

People's Democratic Republic of Algeria

Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research

University of 08 Mai 1945 / Guelma

Faculty of Letters and Languages

Department of Letters and English Language

جامعة 08 ماي 1945 / قالمة

كلية الآداب واللغات

قسم الآداب و اللغة الانجليزية



***British Muslims' Contribution to the Anti-war Movement
(2001-2005)***

A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of Letters and English Language in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for the Master's Degree in Language and Culture.

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September 2021

Acknowledgments

“If I have seen further, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants”

Isaac Newton

First and foremost, I want to thank almighty God, the one who should be praised first, the one who gives us the strength, opportunity and knowledge to complete this research paper.

Without his blessing, this work would not have been achieved. Second, our great gratitude goes to our best teacher and supervisor Mr. Ali Zoui Mahfoud for his guidance, deep involvement, patience, help and his intellectual piece of advice, without forgetting his encouraging and precious words that pushed us forward when we felt tired and upset. I am lucky to have the best teacher ever.

Our thanks also go to the jury members for their precious time in reading, examining and evaluating our dissertation.

Dedication 1

First and foremost, I would like to thank God for enlightening me to conduct this work my mighty teacher and messenger, Mohammed (peace be upon him).

I dedicate this work also to my family members, especially to my darling parents whom I am forever grateful to, to my dear brothers; I would like to thank you for your love and support.

A special feeling of gratitude to my beloved husband for his unconditional support and constant love, to my sisters in law Imene and Nor, to my little angels Ouais, Taline, Rassil and Assil, without forgetting my partner Bouchra the one whom I have shared this academic journey.

A special appreciation to my respected supervisor Mr. Ali Zoui Mahfoud who has inspired me, my God bless you.

I dedicate this work to everyone who encouraged me when I lost hope and pushed me to believe in myself.

I dedicate this research to you all.

Si ssaid Roqiya

Dedication 2

First of all, I would to thank my god for helping me to achieve this dissertation, without God's blessings this work could not have been doable.

I dedicate this work to my beloved parents who surrounded me

With love, care, and patience during my whole life may Allah protect them. A special dedication goes to my lovely brothers Walid and Ramzi and to my unique sister Sara, I would like to thank you for all the good times we passed together, for all the food, joy, efforts and positive thoughts.

I would also like to dedicate this work to my best supervisor Mr. Ali Zoui Mahfoud, my special thanks go to my partner Miss Sissaid Roqiya for her kindness support and understanding.

Djebabla Bochra

Abstract

This study sheds light on the contribution of the British Muslim community in the anti-war movement that took place in Britain to oppose the wars on Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003. In the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, the British government became America's main partner in declaring «global war on terrorism". The new policies and measures taken to combat terrorism at the local and international levels put a lot of pressure on the Muslim community. When a coalition was formed by peace activists and other politicians from the left to oppose the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq later, Muslim leaders and organizations seized the opportunity to mobilize members of the British Muslim community to take a leading role in the effort to stop an unjust war against two Muslim-majority countries. While the role of Muslims in the campaign against the Afghanistan war was not much visible, their role in organizing marches and demonstrations against the invasion of Iraq was central. The participation of Muslims in the anti-war movement 2001-2005 has had some immense implications for their political activism and their overall standing in the British society.

ملخص

تلقي هذه الدراسة الضوء على مساهمة مسلمي بريطانيا في الحركة الاحتجاجية ضد القرار البريطاني في غزو أفغانستان سنة 2001 و العراق سنة 2003. في أعقاب هجمات الحادي عشر من سبتمبر سنة 2001 أصبحت بريطانيا الشريك الأساسي للولايات المتحدة الأمريكية في حربها المعلنة على الإرهاب. لقد ولدت السياسات و الإجراءات الجديدة للحكومة البريطانية في إطار مكافحة الإرهاب الكثير من الضغط على المجتمع الإسلامي في بريطانيا. عندما تم تشكيل ائتلاف من طرف نشطاء من اجل السلام وسياسيين من اليسار لمناهضة غزو أفغانستان و العراق، اغتتمت المنضمة الإسلامية وقادة الجالية المسلمة الفرصة لتعبئة أفراد الجالية من اجل لعب دور قيادي في ذلك المسعى لإيقاف حرب غير عادلة ضد دولتين مسلمتين. بينما لم يكن دور مسلمي بريطانيا في الحملة ضد الحرب على أفغانستان كبيراً، كان دورهم في تنظيم المسيرات والمظاهرات ضد الحرب على العراق محورياً. في المجمل كان لمشاركة مسلمي بريطانيا في الحركة الاحتجاجية ضد الحرب على أفغانستان و العراق (2001-2005) تداعيات كبيرة على نشاطهم السياسي و مكانتهم داخل المجتمع البريطاني

Sommaire

Cette étude met en lumière la contribution des musulmans britanniques au mouvement de protestation contre la décision britannique d'envahir l'Afghanistan en 2001 et en Irak en 2003. Au lendemain des attentats du 11 septembre 2001, la Grande-Bretagne est devenue le partenaire L'objectif principal des États-Unis d'Amérique dans leur guerre déclarée contre le terrorisme. De nouvelles politiques et procédures gouvernementales sont nées. Les forces britanniques dans la lutte contre le terrorisme ont mis beaucoup de pression sur la communauté musulmane en Grande-Bretagne. Un parti de militants pour la paix et d'hommes politiques de gauche pour s'opposer à l'invasion de l'Afghanistan et de l'Irak, a profité des organisations islamistes dirigeants de la communauté musulmane l'occasion de mobiliser les membres de la communauté pour qu'ils jouent un rôle de premier plan dans cette quête visant à mettre fin à la guerre injuste contre Deux pays musulmans. Alors que le rôle des musulmans britanniques dans la campagne contre la guerre en Afghanistan n'était pas significatif, leur rôle dans l'organisation Les marches et les manifestations contre la guerre en Irak sont centrales. En général, la participation des musulmans britanniques au mouvement a été Les manifestations contre la guerre en Afghanistan et en Irak (2001-2005) ont eu des répercussions importantes sur leur activité politique et leur position dans le pays. société britannique

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

APPG	All Party Parliamentary Group
BM	British Muslims
BMI	British Muslims Initiative
BNP	British National Party
CIA	Commonwealth Immigrants Act
CIA	Committee on Islamic Affairs
EDL	English Defence League
EU	European Union
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
MB	Muslims Brotherhood
MCB	Muslims Council of Britain
MP	Members of Parliament
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OEF	Operation Enduring Freedom
OIF	Operation Iraqi Freedom
OPEC	Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries
StWC	Stop the War Coalition
SWMN	Stop the War Muslims Network
SWP	Socialist Workers Party
UFPJ	United for Peace Justice
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations

UNSC	United Nation Security Coucil
USA	United State of America
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction
WWW	Win Without War

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Introduction

There are around four million Muslim inhabitants in Britain and around 15 percent of the population in the capital London are Muslim. In the space of few decades, this minority gained considerable visibility and attracted the attention of the media and the general public as well. However, this is not only the result of the population growth. Much of the attention given to the Muslim community in Britain since the wake of the new century has to do with the rise of radicalism and violent extremism often linked to Islam and Muslims which caused an immense rise of Islamophobia.

Islamophobia, or the fear or hate of Islam and Muslims, is not a new phenomenon. The aftermath of the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, and the immediate war on terrorism' caused an unprecedented rise in Islamophobic attacks against Muslims and has had a direct impact on their lives (Ansari 3).

The attacks of 9/11 in the United States and the subsequent "war on terror" changed many aspects of life in Britain, not only for Muslims but for the whole country. Security became a major concern and the social and political climate in the country changed completely compared to the period before the new threat of terrorism. The British government adopted new security measures and new policies and strategies aimed at fighting terrorism and preventing radicalization.

Many of the new measures and policies did not come in favor of the British Muslim community. In fact, Muslims felt the new policies targeted them and they became the direct victims of the British government anti-terror strategies. Muslims have been perceived as potential terrorists. Their religion has been demonized and they were blamed for actions they did not commit themselves.

In the immediate aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, the United States announced its plan to launch a global war on terrorism with the participation of its allies and friends. It was

revealed later that Britain would be America's main partner in its new war adventure. The new Anglo-American alliance started its war on terror by the decision to invade Afghanistan in October 2001.

Nevertheless, a section of the British society did not support the British government's decision to go to wars in Afghanistan in 2001 and later in Iraq in 2003. There were not convinced by the justification given by the US and British governments. The opposition to the wars in Britain soon developed into a huge social movement with the participation of many groups and organizations. British Muslims who were opposed to the war on terror in general as it targeted Muslims at home and abroad because both Afghanistan and Iraq are Muslim-majority countries, would play a role in the anti-war movement (2001-2005)

This dissertation sheds light on the British Muslim community and aims principally to investigate the role played by British Muslims in the efforts to stop the wars on Afghanistan and Iraq as part of the bigger anti-war movement which turned to be one of the biggest social movements in Britain.

The anti-war movement in Britain resulted in social and political tension what divided the country to proponents and opponents. The opposition of the left to the foreign wars was strong from the beginning. Muslims joined the movement and expressed readiness to make alliances with various groups who opposed the wars. The participation of Muslims in UK social and political life is notable. It gained them some experience in mobilizing the community.

No one can throw over the impact of the 9/11 events on British Muslims.

11th September reinforced hostility toward them. British Muslims who by the end come the realization that they should stand together and seek broader alliances with other British forces to defend their both political and social status. The alliance of the Muslim Association of Britain (MAB) with the Stop the War Coalition (STWC) was an example.

