

---

## Brief Reviews

**The Ghosts of Martyrs Square: An Eyewitness Account of Lebanon's Life Struggle.** By Michael Young. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2010. 254 pp. \$26.

Young, a Lebanese-American journalist, turns his memories of assassinated friends and humbled dreams into an emotional tale of Lebanon's political meanderings since 2005.

The good news, Young argues, is that at least part of the puzzle of Lebanon is a form of liberalism at its core. Whereas the region's autocrats are easy to read, Lebanon thrashes around with a "paradoxical" liberalism, in which "illiberal institutions tend to cancel each other out in the shadow of a sectarian system that makes the religious communities and sects more powerful than the state [which is] ... the main barrier to personal freedom in the Middle East." Lebanese politics may be the haunt of swindlers and stomach churning deals with the devil, but there is an invisible hand at work here, one that works against the totalitarian machinations of all confessions jockeying for power.

But in this book about Lebanon, the bad news overpowers the good news. Lebanon is a small state in a shady neighborhood where whatever invisible hand may exist is no match for the foreign hand. Young describes a dazed Lebanon in the fresh ruins of "Pax Syriana" where Syrian president Bashar al-Assad can shamelessly threaten to "break Lebanon" to the U.N. secretary general.<sup>1</sup>

Young finds Hezbollah's role within the Lebanese army growing and worrisome. In the weeks after Rafiq Hariri's assassination in 2005, the army was given the delicate task of quelling protests but not too vigorously. Young remarks that "the soldiers murmured to us to push be-

cause the quicker we pushed, the quicker the absurdity would end for them. And as we pushed, they gave way, making it seem like a struggle." The August 3, 2010 border clash with Israel may indicate, however, that the army's dance is over with the citizens it is sworn to protect.

But Young, too, is not immune from Lebanon's selective amnesia. Where in his book is the Lebanon where the most common reaction to seeing Israeli civilian casualties, according to a 2010 Zogby poll, is "Israelis brought it upon themselves" with "empathy" not even registering a percentage?<sup>2</sup> The Beirut that closed its windows and drew the curtains when journalist Christopher Hitchens was nearly beaten to death two years ago for defacing a swastika is also missing.<sup>3</sup>

All in all, though, Young sees Lebanon as a liberal wonder on a rough street. Readers are lucky to have his insider account to guide them through this confusing country, as there appears to be little time to spare before the dark returns.

Patrick Knapp

Maryland Army National Guard

**The Grand Jihad: How Islam and the Left Sabotage America.** By Andrew McCarthy. New York: Encounter Books, 2010. 453 pp. \$27.95.

Former federal prosecutor McCarthy's latest book, *The Grand Jihad: How Islam and the Left Sabotage America*, is a grand tour of Islam's threat to the United States. It takes direct aim at the well-funded, well-coordinated, and seemingly unrelenting efforts to insinuate Islamic law, or Shari'a, into the fabric of American society and to weaken America's will to resist these attempts.

---

1 Peter Fitzgerald, *Report of the U.N. Fact-Finding Mission to Lebanon* (New York: United Nations, Feb. 25- Mar. 24, 2005), p. 5.

2 "The 2010 Arab Public Opinion Poll," Zogby International, Aug. 5, 2010.

3 Michael Totten, "Christopher Hitchens and the Battle of Beirut," Feb. 25, 2009.



ANDREW MCCARTHY

# THE GRAND JIHAD

HOW ISLAM AND THE LEFT  
SABOTAGE  
AMERICA

The author became schooled in radical Islam through on-the-job training. As a federal prosecutor, McCarthy led the team of U.S. lawyers that obtained the conviction of “Blind Sheik” Omar Abdel Rahman for involvement in multiple terror activities. After spending years in the legal trenches, McCarthy became an accomplished author and regular commentator on Islamism.

The scope of the book is ambitious. McCarthy describes the Islamist threat in the United States with a special focus on the leftist-Islamist alliance. Many readers might be perplexed initially that leftists and Islamic ideologues would sup together, let alone pool their efforts. McCarthy skillfully unravels their twisted partnership; despite the vast divisions in their social and political agendas, Islamists and leftists are united in hate against the world’s capitalist and Christian colossus.

