



BRITISH MUSLIMS: SECTARIAN MOVEMENTS

This guide provides an overview of British Muslim sectarian movements and networks.



“ It is important to distinguish between Islam and Islamism. The former refers to the global religion in all its unity and diversity, and the latter to what is often referred to as ‘political Islam’. ”

KEY POINTS

- In the UK today, a large number of Islamic movements and networks are represented, most with their origins in either South Asia or the Middle East.
- In the initial stages of community development, Muslims in Britain made little reference to different schools of thought or Islamic traditions. Once communities were able to finance and support more than one mosque, traditional divisions began to have an influence.
- Eighty-five per cent of British Muslims are Sunni; 15 per cent are Shi'a.
- There is a difference between Islam and Islamism, the former referring to the global religion as a whole in all its unity and diversity, and the latter to 'political Islam'. In the UK, the terms 'Islamism' and 'Islamist' are generally of the revivalist Islamic movements, *Jama'at-i Islami* and the Muslim Brotherhood.
- South Asian reform movements include the Deobandis, Tablighi Jama'at, the Barelwis, and Jama'at-i Islami.
- The chief Middle Eastern influences on Islam in Britain have been the *Salafi* beliefs and practices associated with the 18th century scholar, Ibn Abd Al-Wahhab, and the Muslim Brotherhood (founded in 1920s Egypt).
- Since the 1990s a number of Salafi groups with their roots in the Middle East have appealed to young British Muslims.
- Although Salafi movements share a commitment to reviving 'authentic' Islam, their views have differed on issues such as *khilafah* (an Islamic state or society based on *shari'ah*), *jihad*, and engagement with Government and wider society. Despite being considered extreme in their personal piety and desire to pursue a pure form of Islam, only a small minority have been violent.

- The promotion of violence is predominantly associated with nomadic jihadis, such as Abu Qatada, Abu Hamza, Omar Bakri Muhammad, Abdullah al-Faisal and Anjem Choudary, some of whom had served in conflicts abroad and all of whom used extremist rhetoric sanctioning violence against those they considered to be apostates.
- Neither al-Qaeda nor Islamic State were formally constituted in the UK, although their ideologies were disseminated in person by extremist preachers and activists, and online via websites, forums and social media. Despite the absence of a physical base, they were able to recruit and mobilise potential supporters.

A BRIEF HISTORY

In the 1960s, in the initial stages of community development, Muslims in Britain made little reference to different schools of thought or Islamic traditions.

What happened is that when we came to Britain, the people who were praying in the mosque, I remember, we were praying together. There were no Deobandis, no Barelwis, no Ahl-i Hadith, nobody. We were glad to have a mosque and to be able to pray. Whoever established it usually was going to do it his own way, in his own tradition... We didn't mind what it was as long as Islam was practised.

(Sher Azam, Bradford Council of Mosques, in Ron Geaves *Sectarian Influences within Islam in Britain*, p. 159)

Once communities were able to finance and support more than one mosque, however, traditional divisions began to have an impact. This was most noticeable in areas of South Asian Muslim settlement where Deobandis and Barelwis began to found separate community organisations and mosques. In the 1970s and 1980s the first generation of British Muslims in many ways sought to recreate the Islamic institutions of their homelands.

More recent Muslim migrants, from different ethnic, national and sectarian backgrounds, have started out by attending existing mosques near to their homes. However, as they have become more settled and organised, they too have opened their own mosques and community centres.

In the UK today, a large number of Islamic movements and networks are represented, most with their origins in either South Asia or the Middle East. This not only reflects the historical presence of Muslim migrants from different parts of the world, but – in the case of Middle Eastern reform movements particularly – of young Muslims' search for Islamic purity and authenticity.

Muslims prefer the term 'school of thought' (*maslak*) to 'sect'. Different schools of thought have emerged for social, political and theological reasons, including differing attitudes to the law or society, divergent views on Islamic or secular governance, and differences of opinion about Qur'anic interpretation, authority, what constitutes authentic Islam and how to be a good Muslim.

It is important to distinguish between Islam and Islamism. The former refers to the global religion in all its unity and diversity, and the latter to what is often referred to as 'political Islam'.

Adopted in North Africa in the 1970s to refer to political ideology and activity inspired by Islam, the term Islamism has been applied to a wide-range of very different groups, often pejoratively. In the UK, 'Islamism' and 'Islamist' have tended to be used of groups and individuals informed by two broad revivalist movements, Jama'at-i Islami and the Muslim Brotherhood (see below). Islamist groups range from non-violent to violent extremist movements as well as those closer to mainstream Sunni Islam.

