

2 The Ottoman Proclamation of Jihad*

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Why did the Ottoman empire proclaim Jihad in November 1914 and who was the proclamation's genuine author? Did the impetus come from Kaiser Wilhelm II, the German emperor, whose faith in Jihad stemmed from the desire to undermine Berlin's rival empires, Britain, France, and Russia, who all ruled over large Muslim populations? Or did the proclamation originate with the Ottomans themselves and, perhaps more specifically, with the leaders of the Committee of Union and Progress, the men who ruled the empire during World War I? In truth, the proclamation had both German and Ottoman origins. In this chapter, I focus on the latter, to examine Ottoman uses of Jihad both before and after November 1914.

Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje's The Holy War "Made in Germany" (1915)

In 1915, one of the foremost European Islamicists, C. Snouck Hurgronje, in several publications denounced his German colleagues for inducing the Ottoman government to issue a world-wide call for holy war. In particular, Snouck chastised his fellow scholars Martin Hartmann and Carl Heinrich Becker for allowing political expediency to prevail over academic integrity.¹ He charged them with resuscitating "a thoroughly mediaeval institution, which even the Mohammedan world was outgrowing."² The German government, aided by its academics, "for their own selfish interests [was leading the Ottomans back] into the ways of mediaeval religious hatred which they were just about to leave."³

Jihad in the Ottoman Register before 1914

The 19 November 1914 issue of the *İslam Mecmuası* (the journal of Islam), published in Istanbul, carried a number of documents related to the Ottoman proclamation of Jihad. It included the Jihad proclamation itself, the call to Jihad by Sultan Mehmed Reşad V, the fatwas issued by the

sheikhülislam authorizing the move, the statement by the top military commander, Enver Pasha, and, finally, “a few words” of editorial comment by the publication’s director, Halim Sabit.⁴

The Ottomans did not need German blandishments to convince them of the advantages of issuing a Jihad declaration in 1914. By employing Jihad the state was mobilizing the support of its Muslim subjects in a time of war. This policy was aimed in particular at the empire’s Arab inhabitants, whose leaders the British courted and whose allegiance the state sought to secure.⁵ Contrary to what Entente propaganda was wont to argue, the declaration stemmed neither from an Ottoman desire for a global Muslim empire nor from a German gambit. The state’s use of Jihad in 1914, moreover, was far from unprecedented. Ottoman history shows us that the centralized state, along with its religious authorities, military and political leaders, and – beginning in the mid-nineteenth century with the emergence of the institutions of mass society and its outlets – newspaper editors, journalists and intellectuals, understood and employed the powerful ideological energies that “Jihad” could mobilize. They also understood the dangers of such an ideology. While Jihad had the potential to unify Muslims against intruders, it could also, in their diplomatic relations, estrange the Ottomans from the European powers and, at home, speed up the disintegration of the multi-confessional empire by sparking hostilities between its Muslim and non-Muslim subjects. Thus for much of the nineteenth century the government in Istanbul sought to join the European concert, not to fight it. It was not for nothing that the Ottomans’ understanding of international law included not only “holy war” but also “holy peace.”⁶

The concept of Jihad occupied a quotidian place in the Ottoman cultural register, and its motley everyday presence as well as the state’s repeated use of Jihad-as-holy-war throughout the long nineteenth century make it odd that the best-known Ottoman Jihad declaration – that of November 1914 – has been largely understood as a “jihad made in Germany.” Jihad was a prominent cultural concept, and usages of the term “Jihad” spilled into a wide variety of meanings. The jolly seventeenth century traveller and adventurer, Evliya Çelebi, for example, characterized his patron’s most intimate marital moments devoted to “the propagation of the species” as a “greater jihad.” His patron was the grand vezir, whose wife, Kaya Sultan, was a strong-willed woman, we are to understand.⁷ During the years of the Crimean war (1853–1856), in another case, a certain Ayşe travelled to Istanbul to join the “jihad” – never mind that the state had not, and did not, issue a call to holy war during that war against Russia. Ayşe’s initiative leaves us wondering about the meanings

and function of Jihad, but it also demonstrates its evidently broad appeal. Whether she intended to take up arms or perhaps was expressing her willingness to serve as a field nurse remains unknown. She may also have simply expected the state to reward her patriotism monetarily and to send her home, which is how the episode ended.⁸ Even though the documentation lacks detail, we can say at least that her case was not unique; the same year a woman by the name of Nazıma presented similar intentions.⁹

