African Americans from Detroit are not intelligent, nor do they speak proper English, these being common anti-Black stereotypical generalisations. I later spoke to the *sayyid* privately to get clarification of what he meant, before telling him that the comment which he considered to be complimentary was in fact an insult to Black people, especially to African American Muslims.

The arrogance of cultural supremacy fortifies societally normative racism, which imbeds itself into governmental institutions and policies. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ stated regarding arrogance which fuels racism, that it causes ‘*rejection of truth, scorn and abasement of other people.*’ The archetype of this mentioned in the Qur’an was the rule of Pharaoh, who was mostly likely a Black man, in ancient Egypt during the era of enslavement of the children of Israel. Allah (mighty and sublime) says: ‘*Surely, Pharaoh arrogantly elevated himself on the earth and divided its people into castes. A group among them he oppressed, slaughtering their young males while sparing their ladies. Surely, he was among those who spread corruption.*’ (Qur’an, 28:4)

Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabar (may Allah’s mercy

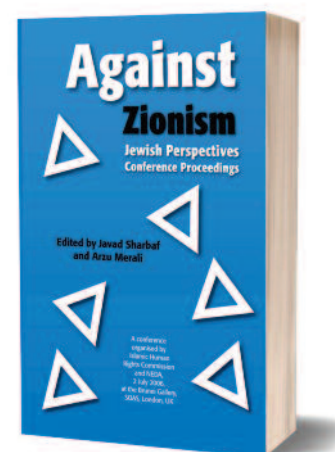
Against Zionism: Jewish Perspectives



The papers in this collection come from brave intellectuals, academics, activists, and Rabbis. All of them continue to challenge the injustices and outright oppression caused by racist, supremacist discourses. Their work remains pertinent at a time when advocacy for justice, especially in support of the Palestinian people,

their rights and their aspirations, is being demonised.

This volume is essential reading for those struggling for the dignity and equality of all peoples in making the arguments and connections needed to transform all cultures of hate into ones of mutual respect for diversity, and dignity for all.



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be upon him) said, regarding this *ayah*: ‘Surely, Pharaoh ruled by force in the land of Egypt and exuded arrogance. He elevated his people while oppressing others until they established the institution of enslavement [of Israelites].’

Shaykh ‘abd al-Qādir Jīlānī (may Allah have mercy upon him) reportedly stated that the children of Israel were expelled from their homes before they were burned down, then Pharaoh commanded Egyptian law enforcement (*al-sharjah*) to slaughter the young Israelite males. Hence, in this situation, the issue was a political leader who bred a culture of ethnic superiority into his people, which led to land dispossession, property damage, and enslavement of the children of Israel. This was an expression of the systematic racism that permeated every socioeconomic structure in ancient Egyptian society. More contemporary examples of such systematic racism include the establishment of the United States of America and apartheid South Africa, where state power, based in the false ideology of white supremacy, dispossessed indigenous people’s lands, exploited their labour as well as the labour of swathes of non-white migrants, and barred equal access to economic and political opportunities.

Before trying to remedy societal racism, every Muslim is spiritually required to purify his or her own inward state, which includes working on ridding their heart of arrogance. In particular, for the activist or community organiser, attempting to change the world without holding oneself or one’s own ethnic or racial group to the highest standards is an ethical dilemma. Allah (mighty and sublime) says: *Do you enjoin good conduct upon other people yet forget it for yourselves while you recite the scripture? Do you not have intelligence?* (Qur’an, 2:44)

It is narrated that Qat dah (may Allah be pleased with him), who was from the second generation of Muslims, stated about this *ayah* that it firstly relates to the children of Israel, who enjoined upon people to

obey and be regardful of Allah (mighty and sublime) and to have good conduct, yet their own actions in society differed from that ideal. Hence, the first and greatest struggle in “anti-racism” work is the inward struggle against arrogance per the prophetic statement that *“the most adversarial of your enemies is your own self which is in between your two sides.”* This is necessary for a person to not possess spiritual incongruency through calling others to not be arrogant against other racial and ethnic groups without that individual firstly holding themselves accountable.