One thing all Islamic sects or movements have in common – including those referred to here as Islamist – is their claim to be authentic and to represent correct Islamic practice and interpretation.

SUNNI AND SHI'A ISLAM IN THE UK

The most basic distinction within Islam – in the UK and beyond – is between Sunni and Shi'a. The majority (85 per cent) of British Muslims are Sunni, and their movements will be discussed below. The remainder are Shi'a, the majority being of Pakistani heritage, with others originating from Iran or Iraq. In 2017, around six per cent of the UK's mosques were run by and for Shi'as. Key organisations included the Al-Khoei Foundation, which represented Shi'a interests and ran several schools, the Institute for Ismaili Studies, the Khoja al-Mahdi Institute and the Hawza Illmiya, a further and higher education college. The renowned Iranian *marja* or religious authority, Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, had his European headquarters at the Imam Ali Foundation in north-west London.

A traditional marker in Sunni Islam has been the principal Islamic law school (*madhhab*) with which a group identifies. These schools emerged from the

work of four Islamic scholars, and are known by their names: the *Hanafi*, *Maliki*, *Hanbali* and *Shafi'i* schools. Those groups associated with Salafism, however, make direct reference to the sources of Islam (the Qur'an and *sunnah*), and by-pass the schools of law and their leaders.

Sunni movements in the UK can be categorised according to their origins in South Asia or the Middle East and, within that, their Islamic orientation (for example, whether they are Sufi, Salafi or Islamist). In the discussion that follows, reference will be made in each case to the type of movement, its origins, theological and political ideas, attitudes to wider society, presence and location in the UK, factions and divisions, and, where relevant, any history of violent extremism.

SOUTH ASIAN REFORM MOVEMENTS IN THE UK

THE DEOBANDI MOVEMENT

The Deobandi movement was a reformist but conservative Islamic movement founded in 19th century India as a response to British colonialism. It emphasised scholarship and education, and accepted the authority of the *ulama* (Islamic scholars), and their scholarly and legal traditions. Although it has engaged in polemical disputes with the Sufi Barelwi movement, it continues to perpetuate a *shari'ah*-centric Sufism that is often mistakenly conflated with the anti-Sufi doctrine of the Salafis.

The Deobandis are one of two major South Asian Islamic movements in the UK (the other being the Barelwis). They control the largest number of mosques, and have more than twenty seminaries (*darul-ulum*) for male students, two female-only boarding seminaries, and a number of schools,

including some for girls. Their major centre is the *darul-ulum* in Bury (founded in 1979), but their presence is also significant in other northern towns and in the city of Leicester. Although Deobandis in Britain come from Pakistani, Bangladeshi or Indian heritage communities, the leadership tends to be Gujarati. They are highly conservative in terms of their attitudes to women and dress, yet committed to engaging with the broad base of Muslims in the UK through well-educated leaders with a command of English.

Deobandis in the UK are largely a-political at the national level, though there is some involvement in local affairs. In Pakistan, there are historical links with the Taliban and with Kashmiri jihadi organisations, but Deobandi leaders have condemned al-Qaeda and Islamic State. There is no evidence of any association with violent extremism in the UK.

TABLIGHI JAMA'AT

Tablighi Jama'at is a pietistic revivalist movement known for its missionary work among cultural and lapsed Muslims. Founded by Muhammad Ilyas Kandhlawi in the 1920s in India, it was an historical offshoot of the Deobandi tradition, but is now a global network operating in more than one hundred countries. Its annual international gathering in Bangladesh attracts some five million followers. Its UK headquarters is in Dewsbury.

Tablighi Jama'at has a fairly close relationship with the Deobandi movement, making use of its many mosques as retreats and bases for missionary activity. Its followers offer their services as door-to-door preachers, for periods of up to 120 days, to spread a six-point programme: profession of the faith (*shahadah*), prayer (*salat*), remembrance of God (*dhikr*), respect for all Muslims, sincere intentions and the giving of time in missionary activity. The target group is other Muslims not those of other faiths or none, and its approach is spiritual. It has no interest in politics, and little engagement with government or wider civil society.