Thus, the aim of the present work is to examine the political position of the Muslim minority in country known as democratic nation. Following the terrorist attacks, a new way of discrimination appeared in Britain called “Islamophobia”; this dissertation puts the exploration of this phenomenon among its primary goals. The decision of Britain and the USA to engage in the war in Iraq adds pressure on the Muslim minority causing millions to take British streets to stand against the war.

This study also tries to investigate the relation between the three variables: the terrorist attacks, Iraq war and the anti-war movement. In particular, it analyzes Muslim’s participation in anti-war movement and assesses how far this act was influential to stop the war as well as investigate what factors contributed in these successive incidents.

This research will examine the issue of Muslim participation in the anti-war movement which is a social movement. Thus, it makes use of a qualitative method to go into issues of interest giving rich descriptions and explanation of the topic and explore nuances related to the problem at hand.

Data is collected from a wide range of studies done by variety of researchers who are interested in the subject. Descriptive and analytical approaches are both essential to proceed in the recent work in order to afford a clear understanding and interpretation of the data gathered.

As most research projects, the use of numerous materials related to the subject matter is required, and the need to combine primary and secondary sources in order to achieve the intended objectives are crucial. News articles, interviews related to the topic are considered as primary sources while books, articles are embedded under secondary sources.

The first chapter is devoted to the examination of British Muslims community and their standing in the British society. Starting from giving an overview of Islam and Muslims in the UK, moving to providing brief history about immigration and how Muslims settled in Great

Britain. Moreover, this chapter provides describes the historical and social conditions that contributes in shaping the British Muslim community. The chapter then, tackles the concept of Islamophobia and the role of Media in mobilizing public opinion and internalizing false images about Islam and Muslims.

Chapter two holds the following title: “The War on Terror and the State of British Muslims in the Aftermath of September 11th.” It goes with explaining the terrorist attack of 9/11 and its negative effect on British Muslims and how this latter transformed their life. From the attacks toward analyzing the response to these attacks: through describing the government actions and reactions to fight terror. The chapter explains as well how US Government engaged in the war against Iraq and Afghanistan to fight Al Qaeda.

Chapter three, moves a path away to investigate the contribution of British Muslims to the efforts to oppose the wars on Afghanistan and Iraq by shedding the light on the role played by the most active organizations such as Muslims Association of Britain, Just Peace, and Muslims Council of Britain in the anti-war movement and the Stop the war Coalition. It analyses and assesses the outcomes of the Muslim participation in the anti-war period at the social and political levels with a focus on the establishment of the Respect Party.

Chapter One: An Overview of British Muslims

During the last two decades, the British Muslim population attracted some attention and became a subject to continuous debate. This was partly the result of 9/11 and subsequent attacks linked to Muslim individuals and groups but also due to the fact that Islam becomes the second religion in Great Britain. The current chapter gives a general overview about the British Muslim population and its demographic profile. It further speaks about the history of immigration and the emergence of Islam in the UK in addition to the ethnic makeup of the British Muslim group.

1.1. British Muslims and their History of Immigration

The inquiry on religious affiliation for the first time in the 2001 Census of England and Wales was a surprising event and an achievement made possible because series effort by an alliance of faith groups including an important role played by Muslims. This 2001 Census offered for the first time official and detailed data on the Muslim population of Britain which allowed scholars and people interested in this population to have a better understanding of it.

Defining Muslims formally is not an easy task to do because of various reasons. For the case of British Muslims family background is generally believed to be the most relevant factor. According to Kettani Muslims are people who “Affirm Muhammad to be the last messenger of Allah and hold his teachings to be true, irrespective of the extent to which they know about his teachings or the extent to which they are able to live according to them” (2). Another scholar insisted on awareness of “ the differing factors (social, economic, cultural and generational) which may contribute to vary the application of ideas of Islam ... at both the individual and the collective level” (Nielsen 386). For research purposes, scholars often consider Muslim anyone who declares himself to be a Muslim.

Contrary to the common belief that Islam is a new arrival to the British Isles, there is proof that Islam was introduced to modern day Britain many centuries ago. It is true that its

influence remained marginal for many centuries and its presence started to be felt with the first waves of migrants from Muslim regions during the eighteenth century. This migration was much related to British colonialism.

However, Muslims had been present in Britain in ancient times, earlier in 18th century. There were small groups consisting of Muslim sailors and merchants from the Middle East, they settled in British ports after the opening of the Suez Canal (Iqbal 10). During the second half of the twentieth century, by the end of the Second World War, the immigration rate from Muslim regions started to increase due to the immigration from former British colonies of Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, Indians and Turks from 1950 to 1960. These immigrants came to fill the deficit and provide labor in industrial cities such as London and the Midlands.

This post-Second World War immigration allowed for the formation of small Muslim communities in Britain. These groups started increasing in number and many have been joined by other family members. It was mainly composed of South Asian Muslims from the Indian peninsula who formed the majority of British Muslims at that time.

Immigrants at that time were protected by the Commonwealth Immigrants Act of 1962, which managed workers and controlled their movements, nevertheless; it supported family's unification. It was a positive act that allowed for more waves of immigration. With the beginning of the 1990s; there was a large wave of Muslim immigrants from East Europe who escaped from their homeland looking for better life, in addition to asylum seekers from Iraq, Somalia, Afghanistan and Turkey (Peach 632).

1.2. A Demographic Profile

There is an extended record of studies on Muslims inside the United Kingdom. Researchers have differentiated Muslim groups on the premise of ethnic origin, regions of

settlement, and sectarian identity. Research on British Muslims has become vital in current decades.

Today, Muslim's shape 4.8% of the populace in England and Wales. The population has grown from one fifty-five million (1.55%) in 2001 to two seventy-one million (2.71%) in 2011. There are 77,000 Muslims in Scotland and 3,800 in Northern Ireland. Although Muslims still make a small minority in the British society, their population is considered significant as it is greater than all different non-Christian religion organizations put together. Around half of this Muslim population, (47%) are born in the UK (Ali 16).

The noteworthy impact of record gathering on Muslims changed to that, for the first time, it turned out to be an appraisal of the size of this population. Prior to the 2001 census, conjectures had depended on proxy markers like place of birth and ethnic groups. At the end of 1980s and the beginning of 1990s, estimates scored from 750,000 or 1 million to 3 million. The 2001 census found that 1.6 million people in Britain are Muslim (3.1 % of Britain's population).

Muslim activists hope that census data would encourage more extensive government involvement, and this issue has been reinforced by another important census finding, that Muslims are, it is suspected the most socially and economically disadvantaged among the general religious population described in the census (Hussain and Sherif 420).

Although South Asians form a significant portion of the British Muslim population, Muslims living across Britain come from a vast range of national and cultural backgrounds. The population includes a notable number of British and Europeans converted to Islam, others have come from war-torn countries to find a better life in Britain.

Figure 1: Country of Birth of Muslim Population

Country of Birth	Muslims		Muslims		Muslim Population Change	
	2001	%	2011	%	2001-2011	%
United Kingdom	718,226	46.4	1,278,283	47.2	560,057	48.3
Republic of Ireland	1,135	0.1	3,677	0.1	2,542	0.2
Other Europe	68,451	4.4	162,292	6.0	93,841	8.1
Africa	144,706	9.4	275,812	10.2	131,106	11.3
Middle East & Asia	599,848	38.8	977,037	36.1	377,189	32.5
The Americas & the Caribbean	5,422	0.4	7,991	0.3	2,569	0.2
Antarctica & Oceania (including Australasia)	494	-	966	-	472	-
Other	8,300	0.5	8	-	-8,292	-0.7
All	1,546,582		2,706,066		1,159,484	

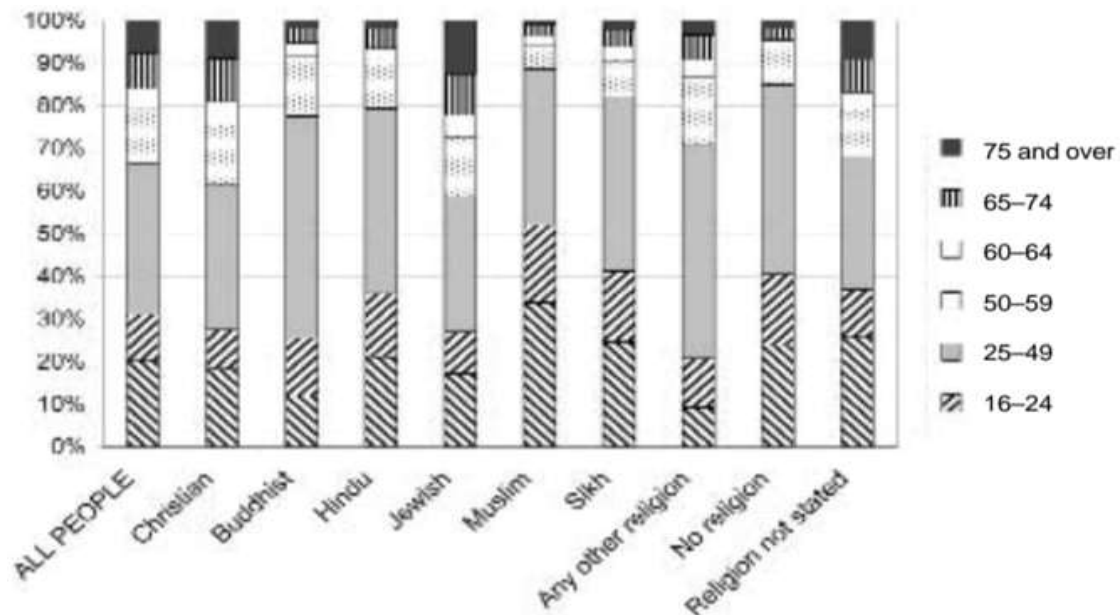
Source: Ali, Sundas. "British Muslims in Numbers". Jan 2015.

