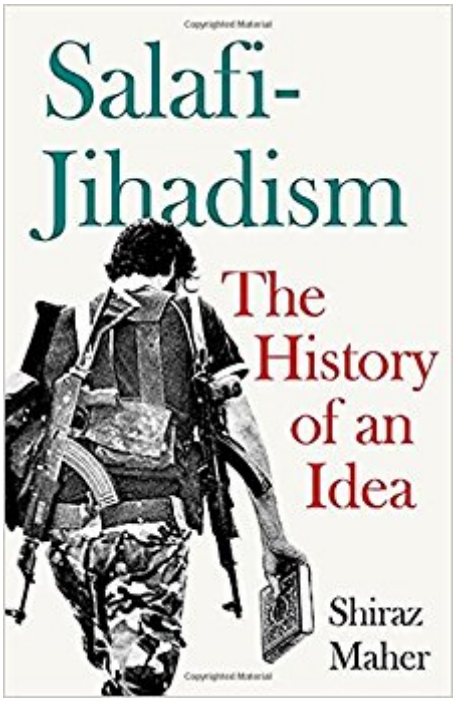
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Salafi-Jihadism: The History Of An Idea



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Synopsis

No topic has captured the public imagination of late quite so dramatically as the specter of global jihadism. While much has been said about the way jihadists behave, their ideology remains poorly understood. As the Levant has imploded and millenarian radicals claim to have revived a Caliphate based on the teachings of the Prophet Mohammed, the need for a nuanced and accurate understanding of jihadist beliefs has never been greater. Shiraz Maher charts the intellectual underpinnings of salafi-jihadism from its origins in the mountains of the Hindu Kush to the jihadist insurgencies of the 1990s and the 9/11 wars. What emerges is the story of a pragmatic but resilient warrior doctrine that often struggles - as so many utopian ideologies do - to consolidate the idealism of theory with the reality of practice. His ground-breaking introduction to salafi-jihadism recalibrates our understanding of the ideas underpinning one of the most destructive political philosophies of our time by assessing classical works from Islamic antiquity alongside those of contemporary ideologues. Packed with refreshing and provocative insights, Maher explains how war and insecurity engendered one of the most significant socio-religious movements of the modern era.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"[A] most timely and relevant contribution to the growing literature on the subject, and is enlightened, informed, and insightful. Highly recommended." - Choice"An excellent and original account of what jihadists actually think. Mr Maher goes well beyond previous works EL in setting out a taxonomy of jihadists" system of beliefs. It will be a must-read work in the study of radicalism." - The Economist

"Mr. Maher deserves praise for producing a book that is the first of its kind, synthesizing work that has been done on the individual components of Salafi-jihadism. Readers looking for a rigorous but lucid account of Islamic State's ideas will be well-served by Mr. Maher's book.' - Wall Street Journal "Shiraz Maher does a first rate job of explaining a complex and important issue. Salafi-Jihadism is arguably the fastest growing current within the Muslim thought today and is essential to our understanding of how groups like the Islamic State and Al-Qaeda recruit and justify their acts." - Hassan Hassan, Associate Fellow of Chatham House; author of the New York Times bestseller ISIS: Inside the Army of Terror "Shiraz Maher makes it clear in his fascinating new book that we are witnessing a very recent phenomenon: "the greatest period of anti-western intellectual development in Salafi-jihadi thought took place in the years after the 9/11 terrorist attacks"." - Patrick French, The Guardian "[A] groundbreaking study EL a masterclass in how to do intellectual history, and one that nobody with an interest in radical Islam should miss." - Tom Holland, New Statesman "Although Salafi jihadism has profoundly shaped global politics for more than three decades, Shiraz Maher is the first to survey the doctrines that have animated and divided the movement. His book will be a standard reference for years to come." - Will McCants, author of The ISIS Apocalypse: The History, Strategy, and Doomsday Vision of the Islamic State "In this perceptive and lucid survey, Shiraz Maher, who has built up a justified reputation as an authority on contemporary Islamic extremism, traces the evolution of they key ideas behind one of the most significant religious and political movements of our time. He explains their origins, meanings and, above all, their real impact on violent militants over the last three or four decades. Comprehensive and thought-provoking, this is an important and timely contribution." - Jason Burke, author of The New Threat From Islamic Militancy "Salafi-Jihadism provides an excellent and important insight into an intricately constructed religious and intellectual situation .. it provides much needed context to some of the most complex and consequential events in the world today. With its elegant, engaging style and crisp brevity, this book is an excellent investigation into a subject many of us would do well to learn that bit more about." - Middle East Eye

Shiraz Maher (PhD) is a Senior Research Fellow at the International Center for the Study of Radicalization (ICSR) at Kings College, University of London, and teaches at Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore.

