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## Leiken, R. S. Europe's Angry Muslims: The Revolt of the Second Generation. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2016.

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**Leiken, R. S. *Europe's Angry Muslims: The Revolt of the Second Generation*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2016.**

Muslim minorities in Western Europe continue to be a subject very much present in public discourse, not infrequently coming up in the context of radicalization and terrorist attacks, especially recently. Questions are raised why some Europe-raised descendants of immigrants choose to commit acts of terror, not infrequently ending in casualties among representatives of the societies they grew up and live in, and why the majority of them do not follow that path. Attempts to answer these questions can be found in the recently published paperback book by Robert S. Leiken titled *Europe's Angry Muslims: The Revolt of the Second Generation*. Leiken is a political scientist, specializing in international affairs, author of numerous books covering the subjects of politics in Central America, Soviet strategy and immigration. Acting as an expert in prominent think tanks, including the Carnegie Endowment and the Brookings Institution, Leiken has held lectures in a number of institutions in the US (Boston University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Harvard's Center for International Affairs) and Mexico. His opinions are frequently quoted by the American press.

In his most recent book, Leiken focused on the sources of radicalization among young Muslims from the second generation (i.e. those who were either born in Europe or came to Europe with their parents as small children). He selected three Western countries with the largest population of Muslims—France, Great Britain and Germany—and having described the history and the specific character of the Muslim minorities in each of them, Leiken presented the most infamous “local” terrorists and made an attempt to retrace their journey down the road of radicalization.

Part one of the book is devoted to France, the first country where an act of terror was committed by a homegrown terrorist, Khaled Kelkal, in 1995. Chapter one is a presentation of Kelkal. Born in a not very religious family, he was a better student than his brothers and finished his education with a BSc in chemistry. He was a social worker devoted to his work with troubled youth. Having been caught for stealing, Kelkal served two prison sentences where his radicalization took place. From an interview he gave to a German doctoral student after the first prison sentence, we learn about Kelkal's school years and the mistrustful treatment he received from his schoolmates, who insisted on his full assimilation (e.g., Kelkal would not eat pork), and about the humiliation and racism he experienced. When he gave up school, his family turned their back on him and Kelkal joined the ranks of his unemployed peers from the suburbs (the unemployment rate was 25%) and, like them, he resorted to theft. His feeling of rejection by mainstream society grew stronger and stronger. Kelkal believed that Arabs get punished more severely for lesser crimes than white offenders. When in prison, Kelkal met a missionary connected with the Muslim Brothers, he learned to read the Qur'an and found the explanation he was looking for—the way the French treat Muslims is nothing but an element of global persecution of Muslims by the West. He regained his pride and his own identity (“neither Arab nor French, but Muslim”). He went to Algeria where he was trained and became a jihadi. His life story shares a number of elements with the stories of other people who committed acts of terror, like Mohammed Sidique Khan, the leader of the London bombers, such as growing up in a community with an increasing unemployment rate, rejection from the local mainstream community on the grounds of skin color, feeling alien in the parents' country of origin, trying to succeed in education, limited religious involvement of the family, and estrangement from the parents that results in getting close to a group of similarly radicalized people. Radicalization is a result of the Europe-raised Insiders (as Leiken calls them) initially meeting missionaries from the fundamental branch of Islam (*Salafi*) and following their strict version of Islam, devoid of folk influences, and then

meeting the Outsiders, usually coming from the Muslim world and preaching the political role of Islam and the necessity to fight the West with violence.

In the next two chapters, Leiken competently shows how French authorities exaggerated the Muslim threat in the whole country. The fear grew stronger fed by the manipulated results of the so-called Obin report on French schools or hoax press releases blown out of proportion like that of Marie Leblanc who falsely accused a group of Muslims of attacking herself and her child. It is with great precision that Leiken debunks the riots of 2005 in the suburbs of French cities, when young Muslims set fire to cars and committed other acts of vandalism which were labeled in the media, especially outside of France, the French Intifada. In fact, it was an expression of frustration by unemployed people living in those areas without any hope for a better future, and feeling looked down on by the authorities. It was limited to particular districts and even displayed features of local patriotism in that the districts competed against one another in the act of destruction. The author stresses that those who took part in the riots used no Muslim symbols, did not shout religious slogans and disregarded imams who tried to talk some sense into them. In the end they were overpowered by the police. One more significant issue connected with France is that of a headscarf ban (i.e., conspicuous religious symbols at school). Leiken shows that the ban was introduced following falsified results in the reports of the school control commissions but he also stresses how submissive and relatively non-rebellious the reaction of the Muslim community was.