In the Ottoman world one did not even have to be Muslim to wage “jihad.” When Maronite Christians in Mount Lebanon felt threatened by the growing number of Protestant missionaries from the United States in the 1820s, the Maronite patriarch saw his church fighting a “struggle [original: *jihād*, M.A.] with all our power against those Biblemen.”¹⁰ For the early Ottoman period, Linda Darling and Cemal Kafadar have each emphasized the situational character and fluidity of the ways in which the concept Jihad was employed. And they have differentiated Jihad from *gaza*, two related but distinct categories often simply rendered into English as “holy war.”¹¹ Both Darling and Kafadar have shown that “holy” by no means meant “in line with Islamic law” and that, perhaps counter to our modern expectations, Christian corsairs – or an Armenian prince and a Greek princess, for that matter – could be featured in epics and stories as warrior heroes fighting shoulder to shoulder with Muslims.¹² Thus the meaning of “jihad” went beyond any one legal-doctrinal definition and signified a generic call for marshaling all-out effort in the face of great challenges. Such a broad understanding explains why the new coins minted in the crisis years under Sultan Mahmud II (r. 1808–1839), for example, were named “jihadiye” coins.¹³

In Arabic the word *jihād* connotes “striving.” The concept appears in the Koran without a definitive explanation and thus over the centuries it has been interpreted by scholars in various ways. *Jihād* has been defined as the internal, entirely peaceful struggle carried on by the individual believer striving to honour divine expectations *and*, at other times, as external, violent warfare waged against non-Muslims.¹⁴ The internal, peaceful form, moreover, has been referred to as “greater jihad,” whereas the external, violent form has been referred to as “lesser jihad.”¹⁵ Thus the fact that the Young Turk government of the Ottomans in 1914 declared the war against Britain, France, and Russia (and Serbia and Montenegro) a “greater jihad” (*cihad-ı ekber*) seems to betray, at first sight, a stunning ignorance of classical Jihad doctrine on the part of the Ottoman leaders.¹⁶ Could the Young Turks and their German allies have got their Jihad so wrong?

The Ottoman Jihad in 1914

The Jihad proclamation was first deliberated upon, then prepared in the form of five legal opinions or fetvas (*fatwā*), endorsed by 29 religious authorities, blessed formally by the sultan, received by the members of the Ottoman chamber of deputies, presented in a closed ceremony to political, military and religious dignitaries on 11 November, and then, with great fanfare on 14 November, a Saturday, read out publicly by the Custodian of the Fetva (*Fetva Emini*), Ali Haydar Efendi, to a large crowd assembled outside the Mosque of Mehmed the Conqueror in the Fatih neighbourhood of Istanbul, not far from the Haliç, the fabled Golden Horn.¹⁷ All this took time and was not accomplished in a single day but rather over the course of several weeks. There are still other “correct” dates for the proclamation. Arnold Toynbee’s *Islamic World since the Peace Settlement* puts the declaration on 23 November, the day on which, as Toynbee notes not incorrectly, “the Sultan-Caliph” Mehmed v (Reşad) “promulgated” the fetvas “signed by the *Sheykhul-Islām*,” the highest-ranking religious dignitary.¹⁸ Gottfried Hagen, who has published a collection of pan-Islamic pamphlets found at the University of Heidelberg, has shown that the first publications of the fetva appeared as early as 7 November.¹⁹ And, in fact, even earlier, on 3 November – thus immediately after the Ottoman surprise attack on Russian Black Sea ports on 30 October and the Russian declaration of war on 2 November – *İkdam*, the large Istanbul daily and no friend of the ruling Union and Progress regime, had urged that “the declaration of jihad against these states who are the enemies of Islam” had become a “duty for all Muslims.”²⁰

What seems more plausible than Young Turk ignorance, however, is the erasure of the line between the individual’s and the state’s efforts in the age of anti-colonial mass movements and total war. The erasure between the personal and the official, the internal and the external, amounted to the “secularization of jihad”, to draw on Firoozeh Kashani-Sabet’s description of the phenomenon in Iran.²¹ But if “jihad” became secularized through its employment for secular, political ends, then the reverse also became true and resulted in the “Islamization of politics” or, put differently, the “politicization of Islam.”²² Both framings point to a new type of convergence of politics and religion in the nineteenth century. What was new was not the convergence itself but the extent to which it was employed by the state in a new era of mass society and universal conscription armies. In other words, a century so often described as a century of secularization was, in fact, in the Ottoman case just as in societies all across Europe, one in which religion became ever more prominently a part of international conflict. İsmail Kara’s analysis

and painstaking translation of excerpts from some 70 publications and manuscripts appearing in the late Ottoman period clearly illustrate this process.²³ Anti-colonial struggles, whether armed or not, became framed as Jihad from Indonesia to western Africa.²⁴