This table shows that there is a huge increase of Muslim population in Britain in the period between 2001 and 2011. Britain is the home to the most diverse Muslim society on the earth. The largest communities come from South Asia, but there are also many Arabs and African communities, as well as Muslims from Southeast Asia, the Balkans and Turkey. In addition to many Muslims who have converted to Islam from other religions. Islam is the second largest religious group in the UK as a religious community transcending color or race. Muslims started having an effective presence in different fields of British economic, cultural and political lifestyle.

Regarding, the age profile of British Muslim, there is a noticeable increase of Muslim young population between 2001 and 2011 especially in England and Wales. 33% of the Muslim total population was aged 15 or younger in 2011, compared to 19% of the population as a whole. Only 4% of the Muslim population is aged 65 and over, compared to

16% of the whole. Within a decade from now there will be approximately 190,000 Muslims in 65 to 84 years of age (Ali 16).

Figure 2: Religious groups by age, England and Wales, 2001



Source: Abbas, Tahir. "Muslim Britain, Communities Under Pressure". 2005.

Relying on the figure above, we are able to deduce the comparative position of Muslims in the UK through a graph showing the age distribution. To illustrate, information is related to England and Wales, which contain 79 % of the UK total population. It seems that the Muslim population has the youngest age framework among all other religions in both Wales and England. One third of British Muslims are aged between 0 to 15 compared to the global population of 20 %. Nevertheless, less than 10% are approximately aged 60 or above in comparison to the whole population.

While Islam and Muslims took the chief proportion among all religious groups in United Kingdom, the percentage increased dramatically in the period between 2001-2011. A simple comparison between data offered by the 2001 census and data offered by the 2011 census

shows clearly the rapid increase of the British Muslim population and the changes in the age profile.

Figure 3: Change in Muslim Population Age Profile 2001-2011

Age Group	Muslims				Muslim Population Change	
	2001	%	2011	%	2001-2011	%
0 - 4	176,264	11.4	317,952	11.7	141,688	80.4
5 -15	346,596	22.4	577,185	21.3	230,589	66.5
16 - 24	281,628	18.2	414,245	15.3	132,617	47.1
25 - 64	685,636	44.3	1,289,858	47.7	604,222	88.1
65+	56,502	3.7	106,826	3.9	50,324	89.1
All	1,546,626		2,706,066		1,159,440	

Source: Ali, Sundaes “British Muslims in Numbers”. Jan 2015.

This figure indicates that there is a surprising increase in the Muslim population in all ages generally, while the age group between 25-64 witnessed a terrible increase in the declared numbers above 604,222 as its percentage in total Muslims population is (from 44.3% to 47.7%). Furthermore, the age group between 16-24 also witnessed a significant decrease from 18.2% to 15.3% and the age between 0-4 was shifting significantly from school to youth to adult.

1.3. British Muslim Community Construction

In fact, giving demographic profile alone does not indicate whether a particular group shape the so called “community”. Thus, the need to investigate what are the common values shared by group members is highly important. The word community is used when certain group tends to share the same language and practices besides having the same interests. Some

communities have people from different genders and races but share the same principles and values like the case for British Muslims (*British Muslims 2*).

It is appropriate here to raise the question whether British Muslims really behave as a community. Are they vital example of what is defined above? British Muslims in both popular and academic discourse are distinguished primarily by their religion, but also by family, language, and ethnicity. Yemeni, Pakistani, Somali, Bangladeshi, and Turkish communities in the United Kingdom hold events to bring Muslims who share a common heritage and culture together. Their members may be linked by blood, marriage, or more extensive social and transnational ties, and are made up of a number of generations who frequently speak the same mother tongue, though later generations value English more. They have their own institutions, services, and facilities. Everyday activities and exceptional events, which are often gendered, rely on social and cultural norms. Despite cultural traditions, the local and national context is important.

Internally, Muslim communities in the United Kingdom are complicated and dynamic. They shift with the passage of time and from one region to the next. They have their own internal communication system as well as disputes and disagreements over family concerns between generations, especially over religious and political issues. The way they've been seen by outsiders, on the other hand, has set them apart from the rest (*British Muslims 9*).

There are more diversified resources accessible for understanding the place of Islam in British society and evolving perceptions of Muslims in Britain and abroad from the mid-nineteenth century onwards. Travel narratives, parliamentary papers, newspapers, novels, poetry, and scholarly research are all examples of this type of writing. Furthermore, Muslims in the United Kingdom began writing and publishing their own bulletins and journals (*Muslims and Islam 8*).

The current British Muslim community is the product of successive waves of immigrants from Muslim regions across the world. With time, increasing numbers of Muslims arrived in Britain as traders, teachers, and university students and a number of prominent British public figures converted to Islam.

Since the late 1980s, British Muslims have established Islamic organizations to represent their interests on a national level and to collaborate with the government and other civil society organizations. The UK Action Committee on Islamic Affairs, the Muslim Council of Britain, and the British Muslim Forum; in addition to The Sufi Muslim Council, the Muslim Association of Britain, the Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board, and the Federation of Student Islamic Society are among the most active Muslim groups.

Such organizations' interests and larger relationships are not always aligned; in some cases, they are in competition or dispute with one another. Some claim that others collaborate too closely with the government, while others criticize those, they believe to be extremist or Islamist (*Muslims and Islam* 9). Creating such organizations in the host country is testimony to Muslim's settlement and community building.

1.4. The Challenge of Islamophobia

When it comes to discussing the different races in Great Britain you are breathing different air (Ali15). Living in a civilized community, Muslims explored a new way to integrate within the host community that makes them the subject and the object of their anger. From British perspective, British Muslims are responsible for the weft that keeps the whole together and responsible as well for developing a hostile worldview about democracy and liberal values. Many in the mainstream population consider Muslims as threatening power that can --and at any moment--destroy the British peace (Sardar and Waqar 7).

British Muslims have been were exposed to racism and got marginalized and discriminated against in many domains. This situation motivated them to start thinking about

how to establish community that defend their right and resist racist behaviors. The events of 9/11 and the London attacks of 7/7 led to a surge in Islamophobic attacks against Muslim individuals, properties, and houses of worship. Attitudes towards Islam and Muslims which had always been negative have even become more negative following 9/11.

British attitudes toward Islam and Muslims have been examined using data from numerous public opinion polls conducted since the late 1980s. Many of these surveys were conducted at national crisis points of one kind or another. Islam and Muslims could not avoid being viewed as causal factors. Not least since 2001, there has been an increase in Islamophobia. Muslims are viewed as hesitant to integrate into mainstream culture, with a tepid sense of patriotism and a proclivity to preach anti-Western ideas, prompting many to support so-called Islamic terrorism ("A Review of Survey 18").

Paki-bashing, a form of racist violence perpetrated against South Asians since the 1960s, has been compared by Robert Lambert to Islamo-phobia and anti-Muslim street violence. Lambert notes that one key difference is that the National Front and BNP targeted all South Asians, whereas Islamophobia and anti-Muslim street violence targets only Muslims (Lambert 40). Many scholars link the media's involvement in promoting "Paki-bashing" in the late twentieth century to anti-Muslim attitudes in the early twenty-first century. According to Geddes, members of the racist organization EDL occasionally use variations of the racist insult "Paki" (Lambert 132).

Following Enoch Powell's Rivers of Blood speech and the formation of the National Front in the late 1960s, British Asians (both Muslim and non-Muslim) faced heightened persecution. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, they drew inspiration from the civil rights movement and the black power movement. In the 1970s and 1980s, following the anti-apartheid campaign, young British Pakistani and British Bangladeshi activists launched a

number of anti-racist Asian youth organizations, including the Bradford Youth Movement in 1977 and the London Youth Movement in 1980 (Timothy 52).

In the 1990s, the term "Islamophobia" was coined, dislike, suspicion, or prejudice directed at someone who affiliates with the religion of Islam. However, the source of such animosity has been discovered. Islam has been depicted negatively many times over the years. Clerics, travellers, and other observers have referred to it as the Christianity's foe and menace to Europe. In the aftermath of September 11th, in addition to the stigmatization on the streets and online, individual Muslims and their communities have been viewed as dubious, potential hotspots for radicalization, as well as the target of radicalization strategies and activities to combat terrorism.

Terrorism fears have widened the gap between British Muslims and the rest of the population. Muslims have been painted as a homogenous group in the popular media, and increasingly on social media. Muslims have long been linked to violence, fanaticism, and terrorism. The manner in which they have been reported has resulted in concerns about Britain's Islamization. This bad portrayal has not only had a detrimental impact, but it has also had a positive impact as a result of marginalizing British Muslims, but also as a result of putting their Muslim identity to the forefront in everything they do outside of the home (*British Muslims* 8).

Islamophobia has risen at an alarming rate in the United Kingdom in recent years. Because it has only been recognized in policy debate in a meaningful sense for the last 20 years, Islamophobia does not receive the same attention as related concepts such as racism. Despite a number of significant efforts, this is still the case. There is no commonly acknowledged definition of Islamophobia, as stated by the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on British Muslims in 2018.

More than 3.4 million Muslims live in the United Kingdom. They account for over 5% of the country's total population. The Muslim community in the United Kingdom is extremely diverse with different languages, cultures, and financial levels, as well as a wide range of Islamic rituals. Despite the fact that Muslims have been in the country since the 16th century, they are frequently considered as "the other" (Bayrkali and Hafez 10).

The conventional media coverage of Islam and Muslims often portrays Islamophobia as a sensible choice, despite the fact that it focuses on the symptom rather than the core cause. In the post-Cold War period, Islamophobia resurfaces in public discourses and becomes an element of official policy, building on latent Islamophobia that has existed for a long time. The OPEC oil crisis, which saw the conflation of Arabs and Muslims, both being regarded a threat to Britain's economy and civilization, brought Islamophobia into the forefront in the United Kingdom in the 1970s.