As a result of this distance, Tablighis have been reluctant to respond to accusations that they have been used as a cover by extremists, such as Jermaine Lindsay, Mohammed Siddique and others involved

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In the case of both the Deobandi and Tablighi movements, the focus on isolationism and anti-western rhetoric has set them at odds with a government agenda of community cohesion.

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in terrorist plots in the 2000s. The public concern has not been that the movement promotes violent extremism, but that it may have been susceptible to infiltration by extremists looking for new recruits or a cover for international travel.

Tablighi Jama'at's campaign to build a new mosque adjacent to the Olympic stadium in east London, dubbed the 'mega mosque', attracted a great deal of negative media attention, and its plans eventually fell through in 2010. In the case of both the Deobandi and Tablighi movements, the focus on isolationism and anti-western rhetoric has set them at odds with a government agenda of community cohesion.

THE BARELWI MOVEMENT

The Barelwi movement, sometimes known as *Ahl al-Sunnat wa-al-Jama'at*, is a reform movement which emerged in India in the 19th century. It can be distinguished from the Deobandi movement by its teachings about Muhammad (who is held to be blessed with superhuman qualities and characteristics), the role it ascribes to Sufi teachers and the devotional practices it endorses, including visiting tombs and shrines.

Throughout the history of South Asian migration to Britain, Barelwis have almost certainly been numerically dominant, though less centrally organised and vocal than many other Islamic movements. Although they are responsible for fewer mosques than the Deobandis, Barelwis control the majority of Sufi mosques (24 per cent of all the mosques in the UK). They have a strong local focus, as well as transnational connections determined by which *pir* or leader they revere or what order they belong to. Prominent locally-based Sufi leaders have included the Yemeni Shakyh al-Hakimi in South Shields and Cardiff, Pir Maroof Shah in Bradford, Sufi Abdullah Khan in Birmingham, and Pir Abdul Wahab Siddiqi in Coventry.

In addition to organising around esteemed spiritual leaders, the Barelwis have developed several organisations globally that operate in the UK,

including *Minhaj ul-Qur'an*, a network of mosques and Islamic centres, and *Dawat-e Islami*, a Pakistan-based missionary organisation with its UK centre in Dewsbury. Although it imitated many of the strategies and practices of Tablighi Jama'at, *Dawat-e Islami* exploited information technology, and developed its own television channel, Madani TV.

There are two further UK-based organisations in which British-born Barelwis have played a part, the *British Muslim Forum* (BMF), which was formed in 2005, and the *Sufi Muslim Council* (SMC), in 2006. The BMF was established to give a voice to Barelwis who felt unrepresented by the *Muslim Council of Britain* (see below). The SMC had some initial success in pitching itself as a representative organisation for the silent majority of Muslims in the UK.

OTHER SUFI INITIATIVES

In addition to the Barelwis, who are predominant among Sufis in the UK, a number of transnational Sufi Orders are represented, including the *Naqshbandiya*, *Qadiriya*, *Chishtiya*, *Alawiya* and *Tijaniya*, most of which transcend ethnic boundaries. One Naqshbandi spiritual leader in the UK, Nazim al-Haqqani, until his death in 2013, had a diverse UK following of Turks, South Asians, and white and Afro-Caribbean converts, whilst the Tijaniya Order, with its roots in West Africa, has had the support of Nigerian Muslim migrants.

Scholars have suggested that it was 'Muscular Sufism', popularised by charismatic American converts such as Hamza Yusuf and Nuh Keller and the British Abdal Hakim Murad, which offered a viable modern alternative to young seekers. These leaders and the trends they initiated were publicised and communicated online. Two successful platforms have been the *Radical Middle Way*, formed in 2005 with the aim of connecting young British Muslims with authentic Muslim scholarship, and *masud.co.uk*. Started in 1996 by Masud Khan, *masud.co.uk* foregrounds the work of the scholar, Abdal Hakim



Murad, and claims to be one of the leading online resources of traditional Islam.

The term 'traditional Islam', used increasingly by Sufi leaders, has been adopted to raise the profile of global Sufism, to challenge the dominance of Salafi and Islamist groups and preachers, and to bring together the wide range of Sufi and new Sunni perspectives into a more coherent and effective movement.