Imam Fode Drame (may Allah preserve him) holds the opinion that the spiritually opposite trait of arrogance is repentance (*tawbah*), which consists of reversion (*in-ābah*) and self-surrender (*taslīm*). This first step consists of spiritual actualisation, in which a person realises that he or she has been arrogant or needs improvement in their inward state or outward actions. The Prophet ﷺ said, *‘Remorse is repentance’* – in relation to racism, this means that a person must firstly recognise that their heart has in fact carried self-aggrandisement, which requires change. To recognise such means that the spiritual heart cannot be completely dead or darkened, for a spiritual heart void of light shall feel virtually no remorse. In regards to this, the Prophet ﷺ said, *‘Beware! There is a component in the body if it becomes good, the whole body becomes good but if it gets spoilt, the whole body gets spoilt, and that is the heart.’* A non-repentant soul is an attribute of Iblīs as well.

After remorse, sincere repentance also requires seeking forgiveness from Allah (mighty and sublime), then firmly turning to Allah (mighty and sublime), which means turning away from that which was displeasing to him. Sincere repentance carries with it truthfulness in resolve, for truthfulness in resolve comes before truthfulness in actions and speech. Lack of resolve to truly repent leads to laziness in working to truly change one’s behaviours and speech, much less one’s worldview. There is more, however, that is

required in terms of repentance when harm has been afflicted upon people due to racial or ethnic discrimination fuelled by arrogance.

Shaykh Usman Dan Fodio (may Allah have mercy upon him) stated that the cure to arrogance is in two portions, which are the ‘knowledge-cure’ and the ‘action-cure.’ The shaykh stated: ‘the knowledge cure is to know and recognise yourself and to know and recognise your Lord.’ This relates to the concisely profound statement of Imam ‘Alī bin abī Ṭālib (may Allah ennoble his countenance) who stated, ‘Whoever knows himself, knows his Lord.’ Those who know that they have a beginning and end recognise that Allah (mighty and sublime) has no beginning nor end. Moreover, they recognise that they are dependent upon someone other than themselves to survive in this world, while knowing that he is free of any need. Allah (mighty and sublime) mentions this reality when he says:

‘Perish man! How thankless he is! Of what did He create him? Of a sperm-drop, He created him, and determined him, and then made the way easy for him. Then He makes him die, buries him, and then, when He wills, raises him.’ (Qur’an, 80:17-22)

Commenting on this reality in relation to its knowledge-cure of the arrogance of racism, Shaykh Ahmadou Bamba waxed:

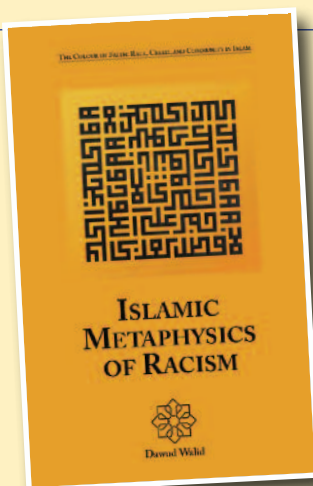
‘Certainly, you were before a despicable sperm-drop and afterwards a carrier of faeces. Then you will become a rotting corpse, odious, despicable looking and stinky. You are all the children of Adam regarding that, and it was from the dust and clay that you were created.’

All people come from smelly, sticky sperm which has no outward merit, and become skeletons with maggots feasting on their previous flesh – an inescapable beginning and ending, which are equally lacking in any sort of outward superiority. According to Shaykh Usman Dan Fodio, internalising this reality should suffice as a knowledge-cure for arrogance. Regarding the action-cure, Shaykh Usman Dan Fodio stated, ‘It is

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to humble yourself to people in a constrained unnatural manner until it becomes natural for you.'

The operational opposition of outward arrogance is humility (*tawāḍuʿ*). The Prophet ﷺ said, 'None humbles himself except that Allah (Mighty and Sublime) raises him up.' ʿĪsā (peace be upon him) reportedly preached, 'Glad tidings to the humble in the world, for they are the companions of lofty pulpits on the Day of Resurrection.' So after praying to Allah (mighty and sublime) for refuge from arrogance, the action-cure for racial arrogance is to be a servant to those who are looked down upon. Even if one begins offering such service (*khidmah*) with shades of paternalism, as if the served are being done a favour, this tendency should be struggled against through consistent service. In reality, those humbling themselves to others for the sake of Allah (mighty and sublime) to correct their inward selves are the ones receiving favour, far more so than those being served.