The release of Salman Rushdie's novel *The Satanic Verses* in 1988, which drew the wrath of Muslims around the world and prompted Iranian leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini to issue a religious decree against his life, catapulted Islamophobia into the spotlight. At the same time, the Rushdie affair—and the resulting alienation of Muslims—pushed many of the country's young Muslims to consolidate around a Muslim identity, leading to greater rejection by the rest of British society (*Defining Islamophobia* 14).

Despite the fact that the country's race laws protected Sikh and Jewish communities on the basis of their racial/ethnic identity, British Muslims were excluded. The Muslim appellant was refused protection under the Race Relations Act 1976 in the matter of *Nyazi v Rymans Ltd* in 1988. The Muslim appellant was denied protection under the Race Relations Act 1976 in the matter of *Nyazi v Rymans Ltd* in 1988 because “Muslims comprise individuals of various nationalities and colors, who speak numerous languages, and whose sole common denominator is religion and religious culture” (Allen 12).

The media, maybe because of their concentration on Islam in foreign cultures, plays a part in the situation as well. According to a Greater London Authority assessment from 2007, 91 percent of reports on Muslims in the British media over the course of a week were unfavorable. The Muslim Council of Britain conducted a more current research, which found that little had changed. According to a 2017 Arab News/YouGov study, the majority of British citizens support racial profiling of Arabs. According to a poll conducted by YouGov in 2019, 38% of British adults feel Islam is incompatible with Western ideals.

When compared to any other religion, Islam had a considerably larger percentage of negative responses. The Muslim Council of Britain's newly created Centre for Media Monitoring examined over 10,000 articles and clips related to Muslims and Islam in the fourth quarter of 2018, and presented its results in parliament. Professor Paul Baker, one of the country's foremost corpus linguist experts, confirmed the study's approach (Allen 18).

In Western countries, most of what is known about Islam and Muslims comes through the media. According to studies, almost three-quarters of individuals in Western nations rely on the media, particularly television, for knowledge about Islam and Muslims. Scholars agree that the prolonged intensity of media coverage of Islam and Muslims in the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks resulted in an almost universal knowledge of the religion and its adherents.

The number of Muslims residing within their country's boundaries is greatly overstated by the media. In a research on Muslims in the West, a variety of misconceptions about Muslims are debunked, including those involving population, immigration, and patriotism and because of the fact that words have such power, how they are utilized is extremely important. The printed media continues to play an essential role in melding public opinion and setting agendas for how important particular issues are. Public opinion may be swayed by

mistakes, and journalists have a big role to play in portraying religions and communities honestly and correctly (Allen 5).

While academics debate the word, it is “here to stay,” as Richardson puts it. Islamophobia was a source of concern for the writers of the original Runnymede report potentially hazardous aspect of society that needs to be tackled (Allen 20). According to Lambert and Githens-research, the rise in anti-Muslim hate crimes shows that Muslims are witnessing an increase in discrimination. Fear of terrorism has resulted in an “exponential surge in Islamophobic language and agendas,” (Allen 30). Osborne and Jones also believe that Muslims are becoming more visible; being subjected to physical assaults as a result of media coverage (Allen 67).

The above discussion provided an overview of Muslims in UK. Starting from the earlier settlement to a recent year highlighting at the same time the major challenges facing them in daily life. The entire community is actively taking extra measures that go above and beyond policy standards to provide British Muslims with safety. However, all these paradigms must be in touch daily with UK government bodies to benefit their guidance and to give assurance that they have their full support in this crisis.

Islamophobia then, is a national concern that requires collaborative efforts by both the government and individuals. These efforts make the task of prevention the responsibility of each UK member starting from raising awareness about the risks of emerged phenomenon. Racism, and Islamophobia are not merely academic concepts; they have real-world detrimental consequences for their victims in every part of life. Muslim students have been proven to have a lower chance of being accepted into Russell Group universities in studies. Meanwhile, Muslims in Britain continue to have "the biggest economic disadvantages of any minority," with unemployment rates double those of the overall population. The percentage of Muslims working in higher-level managerial, administrative, or professional positions is less

than half of the total population. These successive and daily obstacles aid in unifying Muslims against any sort of discrimination.

Chapter Two: The War on Terror and the State of British Muslims in the Aftermath of September 11th

The 9/11 attacks that took place in American soil had a profound effect all over the world. The effects of the attacks were so apparent in Britain as this latter was America's main ally in its declared international war on terror in reaction to the new threat. Security, lineups at airport checkpoints, a national terror alert system, and years of conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan can all be traced back to the events of September 11th. More poignantly, memorial sites in London remind tourists from all over the world that life before and after September 11th has completely changed. Since September 11th, other shifts in the UK have been equally intense and long-lasting. The event had a profound impact on those well-known, well recognized literature, television shows, movies, and music.

British Muslims have lived a very hard experience since 9/11. The new government policies locally and internationally have impacted their lives negatively. An in-depth look of the link between September and British Muslims can reveal a lot about how the attacks affected them, and how Muslims' life was altered since the tragic day. British Muslims were opposed both to the strategies of fighting terror in Britain which targeted them mainly, and to the involvement of Britain in America's foreign wars in Afghanistan in 2001 and in Iraq in 2003, both Muslim countries.

2.1. The September 11th Attacks and the Invasion of Afghanistan

The September 11 attacks, also known as the 9/11 attacks, were a series of airline hijackings and suicide attacks carried out by 19 militants affiliated with the extremist group al-Qaeda against targets in the United States in 2001, which claimed the lives of over 3000 persons making them the deadliest terrorist attacks on American soil in US history. The assaults on New York City and Washington, D.C. resulted in a large amount of death and destruction, as well as a massive US counter-terrorism campaign.

In New York, 2,750 people were killed, 184 at the Pentagon, and 40 in Pennsylvania; where one of the hijacked flights crashed as passengers attempted to reclaim the plane (Hampton 7). The September 11 attacks were sparked in part by Osama bin Laden, the head of the militant Islamic group al-Qaeda. Bin Laden became increasingly convinced that America was weak in the years leading up to the attacks, according to Abu Walid al-Masri, an Egyptian who was a bin Laden associate in Afghanistan in the 1980s and 1990s. As evidence," he referred to what happened to the United States in Beirut when the bombing of the Marines camp drove them to escape from Lebanon," al-Masri recalled, alluding to the demolition of the marine barracks there in 1983 (Wilborn 8).

On September 11, 2001, hijackers hijacked four domestic aircraft at three East Coast airports. The first plane, American Airlines flight 11, was piloted into the north tower of the World Trade Center in New York City. Some may have been stabbed with box cutters by the hijackers. All three structures were badly damaged by the impact and erupt in flames. Some office workers who were trapped above the points of impact in some cases leapt to their deaths. The U.S. was under attack at the time. The World Trade Center was heavily damaged, south tower collapsed followed by the north tower which fell 29 minutes later. A number of other buildings adjacent to the twin towers suffered serious damage, and several subsequently fell. Fires at the site smoldered for more than three months (Miller 23).

As a direct reply to the 9/11 Attacks, the United States decided to wage a war against Afghanistan on October, 7th, 2001. Following the terrorist attacks, the Americans sought international support to eradicate the threat of its new enemy Al-Qaeda. The war was not obsessively opposite to Al-Qaeda, actually the declared goal of what came to be known as the global war on terror was to defeat terrorism and overthrow it wherever it existed. However, the main battlefield and the big war was declared firstly against the Taliban movement in Afghanistan (Collins 2).

The first responsible of declaring war on Afghanistan was the Bush administration, the aim of this invasion was to destroy the Taliban regime that worked for the benefits of the terrorists, and arresting or killing of Al-Qaida's leader Ossama Bin Laden for being the mastermind and planner of the 9/11 attacks. The Taliban refused to render Ben Laden. In fact, they protected and served all his needs. The United States initially sent about 500 fighters of CIA and SOF to launch the war in collaboration with Northern Alliance and some friendly Pashtuns (Collins 48).

The Afghanistan war was not legitimized by the United Nations Security Council, it was rather implemented under the provision of the article 51 of the United Nations' charter. The US announced that: "Government has significant and compelling evidence that Al-Qaeda organization, which is supported by the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, had a crucial role in the terrorist attacks against the World Trade Center, the Pentagon and in Pennsylvania"(Ben Smith and Thorp 3).

Washington accused the Taliban regime of allocating part of Afghanistan as a base of terrorist operations, and of refusing to change their policy despite all the efforts made by the United States .According to the US government, the Taliban continued to regulate, coach and encourage terrorist agents who violated millions of blameless people around the world and disturbed the US interests within and outside the country (Ben Smith and Thorp 3).Britain participated in the invasion of Afghanistan with the US and other allies with the declared aim of destroying al-Qaeda, and the Taliban that had backed them. In fact, Britain was America's main ally in this war and the coalition that invaded Afghanistan was known as the Anglo-American alliance.

Operation Enduring freedom (OEF) or the war on Afghanistan, started on October 7, 2001 as a response to the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon. Allied forces carried out air strikes against Taliban and Al-Qaida, which operates under the protection of

the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. The operation was initiated to prevent the Taliban from providing a safe refuge for al-Qaeda and to prevent al-Qaeda from using Afghanistan as a foundation for terrorist activities (CNN).

Operation Enduring Freedom passed by three essential phases. The first stage, the overthrow of the Taliban, was short-lived and only lasted two months. While the second phase from 2002 to 2008, was marked by the US strategy of militarily defeating the Taliban and rebuilding the central institutions of the Afghan state. And the third one was considered as the shift to the classical doctrine of counterinsurgency, started in 2008 and followed the acceleration of the President of the United States.