One organisation with its roots in Turkish Sufism but now with a global reach is the *Gülen Movement*. Established by Fethullah Gülen in the 1960s and influenced by the teachings of Said Nursi, it developed into a large and powerful Sufi *cemaat* (community) during a period of Turkish state secularism. Primarily through its schools, its influence has extended beyond Turkey to Central Asia and, through the Turkish diaspora, to Western Europe and the United States. Fethullah Gülen migrated to the US in 1999, and from there he has overseen a global movement combining secular and spiritual objectives, and incorporating schools, universities, media businesses,

and interfaith and intercultural initiatives. Referred to by the ruling political party in Turkey (the AKP) as a 'parallel structure', one which seeks to establish its own institutions and ultimately to take over the instruments of state, it is now considered a terrorist movement and is held responsible for the coup attempt in July 2016.

Less influential in the UK than in Germany and the Netherlands, the movement's following has been almost exclusively among those from Turkish heritage communities, via the Turkish-medium supplementary schools run by the Axis Educational Trust, though its impact has extended to others through the Dialogue Society, founded in 1999.

JAMA'AT-I ISLAMI

Jama'at-i Islami was originally a South Asian Islamist political party, founded in 1941 by Maulana Mawdudi (1903-79) who called for an Islamic theocratic state based on *Shari'ah* law which could defeat British colonialism and western ideology. It developed separate branches in Pakistan, India and Bangladesh.

The impact of Jama'at-i Islami in the UK has been social and ideological – through networking and publications – rather than institutional. It has no official presence in the UK, but has been particularly influential through its various ideological offshoots: the UK Islamic Mission, the Islamic Foundation, the Markfield Institute of Higher Education, the Islamic Society of Britain, Young Muslims UK (YM), and Dawatul Islam. It also influenced the Muslim Council of Britain.

Jama'at-i Islami-inspired organisations are revivalist in orientation, outward-looking and socially engaged. Unlike other movements of South Asian origin, their leaders have been professionals with a secular education who have been inspired by the ideas of Mawdudi, rather than religious scholars trained in Islamic jurisprudence.

The UK Islamic Mission was founded in 1962 by a small group based at the East London Mosque, and

has since been the principal face of Jama'at-i Islami in the UK, overseeing 50 mosques and Islamic schools. A key initiative was the establishment in 1984 of Young Muslims UK (YM), the aim of which was

to create an elite of second-generation British Muslims influenced by Jama'at-i Islami ideology who would provide Islamic leadership to Muslim young people

(Sadek Hamid, *British Muslim Young People*, p. 254).

The *Islamic Foundation* was established in 1973 by Jama'at-i Islami members who had previously studied in Britain and saw a need for western-style, English-medium Islamic education, publications and training. In 2000, the Foundation launched the *Markfield Institute of Higher Education* with the aim of providing reputable academic and professional education in Islamic studies, Muslim chaplaincy, and Islamic banking, finance and management.

The *Islamic Society of Britain* (founded in 1990), though established by Jama'at-i Islami activists, pursued a wider vision – of working across different schools of Islamic thought in Britain, and seeking



to engage them with non-Muslims. As well as introducing Islamic workshops and scouts' groups, in the mid-1990s it developed 'Islam Awareness Week' and took over the running of YM.

Dawatul Islam was founded in 1978. Its principal impact has been among Bangladeshi Muslims in east London who came into conflict with other Jama'at-i Islami sympathisers and went to court over the running of the East London Mosque. Since 1988, the mosque has been run by the breakaway movement, the *Islamic Forum of Europe*, which has also organised an all-male youth wing, the *Young Muslim Organisation*, and *Muslimaat UK*, for young women.

The *Muslim Council of Britain* was first founded in 1997, with encouragement from the UK Government, to provide national representation for British Muslims across a broad spectrum of Sunni groups. It included trustees and other leaders with backgrounds in Jama'at-i Islami and the Deobandi movement. As a result of several media exposés – including an investigative article in *The Observer* in 2005 linking it with Jama'at-i Islami, *shari'ah* law and

the establishment of an Islamic state in Pakistan – the Council's public role has been challenged.

AHL-I-HADITH

Ahl-e-Hadith is a South Asian form of Salafi Islam whose impact and presence in the UK has been eclipsed by Middle Eastern Salafism. Formally launched in north India in the 1850s, this movement drew its inspiration from a variety of earlier sources, the 16th century Indian Shah Wali and Yemeni Muhammad al-Shawkani, as well as Ibn Taymiyyah (14th century) and Ibn Abd Al-Wahhab (18th century). The founders of Ahl-i-Hadith held the view that Indian Muslims no longer followed the pure beliefs and practices of early Islam, and stressed the importance of going directly to the Qur'an and Hadith rather than through one of the established legal schools (*madhhab*).