While some commentators on discord between Muslims and the United States place the

onus on U.S. policy, McCarthy will have none of it. He dispenses with myths about jihad being a form of spiritual yoga; that Islam is a religion of peace; that those who protest the expansion of Islam in the United States are “Islamophobes”; and that those Muslims who wish Americans harm are confined to an isolated, small nucleus of marginalized hotheads. McCarthy captures full scope of the Islamic threat, which alone makes the book worth the read.

He goes beyond the broad sweep of American Islamism to get down to details. One subchapter, for example, exposes a dangerous and shameful incident in the Department of Defense. U.S. Army Maj. Stephen Coughlin, an expert on the security implications of Shari‘a in the United States, was forced out of his job by Hesham Islam, a higher-level advisor in the DOD, with dubious qualifications and suspicious connections. McCarthy deploys his prosecutorial skills to make a case for the major.

McCarthy has much to say on a subject he has mastered. Not all of his arguments are original, but all support his broad and updated account arguing that Americans are engaged in a long struggle with a determined enemy.

Mark Silinsky  
U.S. Department of the Army

**Hebron Jews: Memory and Conflict in the Land of Israel.** By Jerold S. Auerbach. Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 2009. 223 pp. \$34.95.

It takes a careful and measured historian to do justice to the long history of Jewish life in Hebron and its restoration after the terrible 1929 Arab pogrom that decimated the community. Auerbach, a professor of history at Wellesley College, has succeeded.

Hebron is the cradle of Judaism, the resting place of the biblical patriarchs and matriarchs, and was the capital of Israel under King David before Jerusalem came to occupy that historic role. Auerbach takes the reader through the story of the re-creation of the Jewish communities in the territories, established under both Labor and Likud governments. He presents a history in which successive Israeli governments failed to

provide adequate protection when these communities were increasingly subjected to both random and calculated attacks by neighboring Arabs. In the Oslo and post-Oslo era, as neighboring hillsides were transferred to Palestinian control and with armed Palestinian forces in close proximity, the travails and tragedies of Hebron's Jews have only increased.

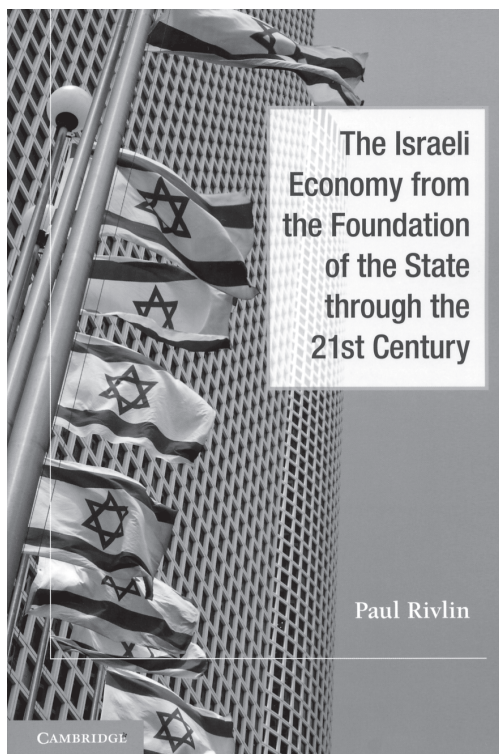
Auerbach takes pains to explain the competing viewpoints of his protagonists. It is not often, for example, that one reads such a scrupulous account of the circumstances surrounding the 1994 killing of twenty-nine Muslims in Hebron's Tomb of the Patriarchs by Baruch Goldstein. Auerbach convincingly debunks widespread notions of messianic settlers, ideologically driven to terror, which collectively damn all Jews who live in these disputed territories. Instead, he locates Goldstein's acts within the man's personal history and amid rumors of an impending Arab assault on Jews. Goldstein, who, as a physician had tended to Israeli victims of terrorist attacks, including personal friends, had heard the calls for the murder of Jews rise from neighboring mosques. On the morning in question, he had been urged to prepare himself for treating a large number of anticipated casualties and decided to preempt a pogrom with a tragic and ill-conceived massacre of his own.

Auerbach has written with proper dispassion on a subject close to his heart, providing an unusually useful history that can benefit anyone who wishes to acquaint themselves with an explosive subject that normally produces supercharged, one-sided prose.