Obama decided in 2009 to temporarily augment the US military presence in Afghanistan. Larger forces have been used to implement a strategy to protect the population from attacks by the Taliban and to support insurgents' efforts to reintegrate into Afghan society. The US - NATO combat mission officially ended in December 2014. The 13 years Afghanistan War had become the longest US war (Witte).

2.2. The Invasion of Iraq

After the Afghanistan War, the United States and its allies declared the war against Iraq in 2003. The declared objective behind this war was to overthrow Saddam Hussein's authoritarian regime, demilitarizing Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, and depriving any attempts to use these weapons to harbor terrorists, because Saddam Hussein has been accused of being involved with Al-Qaida.

The United States suspected a strong relationship between Iraq and al-Qaeda. Before and after the invasion, large numbers of Americans validated that there was evidence of a connection between Iraq and Al Qaeda. Before the declaration of war, in January, 13% of people said they believed that they found conclusive evidence for the involvement of Iraq in the attacks. A large percentage (45% to 52%) argued that the United States found clear

evidence in Iraq that Saddam Hussein organized in close cooperation with Al –Qaeda terrorists. In June, 48% of people said they had found clear evidence, and only 33% said no, 19% said they weren't completely sure. Although the media has debated this issue in depth and the result was 50% thought evidence has been found, 35% thought not, and 14% were unsure (Kull et al.572).

For the war, the United States also claimed that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction. Although there was an absence of testimony on the actual existence of WMD in Iraq, it did not seem appropriate to call it a misunderstanding, because it was very common at the time. However, an alarming misunderstanding arose after the war. At the time, the United States could not find weapons of mass destruction or even conclusive evidence about the destructive programs (Kull et al.572).

In September 2002, the British Prime Minister Tony Blair and President Bush stated that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) released a new report stating that Iraq resumed its nuclear weapons program. A month after, Blair argued that Iraq not only possessed weapons of mass destruction, but could also deploy them in 45 minutes. On September 24, Blair released on Iraq's weapons program. Two other evidences provided by the neo-conservative camp. The first was that Iraq bought aluminum tubes to make nuclear weapons in period of six months. Second, Iraq attempted to buy uranium from an African country. The evidence for these accusations was founded on a collection of letters that, according to the government, are "conclusive evidence". So that Bush won the congressional resolution on October 11, 2002, handing him a blank check for the war against Iraq (Kumar 57).

The initial success of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan prompted the Bush administration to consider Iraq as a risk which could menace the US as a whole, and to prepare for another operation to invade Iraq. It was Operation Iraqi Freedom, also known as

the Third Gulf War. It began on March 20, 2003. The United States-led coalition against Saddam Hussein's Baath Party. The invasion drove to the rapid defeat of the Iraqi army, the detention and execution of Saddam Hussein. The United States invaded Iraq and tried to organize a new government (Bassil 29).

The official salient reasons behind the OIF are to fight terrorism since Iraq was claimed to be a country that supported al-Qaeda, including the attacks on the USS Cole, US Embassy in Africa and 9/11 Attacks. The US Senate considered Saddam Hussein as a danger to the American regime. The second reason is to eliminate the weapons of mass destruction that should have been in the hands of Iraq. The possession and proliferation of long-range missiles has been proven since the 1990s. The third reason was to arrest Saddam Hussein and abolish his regime, which would bring democracy and peace to the region (Bassil 29).

While the hidden reason is to establish a transitional government as soon as possible. The war had an economic purpose which was to take control of oil perfectly and ensure the continuous flow of oil from Persian Gulf to all gulf counties like Kuwait and Saudi Arabia because they are considered as a perfect source of gasoline to the US (Bassil 31). The outcomes of the war were very expensive for both sides, there were a huge number of casualties and other material losses. Since 2003, millions of Iraqis have fled abroad, mainly to Syria and Jordan, as well as to Europe and the United States. It was estimated that the war costs more than US 800 billion dollars.

2.3. The British Involvement in the Wars on Afghanistan and Iraq

Following the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the United Kingdom's national security agenda became the first and the main concern. It was the first time in history that international terrorism posed a significant national security threat to the international peace and security and the United Kingdom in particular, leading to a strong response under the so called 'the war against terrorism'

Britain participated in the US war adventures in Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003 in what came to be known as the Anglo-American Alliance. The US and the UK were unified together and responded to the challenge by improving their counter-terrorism structures and sending them to the destination of the international terrorist threat. It was a very tiring and arduous task to do at the national and the international level to fight the global threat. The British had an experience in combating terrorism as they had been involved in Northern Ireland for over 30 years. They thought that they had the ability to improve the competences to combat the new terrorism. The terrorist threat was marginal before 9/11 attacks, but it became a central threat afterwards (Bamford 738).

The UK government was a staunch supporter of the US-led war, and it was committed to standing by it. In October 2001, with the beginning of the war, the British were involved in military operations against Afghanistan from the onset of the invasion. They launched Tomahawk cruise missiles from submarines in the Arabian Sea. The United Kingdom, in particular Diego Garcia, served as a base for American planes to bomb Afghanistan. It also extended assistance to the American Marines.

In April 2002, the British deployed as a combat force in Afghanistan, soldiers under the name of JACANA, their common activities were to plant spy groups to gather information, combat terrorism, block terrorist operations and destroy their infrastructure in southeastern Afghanistan. The role of the British army in the war against terrorism in Afghanistan was limited, as it prevented Afghanistan from being a refuge for terrorism again in various ways, including: intercepting civil aircraft and conducting patrols in opening rebellious ships (Lamford 751)

The United Kingdom played an active role in the European Union (EU), which has enabled it to enhance international aviation security and limit the proliferation of weapons as it had reinforced the NATO to fight against terrorism. This later formed the International

Security Assistance Force (ISAF) by an order from the UN. Their starting point was to save the capital of Afghanistan Kabul. Meanwhile, 1,700 British soldiers stood with other NATO allies to fulfill their objectives together (National Army Museum). The British Army participated in the stabilization and security of Afghanistan by assisting it in security matters.

Moving on to the Iraq War, it was a long-running armed confrontation that lasted from 2003 to 2011. It began with the invasion of Iraq by a US-led coalition, which ousted Saddam Hussein's totalitarian government. For much of the next decade, the struggle raged on as an insurgency rose up against the coalition forces and the post-invasion Iraqi government. In the first three to five years of the battle, an estimated 151,000 to 1,033,000 Iraqis died.

In 2011, US forces were officially removed. In 2014, the US re-entered the battle as the leader of a new coalition; the insurgency and many aspects of the armed struggle persisted. Despite no link between the September 11 attacks and Iraq, the invasion took place as part of the George W. Bush administration's War on Terror (Schneider). British troops took part in the coalition invasion of Iraq in March 2003. They overthrew Saddam Hussein's administration and occupied the country after a month of fighting. However, Britain's war operations would continue for another six years (Mockaits 50).

Following the 11 September 2001 Al Qaeda attacks on the United States (US), British Prime Minister Tony Blair made a public vow to stand with his American allies. British military took part in the campaign to expel Al Qaeda and overthrow the Taliban administration in Afghanistan, adhering to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO) concept that an attack on one member is an attack on all. President George W. Bush next shifted his focus to Saddam Hussein, Iraq's ruler. During the Gulf War (1990-91), the president's father, George Bush Senior, commanded a coalition that drove Iraqi forces out of Kuwait but fell short of overthrowing the government.

According to the Bush administration, Saddam Hussein was actively developing biological and chemical weapons, often known as WMDs, in violation of international treaties and regulations. The US military was prepared for war with Iraq in 2002. Saddam Hussein's purported stockpile of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) and his reluctance to fully cooperate with UN weapons inspectors provided the rationale for this (Kimberely 30).

For Buckley and Fawn, the preparations to expand the 'War on Terror' were known to British military personnel working with the Americans. Tony Blair, was unwilling to fully commit UK military to the war against Iraq without parliamentary approval. Because of the delay, Britain's role in the planning phase was restricted, and its forces were less prepared and equipped than they could have been. The British Army's responsibilities during the UK's Fire Service industrial dispute in the winter of 2002-03 also hindered deployment preparations to the Middle East (93).

On the night of March 20, 2003, US and British engineers breached defensive barriers to allow coalition soldiers to cross into Iraq. The following evening, a barrage of air and missile strikes were launched against sites across Iraq, with the goal of inflicting "shock and awe" and neutralizing command and control systems. Iraqi defenses quickly crumbled in the face of the major US assault, which included armored vehicles, artillery, attack helicopters, and air attacks; Baghdad was the main target for US soldiers, who were primarily interested in bringing about government change (National Army Museum).

The occupation of the 'Basra Box,' which served as a screen for the main American assault northwards, was a crucial role for British forces. Basra, Iraq's second largest city, was not to be captured quickly to save unnecessary delays and deaths. However, the surrounding area had to be protected. Reinforcing and relieving US Marines, British troops experienced substantial Iraqi resistance and had to cope with an escalating number of detainees. By April 8, 2003, US troops had secured the Baghdad approaches. The northern cities of Tikrit, Mosul,

and Kirkuk fell to coalition forces a few days later. Saddam Hussein, on the other hand, had fled. In 2006, he was apprehended and put to death (Mockaits 51).

On the aircraft carrier 'USS Abraham Lincoln,' President Bush addressed US military forces and the world media on May 1, announcing the end of combat operations. Attempts to restore stability, however, were unsuccessful. Soon after, sectarianism sprang up, as did an insurgency against the occupation. For the next six years, British troops would be stationed in Iraq (Zinni 15). The United States of America and the United Kingdom strengthened their special relationship, together they resolved to wage war against Afghanistan and Iraq, exchanged intelligence and worked to develop counter-terrorism measures

Britain participated in the wars on Afghanistan and Iraq as part of its leading role in the global war on terrorism. For more than a century, it has fought various forms of terrorism. Following 9/11, the British believed that their previous experience gave a good foundation on which to build a counter-terrorist strategy to combat this new threat. Despite this background, the United Kingdom's prospects in the post-9/11 fight on terror have deteriorated. This is most evident in Iraq, where British efforts to stabilize the country's southeast have failed. The British also had serious difficulties in Afghanistan's second battlefield in the war on terror.