Completely changed my view of the middle east and helped me discover who are real enemy is; not Islam, but Salafi Jihadist

Interesting book, not much else available on the subject for the general reader. Not the easiest of reads, requires considerable concentration to follow, particularly the many very similarly spelt but dissimilar meaning Arabic words.

Thorough and scholarly yet able to be understood - maybe not always on the first read. It is an excellent read wherein one must suspend presuppositions and truly learn.

ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“Salafi-Jihadism: The History of an IdeaÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• by Shiraz Maher (June 2016). [This review is from the "Hurst & Company, London" edition with 292 pages -- not the "Oxford Univ. Press" edition.]The author has written a very extensive and objective book in detailing the theological origins of "Salafi-Jihadism" or "political [Islamist] religion". The author cites not only the writings of Salafi-Jihadists theorists since the 1930s (Sayyid Quth & Rashid Rida [who were stimulated by the earlier writings of Jamal al-Afghani & Muhammad 'Abduh], and later by Ayman al-Zawahiri and Osama bin Laden), but also provides extracts from the Quran and ahadith that jihadists use to justify their militancy. But what is "Salafi-Jihadism"? The author reviews the opinions of others writing on this topic, and opines: "there are five essential and irreducible features...tawhid, hakimiyya, al-wala' wa-l-bara', jihad, and takfir" (p. 14).While the author acknowledges that the current jihadism was stimulated by the Russian invasion of Afghanistan c. 1979, and while Salafis were opposed to "Westoxification", the author doesn't buy into the Edward Said argument that "Western colonialism" fomented militant jihadism, but shows instead that it is a fundamental part of Islam itself -- of the Qur'an.The author noted: "In this book I aim to demonstrate tensions within the movement by highlighting intra-Salafi debates and disputes over orthodoxy" (p. 12). The author contends that Salafi-Jihadism "is a thought, or ideological strain, with which individuals can identify. It does not belong to a particular group or movement..." (p. 16).If there is no "Look Inside" feature, following are several sub-topics that help reveal the exploration of this book: "Jihad: The Obligation of Fighting", "Applying Jihad in Salafi Thought", "Attacking the far enemy as a defensive measure", "Human shields (tatarrus)", "The emergence of takfir as a tool for intra-Muslim violence", "Heretics", "Holy war and the Essence of Monotheism [tawhid]", "the fear of secularism", "Intra-Salafi debates on obedience: jihad and islah".The author contends that Salafi-Jihadism "believes in progress through regression, where the perfect life is realized by reviving the Islam for its first three generations" (p. 207).The author said for a goal in writing this book: "Movements within Salafism differ sharply over their views on the modern nation-state.... They consequently prescribe different

methods (manhaj) for change, from inert quietism to revolutionary upheaval. It is this latter manifestation of Salafism that has been the subject of inquiry in this book" (p. 207).The author notes how Salafi-Jihadism expanded after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, and reviews the differences between al-Qaeda and ISIS in Syria c. 2015 -- and how these differences continue to change today (c. early 2016). The author opined: "Only war could allow a true believer to fully establish their devotion to Allah by demonstrating their conviction in al-qada' wa-l-qadr, tawakkul, and khawf." (p. 208).Despite the clamp-down efforts against Salafi-Jihadism, the author claims: "Salafi-Jihadism remains an extremely resilient soteriology. ... Whenever its name is called, supporters chant 'baqiyya wa tatamaddad' -- remaining and expanding" (p. 211).One shortcoming I found is that while the author provided a "glossary" with meanings for about 45 frequently-used Arabic words, the author splashes dozens and dozens of other Arabic words or phrases throughout his book -- I wish that they had also been listed in the glossary, too (just for ease of reference). All of these Arabic words/themes help to solidify the author's expertise in understanding and writing on this topic.While the author doesn't cite the works of Mr. Robert Spencer, he does note Mr. Raymond Ibrahim's "The Al Qaeda Reader" in the bibliography.This book will be well received by Islamo-realists.

Maher has a grasp on Salafi-Jihadism that rivals that of any academic or policy wonk. With deep discussion and clear analysis the author brings understanding to a complicated and history-filled belief.

Great read

"Know your enemy."

One of the clearest expositions yet on Islam extremism yet available. wwf

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