

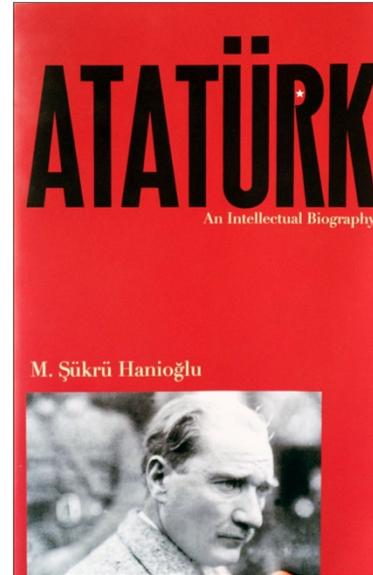
## Brief Reviews, Winter 2018

**Ataturk: An Intellectual Biography.** By M. Şükrü Hanioglu. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013. 296 pp. \$19.95, paper.

Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of modern Turkey has not lacked for biographies. Nonetheless, Hanioglu's compelling book offers something that most Atatürk literature, particularly in Turkish, has yet to offer. It demythologizes the legendary soldier and politician by illustrating the social, intellectual, and political settings that influenced his ideals and which, in turn, led to the nation state of Turkey.

Hanioglu presents an intelligent and ambitious leader who studied and was enriched by ideas and techniques formulated by a variety of people on the cutting edge of the political theories of his day. Instead of portraying him one-dimensionally as a man of intellectual miracles, the author objectively analyses Atatürk's thought within complex historical contexts. Atatürk was not the "inventor" of ideas as other hagiographic biographies suggest. Instead, he was heavily influenced by a wide spectrum of thinkers including Gustave Le Bon, Emile Durkheim, Ludwig Buchner, and even H.G. Wells.

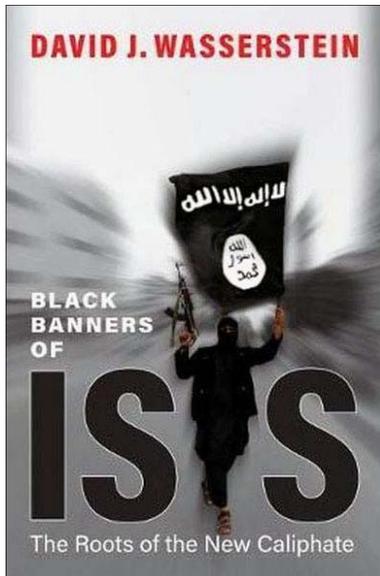
Hanioglu's Atatürk is a "literatus" who wanted to build a Western nation from the ruins of the Ottoman Empire. Relying on both these "outside" theories and his own strongly-held vision of a Turkish nation, he tasked himself with encouraging his fellow citizens to accept progressive ideals that



have, a century later, lost their appeal to the Turkish masses. The virtues of secularism, religious reform, and materialism are the very characteristics that today's government aims to replace with a neo-Ottoman, religiously conservative, and socially restrictive approach.

*Atatürk: An Intellectual Biography* will be a valuable source for amateur and professional students of both Turkish and Middle Eastern studies and for anyone who might wish to understand the deep political polarization between today's secular Turks who cling to Atatürk's dream and more religiously conservative-minded Turks who are retreating from the path on which he set the nation.

Burak Bekdil  
Middle East Forum



**Black Banners of ISIS: The Roots of the New Caliphate. By David J. Wasserstein. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017. 280 pp. \$26.**

Wasserstein, a medieval historian, explains key components of the Islamic State's (ISIS) ideology and many of the group's practices, mostly through the lens of early Islamic history, an approach that produces interesting insights.

For instance, he offers a detailed analysis of the Islamic State's proclamation of the caliphate in June 2014, explaining the significance of the caliphate in Islamic history and why ISIS placed such emphasis on citing Qur'anic proof texts. In addition, he provides useful context to the apocalyptic traditions surrounding the Aleppo province town of Dabiq, which featured prominently in ISIS propaganda.

