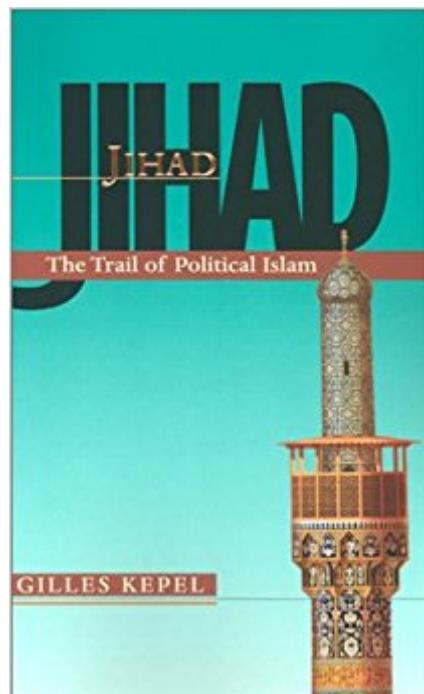


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# Jihad: The Trail Of Political Islam



## Synopsis

The late twentieth century has witnessed the emergence of an unexpected and extraordinary phenomenon: Islamist political movements. Beginning in the early 1970s, militants revolted against the regimes in power throughout the Muslim world and exacerbated political conflicts everywhere. Their jihad, or “Holy Struggle,” aimed to establish a global Islamic state based solely on a strict interpretation of the Koran. Religious ideology proved a cohesive force, gathering followers ranging from students and the young urban poor to middle-class professionals. After an initial triumph with the Islamic revolution in Iran, the movement waged jihad against the USSR in Afghanistan, proclaiming for the first time a doctrine of extreme violence. By the end of the 1990s, the failure to seize political power elsewhere led to a split: movement moderates developed new concepts of “Muslim democracy” while extremists resorted to large-scale terrorist attacks around the world. *Jihad* is the first extensive, in-depth attempt to follow the history and geography of this disturbing political-religious phenomenon. Fluent in Arabic, Gilles Kepel has traveled throughout the Muslim world gathering documents, interviews, and archival materials inaccessible to most scholars, in order to give us a comprehensive understanding of the scope of Islamist movements, their past, and their present. As we confront the threat of terrorism to our lives and liberties, Kepel helps us make sense of the ominous reality of jihad today.

## Book Information

Paperback: 464 pages

Publisher: Belknap Press: An Imprint of Harvard University Press; Edition Unstated edition (March 31, 2003)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0674010906

ISBN-13: 978-0674010901

Product Dimensions: 9.1 x 6.3 x 1.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.4 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.7 out of 5 stars 17 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #120,031 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #52 in Books > Textbooks > Humanities > Religious Studies > Islam #101 in Books > Textbooks > Humanities > History > Middle East #129 in Books > Science & Math > Earth Sciences > Geography > Regional

## Customer Reviews

This is a landmark book, a work of breadth and scope and scholarship, and genuine imaginative

powers. It should be the standard source on political Islam. (Fouad Ajami, author of *Dream Palace of the Arabs: A Generation's Odyssey*)[T]here are few comprehensive and analytically sound books in the Euro-American world that explain the recent ascendance of militant Islam to the Western audience. This book by Kepel, a professor at the Institute for Political Studies in Paris and a leading European specialist on contemporary Islamic movements, is a welcome addition to the growing literature on this topic. Meticulously researched and written in a jargon-free narrative style, the book covers the trials and tribulations of political Islam throughout the world. A standout in the field of current books, this is a sophisticated and timely work that places the events of September 11 in historical and sociopolitical context and sheds greater light on the influence of Osama bin Laden and his movement. Highly recommended. (Nader Entessar *Library Journal* 2002-03-15)Kepel clearly traces the rise of the contemporary Islamist movement from its origins in the mid-20th century through its later appearance in countries such as Malaysia, Algeria and Turkey, as well as in Western Europe. Amid the plethora of books on Islam released since September 11, this work stands out, both for its erudition and its provocative thesis. (Publishers Weekly 2002-03-04)We hear more about Muslim extremists than ever before, but Kepel argues that the terrorism seen today throughout the world results from the failure of Islamic fundamentalism and not its success. Fascinating despite its copious detail, Kepel's history has a wider focus than Ahmed Rashid's *Jihad* and more analytical depth than Robin Wright's *Sacred Rage*. The first in-depth history of political Islam appropriate for newcomers to Islamic history. (John Green *Booklist* 2002-04-01)In *Jihad* Gilles Kepel offers a masterly display of scholarship that describes how a radical idea spread through large segments of the Islamic world in the 1970s and 1980s. Mr. Kepel leads us on a breathtaking excursion. He trails the Islamist movements that have traversed Europe in recent years, founding radical communities in France, Britain, Germany and Belgium. (Adrian Karatnycky *Wall Street Journal* 2002-03-29)An early and most perceptive student of [Islamism] was Gilles Kepel, a French political scientist who has traveled widely through the Muslim world and has written about fundamentalism in both the East and the West. He is also the best-known commentator on Islamic affairs on French television, and he has advised international leaders at the Davos conferences. In short, Kepel is not only a leading scholar but also a man of the world. [Jihad] is probably the best introduction to Islamism currently available. (Walter Laqueur *The Atlantic* 2002-03-01)[Kepel] is one of the world's leading experts on the Islamic resurgence: [He] began doing fieldwork among fundamentalists in the Middle East in the 1970s, and he has remained attuned to their world ever since. Only a handful of scholars can command as much authority, and none of these is as bold as Kepel. Kepel's willingness to investigate the entire Muslim world