Such is the case of a white man I know who came from an upper-middle class background and converted to Islam in the 1970s. Understanding that he came from a societal context of anti-Blackness, and that his growing up in suburban America had caused him to absorb a white exceptionalist framework, he took on a black African as a shaykh whom he served, not just learning from him, but also serving him food and drink and carrying his bags. Even after having been Muslim for decades by the time his shaykh died, he was self-aware enough to take on another black shaykh, except that this second shaykh was young enough to be his son. This is an example of real self-awareness, as it is societally unusual for a white man of means to not only take on a black African shaykh, but to submit to take one as a spiritual guide who is twenty-six years his junior.

The attempt to make others – or an entire social class of people – humble, when they deem themselves to be superior, is a tremendously difficult task indeed. Given that long-lasting change comes from within,

the likelihood is slim that such humility can be imposed upon others. Allah (mighty and sublime) says: 'Let there be no compulsion in the dīn, for certainly right-guidance stands out clearly from error.' (Qur'an, 2:256) the word 'compulsion' (*ikrāh*) in this *ayah* has an etymological connection to the word 'to hate or loathe' (*kurh*). As it relates to this *ayah*, I heard Imam Warith Deen Mohammed (may Allah be pleased with him) state that it is a natural response for people in general to hate whatever they are being forced or compelled to do against their wills. This can be easily seen in American history, in the millions of whites who despised efforts to force racial integration in public schools and neighbourhoods. Some vehemently protested such efforts with hateful rhetoric and violence, while others more quietly resisted what was being forced upon them through 'white flight' or voting with their resentment at the ballot boxes. As was stated before, racial arrogance cannot simply be legislated and adjudicated away, as hearts do not change for the better through compulsion, even if something is being pushed for the greater good. Allah (mighty and sublime) says:

'I will turn away from My signs those who are arrogant upon the earth without right; and if they see every sign, they will not believe in it. And if they see the way of consciousness, they will not adopt it as a way; but if they see the way of error, they will adopt it as a way. That is because they have denied Our signs and they were heedless of them.' (Qur'an, 7:146)

The arrogance of Pharaoh and his hosts caused them not to repent, even when clear signs of their misguidance manifested before their eyes. Ultimately, they were doomed by their own hubris. In relation to this *ayah*, however, al-Ālūsī (may Allah have mercy upon him) stated that 'displaying arrogance upon the arrogant is charity,' meaning the appearance of swagger, not genuine inward arrogance. One of the meanings derived from this is that when there are people who have the gravitas or stature to put arro-

gant people in their place, they should do it, and this action is deemed meritorious as long as it is not done with arrogance in the hearts of those doing it. They should start off giving general counsel before escalating to stern admonition.

Within the action-cure for Muslims are the obligatory prayers at their appointed times, along with the supererogatory prayers in the last third of the night. Fāṭimah al-Zahrā' (may Allah be pleased with her) stated that Allah (mighty and sublime) made 'prayer (*ṣalāh*) as a purifier from arrogance.' The Prophet ﷺ said, 'The servant is closest incumbent to his Lord during prostration, so increase your supplications therein.' It is reported that 'Alī Zayn al-ʿAbidīn (may Allah be pleased with him) was heard supplicating in prayer while in prostration, 'I am your servant by annihilation in you, your weakling by annihilation in you, your beggar by annihilation in you, and your impoverished by annihilation in you.' Thus, those who sincerely reflect on the reality of their prayers, both obligatory and supererogatory, in which their face touches the earth – both their origin and their eventual ending place – become more humble before their lord.

Dawud Walid

is the author of various books and essays including, Futuwwah and Raising Males Into Sacred Manhood, Blackness and Islam, and Towards Sacred Activism as well as co-author of the books Centering Black Narrative: Black Muslim Nobles. He is currently the Executive Director of the Michigan chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR-MI), member of the Imams Council of Michigan, and advisory board member of Muslim Endorsement Council (MEC) which is a national endorsement and support organization for Islamic chaplaincy.

Islamic Metaphysics of Racism is published by Algorithm. Pre-order a copy here. Use the code LVDW at checkout for a 15% discount on this and other books by the author at the IHRC Bookshop online.