During the period from 1768 to 1922, the state issued official Jihad declarations on at least six occasions.²⁵ In 1773, the state declared Jihad during the war against Russia that led to Russia's annexation of the northern Black Sea region.²⁶ And again in 1809 it did so against its own Serbian population,²⁷ accompanied by eight banners to be "unfurled for jihad."²⁸ In 1829 the state declared Jihad against Russia for supporting the Greek revolt: "[b]ecause the Russians have incited the Greek Orthodox to wage war [against us] in pursuit of independence and because this war has thus been caused by hostility towards the Islamic faith and therefore is a religious struggle, jihad has become an obligation for all those between the ages of twelve and seventy of the people of Islam."²⁹ It did so again in the one-month-long Greek-Ottoman war of 1897, a rare victory during this long stretch of Ottoman defeats.³⁰ In 1914 the declaration was aimed collectively against the Entente powers, Britain, France and Russia, and their allies. And in 1919, religious leaders in Mustafa Kemal's resistance movement – hence technically not the Ottoman state – declared Jihad against Greece, to mobilize support for Mustafa Kemal against both the Greek armies in May 1919 and against the British-controlled government in Istanbul.³¹

This type of accounting, however, focusing on declarations of war, is inadequate because it omits the many other instances in which the state employed the concept of Jihad. In mid-1821, for example, in the face of the Greek uprising that led to an independent Greek state in 1832, the palace sent out directives to officials in Istanbul and its vicinity "to call upon the Muslims to bind their hearts together" and "to observe the 5 times daily prayers," reminding them that in the age of the Prophet Muhammad "when *shari'a* was followed, *jihad* performed and the religious beliefs were firm, ... the Muslims were victorious."³² In explaining why the Ottomans had suffered so many military defeats since the eighteenth century, the sultan's court historian, delivering his sovereign's imperial decree in 1826, claimed that the Ottomans' earlier victories had flowed "from the virtue of the sword of jihad (*seyf-i cihad sayesinde*)."³³ The army of Mehmed Ali, the governor of the province of Egypt, was known as the *Jihadiye*. When in 1831 he sent his forces into Syria against those of the sultan with the intention of capturing the Ottoman capital, Sultan Mahmud II had fetvas issued against the ambitious governor and his son, the *Jihadiye*'s commander, declaring them "rebels."³⁴ Sultan Mahmud II's own troops – newly reorganized, all-Muslim, and renamed in 1826 –

had marched under the banner of “The Trained Triumphant Soldiers of the Prophet Muhammad.” During the Crimean war, even though the state did not declare Jihad, as we have seen, the special taxes collected to support that war were designated “jihad donation (*iane-i cihadiye*)” and “jihad taxes (*rüsumat-ı cihadiye*).”³⁵ And throughout the uprisings across the Balkans during the 1870s and the 1877–1878 war with Russia, the state subsidized the publication of books on Jihad – although here, too, because of its potential international consequences, it refrained from declaring Jihad publicly.³⁶

What inspired these continued uses of religion by the state in the nineteenth century? Virginia Aksan suggests that this turn towards religion in military and political affairs reflected a state policy of Islamization, or re-Islamization – a “revival of religious fervor” necessitated by the need “to recreate an [Islamic] ‘orthodoxy’ in the face of both Muslim and non-Muslim challenges to legitimacy.”³⁷ Over the long nineteenth century Ottoman elites employed an “image of Islam” in the manner of an “invented tradition” by blending religion with resistance to European encroachments, often by depicting the Prophet Muhammad “as an exemplar in war.”³⁸ Butrus Abu-Manneh has linked this development to the ascendancy among the Ottoman elites of sufi mystics from the Khalidiye branch of the Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi order. The Khalidiye had been moulded by the experience of British imperialism in India and had abandoned previous quietism in order to achieve not only religious but also “political regeneration.”³⁹ By the end of the nineteenth century, cadets at the war college who missed prayers or did not fast during Ramadan were receiving disciplinary demerits.⁴⁰ Maintaining those practices was deemed necessary because “the survival of the Sublime State depends on the preservation of the Islamic faith”, and all civil and military members of the state had to understand “the sacredness of their duty.”⁴¹