The war against terrorism was equivalent to the Cold War in terms of scale, expenditure, and impact on international relations. It was meant to mark the start of a new age in global politics, and it has had significant implications for security, human rights, international law, collaboration, and governance. The war on terrorism was a multifaceted, nearly unlimited battle. Major wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as clandestine operations in Yemen and elsewhere, were all part of the military dimension. Large-scale military assistance programs for cooperative regimes, as well as significant increases in military spending, were also part of the package (Lansford et al. 2).

2.4. Opposition to the War and the Initial Reaction of British Muslims

In Britain many organizations and individuals were opposed to the foreign wars and worked at redirecting policy along pacifist, or at least peaceful, lines. Peace was a goal that virtually everyone in the country agreed on. This was founded on both moral and financial considerations. This was not specific to Britain as the abhorrence of war was nearly universal. This was backed up by strong economic and political considerations, which bolstered the case for world peace (Richard 14).

Right from the beginning of the government propaganda for the war, opponents made it clear that another war would be disastrous for Britain's economy, its shaky national finances, and its commerce. All of this meant that Britain had become a satiated power, content with hanging on to what it had and preserving its international position, with a conservative and tranquil perspective, and with little or no desire to become engaged in a big international conflict (Richard 12).

Historically, the success of the peace movement's war, in many ways, a simple reflection of public opinion. In 1914, there had been a broad national consensus over the decision to enter the war. The experience of the following four years, however, was to transform the national feeling. The refusal to contemplate another war became deeply embedded in the "lost" generation that had lived through 1914-18, and in the one that followed on from it. This sentiment was reinforced by a perfectly rational calculation of Britain's position (Richard 23).

The peace movements throughout the country's history have had larger impact on British policy making. The peace movement could sometimes act as a constraint on the government's ability to direct policy. As there were strong proponents to the war on terror, there were also an opponent minority; they were totally against this war. The decision of the war led to an unprecedented controversy and domestic disagreement in the UK. The strength of anti-war

sentiment was mirrored in enormous protest gatherings. The anti-war movement was broad-based and included a wide range of alliances. British Muslims also were involved and they had a great impact on the evolution of the movement.

For more than a decade, Al-Qaeda's post-9/11 capability and its potential to carry out attacks in the UK have been hotly debated. The Director General of the Security Service announced in November 2006 that Saidher organization was aware of up to 30 terrorist schemes aimed to assassinate UK residents and wreak havoc on the economy. The chief of MI5, Jonathan Evans, stated in June 2012 that the Arab Spring has aided Al-Qaeda's second arrival. He claimed that British would-be jihadists were traveling to the Middle East in search of martyrdom.

The police revealed that British Muslims fighting in Syria had potential to link up with Al-Qaeda. Counterterrorism officers believed that British Muslims could link up and further terrorist activity in the UK. Police warned of growing threat from 'Al-Qaeda franchises' in Britain. The UK government security measures revealed that Al-Qaeda remains a growing concern (Huntington 2).

Between 2003 and 2013, some 50 extremists have pursued at least six major terrorism plots targeting British citizens. The majority followed a pathway that involved engagement with Islamic political activism, also known as Islamism, says Peter Rowney-Gibson. There is no evidence that these men did just decide to act. Fundamentalists advocate the establishment of an Islamic caliphate governed by Shari'a law. The term is used to describe the underlying political ideology of extremists.

For British Muslims, one of the significant effects of 9/11 was to break the taboo of Muslims speaking out against the extremists within. In the months and years since, many people have been searching for a way to deal with extremism within the Muslim community with a frankness and honesty that was clearly lacking previously. Muslims debated how to

deal with young men's rage, frustration, hatred, and radicalization and prevent radical tendencies from gaining any more traction. However, this climate has had a profoundly political impact on the development of identity, with the 'Muslim' dimension gaining more prominence. Some analysts warned that the Muslim identity in the United Kingdom was in risk of becoming more of a political entity than a religious–spiritual one (Miller 25).

The impact of the events of September 11th, 2001 on the British Muslim community is difficult to estimate. In the wake of the 9/11 attacks many British Muslims chose to mobilize in order to "protect what they considered as their faith's civilized nature, to "take a stand against its own extremists," and to "avoid the logic of revenge from dictating a strategy that would be detrimental to their faith.". In light of the increased anti-Muslim hostility and the initial ramifications of the declared 'global war o terror', it is easy to see why so many British Muslims later chose to join the anti-war campaign. Muslims were the victims of rising Islamophobic attacks and discriminatory policies by the government.

Nevertheless, the involvement of British Muslims in the efforts to stop the post-9/11 wars are said to have had humble beginnings. The Stop the War Coalition STWC was founded at a demonstration on September 21,2001, little over two weeks before the launch of 'Operation Enduring Freedom' in Afghanistan on October7, 2001(Peace 18).

Attempts were made at the Coalition's second meeting to organize diverse interest groups such as 'Nurses opposing the war' or 'lawyers against the war'. The Muslim activist ShahedSaleem was present at the meeting and recommended that an organization be formed to mobilize Muslims against the war. They formed a group of roughly ten persons, including Shahedah, a South African activist. In this group of Muslims, it was Shahed and Shahedah who would take the lead.

They later founded a new organization known as Just Peace. Just Peace was formed with the goal of encouraging Muslim participation in movements fighting for freedom from

oppression and injustice. It drew a large number of its members from the City Circle, a network founded in 1997 in London, for young Muslim professionals. The organization gathered on a regular basis to mobilize the Muslim community for the anti-war movement, and secular organizations such as the Palestinian Solidarity Campaign joined them. In addition, Shahed and Shahedah were chosen to the STWC's steering committee (Lewis 10).

Although Just Peace was founded to encourage Muslim participation in the anti-war movement, its founders wanted it to go beyond what they perceived as the Muslim mainstream's narrow interpretation of events: that this was a war on Islam. The only reason to oppose the invasion of Afghanistan was this. The fact that so many individuals were active in STWC, not because of any cultural or religious reasons, but just because they believed it was immoral appealed to Shahed. He believed that Muslims should broaden the scope of their campaign since it is about a principle, not just because they are Muslim. Religion should not be the sole source of opposition to the war (Birt 33).

In fact, Just Peace was a dramatic break from conventional Muslim organizations and institutions, which tended to focus on the "Muslim situation" and were outwardly religious to a greater or lesser extent. Although members practiced their religion, it was not a "religious organization" in the traditional sense. It began by involving both Muslims and non-Muslims, with the goal of being as inclusive as possible. The group did not identify itself as a religious organization, and there was no religious component to it. They had an agenda or ideology that guided their actions (Peace 15).

Chapter Three: British Muslims and the Anti-War Movement

Since the unveiling of the intention to invade Afghanistan and later Iraq by the USA and its allies, a surge of opposition to the war had continued to arise all over the world. A huge number of people gathered in many cities of the world refusing the Anglo-American wars, carrying anti-war slogans. Their goals and demands are common 'not to war' moving towards an 'anti-war movement'.

In Britain, a movement to oppose the war started to take shape early. British Muslims played a crucial and a significant role in this activity. The chapter investigates the involvement of British Muslims in the anti-war Movement, and their role and weight in the huge social movement initiated in Britain to refuse the invasion of Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003, both Muslim majority countries and as a matter of fact, British Muslims have significantly contributed to the efforts to oppose the wars on Afghanistan and Iraq.

The chapter also sheds the light on the various obstacles that the anti-war movement faced in order to achieve its goals. Finally, it explains the role of anti-war movement in achieving peace and harmony in various parts of the world.

3.1. Just Peace and the Beginning of Muslim Involvement in the Anti- War Movement

It was clear from the very beginning that the Muslim community of Britain would bear the brunt of what they considered an unjust war on terror at the local and international levels. That is why it was expected that Muslims would join the various forces that stood up refusing the involvement of the British government in the foreign wars in the side of the United States. The engagement of Muslims in the movement to stop the war, however, had humble beginnings.

The anti-war movement started with the establishment of the Stop the War Coalition with a strong presence of left-wing organizations. Stop the War Coalition (StWC) was founded at a demonstration on September 21, 2001, little over two weeks before the commencement of

'Operation Enduring Freedom' in Afghanistan on October 7, 2004. At the Coalition's second meeting, attempts were made to organize diverse interest groups such as "nurses against the war" and "lawyers against the war. The Muslim activist Shahed Saleem was present during this conference.

Saleem the founder of Just Peace, proposed forming an organization to mobilize Muslims against the war (Peace128). The organization was called Just Peace, and its mission was to 'encourage Muslim engagement in organizations that struggle for liberation from tyranny and injustice. It drew many of its members from the City Circle, a network established for young Muslim professionals in London in 1999 (Lewis 113).

The group gathered on a regular basis. They were also tasked with mobilizing the Muslim community for the anti-war movement. Secular organizations such as the Palestinian Solidarity Campaign have joined force. Shahed Saleem was also appointed to the StWC's steering committee. Although it was founded to promote Muslim involvement in the anti-war movement, its founders wanted Just Peace to go beyond what they viewed as the Muslim mainstream's limited interpretation of events: that this was a war against Islam and that was the sole reason for opposing the invasion of Afghanistan.