British Muslims' Expectations of the Government (BMEG)

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The Wrong Side of Britishness: Anti-Muslim Narratives in the UK

The demonisation of Muslims is now embedded in the various discourses of the nation, argues **Arzu Merali**. Originally written in 2017, this piece tackles the institutionalised narratives of hate – often dressed up as concerns for security or rights – and argues that countering them needs to be a top priority for government.

The end of the first workstream of the Countering Islamophobic Narratives project in the UK saw the publication of the ten key narratives of Islamophobia. These represented only the most prevalent and potent rather than the sum. The level of impact *vis-à-vis* the prevalence of a narrative within or as a precursor in media and political discourse to policy and law were the final determiners of what were the more impactful narratives.

Counterposed with existing research into experiences of Muslims in the UK, these narratives have several counterproductive and in some cases counter-intuitive (based on stated policy aims) outcomes.

The ten narratives identified were:

1. Muslims as disloyal and a threat to internal democracy
2. Islam as a counter to 'Britishness' / 'Fundamental British Values'
3. Muslims and 'extremism'
4. Muslims as a security threat (and therefore in need of regulation by way of exceptional law, policy and social praxis)
5. Muslim misogyny and perversion and the oppressed Muslim woman
6. Muslims as subhuman and unable to socialize to 'human' norms
7. Muslims as segregationists
8. Muslims in need of integration (assimilation)
9. Immigration and the demographic threat

10. Muslim spaces as incubators

It can be argued that narratives that fuel securitization policy and discourse and those that critique the potentiality and possibility of the Muslim subject in the public space as entryists etc., currently hold the most sway as anti-Muslim narratives. The impact of this is seen and felt by Muslims whose faith in the political process appears to have collapsed between the period of 2011 and 2014. This latter narrative has highlighted to many Muslims surveyed that they feel targeted by media and political institutions, which in their understanding contribute heavily towards a deteriorating climate of fear, a rise in support for far-right groups and a rise of anti-Muslim racism *per se*. As a result they feel pressured to modify their behavior and in some instances feel that this is the deliberate goal of government and the political classes. This latter feeling is something more evident in 2014 than it was in 2010, when the operation of institutional (and what was understood to be often ignorant) reproduction of stereotypes by the media was seen to be the primary cause of an anti-Muslim culture.

Further reported outcomes relate to behavior modification as a result of negative experiences. This type of behavior change effectively reduced or erased Muslim visibility, as individuals, but also as a community of confession, or as individual actors or groupings in political and civil society are

nas. The political pressures are seen as a way to socially engineer the acceptance of a depoliticized and secular 'Islam' amongst Muslims in the UK. This creates a perception backed up by the prevalence of policy and the narratives which have underpinned much of it that this is the expectation from the state for Muslims to hide their beliefs and views.

Arranged in order of impact the narratives can be subsumed under the four most powerful and fall as follows:

- **Muslims as a security threat (and therefore in need of regulation by way of exceptional law, policy and social praxis)**

Whilst the idea of Muslims as 'extremist' is of relevance to these narratives, it is inferred in all the above. Of similar significance is the trope of **Muslim misogyny and perversion and the oppressed Muslim woman**. This carries with it now the subtext of violence, having been attached to the idea of male radicalization both by dint of raising radicalized sons as a result of their inability to communicate with them (e.g. Cameron, 2016), and by being themselves beacons of radicalization and cause of social unrest (e.g. Turner, 2013).

Whilst the narrative of Muslims as **segregationists** is connected to Muslims failing or not wanting to integrate, **the failure to integrate narrative** has moved beyond the idea of Muslims as living separate lives.

Counter-Islamophobia Toolkit (CIK)