Already by 1826, the rhetoric used for the mobilization of the army by military leaders and state bureaucrats increasingly cast non-Muslims and non-Turks as “politically or militarily” unreliable.⁴² To be sure, the vast, complex empire of the Ottomans did not adhere to a single set of unidirectional policies or one consistent ideology in its approach to the challenges of modernity. Far from it: internationally the Sublime Porte sought to join the European concert, while domestically, beginning in 1839 with the *Tanzimat* reforms (the “re-orderings”), it put in place laws, and even granted semi-autonomous constitutions in the attempt to hold Christian communities inside the Ottoman imperial frame. But prevalent attitudes associated with Islam and Jihad pushed the other way, and they played a central role in the way the state

and its elites, and increasing segments of the Muslim public, defined themselves. The Habsburg empire, also a multinational state, could counter centrifugal pressures by coupling legally enforced religious toleration with an emphatic association of the dynasty, culturally and ceremonially, with the Catholicism to which the overwhelming majority of its subjects belonged. In the Ottoman lands, religiously far more heterogeneous, national cleavages were reinforced rather than undercut by religious identities. The dilemmas of the multi-national state that was also multi-confessional could not have been demonstrated more starkly.

Those at the helm of the Ottoman state were well aware of the self-destructive potential built into instrumentalizing Islam. Sultan Abdülhamid II (r. 1876–1909) sought to use jihad as a diplomatic lever, not as an actual military policy; “the threat of *cihad*,” as one historian put it, “was more effective than the call itself.”⁴³ Islam could be the sword that united Muslim Ottomans from the Balkans to Arabia but it could at the same time be the sword that sliced into the Ottoman body politic cutting out Christians and Jews. In moments of violence against Christians the state rushed to punish the alleged transgressors, often summarily without adequate investigation, in the effort to calm European diplomats and, gradually, European public opinion. Thus the commander on whose watch inter-communal violence broke out in Lebanon in 1860 was put to death alongside two aides.⁴⁴ Similarly, about 30 participants were swiftly executed for the gruesome slaying of the German and French consuls by a mob in Salonica in 1876, murders that had been prompted by the conversion of a young Bulgarian woman to Islam and the woman’s subsequent detention and concealment by her relatives. In the ensuing chaos, according to reports, the ringleaders demanding the woman’s release claimed that “the holy war is about to commence.”⁴⁵ In the war against Russia in 1877, Sultan Abdülhamid II decided it would be prudent to refrain from an Ottoman Jihad declaration, a calculation that did not prevent the sultan from receiving a Muslim delegation from Russian Dagestan and explicitly blessing its Jihad declaration against the Russian state with an imperial decree (a *ferman*).⁴⁶ His prudence was certainly vindicated, as the Ottomans had the European powers on their side at the Berlin Congress, which overturned much of Russia’s military successes and the treaty it had imposed at San Stefano. Similar calculations anticipating international support from the great powers meant that the Ottomans not only did not declare Jihad during the Crimean war or the Russian war of 1877–1878, as we have seen, but also not, as we shall see, during the Italian war of 1911–1912 and the Balkan wars of 1912 and 1913.⁴⁷ When in 1894, during large-scale massacres of

Armenians, European papers reported that the Ottomans were engaged in Jihad against their Christian subjects, the state took quick steps to deny the charge.⁴⁸

