



Jihad Legacy

Islamic Holy War and the Fate of Non-Muslims

Andrew G. Bostom has compiled in *The Legacy of Jihad* primary and secondary sources on jihad and non-Muslims under Islamic rule (ahl adh-dhimma). Ibn Warraq (a pseudonym) says in the foreword that Arabic works of commentators on Islamic manuscripts have also been translated. Indeed, I will illuminate such a key text made in Berlin and Istanbul.

Ibn Warraq stresses also that dealing with jihad could be hard for reasons of political correctness, fear of playing into the hands of racists to the detriment of the West's Muslim minorities, commercial motives, feelings of postcolonial guilt, just plain fear and intellectual terrorism. The editor oversaw the translations on jihad of secondary sources from French and other tongues. Bostom has included Shiite and Sunni works, classical and modern. Ibn Warraq asks why historians didn't do this job of compiling key sources on jihad.

Well, historians of the Mideast have often researched the doctrine of jihad. Bernard Lewis (1916-2018) worked the topic and devoted a chapter to "war" in his source book, *A Middle East Mosaic* (Random House, 2000). Rudolf Peters added a chapter about it to his pioneering *Jihad in Classical and Modern Islam* (Wiener, 1996, 2016) compiling and commenting related fatwas. Germans have dealt with the topic often, though much is still to be said.

This legacy book has eight chapters on jihad, starting with a survey of conquests and the imposition of Islamic rule. Then come sources from Qur'an and Hadith, classical writings by Muslim clerics and jurists, and academic overviews from the last century. Chapters five to eight are devoted to jihad in the seventh to eleventh centuries in world regions; jihad and slavery; and, some Muslim and non-Muslim chronicles of jihad campaigns. Moreover, four appendices with sources and a bibliography make this book a highly valuable compendium.

Made in Berlin and Istanbul

Interestingly, the editor includes a document from World War I (p. 221), a "1915 Ottoman Fatwa." He says this text is believed to be an excerpt from a fatwa by shaikh Abd al-Aziz Jawish (1876-1929 عبد العزيز جاويش), titled *Al-Jihad*, and that the English translation was provided by the "American Agency and Consulate, Cairo, Egypt, March 10, 1915." The Jews of Alexandria were worried and sent it to the Americans in Egypt. How came it about?

The Shaikh of Islam issued his jihad fatwa on November 14, 1914, in Istanbul. There was no previous similar fatwa. The text in this book is a commentary circulated by Jawish in March 1915. But it is not a "1915 Ottoman Fatwa" as such. If so, it would have been written in typical question-and-answer style. Jawish, although educated at al-Azhar University and Dar al-Ulum in Cairo, could not have issued an Ottoman fatwa. He was in the inner circle of the Ottoman war minister, Enver Pasha. Jawish lived until 1914 in Istanbul, then in Berlin, where he worked for the propaganda department of the Foreign Office, which had been founded for one reason: to incite jihad against the British, French and Russians in colonies. So, what appears here as an Islamic text of jihad was really launched in Berlin and Istanbul. This fits to Oppenheim's recipe "how to drive the British in Egypt into a spiral of violence."

How to Wage Jihad

Henry I. Morgenthau (Doubleday, 1918) remembers a similar Arabic document. It was circulated around the same time that the Shaikh of Islam Ürgüplü Mustafa Khairi issued his jihad fatwa, after the Ottoman sultan-caliph himself confirmed jihad in Istanbul on November 11, 1914, and most publicly this Shaikh of Islam Khairi on November 14. Morgenthau's document is broader, but the hard core is the same, especially regarding the little and great jihad, war “by mouth and heart” (hatred of the “infidel”), and how to wage it by the three methods: personal deeds with sharp tools, collective bands to slay “infidels” (for Ottomans this meant also local Greeks, Armenians and Jews)—and jointly by open army campaigns.

Berlin enlisted in the Mideastern News Department two dozen nationalists and Islamists like Jawish to spread millions of jihad pamphlets in the languages of Islam throughout Africa and Asia, where they were to be read to Muslims in mosques. Morgenthau, the U.S. Ambassador in Istanbul from 1913 to 1916, reported that a pamphlet, printed in Arabic and distributed very secretly, instructed Muslims on how to carry out the 1914 Ottoman fatwa.

A Changed Doctrine of Jihad

In this legacy book, an interpreter was not too familiar with the jihad doctrine. He translated concepts of al-jihad al-asghar and al-jihad al-akbar, which the Prophet of Islam used according to tradition, as “lesser war” and “greater war,” respectively. Traditionally, little jihad meant the duty to spread Islam by use of arms and by the killing of enemies. In contrast, the great jihad refers to an individual's spiritual struggle with his soul to overcome base instincts. Do we find in both pamphlets an Ottoman redefinition? There the great jihad is a holy war for the Ottomans, and the little jihad is a holy war in a single country beyond it.