The movement was first established in Britain in 1975 by Moulana Fazal Karim Asim. The *Green Lane Mosque* in Small Heath, Birmingham became its official headquarters. The mosque, one of a number of increasingly important centres of Salafism in the UK, became an independent charity in 2008.

MIDDLE EASTERN REFORM MOVEMENTS IN THE UK

Followers share with other Salafis the commitment to live according to the early traditions of Islam and to discard what they see as later cultural additions.

The primary Middle Eastern influences on Islam in Britain, particularly from the 1990s onwards, have been the *Salafi* beliefs and practices associated with the 18th century scholar, Ibn Abd Al-Wahhab (exported by the Islamic regime in Saudi Arabia and by various *Wahhabi* institutions and scholars), and the global impact of the Muslim Brotherhood (founded in 1920s Egypt). Middle Eastern Islamic reform movements have taken root more recently in the UK than those with their origins in South Asia,

owing both to migration patterns, and to second generation Muslims' feelings of marginalisation and search for authenticity.

According to Quintan Wiktorowicz, there are three broad categories within Salafism: pietism, political Salafism, and jihadi Salafism.

Pietistic Salafis who believe that salvation will come through faith, religious ritual and strict adherence to the principles laid down in the Qur'an and hadiths; political Salafis who believe that Muslims should also strive to establish Islamic states in Muslim-majority countries; and jihadi Salafis who advocate the

taking up of arms to overthrow un-Islamic regimes in Muslim lands.

(Innes Bowen, *Medina in Birmingham, Najaf in Brent: Inside British Islam*, p. 59)

These three impulses have been important in the development of Salafism in the UK, and in its internal debates and schisms.

Although Salafi groups share a commitment to reviving authentic Islam, their views have differed on issues such as *khilafah* (an Islamic state or society based on *shari'ah*), *jihād*, and engagement with Government and wider society.

Despite being considered extreme in their desire to pursue a pure form of Islam, only a small minority have been violent. The promotion of violence has been associated with nomadic jihadis, such as Abu Qatada, Abu Hamza, Omar Bakri Muhammad, Abdullah al-Faisal and Anjem Choudary, some of whom served in conflicts abroad and all of whom used extremist rhetoric sanctioning violence against those they considered to be apostates (*takfir*).

The principal Salafi movements and trends in the UK include JIMAS, a range of Salafi mosques and initiatives, Muslim Brotherhood-inspired organisations such as the *Muslim Association of Britain*, and radical jihadi groups such as *Hizb-ut-Tahrir* and *al-Muhajiroun*. The number of Salafi mosques in the UK has been increasing in the last decade, from around 30 in 2009 to 180 in 2017, nearly all of which have facilities for women. This rise is predicted to continue as younger leaders take over from their elders in more traditional Barelwi and Deobandi mosques.

JIMAS (JAM'İYAT IHYA' MINHĀJ AL-SUNNAH)

JIMAS was founded in 1984 by a group of British Muslim university students, led by Manwar Ali (also known as Abu Muntasir), and was responsible for popularising Salafism among young people. Like many other Western-educated Muslims at the time, the founders were eager to distinguish religion from the culture of their parents' generation, and were ready

to adopt a purer form of Islam based on the Qur'an and *sunnah*. Some went to study at the University of Madinah in Saudi Arabia, returning with skills in preaching Islam as well as in Arabic.

Salafi scholars from Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Kuwait, Egypt and the US, and veterans from the conflict in Afghanistan sought to gain the allegiance of members of JIMAS, plying their distinct theological interpretations of authentic Islam and, in some cases, their ideological commitment to military *jihād* and the caliphate. For a time, JIMAS sent fighters to Afghanistan, but in 1995 internal disagreements on *jihād* were exposed. Pietistic Salafi members took one side, and those who endorsed participation in *jihād* in Afghanistan, Bosnia and Kashmir as an obligation took the other.

This dispute reflected the growing division, between those pursuing a pietistic path and those favouring a political vision, which eventually led to schism. Several figures, including Abu Khadeejah and Dawud Burbank, left in 1996 to form the website, *Salafi Publications*; a group based at Brixton Mosque, and led by the convert Abdul Haqq Baker, also broke away. The more politically radical group, including Manwar Ali and Usama Hasan, remained in JIMAS.

