

BOOK REVIEWS

Raffaello Pantucci, “*We love death as you love life.*” *Britain’s suburban terrorists.* Hurst & Co, London 2015, p. 377

The activity of Muslim radicals based in UK has been considered as a grave threat to the security not only of Great Britain but other European countries as well. The term “Londonistan” was coined almost two decades ago by the French security services to describe the growing importance of British Islamism. At least by July 2005 Muslim radicals had an opportunity to act pretty freely on British soil, where they managed to establish their networks and widen their influence on the Muslim *ummah* in Europe. As Raff Pantucci claims: “This book aims to understand the extremists’ narrative and its history in the United Kingdom, and peel away some of the complexity around the issue of ‘radicalisation’ by telling the story of Britain’s suburban mujahedeen” (3). It must be said that he keeps his promise throughout his book – it is an important and thorough contribution to the subject – a must read for all interested in the processes of Islamic ‘radicalization’ in Britain and beyond. Though Pantucci has extensive knowledge of the ongoing discussion on ‘theoretical’ aspects of ‘radicalization’, he rightly chooses to focus his attention on historical and demographical backgrounds of UK-based Islamists and to present concrete cases of numerous ‘activists’ forming this violent social movement. Chapter 1 and 2 show the history of Muslim communities in Great Britain and their socialization: Pantucci describes different ‘waves’ of Muslim migration to the UK and the early developments of various Islamic groups and organizations there. In chapter 3 he starts with the detailed description of the ‘Rushdie affair’ as a focal point in the development of Muslim radicals activity in Britain and explains the importance of the war in Bosnia and its impact on global Muslim identity. In this chapter the reader follows the activity of

Hizb ut-Tahrir and Omar Bakri Mohammed, *Supporters of Sharia* and Abu Hamza al-Masri – two prominent figures and the leaders of two most widely known radical Muslim organizations in the UK in the 90s. In the next, 4 chapter, Pantucci discusses the role of Abu Qatada and Abdullah el-Faisal and their influence on Muslim radical circles in UK. In this chapter the reader can trace the links between British ‘suburban mujahedeen’ and people and groups close to 9/11 terrorist attack plotters. In chapter 5, he meticulously presents developments leading to July 7 and 21 terrorists attacks in London – most notably the activity of Omar Khayam and *Operation Crevice*, the activity of Dhiren Barot and *Operation Rhyme*, the activity of Mohammed Siddiq Khan and the ‘7/7’ cell, ending this crucial part with the *Operation Overt*. The last, 6 chapter deals with the next generation of British jihadi fighters, though does not include the most recent ones influenced by ISIS/IS. For sure, every book must end at some point, and the only weakness of this important contribution to the difficult task of understanding British Muslim radicals is that Pantucci does not tell us much about most recent events. Particularly, on the impact of the recently established Islamic State on groups of British Muslim radicals. In *Conclusions* we get the analysis of the influence of Anwar al-Awlaki, though not ISIS/IS and their spin-doctors of death. Perhaps this is going to be a proper subject of his next book?

In any case, *Britain’s Suburban Terrorists* is a concise but at the same time profound and persuasive insight into the world of modern Western jihad, providing important clues on the evolution of this militant global social movement to the interested public. Good job, Raff, tell us more soon ...

Ryszard M. Machnikowski