In all its modern wars the military used Jihad in its conscription and recruitment efforts, in the training and drilling of troops, and in its efforts at rallying army and society behind the flag. In so doing, Sultan Abdülhamid II, for one, believed himself in good company. Shortly after the “Bulgarian massacres” of 1876 that had so exercised European opinion, the sultan complained that “We are accused in Europe of being savages and fanatics ... [Yet] unlike the Czar, I have abstained till now from stirring up a crusade and profiting from religious fanaticism, but the day may come when I can no longer curb the rights and indignation of my people at seeing their co-religionists butchered in Bulgaria and Armenia.”⁴⁹ By 1892, the day *had* come “In England, Russia and France there are Bible Societies which become exceedingly rich through the donations of rich and fanatical Christians who bequeath all their wealth to them in their wills ... Although the English, Russian and French governments seem not to be involved in their activities, they secretly aid and abet them in sending missionaries into darkest Africa. In this way they spread their beliefs among the local population. By increasing the numbers of their followers this religious influence is then transformed into political leverage ... Although it is obviously desirable to take firm measures against them, if open opposition is brought to play the Sublime Porte will suffer the vexing interventions of the three powers’ ambassadors. Thus the only way to fight against them is to increase the Islamic population and spread the belief in the Holiest of Faiths.”⁵⁰ What did Abdülhamid II mean by declaring his intention to “increase the Islamic population”? Perhaps policies aimed at winning converts in foreign lands. But the massacres of Armenians in the mid-1890s, during which entire villages of terrified Christians sought safety in mass conversion to Islam, suggests that one way the Muslim population could be increased was by decreasing the Christian one.⁵¹

The military distributed publications to army chaplains, some written by the chaplains themselves, others by officers, with stories intended to fortify morale and impart lessons of courage and sacrifice. Typically such stories were built around the ideal of Jihad in terms that conflated religious and secular goals. In one such booklet Jihad meant “unity, fulfilling shari’a law, contributing to the health of the nation, protecting the dignity and glory of the state, building up the country, bringing aid to the umma, [and] preserving the homeland.”⁵² In another, *The Virtues of the Champions of Islam* (“Mujahideen”), Colonel Osman Senai insisted on loyalty, discipline and purity of heart and purpose.⁵³ In *Jihad*

is the *Lord's Command*, published in 1910, the fictional Little Halil – an Ottoman G.I. Joe – presents himself to the recruitment officer. The officer, however, sends the recruit back home upon learning that Halil has no one but an elderly mother and an unmarried sister, and that his father had died after fighting in many a campaign. Halil, with much gusto, objects to his rejection and explains that it had been his mother herself who had sent him.⁵⁴ Thus the recruitment officer is portrayed as compassionate, Halil and his family as eager for Jihad. Such publications, written by officers, religious scholars⁵⁵ and by the Young Turk Committee of Union and Progress that would unseat Abdülhamid II in 1908/9 and seize power in a coup in 1913,⁵⁶ cast further doubt on the assumption that it took German machinations to produce the Jihad declaration of 1914.

When the Italians opened the bombardment of the Libyan coast in early October 1911, a play by Mehmed Sezai entitled *The Sacred Jihad, or the Ottoman-Italian War in Tripoli* was performed in Izmir/Smyrna almost immediately.⁵⁷ “Jihad” played such an important role as a rallying cry among both the regular units and the irregular local resistance in the Italian-Ottoman war that even though the state issued no formal call to holy war, both contemporary observers and subsequent scholars have assumed it had.⁵⁸ A religious gloss on the conflict was encouraged by both sides, as “the Catholic Church and the Pope blessed the Italian fighters and praised God for helping them to replace the Crescent with the Cross in Libya.”⁵⁹ It was not lost on Ottoman officers fighting in Tripoli, including the empire’s future minister of war, Enver, that Italian propaganda was aimed at exploiting ethnic differences and setting the local Arab population against the “Turks.” Italian propaganda held out a deal to Ottoman Arabs: “Let it not be hidden from you that Italy (may Allah strengthen her!), in determining to occupy this land, aims at serving your interests as well as ours, and at assuring our mutual welfare by driving out the Turks ... They have always despised you. We, on the other hand, have studied your customs and your history. We know that you keep your word, and that the Turks oppress you by taxation and conscription. We respect your noble religion because we recognize its merits, and we respect also your women. Woe unto him who will venture to touch them! It is true that we belong to another faith, but we also are People with a Book (Ahl el Kitab), and we practice justice and give alms to the poor. We recognize the rights of all men, and especially of the Arabs, about whom history records so many great things ... There is no doubt that with God’s help, we shall drive the Turks out of this country.”⁶⁰ Those concerned with salvaging the empire hoped to counter such challenges by employing Islam – and Jihad – to strengthen the

bonds crucial for holding together the empire's various parts. Thus, while the Italians were appealing to Arab nationalism, the Ottomans knew that they held the Islam card.