Saleem found it particularly fascinating that so many individuals were active in StWC, not because of any cultural or religious reasons, but just because they believed it was wrong. He believed that it would be beneficial for Muslims to broaden the scope of their campaign since it is not only about being Muslim. It is all about values for Muslims. The opposition to the war should not be founded solely on religious grounds. In reality, Just Peace was a dramatic break from previous Muslim societies and organizations that centered on the "Muslim condition" and were explicitly, to varying degrees and religions

In this sense, Just Peace was unique — despite the fact that its members practiced their faith, although it was not a "religious organization" in the traditional sense. It began by

including both Muslims and non-Muslims in an effort to be as inclusive as possible. The group also did not identify as a religious organization, and there was no religious component, purpose or philosophy that underlay their actions. Although they discovered that religion did need to be mentioned when seeking to encourage individuals to become involved in the anti-war movement (Peace 127).

Just Peace maintained a core group of approximately ten members, however some of their gatherings drew bigger crowds. They organized public events and discussions, and they urged Muslims to participate in the StWC-organized rallies. This would entail handing out pamphlets outside mosques and spreading the message in general throughout the Muslim community via email newsletters, which were then sent to a number of people. They were able to influence Muslims outside their own social group in London in this way. They were pleasantly pleased, for example, to get queries from Muslim organizations as far away as Wales (Peace 128).

The generational shift advocated by the anti-war movement can only have a beneficial impact on the larger British public's attitude of Muslims. Indeed, the extraordinarily calm and reasonable reaction to the 2005 London bombings, barely two years after the massive anti-war protests, was remarkable. Many people were pleased by the march, which appeared to illustrate society's tolerance. This was also viewed as a result of Muslims becoming more visible in public and interacting more with other residents. Muslim activist Shahedah Vawda believed that it was incredible how regular British people have attempted to learn more about Islam and make an impact.

It came as a surprise that a new and little-known organization like Just Peace was the first to represent the British Muslim community in the anti-war movement. It was expected that larger Muslim representative organizations like the Muslim Council of Britain or the

Muslim Association of Britain would take the lead. Only the latter would join the efforts to stop the wars and take the frontlines of the demonstrations against the wars.

3.2. The Muslim Association of Britain Takes the Lead

The Muslim Association of Britain, best known by MAB, becomes one of chief organizations that contributed in mobilizing millions of people who opposed Britain's foreign wars especially the war on Iraq in 2003. MAB which is the Muslim Brotherhood MB of the UK, was founded in 1997 by Arab immigrants and students, some of them were conductors of the MB in their home countries. Their activity brought about a great revolution in the influence of Islam in Britain and turned into an anti-Western and Anti-Israel views (Whine 35).

The MAB system was not firstly political; it gave preference to cultural and educational functions. In April 2002, when the MAB organized a large pro-Palestinian demonstration in central London, the public heard about it for the first time. An Islamic site depicted the event as "the largest Palestinian rally initiated by Muslims in UK». The president of the MAB at that time was Kemal Al Helbawy the head of the rally and the famous leader Mohamed Sawalha. Because of its effective role, the MAB shifted to the center stage, it had proven its effective presence within the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) in addition to partnership with Stop the War Coalition, MAB gained more power allowing it to organize a series of demonstrations in 2003 (Whine 36).

Leaders of the MAB were working to convince the members that participation with non-Muslims who were against the war was *halal* and permissible and that kind of cooperation is the specialty of their organization. Their first argument was to provide separate spaces for both sexes and not to mix them, also providing *halal* food in demonstrations, meetings, and other occasions where Muslims can participate in the anti-war movements with ease (Philips, "Stand in together" 103).

It is clear that MAB was making a huge and a successful effort to influence the diversity of the population and Muslims in Britain and various community organizations. Their main goal was to control the representation of Islamic political interests, stop war, mistreatment against Muslims, and consider them as an active member of Western society in addition to their main objective which is to resist the negative outcomes of the government's War on Terrorism. Its involvement in the STWC was particularly noteworthy.

In the UK, the Stop War Coalition (StWC) is the most famous anti-war advocacy group. The alliance involved a variety of organizations and individuals one of them was the Muslim Association of Britain (Simonson 6). The StWC aim was very simple, they wish to stop the war declared by the US and its allies against 'terrorism' including the wars on Afghanistan and Iraq.

Figure4: StWC banner



Source: Pickerill and Webster. "The Anti-War/Peace Movement in Britain and the

Conditions of Information War.” International Relations, vol.20, 2006, p.416.

When the StWC was primarily shaped, MAB was the first invited to assimilate the coalition since it had a good reputation and a positive effect with a large number of Muslims, but the MAB refused the invitation of partnership in the first time, but they stood with them and participated in the demonstrations on an individual basis. The events of the demonstrations took place in November 2001, coinciding with the holy month of Ramadan after that, Mouhamed Sawalha the leader of the MAB met with the leader of the STWC and they agreed on working simultaneously as partner according to the terms of the Islamic Association.

The first achievements of this union took place in Trafalgar Square on 28 September 2002 were the formation of a joint demonstration in solidarity with Palestine on the anniversary of the Second Intifada and the demonstration against the threat of war in Iraq (Philips, “Standin Together”¹⁰³).

In the year of 2002, the anti-war movement flourished and developed under MAB. It became possible for them to mobilize larger numbers of Muslims for their protest march. MAB swimmingly constructed a demonstration in April 2002 in opposition to Israeli military operations in Jenin refugee camp. The media admitted that the response to the call for demonstrations was enormous. The number of protesters was about 50000, it was about 20 times more than the primary number (Peace 131). During this period, MAB and STWC reached the peak of the development and became among the largest organizations that made their voice heard for the government, but the unthinkable happened. There were many distinctions between the two partners that led to a defect in the organization process.

The cooperation between the MAB and the STWC leadership of the anti-war movement must be conceptualized in the situation of the notion of Muslims in the wider society. The "War on Terror" after September 11 exacerbated this concept. The aim of this coalition was

to build a bridge between Muslims and non-Muslims, and to break down barriers between them. Not only for the war, but for the treatment of division and neo-colonialism question.

One of the leaders of the organization 'Altikriti' declared that the organization was and remains independent, " We will stand by the STWC and will join you, but we will not become part of your alliance or affiliated with it. We will remain independent and separate, but we will work together under one principle". Altikriti also stressed that MAB was dissolving within the coalition and it still led by the left (Phillips, "Standing Together" 104). As soon as the activities and operations against the war began, there was a misunderstanding and a difference of opinions. Among those disagreements, we have the one that formed when the first joint demonstration was organized by StWC and MAB that there was some contradiction about the procedures taken for the demonstration, as the MAB insisted that Palestine would be the jewel of the manifestation, while STWC preferred the slogan against the attack (Peace 132).

The slogan of the demonstration carried the following pledges, "Against the Iraq War and bring justice to Palestine." Since it was unable to fully agree on the priorities, MAB decided that its pamphlet puts "Freedom of Palestine" above "Stop the Iraq War", while the STW pamphlet puts the slogan on the contrary arrangement. MAB also wanted to call the joint rally the "One Millions March", but accepted STW's objections to this, thinking that a turnout of less than one million would be a shame (Phillips, "Standing Together" 105).

Finally, the result was about a million demonstrators participating, it was the largest demonstration to date, it concluded with a massive rally in Hyde Park, London with speeches from the most prominent figures of the anti-war movement. Despite the differences that occurred, both partners made concessions and the result was satisfactory and profitable for both. The later protest culminated with a large audience and loyal supporters. This encouraged many organizations to join, including CND and ESF (Peace 110).

In preparation for other large demonstrations in all capitals, the citizens of Europe were invited to join and prepare for the promised day of November 9, and then they headed towards global demonstrations that took place on the 15 of February 2003 (Peace132). The demonstration was held in London in coordination with STWC, CND and MAB, as the achievements exceeded the dreams of its founders and broke the record, as declared by Anas Al-Tikriti and others who were invited to talk to people and persuade them.

Al-Tikriti stated:

‘We have Muslims who support non-Muslims. Without forgetting the veiled Muslim women and their yelling over loudspeakers, cheering and the crowd repeating behind them. We have audiences of all ages, Classes and races. The promised day has been established as a historical day where unity was formed and this was due to the anti-war movement (Phillips, “Standing Together” 105).

Thanks to a good management, planning and achievements, MAB was promoted from an obscure group to a group with a national file, with great influence that exceeded its narrow, limited membership. MAB worked to mobilize thousands of Muslims, encouraging them to join political and religious demonstrations. MAB had acquired a strategic importance for both Muslims and Britons. It worked to increase members exponentially; it also has experience in the political field and political relations (Ansari 17).

Despite the importance of MAB and its active role with the STWC in the anti-war movement, its whole entity was shaken. Some participants within the MAB felt that the various organized activities were open incitement against British institutions and exceeded their political, religious and cultural boundaries. MAB took the criticism into consideration and worked to change the plans and the goals away from the previous forms of pressure and changed the political culture of the MAB. But conservative and traditional group expressed

their dissatisfaction and rejection of the new activity within MAB (Phillips,“Standing Together”107).

In July 7th, 2005, a bombing in London sparked a great tension and disruption within MAB, which led to a serious crisis. Tamimi, one of the leaders of MAB, stated that he and his colleagues did not manage MAB well, they made it more politicized and highly salient, and that the MAB was ending angering itself by opposing the government, which led to the downfall of the organization. Leaders who led MAB towards partnership with STWC, including Al-Tamimi and Al-Tikriti, lost control of the organization in December 2005, when a new executive board was included and new leaders appeared, they started spreading a propaganda about MAB’s founders, that they posed a threat to the association, which led to the obstruction of the organization’s path. As the content of the MAB revolved around social issues, individual care and spirituality. New leaders fabricated propaganda against MAB’s founder leaders leading to dispersal and created a chasm between leaders and people (Phillips,“Standing Together”108).