In the parts devoted to Great Britain (chapters 8-11) and Germany (chapters 12-13), the author describes the Muslim communities there and finds a lot of similarities; i.e., the growing unemployment; living in bleak and aesthetically least attractive areas; rejection by mainstream society; the first generation being still involved in matters important in the country of origin and failing to find a common ground with their children; and imams being brought in from the countries of origin and unable to address the needs of youth raised in Europe, who feel rejected in the host country and alien in the country their parents come from. Another similarity is the activity of the Outsiders—missionaries from Muslim countries who talk to the Insiders hungry for religious principles and feed them their version of Islam, sometimes extremely strict and literal, sometimes politicized and sometimes (least often, which is stressed in the book) leaning towards violence.

Importantly, Leiken makes a distinction between those movements or trends in the second generation Muslim communities which can lead to radicalization and are potentially dangerous, and those which might not indicate a great extent of assimilation of particular groups of Muslims but do not pose a threat to others. It is worth stressing that Leiken is fully aware of the differences between Muslim populations in particular European countries, their differences in origin, customs, and culture, as well as the socioeconomic situation in their host countries and the way they are treated by mainstream society and the authorities, both state and local.

Participants in the public debate frequently mix various groups of Muslims, attributing the features of one to the other, e.g., thinking that quietist *Salafis* are as dangerous as Islamist jihadis. This is the reason why the book contains a part titled “Guides for the Perplexed” (chapters 4-7), where Leiken describes particular radical Muslim groups which send their missionaries to Europe. He shows the differences between those that only promote their way of practicing and understanding Islam (*Salafis*), those that want to reform societies by getting actively involved in politics (*political Islamists*) and those that want to force their vision on others including other Muslims (jihadis, *takfiris*). He points to mistakes committed by European countries, especially by the UK which allowed post-war radical jihadis to settle in the UK and preach freely in official mosques and enlist local youth for their own cause, e.g., Abu Hamza or Abu-Qatada. Those were frequently beneficiaries of the British state

support and enjoyed refugee status. Being a political scientist, Leiken brilliantly characterizes the tradition and particular character of the state in France, the UK and Germany and uses that knowledge to explain the differences in their attitude to the communities of immigrant background and shows the mistakes those countries made, such as the UK's refusal to extradite Rachid Ramda to France, a man who funded Kelkal's terrorist attack, on the grounds that he would be tortured by the French.

The book was thoroughly researched. The 52-page-long bibliography is a testimony to the extensive research the author carried out in local materials and the press, as well as academic publications prepared by experts in the field, such as Roger Ballard, Philip Lewis, Oliver Roy, Gilles Kepel, Jocelyn Cesari, Tariq Modood, or even Clifford Geertz. Moreover, the book contains fragments of the author's conversations with the people involved in the subject at hand, including neighbors of the victims and members of state services responsible for security in particular countries. He also describes his own visits to the places he writes about, which makes the book more vivid and personal, although even without this the book reads very well. The writing is dynamic and eloquent even if some things get repeated here and there.

The book is, however, not free of some minor mistakes. On page 17, Leiken states that the number of French Muslims is "the largest in absolute and relative terms in Europe," while Muslims constitute about 9-10% of the population of France. Meanwhile in Bulgaria, the percentage is 12, so relatively the Muslim community is larger in Bulgaria. "Surah" is explained as a Qur'anic verse, instead of a "chapter of the Qur'an" (containing many verses). The book needs an Arabic editor. Arabic names and surnames appear in strange forms, e.g., a hadith collection titled "*Sahih al-Bukhari*" here takes the form of "*Sahih Bokhari*," Abu-l-Ala al-Maududi is "Abdul al la Maududi," and "Mohammed" and "Muhammed" co-exist in the book. The definite article "al-" is spelled with or without a hyphen, as in al-Zawahiri vs. al Jihad (both on page 68). The sun letters of the preceding definite article are sometimes transcribed, such as ad-Din (p. 83), and sometimes transliterated al-Zawahiri (the transcribed version would be az-Zawahiri). On page 111, the author states that "Muslims have been in the Balkans for centuries, though hardly at all elsewhere in Eastern Europe." Not only does it seem rather strange to include the Balkans in Eastern Europe, but the author ignores numerous Muslims in Russia; for instance, there are 2 million Muslim Tatars living in Tatarstan and 116,000 Chuvash people.

These shortcomings have no impact on the entire book, which is a very thorough and competent description of the difficult position of Muslim minorities and the children of workers brought to their host countries during the economic boom, who are now superfluous on the job market and in the society in general. The book investigates where and how the radicalization pitfalls exist and how a member of such a community can fall into them.<sup>1</sup> The new preface, written for the current edition, includes the most recent events in the Middle East (e.g., ISIS) and in Europe alike and renders Leiken's book very much up-to-date and worth recommending to a wide spectrum of readers—it serves as a compendium for those professionally studying Islam, especially Islam in Europe, and as a source of information indispensable for the understanding of a number of processes and their causes for politicians and policy makers in European states.

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<sup>1</sup> Reading Leiken's book, I could very much relate to the author, as I use similar arguments when speaking on public media and explaining the situation of Muslim minorities in Europe.