Since Italy had grabbed Libya with no *casus belli* other than a determined desire for empire,⁶¹ the Ottomans expected the great powers to rein in their Italian colleagues. In fact, not a few European observers sympathized with the Ottomans and saw international law on their side.⁶² Ottoman expectations of effective support, however, were bitterly disappointed. It was in the Libyan war, with the Balkan inferno hard on its heels, that the officers and leaders of 1914 cut their teeth; these "Christian" aggressions were the crucible that imbued them with a deep sense of violation and victimhood.⁶³ This generation embodied the lesson that "our honor and our people's dignity cannot be preserved by those old books of international law, but only by war."⁶⁴

It was this sense of victimization that could legitimize oppression of Christians in the Ottoman empire. Between January and June 1914 the state had ethnically "cleansed" – as the Russian ambassador quoted Talat Bey, the Ottoman minister of interior, as saying – the coastal regions around Izmir of their Greek Orthodox population.⁶⁵ From 1912 to 1924, the percentage of non-Muslims in Ottoman Asia Minor plummeted from roughly 20 per cent to less than 2 per cent.⁶⁶ Only a portion of this reduction can be accounted for by the forced emigration in Spring 1914 of 200,000 Greeks or the 192,000 refugees that left Asia Minor after the official exchange of populations agreement signed between Greece and Turkey in 1923.⁶⁷ Nor can it be explained away by the food shortages and disease that hit Christians and Muslims alike. The disgusted analysis of the young political scientist Ahmed Emin (Yalman), a man who would later become a famous Turkish journalist and writer, makes plain that not all Turks supported these "religious" policies, policies Emin was convinced were cynical at their core. But his dissent also demonstrates the extent to which these policies had already begun to be implemented among non-Turkish Muslims before the November declaration. From his perch at Columbia University, young Emin assessed the latest period in Ottoman history in his 1914 doctoral dissertation: "[r]eligion was used as a basis of agitation to secure popularity ... Phrases like "Ottomanism," and the "unity of all elements of population in Turkey without distinction of creed and religion" were still cited; but the meaning given to them was no longer the meeting of the different elements on a common and neutral ground through mutual sacrifice as citizens of the Ottoman empire possessing equal rights."⁶⁸

Complicating the picture, Enver Pasha told Kaiser Wilhelm II on 22 October 1914 that a declaration of Jihad would be imprudent since the

Ottomans were in alliance with Christian powers. He offered instead to have the sultan-caliph call on all Muslims under British, French and Russian rule to rise up in rebellion.⁶⁹ Did Enver really oppose the Jihad declaration? Certainly not. As we have seen, the Ottoman leadership, and Enver himself, promoted the idea of Jihad to mobilize both soldiers and civilians alike. With the stock of all the neutrals rising during the July crisis and the first months of the war – after Germany had met with unexpected resistance in Belgium and France, and Austria-Hungary in Serbia – Enver was exploiting Wilhelm II's one-dimensional understanding of Jihad. "Jihad" was not the magic wand of the German emperor's imagination. It was not a weapon that could be activated upon the signal of the Ottoman sultan-caliph, the nominal head of all Muslims but in reality a ceremonial head of state in 1914. As for the Ottomans, they had scored a major diplomatic victory by signing an alliance with Germany, the great power of their choice, on 2 August. They had used the July crisis to break out of an international isolation which they believed was slowly strangling them. Once they had signed the alliance, however, they strove to stay out of the war while salvaging the alliance with Germany into the post-war period, during which they hoped to reform the empire under the relative international security that would be provided by the alliance with Berlin. During the summer of 1914 and throughout the war, moreover, the Ottomans were able to draw on enormous German military aid.⁷⁰

The Ottoman leadership had long embraced the idea of using Jihad to mobilize the people for the state's defence. As early as 7 August – three days prior to the controversial arrival in Istanbul of the two German warships, the *Goeben* and the *Breslau*, and three whole months prior to the Jihad declaration – Enver wrote to Cavid Pasha at Fourth Army Headquarters in Baghdad, "War with England is now within the realm of possibilities. Contact ... [the local Arab leaders]. Since such a war would be a holy war [*böyle bir harb mukaddes olacağına*] ... it will definitely be pertinent to rally the Muslim population ... in [neighboring] Iran under Russian and English rule to revolution."⁷¹ He added, "I invite everyone to come to the state's defense in this war" in which "Muslims will rise up" and "end Christian rule over Muslim peoples."⁷² Thus, in their communications with Arab leaders, statesmen in Istanbul utilized Islam to build up an image of brotherhood. "But should our enemies wish to soil our land with their filthy feet," Enver wrote to the regional notable Nakibzade Talib Bey of Basra on 10 August, "I am convinced that Islamic and Ottoman honor and strength will destroy them."⁷³

