

JIHAD AS UNIVERSALISM



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Today the specter of transnational armed Islamism -- “jihad” -- is widely seen as a kind of universal enemy to mankind, the ultimate antithesis to liberal values of tolerance and rationality. Yet such jihads -- be they in Afghanistan, Chechnya, Iraq, or Somalia -- also present themselves as universalist projects carrying a message for all of humanity and support this claim in part by boasting of their own national, racial, and ethnic diversity. This presentation will explore the question of how to theorize universalism as a historically and ethnographically legible object by reference to Arab and Bosnian jihad fighters in the 1992-1995 war in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

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