Spread of Jihad - in German Imagination



Die Wälfch der Zennatj grefchit den heiligen Rittg. Den 8. Jhrberg.

The pamphlet in this legacy book is also directed against Egyptian rulers acting on the advice of the English “infidel”. Cairo declared itself neutral in the as-Sanusi jihad against the Italians in Tripolitania. “This shall never be forgiven. However,” the text continues, “our Egyptian brethren have helped us to a certain degree financially and morally in the last two wars, and despite their unbelieving rulers, forwarded their collections on our behalf to the Capital of the Caliphate.” This indicates an Ottoman author of Enver Pasha's circle. His close associate Abd al-Malik Hamza penned the first Sunni Arab theory of Islamism in 1917.

Abu Jihad's Grand Design

A few words on the context of this document. If one considers Berlin's switch from a peacetime to a wartime policy against the British, French and Russians and their Islamic lands, often colonies, it was not a “jihad made in Germany” as Morgenthau said, but a concerted German-Ottoman action in five stages (I put aside all mutiny efforts in India, this part was called since 1914 the Hindu-German complot: A Pan-Indian revolt against the British Raj):

- Oppenheim's task to revolutionize Islam lands as designed in a 136 pp. plan for the kaiser and his ally sultan-caliph Abdü'l-Hamid; since 1909 Mehmed V to get jihad fatwas by muftis/mullahs in liaison with scholars as Becker, Hartmann, Mittwoch;
- hidden jihad agitation by the Foreign Office's web way beyond Berlin and Istanbul;
- the Ottoman jihad fatwa and many other likewise edicts in the Shia and Sunni areas;
- Shaikh Salih ash-Sharif at-Tunisi's change of dogma for an interfaith coalition war;
- jihad by armies, bands and sending jihadist envoys to Islamic lands to get local and regional fatwas of incitement; and distributing all the related means and pamphlets.

Fomenting Revolts

Von Oppenheim served as an archaeologist and diplomat in the Middle East (1896-1909). In 1896 he suggested to the kaiser advantages of eventually declaring jihad against German enemies via the sultan-caliph. After World War I began in mid-1914, Berlin wanted Enver Pasha to start this jihad. The kaiser asked him to enter the war: now the sultan should call for jihad in Asia, India, Egypt and Africa. Scholars even expected “Islamic fanatics fighting for Germany.” Others warned about fatal consequences especially for local non-Muslim minorities in the event of jihad.

Von Oppenheim, the German Abu Jihad, had designed his jihad master plan in October 1914: “Revolutionizing the Islamic Areas of Our Foes.” The emperor wanted the sultan-caliph to incite this jihad. The plot: The sultan leads jihad against the British, French and Russians. Berlin sends money, experts and guns to activists in British India, French or British North Africa and Russian Asia.

The call to wage jihad, the plan explains, goes out in diverse languages of Islam according to psychological factors. Berlin creates an Oriental News Department in the Foreign Office. Fomenting revolution “among Muslims in India and Egypt is key to victory.” Jihad expeditions are to be sent to Karbala [Iraq], Persia [Iran] and Afghanistan to trigger uprisings. Berlin provides intelligence to Islamists, while Istanbul incites them against their foreign masters. Islam, resumes von Oppenheim (p. 136), will be especially for England a devastating hit. “Let us jointly do everything and by all means that it is going to be a deadly one.”

Propaganda Centers

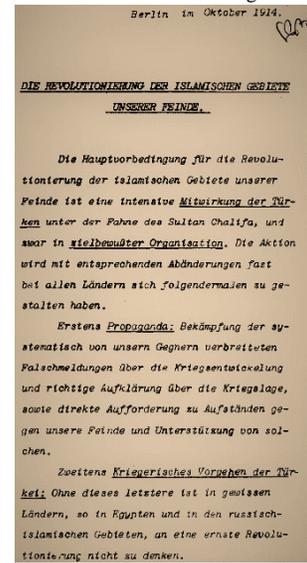
This Abu Jihad became the head of the Oriental News Department, employing native Muslims and establishing up to 75 propaganda centers, the reading rooms staffed by Ottomans with maps and pictures of war. Some called his strategy “war by revolution,” but it was an asymmetrical war waged by incitement to jihad in “anti-imperial revolts:” a double strategy in a colonial hinterland fighting against the front in the spirit of new jihadist Islamism.

Of course, this raised questions. Was the Ottoman sultan the accepted caliph to all Muslims? Is it lawful to fight with chosen friendly “infidels” against selected hostile “infidels” and “their” Muslims? The latter point came up again during the next world war on all sides.