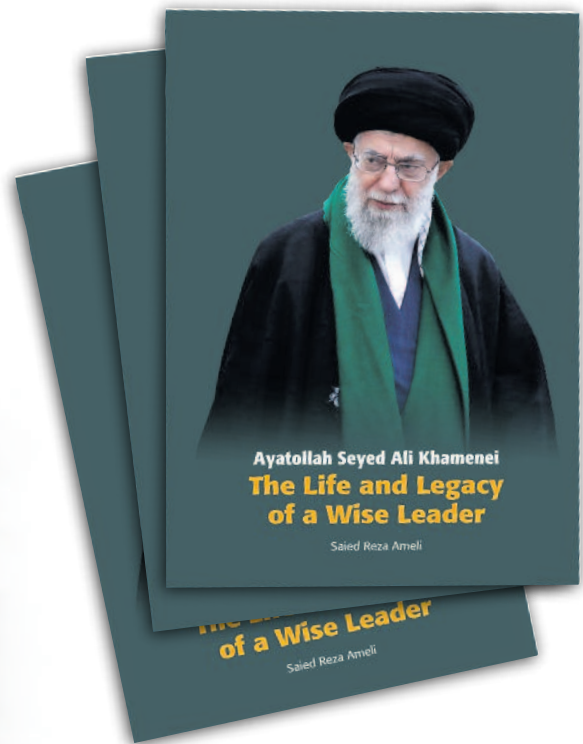
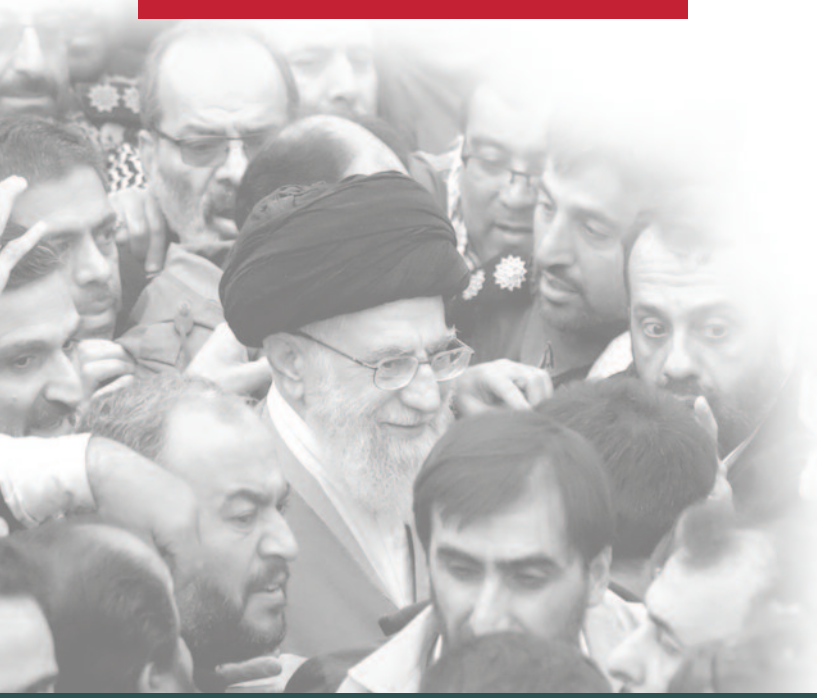
This project has produced documentation targeted at policy makers, lawmakers, academics and activists in order to tackle Islamophobia.

IHRC alongside 5 academic partners across Europe was part of the Counter-Islamophobia Toolkit team that looked at narratives and counternarratives to Islamophobia in 8 European countries: the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Belgium, Portugal, Czech Republic, Hungary and Greece.



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New Publication



Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei **The Life and Legacy** **of a Wise Leader**

“AYATOLLAH SEYED ALI KHAMENEI: LIFE AND LEGACY OF A WISE LEADER” by Professor **Saied Reza Ameli** offers a rare and incisive portrait of one of the most influential figures in contemporary global politics and Islamic thought. In 144 pages, this volume distils the profound intellectual architecture and enduring legacy of Iran’s Supreme Leader, presenting an account that is both scholarly and accessible.

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justice, spiritual resistance, popular governance, and civilisational renewal.

At a time of escalating geopolitical tensions and regional upheaval, this biography emerges as an essential lens through which to understand Iran’s internal cohesion and its assertive posture on the global stage. The book explores not only the moral and theological foundations of Khamenei’s leadership but also his commitment to scientific advancement, economic resilience, and cultural sovereignty. This is a narrative of leadership with moral clarity, civilisational ambition, and unwavering purpose.

For scholars, policymakers, and those intrigued by contemporary Islamic thought, this book offers a compelling and necessary contribution. It is a testament to leadership anchored in values, and to a vision that dares to challenge the prevailing order.

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The narrative that has gained more currency is that of **'entryism'** and the idea that Muslims trying to integrate or to have positions in society or mobilize on social issues is a form of threat.