Morton Klein  
Zionist Organization of America

**The Israeli Economy from the Foundation of the State through the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.** By Paul Rivlin. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010. 288 pp. \$90 (\$31.99, paper).

Rivlin, a senior research fellow at the Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, provides an introduction to Israeli economic history for those unfamiliar with the subject. His book covers both the economy and society of the pre-state and post-independence



periods with emphasis on its early years. Separate chapters are focused on Israel and the Palestinians, on Israeli Arabs, and on socioeconomic inequality in the Jewish state.

Rivlin is a prolific writer who has done interesting work on economic history, but economic policy analysis is not his forte. Hence the volume is weak when it comes to asking and answering why certain financial policies were pursued. Additionally, Rivlin's ideological biases occasionally creep through, such as in his chapters on Palestinians or Israeli Arabs. For example, he fails to mention how Israel's large cash, underground economy helps explain the higher unemployment rate among Arabs who often work without reporting income.

The book has other weaknesses. Much of its prose is "talking statistics" where tables of numbers are presented, and the author talks his reader through them. But Rivlin should give readers credit that they can understand a simple table or graph and concentrate instead on the implications of the statistics. It is also weak in ana-

lyzing the more interesting economic policy challenges and problems, both micro and macro, that Israel's economy faces and has faced. For instance, there is no discussion of the long-standing Israeli policy of exchange rate distortion and of capital market semi-nationalization. Also missing is a look at the "pro-trust" policy that once produced a proliferation of monopolies and cartels, the later privatization campaigns, nor of the implications of the very high levels of concentration of ownership of capital and nationalization. Early attempts at subordinating the Israeli economy to rigid central planning are mentioned only in passing as is Israeli protectionism and the accompanying inefficiencies that resulted from that set of policies. Balance of payments issues are raised only superficially, and this is unfortunate because Israel's growth was made possible thanks to imaginative utilization of foreign direct investment and importation of capital.

Rivlin relies too heavily on sociologists while ignoring most serious economic histories of Israel, such as those by Assaf Razin, Efraim Sadka, and Nadav Halevi. Despite this, he misses significant sociological insights that would help explain important economic issues. His discussion of income inequality misses the point that much of it is a reflection of differences in age and schooling. He frequently tosses out the term "discrimination" when he really means heterogeneity and tries too hard to explain income differences that have nothing to do with discrimination.

Readers interested in Israel's economic history will need to supplement Rivlin's effort with other materials.

Steven Plaut  
University of Haifa

**The Left in Iran: 1905-1940.** Edited by Cosroe Chaqueri. London: Merlin Press, 2010. 458 pp. £19.99, paper.

The role of communist parties and movements in the Middle East and in Muslim territories outside the USSR has been a subject of indifference in regional studies during recent years. This is an understandable outcome of the end of Russian communism and the rise of radical Islam. In *The Left in Iran*, the first of a projected

two-volume, English-language study, Iranian historian Chaqueri sets out to remedy this lacuna, making use of the wealth of documentary resources on communism increasingly available for analysis. He has assembled an impressive collection of materials translated from Persian and Russian, as well as from other languages used by the international Left, to create an authoritative work on the subject.

Chaqueri makes it clear that the trajectory of modern-day Iran has been significantly influenced at different times by Iranian communists and Marxists. They were prominently involved in the partition of Iran by the British and Russians during World War II, the Mossadegh prime ministries of the early 1950s, and in the events surrounding the Islamic revolution of 1979. The Iranian Left remains actively opposed to the clerical regime both in émigré communities and underground in the Islamic Republic.

The author also highlights the role played by the Russian communist party alongside domestic supporters. Early on, Lenin himself had decided to sacrifice the cause of world revolution in such neighboring eastern countries as Turkey and Iran for the interests of the Soviet state. In February 1921, an Irano-Soviet friendship treaty was signed with Reza Khan, the military leader who took control of the Iranian government and who proclaimed himself shah in 1925. But "the republic, on which both the Soviet authorities and the [Iranian communists] had counted" never materialized. Chaqueri indicates that a republican outcome was a conception based on Russian and Iranian communist theories about the presumptive course of political development in the eastern nations rather than any evidence derived from Reza Khan's own actions.