Other sections of the book are less original or lack detail. For example, the

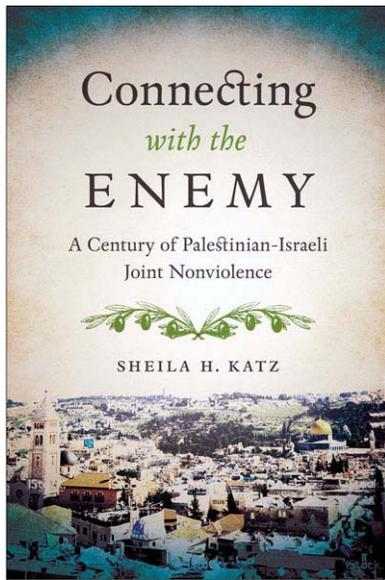
analysis on recruitment of children has little new. Wasserstein also devotes just twelve pages to Islamic State administration, though analysis of its government departments and in-depth comparisons with past and present models would have been useful.

The book is also outdated. The Islamic State no longer controls a territory the size of the United Kingdom. Despite useful historical background on the Dabiq tradition, references to Dabiq by ISIS have now faded since the group lost control of the actual town. Indeed, the group long ago ended production of its *Dabiq* magazine.

Further, Wasserstein makes sloppy errors. He devotes an entire sub-section to the *tarawih* (extended prayers in Ramadan) based on the erroneous claim that ISIS banned it. Similarly, he writes that the Islamic State's Sinai affiliate attacked a hotel in retaliation for the Egyptian government's imprisonment of "female IS fighters," but the *New York Times* report he cites and the original ISIS statement on the assault make no reference to "female IS fighters," only "Muslim women" arrested by the Egyptian army. Other errors reflect insufficient research: the "al-Badri" in Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi's full name does not refer to the battle of Badr but rather is an Iraqi tribal name.

Wasserstein's book takes the Islamic State's religious ideology seriously and makes interesting comparisons with early and medieval Islamic history for insights into how the group thinks and operates. But its noteworthy approach is beset with multiple flaws.

Aymenn al-Tamimi  
Middle East Forum



**Connecting with the Enemy: A Century of Palestinian-Israeli Joint Nonviolence.** By Sheila H. Katz. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2016. 307 pp. \$27.95.

*Connecting with the Enemy* purports to document a hundred years of civil society efforts to resolve or facilitate resolution of the conflict between Jew and Arab over the Holy Land. Sadly, Katz of the Berklee College of Music has produced a silly and often misleading book—as biased as it is banal.

The “Acknowledgements” alert readers to the book’s political bias. The list of individuals whom the author thanks for their “foundational input” is comprised almost exclusively of hard-line, far-left critics of Israel, with virtually all the Israelis strongly supporting Palestinian claims.

Nowhere in the book is there any attempt at balance.

*Connecting* is replete with factual inaccuracies. Thus, readers are told that the Jewish pioneers who arrived in the First Aliya, beginning in 1882, were motivated by an idea formulated almost two decades later by Theodore Herzl in his book *Altneuland*.<sup>1</sup> Likewise, readers are referred to “the Jewish-Arab town of Gilboa,” though no such town exists.

The author unquestioningly accepts the mendacious and outrageous, anti-Israeli blood libel that during Operation Defensive Shield in 2002, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) committed a massacre in the town of Jenin. In fact, the IDF put troops at extraordinary risk, sending ground forces into booby-trapped houses rather than deploying the air force. In the resultant fighting, the IDF lost 23 soldiers and killed 52 Palestinians, most of them armed terrorists. Some massacre.

To its credit, the book includes numerous accounts of individuals on both sides of the conflict rising above personal tragedy and extending a hand in peace to their adversaries. However, its many factual inaccuracies and its blatant political partisanship unavoidably raise skepticism as to the unembellished authenticity of these accounts.

*Connecting* is a book best left unread, or read as a sobering example of what passes for scholarship on the Arab-Israeli conflict.

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<sup>1</sup> *Altneuland* (Leipzig: Hermann Seemann Nachfolger, 1902).

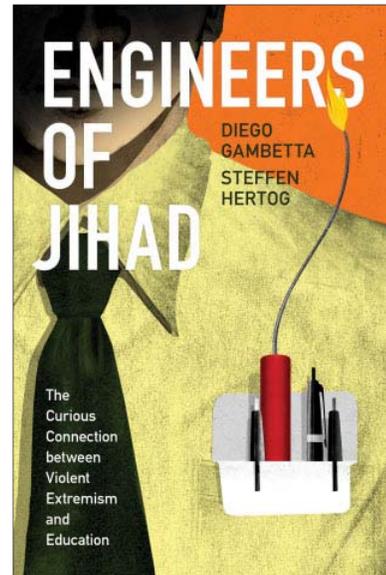
**Engineers of Jihad: The Curious Connection between Violent Extremism and Education.** By Diego Gambetta and Steffen Hertog. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016. \$29.95.