This evidence does not mean that Berlin did *not* press hard for the Jihad declaration in 1914. After all, the Kaiser's faith in Jihad – or in "war by revolution" – was long-standing, and it made perfect geo-strategic

sense.⁷⁴ But the manifold presence of Jihad in Ottoman international and domestic politics throughout the nineteenth century down to 1914, and its presence in both popular and state publications and in the internal correspondence among Ottoman officials, moreover, make a strong case that Jihad would have been an important aspect of Ottoman warfare in 1914 without Wilhelm II and the German orientalists.

The long general report that was read to the assembled members at the 1916 annual congress of the Committee of Union and Progress – the ruling party – also suggests that the Ottomans themselves had made Jihad part and parcel of their warfare. The congress, presided over personally by Grand Vezir Said Halim Pasha and Minister of the Interior Talat Bey and held in late September 1916 in the Nuruosmaniye neighborhood in Istanbul, spoke about the current war as a “jihad.”⁷⁵ An official military publication issued to village councils in the same year makes the following points: “[t]hose of us between the ages of twenty and forty-five are obligated to serve in our military whenever we are called to defend our beloved homeland and our holy religion. To answer this call and rush immediately to the recruiting station is for us religion and honor. Being called into the military is one of God’s commands. If they are needed [for the defence] of the state during wartime those over the age of forty-five will also be called [to service]. All able-bodied Muslims are obligated by their religion to participate in jihad. On the battlefield we must remember how the Prophet and his comrades fought wars for their faith and honor.”⁷⁶ In 1916, the state was only too aware that casting the enemies as Christians often led to the breakdown of stable relations between Muslim and Christian populations within the empire. In this particular publication the author, Major Mehmed Şükrü, an army recruiting officer in Zonguldak on the Black Sea, addressed directly the role of non-Muslims. Even though fighting on behalf of the state was a religious duty, non-Muslims should be full participants in this struggle to save the state: “[o]ur Christian and Jewish friends are also the children of this homeland. Together with us they, too, are obligated to fight against the enemy for the defense of our homeland, that is to say, for their mother, and to spill their blood and to kill and be killed on this journey. And so just as Muslims, Christians, and Jews harvest the fields together and make a living, in wartime they must fire cannons and rifles, throw bombs, and wield swords together.”⁷⁷

In the nineteenth century the call to Jihad was a common node around which Muslims organized their resistance against European (and, in the Philippines, U.S.) domination. From Indonesia to India and to Iran, all around the Ottomans religiously-driven revitalization and resistance movements had been mobilizing for decades. Ottoman

rulers were certainly circumspect in employing this tactic themselves, because for much of the nineteenth century Ottoman governments had sought to become members of the European state system. When they did embrace Jihad, however, they did so primarily for domestic reasons, to mobilize the loyalty of a majority-Muslim society behind an Islamic empire. Had the Jihad indeed been “made in Germany” it is unlikely that publications intended to foster morale and cultivate an Islamic Ottoman identity would have continued all throughout the war even after its global impact, in which Kaiser Wilhelm II had put so much faith, had proven so negligible. And yet, a steady stream of publications appeared unabated down to 1918.⁷⁸ The author of *Holy Jihad is a Religious Duty (Cihad-ı Mukaddes Farzdır)*, like Ahmed Emin, read Jihad as a domestic, wartime policy of social mobilization although, unlike Ahmed Emin, he gave it a positive rather than a negative report card: “[p]eople of Islam! Whatever your nationality, whatever your language, the Lord has declared all of us brothers and sisters.”⁷⁹

Conclusion

Jihad had many faces. It could be a key component in forging an alliance with a non-Muslim European power such as Germany and be employed against other non-Muslim European powers at the same time. It could be an ideology hostile to non-Muslims in the Ottoman empire and, at other times, explicitly include non-Muslims in the Ottoman fold. Jihad could be evoked against Muslims as well as Christians. The Ottoman leadership thought of Jihad instrumentally, using it wherever they thought it would benefit the interests of the state. These contradictions point to the malleability of Jihad in Ottoman life of which the 1914 declaration was one episode in a history of many.