But over the next decade even those who remained moved away from their earlier radical stance, and from Salafism too. JIMAS eventually transformed into a non-sectarian Muslim charitable organisation focusing on education, outreach and service.

SALAFI PUBLICATIONS AND BRIXTON MOSQUE

Salafi Publications was originally a publishing outlet for the dissemination of translations by Dawud Burbank and others of Arabic texts and lectures by prominent Salafi scholars and preachers. By 2016, in addition to a publishing house, it included a bookshop, primary and secondary schools, two mosques, and a network of thirteen associated bodies across the country, and around 11,500 affiliates. Following the model of Saudi Salafism, it has remained committed to the

purification of Islam from additions, distortions and extremism.

In Brixton in the late 1970s, a group of Black Muslims, including Afro-Caribbean converts and those from West Africa, began congregating and preaching to others. They opened a mosque in 1990, which initially accommodated Muslims of different traditions and backgrounds, but soon acquired a Salafi identity after the election of new leaders. It became known for its commitment to a socially conservative form of Salafism, and increasingly for its opposition to Jihadi groups. Several extremist preachers were banned or challenged, including Abdullah El Faisal, Abu Hamza Al-Masri and Anjem Choudary. Building on their informal counter-extremist activity, mosque leaders began a partnership with the Metropolitan Police's Muslim Contact Unit, including working together on the STREET youth project.

Ethnographic research by Anabel Inge has shown that some 2,000 Muslims now worship at Brixton Mosque, most of them under 30, with an equal number of men and women, a significant number of converts, an increasing Somali presence and a minority of European Salafis who have emigrated because of restrictions on the public practice of Islam in their home countries. Birmingham and London remain the major centres of Salafi activity. In addition to mosques, there are many small worship and study groups meeting in community centres, as well as Facebook groups, student societies and websites providing Salafi resources.

The Salafi movement in the UK remains strict on issues of personal piety, conservative on gender segregation, dress, education and family matters, and unswervingly literal on matters of doctrine, with the Qur'an and *sunnah* as the basis of decision making and lifestyle. In the context of Western liberal society, and even when compared to other Islamic groups, their beliefs and practices appear extreme. But there is nothing to suggest that pietistic Salafis in the UK support, condone or practice violence. On the contrary, the evidence suggests that they have

sought to counter it, by preaching and organising against violent jihadi speakers and those who seek to radicalise young Muslims.

THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD (IKHWAN AL-MUSLIMUN)

The Muslim Brotherhood is an Islamist movement, founded in Egypt in 1928 by Hasan al-Banna as an apolitical Islamic reform organisation. It advocated a return to the Qur'an and *sunnah*, and endorsed *shari'ah* as the basis for the development of an Islamic society that would challenge Western colonial domination in the region. As a result of persecution,

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it became increasingly revolutionary and ideological, taking its inspiration from the work of Sayyid Qutb (1906-66) (who was himself influenced by Maulana Mawdudi, the founder of Jama'at-i Islami).

From the 1930s, the Brotherhood began to establish itself in neighbouring countries. Its mix of Islamist political theology, anti-Western discourse, civil society activism and charitable work has had an appeal far beyond its original homeland, to the extent that it is now a fully transnational movement with branches in many countries and organisational connections in others. It is not formally constituted in the UK, but its influence has been substantial, with several organisations inspired by it or led by its members. Chief among these are the *Muslim Association of Britain*, the *Islamic Society of Britain* and the *Federation of Student Islamic Societies*.

HIZB-UT-TAHRIR

Although Hizb-ut-Tahrir took off in the UK in the 1990s, it was founded in Palestine in the 1950s and became a transnational movement appealing to Muslims to re-establish a pan-Islamic state or caliphate (*khilafah*). Originally a political party, it was not recognised in Palestine, and by 2007 had been banned in most countries of the Middle East and Central Asia. Despite this, it was able to get an informal foothold.

Following their expulsion from other countries, some Hizb-ut-Tahrir activists arrived in Britain in the 1980s, establishing a following among students through university Islamic societies, and among young professionals. It became known for its inflammatory magazines and leaflets, not only calling for the caliphate but stigmatising Jews, Hindus and homosexuals. Led for a decade by Omar Bakri Muhammad, it came to widespread public attention in 1994 following the Channel 4 documentary, *The Tottenham Ayatollah*. He left the group in 1996 to establish a more extreme group, *al-Muhajiroun*. Hizb-ut-Tahrir was threatened with a Government ban after the 7/7 bombings; in 2004 it was added to the National Union of Students' 'No Platform' Policy, for inciting hatred and supporting terrorism. Its response was to operate under a range of other names, including the Millennium Society and 1924 Society.