As the problem in the coalition aggravated, the old leaders dissolved the partnership with STWC in February 2005. MAB had been replaced by a new Islamic organization called ‘Stop the War Muslim Network’ (SWMN), and precisely, after one year of the dissolution of the coalition, members who led to a partnership between the MAB and STWC formed a new organization under the name of ‘British Muslim Initiative’ (BMI) to fulfill its previous missions and objectives (Phillips,“Bridging East and West ”509). After a partnership of three years, during this period both partners achieved some of their common goals they made their voice heard for the British government and the whole world despite the obstacles and the difficult circumstances they faced, the coalition between MAB and STWC came to an end.

3.3. Outcomes of Muslim Activism in the Anti-war Movement

The anti-war demonstrations generated a great optimism among demonstrators in general and Muslims in particular. But the government remained opposed to those protests, insisting on their opinion of invasion and sure that all protests would not have an impact on decision-making, especially the war against Iraq.

As British Prime Minister Tony Blair ignored all the protests and insisted that these protests were just a waste of time and will do no good, reinforcing his arguments saying that demonstrators do not realize anything about the reality of the situation and that the situation had serious consequences (Simonson 17).

Despite the politicians' constant rejection of the protests, analysts acknowledged that the anti-war movement was a turning point in international politics and the opposition's style was a profitable card for people. Anti-war movement, especially the London demonstration, which was considered as the largest peace march in 20 years made Blair and Bush concerned about the situation, which led them to make the war adventure before they were finally isolated by public opinion (Simonson 17). The anti-war movement then changed the political views and educated the public opinion and its voice echoes to the whole world.

For British Muslims, the effective participation in the anti-war movement and their success in making alliances with other organizations and groups gave them more confidence. They became more aware of their real weight in the social and political life and of their ability to make pressure on the government to gain concessions. It was also an occasion that gained them considerable experience in protesting and claim making (Simons 19).

The Iraq war of 2003 caused a great deal of controversy in the world and especially in UK. The widely supported anti-war movement grabbed the attention of the international public opinion to the reality of the US-led foreign wars. The power of anti-war sentiment was mirrored in immense demonstrations and gatherings. Those supporters named themselves the

‘anti-war protesters and the peace activists. There were several important coalitions around the world.

In the USA, the plurality pacifist organizations are conducted under the name of ‘Win Without War (WWW) and the United for Peace Justice Coalition (UFPJ). In the UK, most activities were arranged by the ‘Stop the War Coalition’(STWC), it includes a variety of individuals and organizations including anti-globalization activists, the left wing of the Labor party, communists and the ‘Muslims Association of Britain’(MAB), this later had a crucial role in realizing their common objectives. The participation of Muslim organizations and individuals in the anti-war movement and the immense support of the Muslim community of Britain energized Muslims politically. One of the most important outcomes of the Muslim participation in the effort to stop the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq was the establishment of a new political party dominated by Muslim activists (Richard 30).

In January 2004, ‘RESPECT-The Unity Coalition’ was established. It sprang from the anti-war movement in the United Kingdom, particularly the Stop the War Coalition (SWC), which staged the largest public rally in British history on February 15, 2003, to oppose the invasion of Iraq. The anti-war movement had a significant role in the politicization of a new generation of young people, particularly British Muslims. According to Peace, the movement's unparalleled success, along with the notion of creating a new Labor party was sparked by the profound dissatisfaction of many old Labor members which necessitates the creation of new party (Boucek 112).

When Labor lost local elections in Birmingham and Leicester in May 2003, the results were primarily attributed to Muslim voters, giving weight to this theory. George Monbiot, a British journalist and environmental advocate, and Salma Yaqoob, the chair of the SWC's Birmingham branch, spearheaded the effort to create a party. After being ousted from the

Labor Party in October 2003, MP George Galloway entered the fray. He would go on to become the face of Respect and its most well-known figure (although he was never the party leader).

Respect was founded with the goal of providing a forum for people enraged by the Iraq war, but also federate parts of the extreme left in the United Kingdom. Respect's leaders began campaigning soon after its establishment, in preparation for the London Assembly and European Parliament elections on June 10, 2004. They were well aware that a sizable percentage of Muslim voters would be prepared to move from Labor to the Conservatives. Because of the proportional voting systems used, this would be a great chance for Respect candidates to win. Many of these candidates were Muslim, and election literature referred to Respect as "the Muslim party." They also marketed the elections as a "referendum on Blair and the war" in attempt to sway people who were enraged by the Iraq invasion. Given that the party had only been around for six months, its electoral success was surprising (Peace 115).

Respect's first elected official, Oliur Rahman, was elected in a local council by-election in Tower Hamlets. The party subsequently set about preparing for the election of its first Member of Parliament. This would be no easy task, given the severity of the situation. The UK's plurality voting system, known as "first past the post," makes it far more difficult for minor parties to gain traction. Seats are more likely to be won in proportional systems (Elshayel 223).

However, it favors parties with a geographically concentrated base of support and the residential isolation of many Muslim communities meant that many engaged in Respect felt they would be able to take advantage of this. Respect was not the only organization attempting to capitalize on Muslim communities' resentment of the Iraq war. The Muslim Public Affairs Committee for example ran a campaign in the North West of England to remove Labour MPs (Boucek 112).

Respect Party fielded 26 candidates in England and Wales in the 2005 UK general election, with Muslims being the vast bulk of its candidates. The party saw the biggest possibility for triumph in East London, where three of the four current Labor MPs had voted in favor of the referendum. They also targeted Muslim-majority areas in Bradford, Birmingham, Manchester, and Leicester. Respect candidates were also filed in areas with a low Muslim population, such as Dorset and Neath (Laughlin 65).

Respect devoted the majority of its resources on electing candidates in East London, amassing an army of volunteers to canvass potential voters and persuade them to vote for a party that many had never ever heard of. Many political analysts were surprised when George Galloway was elected as MP for Bethnal Green and Bow, overturning a Labor majority of nearly 10,000. Two additional Respect candidates placed second to Labor in the region, and Salma Yaqoob finished second in the Birmingham Small Heath and Spark brook constituency (Laughlin 65).

Although the party has been unable to spread its dominance beyond East London, Birmingham, and Bradford, it has altered the political environment in these places. As a result of its success, it compelled major parties to reconsider their own election strategy. This is especially true in Tower Hamlets, where the party played a key role in pushing for a referendum on a directly elected mayor (Peace 72).

Respect, in fact, has brought to the forefront a new generation of young British people. Muslim political activists and leaders, particularly women, will continue to play an important role and significant influence in British politics. These young activists will be the ones to carry the party forward in the future, and their success will be crucial (Peace 73).

To conclude, this chapter has demonstrated how Muslims in the United Kingdom became active in the large campaign to stop the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq. It highlights the central role played by Muslim organizations like Just Peace and the Muslim Association of

Britain in the anti-war movement. This participation was beneficial to Muslims in many ways. It led to the formation of new organizations and coalitions in addition to the creation of a new political party that achieved notable success in a very short time, the Respect Party.

Conclusion

The British Muslim population increased in size and gained considerable visibility since the wake of the new century. Muslims are now represented in all fields of the British economic, cultural and political life. British Muslims made valuable contributions to the development of the British multi-ethnic milieu and multi religious society. Muslims who live in the UK come from a wide range of ethnic and cultural origins. The story of their immigration and settlement in Britain is mostly associated with hostility and marginalization.

Their situation becomes worse since the 9/11 Attacks as Islam has been linked to violence and Muslims accused of terrorism. Their lives deteriorated as a result of the rising Islamophobia and the negative attitudes about their religion. The new measures of the "war on terror" made the situation of Muslims even worse. However, Muslims who had established a solid infrastructure of community centers, mosques and representative organizations through decades decided to stand up for their rights and defend their religion, dignity and culture.

When Britain decided to enter in an alliance with the United States in its declared foreign wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, Muslims joined the sections of the British society who opposed what they perceived as unjust wars. The Muslim participation in the antiwar movement which aimed to end the wars, or at least educate the public about the hidden objectives of the invasions, was a good test to the political strength of the Muslim community and to the ability of its leaders and representative organizations to mobilize British Muslims for just causes.

The first chapter sheds light on British Muslim's position in Britain and provides a brief overview on British Muslims and the history of their presence in the UK highlighting the issue of immigration before and after the World War Two. It also shows that the British Muslims are an integral part of the British population in general. It also explains the issue of

Islamophobia that existed before the 9/11 Attacks but increased in a rapid rate in the aftermath of the attacks. British Muslims faced and are still facing problems of racial bias, segregation and discrimination.

The organization became an important component of the Stop the War Coalition. They started making demonstrations, protests and organizing meetings in order to voice their demands to the British people and government. They also held unified marches across the United Kingdom; the purpose from these marches was to increase members of protestors gradually. The MAB's leaders also delivered speeches in the process of reporting facts to support Muslims and to change the false image given to Islam after the attacks.

While America and Britain carried on their invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq the anti-war movement was successful in that it debunked the lies used by the two governments to propagate for the wars, educated people on the truth behind the war on terrorism, and generated a huge support to the campaign against the wars. For British Muslims, the effective participation in the anti-war movement was a very successful experience on many levels. By succeeding in making broad alliances with other organizations and groups, they could resist the Islamophobic campaign that aimed to alienate the Muslim community and widen the gap between it and the rest of society.

It also gave them more confidence in their potential to make a change, press the government, and influence the public. They became more aware of their real weight in the social and political life and of their ability to make pressure on the government to gain concessions. It was also an occasion that gained them considerable experience in protesting and claim making and allowed them to prove to the government and the public that the Muslim community is a part of the fabric of British society and that loyalty does not necessarily mean supporting the decisions of the government blindly.

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