in a single volume helps us greatly in our attempt to understand al Qaeda, whose tentacles extend into almost every Islamic country. The combination of scope and expertise puts this book in a league of its own. Kepel grounds his argument in a sophisticated analysis of inter-Muslim relations. Given all the stale talk of a clash of civilizations, there is a freshness to Kepel's focus on the international Muslim debate. We have never been sufficiently aware that the primary architects of the Islamic revolt against the West have regarded their struggle as a tool for gaining power over fellow Muslims. (Michael Scott Doran Washington Post 2002-04-28)Jihadâ" will be a welcome respite for anyone who fears the fury associated with militant Islam. Despite the terrorist attacks of September 11 and the Palestinian suicide bombings in Israel, Gilles Kepel argues that the trend is, in fact, now on its last legs. The violence is merely a reflection of the movement's failure, not its successâ" [Kepel] comes to this conclusion in a thoughtful and expansive chronicle of the contemporary Islamist movement from Cairo to Kabul, from Kuala Lumpur all the way to 'Londonistan'â" [This book] is a compelling read that makes an appealing case. (Robin Wright New York Times Book Review 2002-05-26)Gilles Kepel's Jihadâ" makes an ideal companion to morning newspapers filled with frustratingly context-free briefs from the war on terrorismâ" This is a decidedly grounded book; it's political in the most elemental sense of the word. Although Kepel clearly believes in the Western ideal of civil society, he puts himself in the place of ordinary Muslims in the nations he writes about, rather than viewing their problems from a Western perspective. (Laura Miller Salon.com 2002-05-13)Islam's radical politicalization had peaked long before September 11thâ" [Kepel] argues provocatively in a landmark book. So devastating and unexpected was the September 11th attack on America that many people concluded that Islamic extremism had become a threat of monstrous and mushrooming proportions. That idea is deftly countered in this brilliant and provocative book by a leading French specialist on modern Islam. Gilles Kepel argues that the attack can only be understood in the light of the rise and fall of political Islam, or Islamism as he calls it, over the past quarter-century. (The Economist 2002-06-01)The author of several influential books on Islam, [Gilles Kepel has] spent the last five years writing *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam*. September 11 gave him a new framework, but he sees that event in a way that will surprise (and please) many who have lately been trying to comprehend the meaning of Islamic politicsâ" An usual commentator on recent events, Professor Kepel is a messenger carrying good news. (Robert Fulford Toronto National and Financial Post 2002-04-06)The French scholar Gilles Kepel, who documents the failure of political Islam in [this] excellent bookâ" makes a comparison to communism. It was in the 1960s, after communism had lost any possible appeal to ordinary peopleâ" after the revelations about

Stalin's brutality, after the invasion of Hungary, as its economic model was decaying that communist radicals turned to terror. They became members of the Red Brigades, the Stern Gang, the Naxalites, the Shining Path. Having given up on winning the hearts of people, they hoped that violence would intimidate people into fearing them. That is where radical political Islam is today. (Fareed Zakaria Newsweek 2002-09-09) Kepel's timely volume is the first in-depth attempt to follow the history and geography of this political religious phenomenon. Kepel concludes that the movement will have great difficulty reversing its decline in the 21st century. Written lucidly, this excellent study fills a gap in the literature. (S. Ayubi Choice 2002-11-01) A veritable deluge of books has appeared in bookstores since Sept. 11, 2001, purporting to lay bare the background of militant Islam. Perhaps the most definitive is Gilles Kepel's *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam*. Kepel is well-placed to tell its story given his extensive travels in the very places where militant Islam was born and nurtured. He has used that experience to craft a compelling account of the movements that make it up. Kepel's survey of that world is a remarkably useful tool in placing in context the various groups that appear in our newspapers but remain little more than shadowy cells with vague agendas. (Steven Martinovich Fort Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel 2002-08-18) Gilles Kepel's landmark book provides an in-depth history and compelling overview of the emergence of Islamist political movements in the late 20th century. (Anna Russell Wall Street Journal 2015-11-17)

Gilles Kepel is Professor and Chair of Middle East Studies at the Institute of Political Studies in Paris.