What is the common link between these terrorists: bomb-maker Ramzi Yousef; his uncle Khalid Sheikh Muhammad, operational leader of the 9/11 attacks; 9/11 hijacker Muhammad Atta; Finsbury mosque preacher Abu-Hamza al-Masri; and Palestine Liberation Organization's Yasir Arafat? They were all engineers.

In 2002, Stephen Emerson observed in *American Jihad* that “some of the worst anti-Americanism among Muslim fundamentalists comes from people who are often remarkably well educated—engineers, doctors and even scientists.” In this study, Gambetta and Hertog explore the remarkable over-representation of engineers among jihadists.

The authors mostly reject prominent explanations for the root causes of Islamist terrorism: relative deprivation, social movement, and demand driven theories. Their study offers valuable statistical analyses that lead them to conclude that “ideology matters.” Importantly, “engineers are nearly absent among left-wing groups ... dominated by graduates in the humanities and the social and psychological sciences, of whom we had found barely any among Islamist radicals.” Unfortunately, too much effort is expended trying to establish that “right-wing extremism has much more in common with Islamist radicalism than with left-wing extremism”—without satisfactorily defining either left-wing or right-wing.

Jargon-filled and sometimes simplistic, the book raises serious questions but provides dubious answers. What are we to make of the observation, “Most rightists and at least some radical Islamists are also fans of Tolkien's trilogy *The Lord of the Rings*” or the fact that “jihadists and right-wingers ... also appear to be into computer gaming”? Purported Islamist-



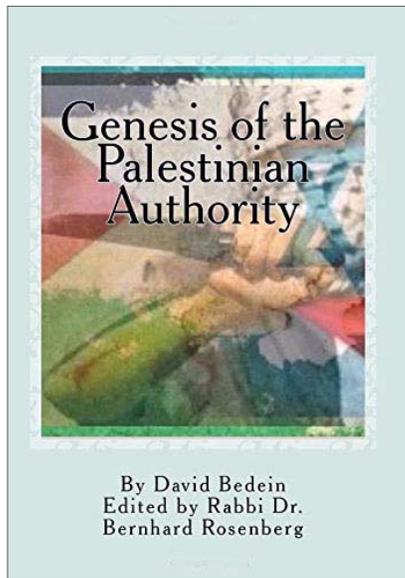
right-wing similarities also come across as overgeneralizations, as in the assertion that the “three character traits” shared by adherents to both ideologies are “proneness to disgust, need for closure, and strong in-group bias.” The same can be said for fans of losing sports teams.

It is a pity the authors did not devote more pages to examining “the ideology of radical Islam.” Had they done so, they might have found more answers. The late sociologist Khalid Duran related an interested anecdote to Emerson: “The words ‘*al-ikhwan al-muslimun*’ mean ‘Muslim Brothers’ and ‘*al-ikhwan al-muhandisun*’ means ‘Engineer Brothers.’ In Egypt, they always say the Muslim Brotherhood is really the Engineering Brotherhood.” Alas, *Engineers of Jihad* mentions the Muslim Brotherhood only once.

Readers interested in a more historically-grounded (and less PC) examination of the topic would do well to consult the Center for Islamic Pluralism's report “Scientific Training and Islamic Radicalism.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> [Center for Islamic Pluralism](#), Washington, D.C., London, and Köln, Mar. 2008.



**Genesis of the Palestinian Authority. By David Bedein. Edited by Rabbi Dr. Bernhard Rosenberg. Printed by CreateSpace, 2017. 577 pp. \$24.99.**

*Genesis of the Palestinian Authority* collects articles and policy papers by Bedein, director of The Center for Near East Policy Research and founder of the Israel Resource News Agency. The author has covered the Palestinian Authority (PA) from its inception in 1994 and documents how the United Nations and Western countries working with organizations such as the U.N. Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) have artificially created and sustained the Palestinian Authority using revisionist history and lies.

For years, Bedein's main focus has been exposing UNRWA, established as a relief agency for Palestinian refugees. He demonstrates how UNRWA has exacerbated the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and created new generations of "refugees" who demand the "right of return" and advocate for the destruction of Israel.

