

Book Review: Ruediger Lohlker. *Dschihadismus Materialien [Jihadism Materials]*. Vienna, Facultas WUV, 2009. 248 pp. ISBN 978-3-8252-3132-3

The author of the volume who holds a chair for Islamic Sciences at the Institute for Oriental Studies of Vienna University, discusses *jihadism* in terms of a transnational Islamic movement which regards *jihad* in a military sense as the core of its theory and practice. Prof. Lohlker traces the history and theory of *jihad* and related concepts and presents texts from Internet forums, communiqués, songs and poetry, biographies as well as training manuals. The original Arabic texts were downloaded by the author from the Internet and translated into German whereby he deliberately excluded in most cases texts which had already been translated into English by G. Kepel and others.

In his comments to the texts, the author demonstrates great erudition with regard to the history and culture of the Arab and Islamic world. He discusses issues like the connection between monotheism and violence (and finds no direct and necessary causal connection when it comes to Islam). In a semantic analysis he notes, for instance, that only in 10 out of 41 uses of the word *jihad* in the Koran there is a clear reference to warfare.

His philological and juridical analyses of the concept make clear how complex and varied its interpretations were over the course of centuries. He also demonstrates how modern theorists of the *jihad* – ideologues and practitioners like A. Assam, S. Qutb, A. Farag, S. Imam (Dr. Fadl) A. M. as-Suri and A. al-Zawahiri – reshaped and instrumentalized *jihad* and related concepts like *takfir* (heretic) for the promotion of their political agendas.

Some of the translated texts from the jihadi literature discuss the role of women on earth (who are admonished not to put obstacles in the way of the *jihad* for their husbands) and the (seductive) role of the virgins (*hur*) in paradise - a place situated "in the shadow of the swords" in some of the jihadist literature. These original primary documents provide the reader with a direct glimpse into a world that is archaic in its imagery but contemporary in its use of Internet technology. The last chapter of the volume discusses ways to exit from the *jihad* with text samples from Yemen, Singapore and Saudi Arabia. A glossary completes this remarkable volume which deserves to be translated into other languages. – *Reviewed by A.P. Schmid (Editor PT)*.

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