Chaqueri's work shows that the Iranian communist movement remained marginal within the country's internal politics before World War II for two main reasons. First, many of the Iranian communists were ethnic Armenians and other non-Persians. Second, Soviet Russia viewed Iran as an economic colony of Britain and subordinated Moscow's strategy in Iran to the larger context of Soviet confrontation with Western



influence, rather than addressing Iranian social conditions. The latter disposition would remain historically consistent for the Soviet-subsidized component of the Iranian Left.

Stephen Schwartz  
Center for Islamic Pluralism

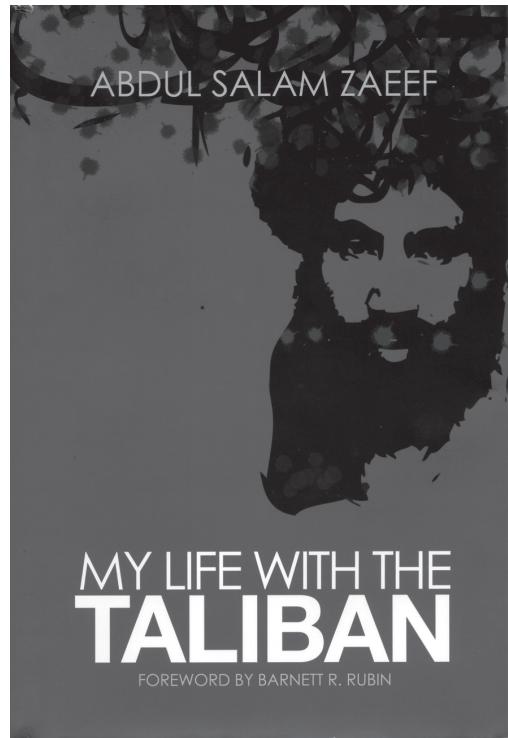
**My Life with the Taliban.** By Abdul Salam Zaeef. New York: Columbia University Press, 2010. 331 pp. \$29.95.

Zaeef, a former Taliban ambassador to Pakistan, provides a valuable contribution to the literature on the current conflict in Afghanistan with his autobiography. He offers an unrepentant Taliban perspective on Afghan events and, as such, provides useful insights on a range of topics.

For instance, his description of immediate post-Soviet, inter-Afghan power struggles shows that Taliban antipathy toward other mujahideen—even those not directly involved—started early. He is dismissive of international efforts to save the famous Bamiyan Buddha statues from destruction and recounts that shortly after the 9/11 attacks, a senior Pakistani intelligence official assured him that the Taliban “will not be alone in this jihad against America. We will be with you.”

But Zaeef’s account is perhaps most notable for what he chooses to ignore. No mention is made of the Afghan Hazaras and other ethnicities who suffered massacres during the Taliban’s reign or of the Taliban’s draconian bans on everything from kite flying to female education and employment. Zaeef is busy criticizing international funding for coeducational schools in Afghanistan but has no time to condemn those Taliban who throw acid in the faces of schoolgirls or target mosque attendees with suicide attacks.

Against this backdrop, it is hard to take seriously Zaeef’s occasional outbursts of political correctness. For instance, he asserts that tolerance “is the most necessary quality on earth; it can make the world into one home” and that “Afghanistan is the home of each Afghan, a family home in which we all have the right to live.” Such unintended irony may help outsiders un-



derstand how those driven by ideological monomania reconcile such laudable opinions with the most reprehensible acts. For Taliban like Zaeef, there is only one interpretation of the proper way to live, and anyone who rejects it is righteously killed.

Yet however abhorrent Zaeef’s ideology, it is hard not to be disturbed by his grim account of his experiences in U.S.-run prisons in Afghanistan and Guantanamo, assuming, of course, that this or any other part of the book is true and not simply deliberate misinformation. That being said, Zaeef offers little support for those who seek to bring so-called “moderate” Taliban into the government of Afghanistan. He insists that “the thought of dividing [the Taliban] into moderates and hardliners is a useless and reckless aim.” On this, we should heed him at his word.

Julie Sirrs and Owen L. Sirrs  
former analysts,  
Defense Intelligence Agency