Notes

* This chapter is a modified version of my “‘Holy War Made in Germany’? Ottoman Origins of the 1914 Jihad”, in *War in History* 18 (April 2011), pp. 184–199.

1 C. Snouck Hurgronje, *The Holy War “Made in Germany”* (New York: G.P. Putnam’s, 1915), introduced by Richard J.H. Gottheil, translated by Joseph E. Gillet (New York: Putnam, 1915), originally published as “Heilige Oorlog made in Germany,” *De Gids: Nieuwe Vaderlandsche Letteroefeningen* (Amsterdam) 79 (1915), pp. 1–33.

2 Ibid., p. 80.

3 Ibid., p. 82.

- 4 *İslam Mecmuası*, No. 15, 6 Teşrin-i sani 1330 (November 19, 1914): “Cihad-ı Mukaddes İlanı,” “Beyanname-i Hümayun Sureti,” “Cihad-ı Mukaddes İlanı ve Fetava-yi Şerife,” “Başkumandanlık Vekaletinin Beyannamesi Sureti,” “*İslam Mecmuası* Tarafından Birkaç Söz.” The preceding issue, No. 14, appeared on 5 November 1914.
- 5 Kayalı, *Arabs and Young Turks*, 187.
- 6 The Habsburg-Ottoman Treaty of 1664 was described as *mübarek sulh*, or holy peace: see Viorel Panaite, *The Ottoman Law of War and Peace: The Ottoman Empire and Tribute Payers* (Boulder: East European Monographs, distributed by Columbia University Press, 2000), p. 79.
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- 8 Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi (BOA), A.MKT.MHM 58/97, 1270 (1853).
- 9 BOA, İ.DH 306/19416, 1270 (1853).
- 10 Patriarch Yusuf Hubaysh quoted in Ussama Makdisi, *Artillery of Heaven: American Missionaries and the Failed Conversion of the Middle East* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008), p. 131.
- 11 Linda Darling, “Contested Territory: Holy War in Comparative Context”, *Studia Islamica* 91 (2000), p. 133; Cemal Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), pp. 79–80.
- 12 Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, pp. 67–68 and 83.
- 13 Şevket Pamuk, “The Great Ottoman Debasement, 1808–1844: A Political Economy Framework”, in *Histories of the Middle East: New Directions*, ed. Israel Gershoni, Hakan Erdem, and Ursula Woköck (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2002), pp. 28–29.
- 14 Michael Bonner, *Jihad in Islamic History: Doctrines and Practice* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), pp. 1–2.
- 15 *Ibid.*, p. 12.
- 16 Hülalü, *Pan-İslamizm*, p. 209.
- 17 For the sultan’s Jihad declaration and the fetvas, in Ottoman Turkish with Arabic translation, showing the 29 signatures and the sultan’s instructions “I order the promulgation of this declaration. Mehmed Reşad”, see BOA, İ.DVİT 1/28, 4 Muharrem 1333 [22 November 1914]. For the public events that unfolded on 14 November 1914 see ‘İslam’ın Günü’, *Tanin*, 15 November 1914. There is little scholarship on Ali Haydar Efendi, but see the sketch by Mehmet Gündoğan, *Ahıska’lı Ali Haydar Efendi* (κ.σ.) (Afyon: Medrese Kitabevi, 1996). For photographs of the ceremonies of 11 and 14 November in Istanbul and a photograph of the public declaration in Medina see Stanford J. Shaw, *Triumph and Tragedy: November 1914–July 1916*, vol. 2, *The Ottoman Empire in World War I* (Ankara: Turkish Historical Society, 2008), pp. 751–753.
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- 21 Firoozeh Kashani-Sabet, *Frontier Fictions: Shaping the Iranian Nation, 1804–1946* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), p. 144. For the Iranian Jihad declarations see Mohammad Hassan Kavousi Araghi and Nasrollah Salehi (eds.), *Jihadieh: The Holy War Fatwas of the Grand Ulama and Mujtaheds in World War I* (Tehran: Unit for Documentary Publication, 1997).
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- 26 BOA, C.HR 90/4492, no month, no day, 1773.
- 27 BOA, C.HR 52/2567, 10 May 1809.
- 28 BOA, C.AS 414/17121, 14 Cemaziyelahir 1224 (27 July 1809).
- 29 BOA, C.HR 38/1864, no month, no day, 1244 (1829).
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