Arrived in good condition for a reasonable price.

Great book

Having spent several years living and traveling in the Gulf during the 1970's I felt this book was extremely informative and thorough in its review and discussion of political Islam. For anyone who really, really wants to know what is going on in that part of the world - this is the book to get.

My professor asked us to get the book. It is easy to follow and very well structured and hopefully I will use it for another class.

I RESEARCHED FOR SOMETIME A BOOK THAT WOULD EXPLAIN HOW THE ISLAMISTS CAME TO POWER SINCE THE 60S. I WANTED TO UNDERSTAND HOW SUCH A COMPLEX RELIGION COULD INTERPET THEIR RELIGION TO MEET THEIR NEEDS AND BRING SO MANY LOWER AND MIDDLE CLASS INTO THE CIRCLE OF HATRED, OBSESSION WITH DEMANDING ALL PEOPLE TURN TO THEIR RELIGION REGARDLESS. THIS BOOK MAKES IT CLEAR WITH A LOOK AT THE SPECIFIC COUNTRIES HOW THIS HAS HAPPENDED IN DIFFERENT WAYS. THE WINS AND LOSSES ARE HIGHLIGHTED. EDUCATION PLAYS A MAJOR ROLE IN THIS ENTIRE MOVEMENT. SPREADING THEIR HATRED AND CONTAMINATING GOOD PEOPLE TO DEPISE THE WEST, THE JEWS, AND EVEN THOSE PEACEFUL MUSLIMS THAT DIDN'T WANT TO BE INVOLVED WITH THE RADICAL MOVEMENT. IT ALSO DEMONSTRATES HOW FUTILE DEMOCRACY AND AMERICA'S ATTEMPT AT CHANGING 3000 YEARS OF TRADITION, HARSH TREATMENT OF WOMEN, AMD THEIR LUST FOR WAR.

Kepel knows his subject. You can't ask for a more comprehensive sweep of Islamist history. That said, the author's fundamental thesis (that Salafism is on the wane, and will die out under its own weight) seems to read as slightly optimistic. Particularly violent brands of Islam, such as Wahhabi Islam, will come and go, but the intrinsic moral and emotional flaws (they are not solely socio-economic) that give ground to such movements will always exist. We will see sea changes, waxing and waning trends, as well as the rise and fall of more positive groups, but groups that advocate a political jihad will always find a voice and an audience. (Just as those who advocate Judeo-Christian, Maoist, and/or Secular crusades will always find a voice and an audience.) That said, anyone wishing to better understand the figures and ideas behind Salafist political movements will enjoy this work immensely. The translation is dry, but the information is robust.

As Walter Laqueur observed in The Atlantic in his March 2002 review of this Gilles Kepel book, his "obituary of Islamism was written before September 11." What seemed truly astounding when I read this book four years ago was the extent of Kepel's knowledge --- and his fundamental ignorance. I hadn't realized, as I read, that the original French edition of this book came out in 2000. Still, it is extraordinary to think a scholar as widely read as Kepel could be so wrong, as he is here, as to pronounce radical Islam and jihad on the wane. As the intervening years have proved, nothing could have been further from the truth, and of all people, Kepel should have known it. But Kepel's lack of knowledge on the origins of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt of the 1920s, or the writings of Hassan

