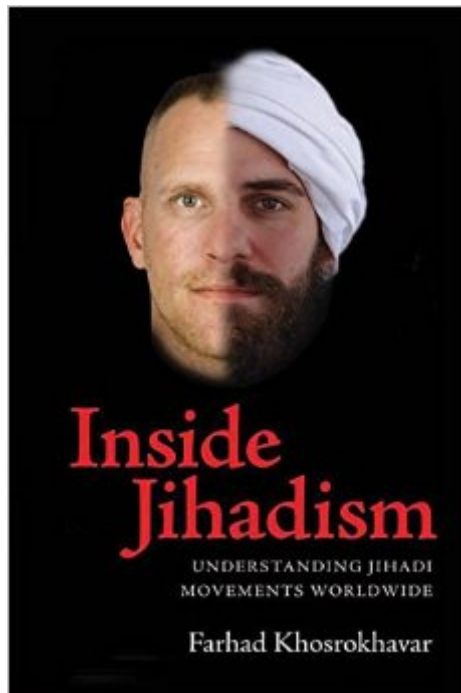


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Inside Jihadism: Understanding Jihadi Movements Worldwide (The Yale Cultural Sociology Series)



Synopsis

Jihad is the most organized force against Western capitalism since the Soviet era. Yet jihadism is multifaceted and complex, much broader than Al Qaeda alone. In the first wide-ranging introduction to today's rapidly growing jihadism, Khosrokhavar explains how two key movements variously influence jihadi activists. One, based in the Middle East, is more heavily influenced by Islamic religion and political thought. The other, composed of individuals growing up or living mostly in Europe and Western democracies including the United States, is motivated by secular as well as religious influences. Khosrokhavar interprets religious and lesser-known Arabic texts and the real-world economic and political dynamics that make jihadism a growing threat to Western democracies. Interviews with imprisoned jihadists on what motivated their plots and actions help the readers understand reality as seen by jihadists. The author concludes with recommendations to safeguard democracies from future jihadism.

Book Information

File Size: 875 KB

Print Length: 322 pages

Page Numbers Source ISBN: 1594516162

Simultaneous Device Usage: Up to 4 simultaneous devices, per publisher limits

Publisher: Routledge (December 3, 2015)

Publication Date: December 3, 2015

Sold by:Â Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B018W7RBMM

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Enhanced Typesetting: Not Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #563,471 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #75

inÂ Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Religion & Spirituality > Religious Studies & Reference >

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Customer Reviews

"Inside Jihadism: Understanding Jihadi Movements Worldwide" by Farhad Khosrokhavar (2009). I've read dozens of books regarding Jihadism, and this one should be at the top for reading by anyone interested in this genre. Unlike so many similar-theme books that seem to be haphazardly tossed together, this book reveals fine, extensive scholarly research. The author has interviewed numerous jailed jihadists, and compares his findings with similar studies. While recognizing the impact of some of the destitute socio-economic influences on jihadism, the author does not buy into the "let's ignore the influence of Islam"- hostage syndrome of apologetic Western 'scholars' -- and warns: "many studies of Jihadism are flawed because of a lack of understanding of Islamic culture, history and society" (p. 6) and "By ignoring the role of Islam as a culture and a religion, these studies give at best a one-sided account of Jihadism" (p.11). In trying to understand the roots of Jihad jingoism, the author looks back at the Kharijite rift with Imam Ali (c. 661). Also, the author looks at the theological disputes and differences between the Jihadists and the 'lesser' hajjis, and debates the issue as to whether or not jihadism is the semi-hidden 'sixth' pillar of Islam. Besides the theologians, the author reviews the jihadist-theory contributions of Banna, Qutb and other 'modern' Islamists. The author discusses how Jihadist cells and their membership assimilate differently in various countries, and how a jihadist's nuclear family may impact upon a young jihadist's development (c. p. 231). The author noted: "For Jihadists as well as major trends within Muslim Fundamentalists, Islam, in its essence, is about ruling and government" (p. 30).

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