

Colonialism and the Call to Jihad in British India

Tariq Hasan



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A historical narrative that examines the role of ulema and their use of the concept of jihad during India's struggle for independence.

Colonialism and the Call to Jihad in British India examines the role of Muslim religious leaders or Ulema's in India's freedom struggle. And it does so by visiting the life and times of seven main protagonists- the 19th century cleric Sayyid Ahmad Barelvi, the mystic revolutionary Maulvi Ahmadullah Shah, Maulana Mahmoodul Hasan(the founding father of the Silk Conspiracy and later of Jamia Millia Movement), Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi, Barkatullah Khan and Maulana Hussain Ahmad Madani. All eulogized the idea of 'Jihad' but used it to fight and lead the freedom struggle against the British. It examines the roots of the Walliullahi movement which led to the Deoband movement in the second half of the 19th century in North India. It also highlights the 20th century Silk letter movement in which Muslim Ulema worked in tandem with the Hindu and Sikh Nationalists led Ghadar Party which was active not just in India but also in Europe and the USA. The book is a timely reminder of a shared Hindu-Muslim unity during our freedom struggle and helps us understand the commonly misunderstood notion of Jihad in the Indian context. The book in the end puts onus on the prevailing political system to ensure that India does not fall victim to sectarian violence and religious intolerance.

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