

DEBATES ON
**ISLAM &
SOCIETY**

JIHAD AND ISLAM IN WORLD WAR I

Studies on the Ottoman Jihad on the Centenary of
Snouck Hurgronje's "Holy War Made in Germany"

Edited by Erik-Jan Zürcher



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Jihad and Islam in World War I

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Preface

The centenary of the beginning of the First World War was commemorated with conferences and seminars around the world in 2014. Most commentary examined the war from the point of view of the European participants and their western allies. The role of the Ottoman Empire in the war was also the subject of several scholarly meetings. The fifth annual conference of the Leiden University Center for the Study of Islam and Society (LUCIS) organized by Prof. Dr Erik Jan Zürcher added a Leiden perspective to this topic.

The conference and the book that resulted from it fit LUCIS's goals very well. LUCIS aims to explore the diversity of Muslim societies through high-quality, evidence-based research. By bringing together experts from different backgrounds – including journalists, policy-makers, teachers, activists and opinion leaders – we stimulate discussion, increase knowledge and promote understanding of Islam as a religion, a political system and a cultural practice. The examination of the use of religion in the First World War aptly expands our understanding of Islam as a system of norms embedded in society and expressed within very specific historical circumstances.

The conference 'Jihad and other uses of Islam in World War I. Instrumentalization of religion by the Ottoman Empire, its allies and its enemies' took place in Leiden on 13–14 November, 2014. This volume is based on the papers delivered at that conference. It appears exactly a hundred years after the pamphlet published by the famous Leiden professor Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje "Heilige Oorlog Made in Germany" (Holy War Made in Germany), from which the conference took its thematic cue.¹

The papers in this book show how the use of Islam by political powers such as the Ottoman State and Germany affected the experience of Muslim subjects of the Ottoman sultan, but also that of individual Muslims serving in the German armies. It had an impact on the life of contemporary scholars of Islam and the Middle East in Europe such as Snouck Hurgronje when they had to define their position vis-à-vis the call for jihad initiated by the Ottomans against the allied forces. Examining jihad as an instrument for military but also cultural goals also extends the meaning of this instrument to domains not generally considered. At times when the appeal and the fear for Muslim holy war, exactly because of the universalist ambitions of jihad, are exploited everywhere in rather

absolute terms, this book reminds us yet again that the motives behind and the effects of this phenomenon are in fact very diverse.

We would like to thank Erik Jan Zürcher for his efforts in making the conference a success and especially for his commitment to bringing the results of the conference into print immediately afterwards. Our colleagues from Leiden University Press are also warmly thanked for their help in the publication process.

Petra M. Sijpesteijn

Director Leiden Centre for the Study of Islam and Society
Leiden, 19 October 2015

Note

- 1 Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje, "Heilige Oorlog Made in Germany," *De Gids* 79/1 (1915), 115–147.