



Centre for Studies in Islamism and Radicalisation (CIR)

AARHUS LECTURE SERIES 2010

HISTORY OF FANATICISM: FROM ENLIGHTENMENT TO JIHAD

By

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Professor, Dr.

*A leading scholar on fanaticism, terrorism and
counterterrorism*

Utrecht University, Holland

Time & Place:

Wednesday, February 24, 2010, 14-16

Aarhus University, Building 1325, room 320

The lecture will be in English.

Free entry!

For further information: www.cir.au.dk



Bob de Graaff is teaching history of intelligence at Utrecht University and is writing a history of fanaticism. He has long-time experience with terrorism and counterterrorism, both as co-ordinator of the research team of the Netherlands Institute for War Documentation which produced the so-called Srebrenica-report, as associate professor at the Dept. of History of International Affairs, Utrecht University and from 2007, as professor of terrorism and counterterrorism at Leiden University and director of the Centre for Terrorism and Counterterrorism.

Abstract: Until the Enlightenment, fanaticism was usually interpreted as a religious phenomenon. But the Enlightenment and the abolishment of God in no way lessened fanatic aspirations. Once man took the position of God, it still proved possible to try to create a salutary end-state, as the ideologies and praxis of communism and fascism proved. Currently, so-called religious, esp. jihadist, terrorism could be defined more profitably as a new form of fanaticism. However, one should not interpret this kind of fanaticism as a return to pre-Enlightenment times and solely in terms of religion. Jihadist fanaticism owes as much to Enlightenment philosophies as liberal democracies do. It even stresses the same core values, such as fraternity, liberty, equality, righteousness and happiness. So, it suffers from the same problems that the combination of these values created during the Enlightenment. In other words, rather than a return to the Middle Ages, jihadist fanaticism is a version 3.0 of fanaticism.



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