One section of the book is devoted to portraits of terrorists who were educated in UNRWA schools where a toxic curriculum of anti-Semitic and pro-jihad incitement is taught daily. UNRWA textbooks incite students to violence and are condoned by the Palestinian Authority and, not astonishingly, by the United Nations itself. In a list of questions, which Bedein suggests the media put to PA officials, he includes, "Will you remove from all Palestinian Authority schools and libraries the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* as well as the doctoral thesis written by Abbas that asserts that Zionists worked with the Nazis to conduct mass murder of Jews in World War II?"

Bedein explains how both the Oslo accords (1993-95) and the dismantling of Jewish communities in Gaza in 2005 were disastrous blunders that emboldened the Palestinian Authority and Hamas to continue their jihad for the destruction of Israel and the murder of Jews. He warns that the "peace process" is merely the continuation of the war against Israel by political means. A case in point is the training of Palestinian Authority policemen that took place in conjunction with the Philadelphia Police Department in 1995. Despite the good intentions of those who envisioned this program, it in fact helped create an armed militia for the Palestinian Authority that ultimately was responsible for the deaths of more than a thousand Israelis.

The book is a treasure trove of documentation exposing how the Palestinian Authority has morphed into a terrorist entity while successfully presenting a façade of reason and moderation to Western governments that continue to fund its deadly activities.

Beila Rabinowitz  
Militant Islam Monitor

**Memorias del cautiverio y Costumbres, ritos y gobiernos de Berbería: según el relato de un jesuita del siglo XVII [Memories of the Captivity and Customs, Rites and Governments of Barbary: According to the Story of a Seventeenth Century Jesuit]. Edited by Felipe Maíllo Salgado. Oviedo: University of Oviedo, 2017. 262 pp. €14.50, paper.**

These memoirs of a Jesuit priest, captured and taken to Algiers in 1644, are a welcome addition to a growing scholarly library focusing on the massive commerce of West European slaves under Muslim regimes. In it, are devoted priests as well as priests who become drunkards and scoundrels; Christians who keep their faith and those who apostatize to escape their misery; horrible scenes of slaves piled up in dark dungeons, and picaresque tales of canny ones who trick and steal from drunken Muslims. As the Jesuit narrator observes, Algiers was the most corrupt of Barbary Coast cities and, therefore, offered opportunities to savvy captives.

Muslim raiders and rulers routinely pillaged the seas and coasts of Europe, as far as Ireland, searching for slaves and loot until, beginning in the nineteenth century, Europeans colonized North Africa and ended the raids and the trade. In *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters*,<sup>3</sup> Robert Davis estimates that 1.25 million European men, women, and children were traded just on the Barbary Coast between 1500 and 1800.

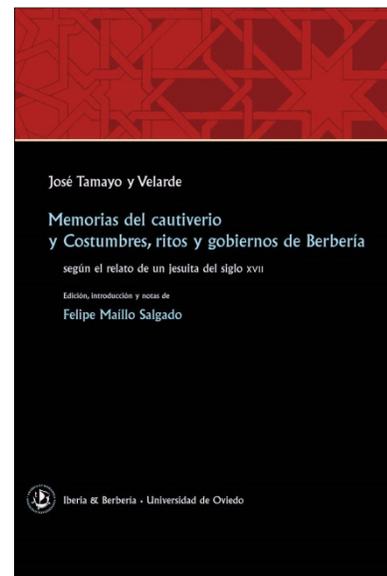
Expecting handsome ransoms, Muslim captors treated those from wealthy families relatively better than those less well-off although they too could be stripped naked, shackled, and malnourished. Young

women, unless their families ransomed them, ended up as sexual slaves. Young men were often sodomized by their masters.

The book should be translated into English because it is a rich primary source on European slavery and on the Muslim rulers of the Barbary Coast and how they practiced Shari‘a (Islamic law). It includes a learned introduction and indispensable notes by editor Maíllo Salgado, professor of Islamic Studies at the University of Salamanca, a foremost authority on Islamic law.

Although a comprehensive, scholarly history of the massive commerce of European slaves under Islamic regimes has yet to be written, *Memorias del Cautiverio* is an indispensable resource for those interested in this topic.

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<sup>3</sup> London: Palgrave, 2004.