As von Oppenheim had suggested, a further fatwa would decide this. The Shaikh of Islam affirmed this idea in his jihad fatwa issued in Istanbul on Saturday, November 14, 1914.

To summarize: His Majesty the [Ottoman] Padishah of Islam orders a jihad as a general mobilization and individual duty for all Muslims according to the Qur'an. Since Russia, England and France are now hostile to the Islamic caliphate, it is also incumbent upon all Muslims ruled by these governments to proclaim jihad against them and to actually attack them. The protection of the Ottoman Empire depends on all Muslims hastening to partake in the jihad; if some refrain, they are committing a sin and deserve divine wrath. For Muslims of enemy countries, it is forbidden to fight against Islamic troops, even if the enemy forces them. Otherwise they deserve hellfire for murder. It is a great sin for Muslims under the rule of England, France, Russia, Serbia, Montenegro and their allies to fight against Germany and Austria, which are Muslim allies (see *Germany and the Middle East*, 2004; *Islam in Europe, Revolts in the Middle East*, 2014; and *Middle Eastern Mosaic* 2013-2016).

1914 Jihad Master Plan: Page One



The Truth of Jihad: حقيقة الجهاد



The Truth of the Faith War

In this fatwa, the sultan-caliph was the sovereign of Muslims. It was permitted to fight with good “infidels” against bad “infidels and their Muslims.” The latter had not only no right to fight back but they had to turn against the foreign overlords. Enver's confidant shaikh Salih ash-Sharif at-Tunisi confirmed this new jihad doctrine. Enver asked him to travel to Berlin to popularize this jihad (he did the same with Jawish). For this, shaikh Salih wrote his fatwa on 3 November 1914. This *haqiqat al-jihad* was published by Berlin's new Society for the Study of Islam. It was a blueprint for similar pamphlets as the one mentioned in this book. Thus, an interfaith coalition jihad became possible with “infidels” of the Central Powers against “infidels” of the Allied Powers. Jihad was now an individual duty for Muslims. Peace between Islam and Europe was possible without foreign rulers.

In the end, the execution of jihad was disappointing for von Oppenheim's circles. Perhaps not so for the Ottomans who waged it in their realm against Armenians and other “infidels” like the Jews of [Palestine](#). Most Muslims beyond the Ottoman Empire ignored that jihad, although Germans spent millions for jihad expeditions and propaganda such as the weekly *Al-Jihad*. That jihad concept deeply affected Muslim politics as Islamists adopted and re-fashioned it in diverse kinds. Not by chance was the Muslim Brotherhood initiated in 1917 and later led by Hasan al-Banna of Egypt. As von Oppenheim's deputy Karl E. Schabinger said, seeds of Islamist revolts had been planted: soon there are people ready to turn against their rulers. After the colonialists left, that jihad impulse went on. No peace came but nationalist revolts. Since 1918 it took 61 years (96 with Sunnis) for Islamist revolts. In Persia of 1914 a jihad wave rose while a teenager named al-Khumaini watched it unfolding. Later he created the “Islamic State.” In the global era, do notions of jihad export succeed as well?

Returning to Andrew G. Bostom's book with the document, the events went like this: von Oppenheim points the kaiser to a fearsome Ottoman jihad potential in 1896 (then Wilhelm II scared Tsar Nicholas' envoy by this “von Oppenheim idea” to incite jihad revolts in India or similar colonial hinterlands—a threat for Russian Asia too). Von Oppenheim draws up a jihad plot in October 1914, a secret but joint German-Ottoman effort. He works in Berlin, Istanbul and Baghdad to incite jihad by his circles beyond the Ottoman Empire and India. His rules: in Islamic matters let only friendly Islamists act publicly, never Germans. Cultivate war neutral countries for Islamists to act without control like America or Switzerland.

As planned, the sultan-caliph proclaims a “selected jihad” for a coalition world war, and the Shaikh of Islam legitimizes this in a public fatwa on November 14, 1914. Shaikh Salih at-Tunisi changes in his fatwa the jihad doctrine as a blue-print for similar edicts by Jawish. An American diplomat in Cairo gets a copy, as Ambassador Morgenthau did in Istanbul. From there it goes to Washington DC's archives and later enters this book as an “Islamic source.” All in all, Andrew G. Bostom's compendium advances a rich multitude of sources on the jihad legacy.

[Wolfgang G. Schwanitz](#)

Andrew G. Bostom, ed.: *The Legacy of Jihad: Islamic Holy War and the Fate of Non-Muslims*. Foreword by Ibn Warraq, Prometheus Books, 2005, 759 pages, including index.