Although Hizb-ut-Tahrir's basic message has remained the same – that Islam offers an alternative political vision and solution to the failure of capitalism and democracy – its approach is less outspoken and more gradualist than in earlier decades, and it continues to stop short of violence.

AL-MUHAJIROUN (THE 'EMIGRANTS')

Although al-Muhajiroun was initially founded in the 1980s in Saudi Arabia, it was only established in the UK in 1996 following the resignation of Omar Bakri Muhammad from Hizb-ut-Tahrir. It expounded an extreme jihadi message and was at the violent end of the Salafi spectrum (but was not accepted as Salafi

by others). It expressed antagonistic views towards non-Muslims and those it saw as apostates, and encouraged followers to travel abroad to train and fight in conflicts. Omar Bakri was the movement's most important ideologue and his teachings brought together the Islamist vision of Hizb-ut-Tahrir with a Salafi-inspired religious theology. It differed from Hizb-ut-Tahrir in advocating for the imposition of *shari'ah* in Western countries as well as Muslim-majority ones, and in supporting violence to achieve its ends.

Al-Muhajiroun's principal approach to recruitment, especially among university students and recent graduates of South Asian descent, was to instil a sense of crisis and urgency, with activists portraying a Muslim community under threat and requiring immediate action from supporters. This was communicated externally through street activism, and followed up in more intimate study circles. Rather than being clandestine, al-Muhajiroun actively sought publicity and provoked outrage.

The group disbanded in 2004 ahead of an expected Government ban, and was eventually proscribed in 2010, under several different names: *The Saved Sect*, *Al Muhajiroun*, *Islam4UK*, *Call to Submission*, *Islamic Path*, *London School of Sharia*, *Muslims Against Crusades*, *Al Ghurabaa*, *Need4Khilafah*, the *Shariah Project*, and the *Islamic Dawah Association*. It is now illegal in the UK to belong, invite support, organise meetings, or wear clothing or display articles indicating support for any of these groups. Omar Bakri Muhammad left the UK for Lebanon in 2005 and was barred from returning. His followers proved adaptable in reconfiguring themselves to get around legal constraints, and in maintaining the network online. Veteran members, including Anjem Choudary (now imprisoned for supporting the Islamic State group), took on a greater role.

OTHER JIHADI INFLUENCES IN THE UK: AL-QAEDA AND ISLAMIC STATE

Neither al-Qaeda nor Islamic State were formally constituted in the UK. Rather, their ideologies were circulated in person by extremist preachers and foreign fighters, and online via websites, forums and social media.

Abu Hamza aligned himself with the Taliban and al-Qaeda; Omar Bakri described himself as the spokesman; and Abu Qatada became a point of contact for extremists linked to al-Qaeda. Also, with recruits coming into contact with members of al-Qaeda abroad, the message was repeatedly reiterated, that they should return home and carry out attacks there. The foiled 2004 truck bomb attack by the 'Crawley group' and the 7/7 attacks were among the results. Both revealed evidence of al-Qaeda communications, manuals, training camps and the adoption of their tactics and methods. The most vociferous protagonist for IS in the UK was Anjem Choudary. The now-banned movements associated with him were a key means by which the ideology of the Islamic State was articulated, as well as being an influence on many of those who chose to travel to Iraq and Syria for jihad.

Extremist jihadi movements have not needed to have a formal organisation or a physical base in the UK in order to share their ideologies, or to recruit and mobilise potential supporters.

ISLAMIC MOVEMENTS IN THE UK

According to Sadek Hamid, the UK's various Islamic movements and trends exhibit 'an internal logic and set of truth claims':

They essentially agree on the notion that Islam is a divinely revealed religion which provides meaning and guidance for life. They start to differ on the analysis of the causes of Muslim civilizational decline and interpretation of scriptural sources to correct this situation in the modern era.

(Sadek Hamid, *British Muslim Young People*, p. 258)



Increasingly, Islamic movements are concerned with teaching what they see as the correct principles and practices in ways that make sense for Muslims in Britain, and with finding ways to cope with the challenges of living in a non-Muslim society. Their analyses and methods differ according to their history, Islamic tradition, the nature of their membership and wider appeal, and their approach to society, politics and the West.

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