Suspicion and denigration of **Muslims spaces** is framed (regardless of the space, be it a mosque, school or the practice of veiling) as inherently threatening and **in need of regulatory law, praxis and discourse**. The idea of **segregationism**, based on the idea of Muslims spaces crosses over here with the overarching narrative of the 'need for Muslims to integrate'.

• Disloyalty and the threat to internal democracy

This, and the other narratives also feed into the narrative of Muslims as the **vanguards of multiculturalism**, are used as evidence of the failure of and indeed the lack of credibility of the multicultural settlement (as ultimately evidenced when David Cameron finally ended all claims of the state to foster such an ethos, declaring instead that it was time for a 'muscular liberalism' in 2011. Arguably, the collapse of the idea of Muslims as citizens and the idea of the Britishness of the majority versus the culture(s) of immigrants (be they Muslim, Eastern European or other) has resulted in an unattainable Britishness, despite claims that the adoption of liberal mores is all that is needed for victimized ethnic and / or religious groups to end their victimization.

The rise of the obsession regarding **entryism** highlights the extent to which the Muslim ability to project themselves into the future has taken hold, whereby Muslim aspirations based on pre-existing praxis amongst the majority is seen, not as (deferential) emulation and evidence of integration but as something other, by virtue of its Muslimness.

Right-wing commentariat claims during the Brexit campaign echoed those of e.g.

Murray in 2003 and 2014 about the Muslim **demographic time bomb**, with the possible accession of Turkey to the EU highlighted as a threat to the UK.

• Islam as a counter to 'Britishness' / 'Fundamental British Values'

The idea that Muslims are **subhuman** and unable to **socialize to 'human' norms** has gained currency within civil society and caused a schism in programs to combat Islamophobia by accepting the premise that (if) some Muslim practices are beyond the pale, there must be a form of rejection of such practices and beliefs on the part of Muslims before a recognition of and redress for Islamophobia can come about. Thus the expectations of Muslims from the government is beset with a **conditionality** in a way no other citizen, be they from a minoritized community or the majority community is required to hold.

• Muslims in need of integration (assimilation)

Whilst the **separatist / segregationist narrative** still exists (an crosses over with the overarching narrative of security), it has more significance as a trope in far-right mobilization where the idea of physical segregation in terms of veiling, Muslim spaces (i.e. mosques, schools etc.) is deemed aberrant and in need of redress if necessary as a result of mobilization of the majority to attack those expressions of separateness. This can be evidenced in the rise of Whilst the majority of hate crimes are usually perpetrated by individuals with no group affiliations, there has clearly been a rise in far-right mobilizations against such spaces. This includes marches through supposedly Muslim majority areas e.g. various English Defence League marches in Luton; mosque invasions by Britain First particularly in 2014; continued attacks on Muslim women

who wear clothing identified as Muslim, including but not solely face veils and headscarves.

These four narratives hold up the basis for all anti-terrorism laws, regardless of efficacy. The above narratives not only herald expulsion of the Muslim as citizen and equal subject before the law is but are foundational to the rise in the notion of what it means to be 'British'. This idea of Britishness whilst finding violent outlet in far-right mobilizations at street levels is established as part of mainstream policy-speak which leaves those constructed Muslim as intrinsically on the wrong side of this identity with no ability to cross over. Such determination of national identities constructed by virtue of exclusion are in many ways a contradiction of democratic values based on equality and difference. There is an urgent need for policy makers and institutions to acknowledge this contradiction and seek both measures that immediately mitigate the negative impacts of these narratives, and work on long term policy and strategy that both project and lead on counter-narratives to Islamophobia. The impact of measures that otherwise Muslims is not simply a rights issue for Muslims individually or a 'minority rights' issue for Muslims as (a) community/ies. This level of subalternization strikes at the heart of what it means to be democracy. The deficit caused by structural racisms, whether Islamophobia or any other form, undermines the very egalitarian claims that form the basis of democratic identity and praxis.

Arzu Merali

was the Head of Research at Islamic Human Rights Commission when this piece was originally written. IHRC was a senior partner on the Countering Islamophobic Narratives project alongside five European universities. Read about the [full project here](#) (including links to work on 8 European countries), and the UK section of the [project here](#).

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