al-Banna and his heir, Sayyed Qutb (whom Nasser hanged in 1966) did NOT lead to the author's blindness. What caused it was most likely Kepel's lack of understanding of the fundamentals of Islam itself. Like so many writers before and after, Kepel blamed the rise of radical Islam on the backwardness of Middle Eastern society, and the lack of political power of the rising middle class. As Laqueur noted in *The Atlantic*, Kepel laid the attractiveness of Qutb's radical "message and in particular his appeal to violence" to broad swaths of Egyptian society to several mostly economic and intellectual factors. Qutb resonated for "students who could not find jobs; the religiously observant lower middle class, distrustful of modernity; and, generally speaking, all those disaffected by the state of affairs in the Muslim world who had become intellectually homeless after the failure of Arab nationalist ideology and of Marxism." Actually, however, both Qutb's philosophy and its attractiveness to Egyptians and other middle eastern Muslims were powered by the same force --- the fact that Qutb based his thinking and writings on the classical jurisprudence of Islamic scholars across the centuries. And in this respect, Qutb was no different than many other radicals whom Kepel covers, including the violent Iranian religious revolutionary, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, and Pakistan's Mawlana Mawdudi, among others. To understand the rootedness of these "radicals" in Islamic religious precepts and Islamic history, Kepel ought to read Dr. Andrew Bostom's *Legacy of Jihad*. Certainly, Kepel is right about some factors that encouraged Islamic radicals to pursue their goals at the specific times that they did: In the 1980s and early 1990s, Khomeinist fanatics terrorized Iran unchallenged, Islamists seized power in Sudan and their cohorts had attempted coups in Algeria and Egypt as well. But more importantly, ragtag Afghan Islamist armies eventually defeated the Soviet Union there, and built a very successful propaganda campaign (though undoubtedly not entirely truthful) as a result. But Kepel did not understand how Islamists saw their defeat and alienation from the Algerian majority, Egypt's mass arrests of terrorists or Sudan's surrender of Carlos the Jackal to the French, for criminal trial. To radicals, these were merely temporary setbacks, not the heralds of permanent defeat. Nor were they at all discouraged by the rise of Iran's so-called moderate, Mohammad Khatami (who was never moderate) or the protests of Saudi women for the right to drive cars independently. Worse, Kepel did not understand that many Islamic scholars --- whom he and many foolhardy others presume to be "reformist" thinkers --- are themselves reputedly central figures in the Muslim Brotherhood, and in any case, fundamentalists in their own right. Take Tariq Ramadan, the grandson of MB founder Hassan al-Banna, whose visa application the U.S. State Department twice, correctly, rejected [before finally caving in early January 2010.] Kepel accepts him as the "reformer" he pretends to be. But this is utter nonsense. As J.C. Brissard recently noted on the *Terror Finance Blog*, ample evidence suggests Ramadan has

links to terror. A 1999 Spanish police General Directorate memo, for example, stated that Ahmed Brahim --- who last April received a 10 year sentence for incitement to terrorism --- maintained "regular contacts with important figures of radical Islam such as Tariq Ramadan." Likewise, Djamel Beghal --- sentenced to 10 years in March 2005 for participating in a foiled attack on the US Embassy in Paris --- in September 2001 aligned his religious "engagement" to the 1994 time when "he was in charge of writing the statements of Tariq Ramadan." Beghal later said he had also "attended the courses given by Tarek Ramadan." And "brothers Hani and Tariq Ramadan," according to a 2001 Swiss intelligence memo, together planned a 1991 Geneva meeting between Al Qaeda leader Ayman Al Zawahiri and Omar Abdel Rahman, mastermind of the 1993 World Trade Center attack. This was confirmed by the member of a Geneva mosque, who heard Hani Ramadan announce the upcoming meeting. While Kepel conducted extensive and sometimes useful research, his conclusions are unreal.--Alyssa A. Lappen

Allah's holy Law of War is in fact the most important religious duty in Islam, obligatory for all Muslims. This is absolutely clear in the Qur'an, the Hadith-traditional stories, the very first valid histories by Ibn Ishaq and Tabari, and Islamic law. Jihad is not political, militant, radical, extremist or anything other than the pinnacle of Islam. Islam must reign supreme over all other religions and laws. Qur'ân 9:29 Fight those who believe not in Allah nor the Last Day, nor hold that forbidden which hath been forbidden by Allah and His Messenger, nor acknowledge the religion of Truth, of the People of the Book, until they pay the Jizya with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued. The phrase *la ilaha illa allah* in the Qur'ân: in Mecca 37:35, 38:4-10 and Medina 47:19. In these it means religious war for supremacy against all disbelievers. Qur'ân 47:19 Muhammad So know that *La ilaha illallah*, there is no god except Allah. Maududi says: This was at the time of the battle of Badr. It is also entitled al-Qital, the Fighting, because it gives the firm command for Jihad, and its theme is to prepare the Muslims for war against disbelievers and to give them instructions about those who kill and those who are killed: Qur'ân 9: 111 Verily, Allah has purchased of the believers their lives and their properties for (the price) that theirs shall be the Paradise. They fight in Allah's cause, so they kill and are killed.

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