



## Atatürk: An Intellectual Biography

By M. Sükrü Hanioglu

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When Mustafa Kemal Atatürk became the first president of Turkey in 1923, he set about transforming his country into a secular republic where nationalism sanctified by science--and by the personality cult Atatürk created around himself--would reign supreme as the new religion. This book provides the first in-depth look at the intellectual life of the Turkish Republic's founder. In doing so, it frames him within the historical context of the turbulent age in which he lived, and explores the uneasy transition from the late Ottoman imperial order to the modern Turkish state through his life and ideas.

Shedding light on one of the most complex and enigmatic statesmen of the modern era, M. Sükrü Hanioglu takes readers from Atatürk's youth as a Muslim boy in the volatile ethnic cauldron of Macedonia, to his education in nonreligious and military schools, to his embrace of Turkish nationalism and the modernizing Young Turks movement. Who was this figure who sought glory as an ambitious young officer in World War I, defied the victorious Allies intent on partitioning the Turkish heartland, and defeated the last sultan? Hanioglu charts Atatürk's intellectual and ideological development at every stage of his life, demonstrating how he was profoundly influenced by the new ideas that were circulating in the sprawling Ottoman realm. He shows how Atatürk drew on a unique mix of scientism, materialism, social Darwinism, positivism, and other theories to fashion a grand utopian framework on which to build his new nation.

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## Atatürk: An Intellectual Biography By M. ?ükrü Hanio?lu Bibliography

- Rank: #1180753 in Books
- Brand: Brand: Princeton University Press
- Published on: 2013-04-07
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: .60" h x 5.40" w x 8.40" l, .78 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 296 pages

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

"[F]resh and concise."--*New Yorker*

"[T]his intellectual biography is a significant achievement, and indispensable for anyone seeking to understand the roots of modern Turkey."--*Times Higher Education*

"Atatürk does not lack for biographers, most of whose books are adulatory, but none has so thoroughly brought to life the ideological climate that molded the man as has Hanioglu. And few have presented Atatürk with such objectivity."--*Foreign Affairs*

"In this timely and brilliantly articulated book, Hanioglu reaffirms the need for an intimate understanding of historical context in biographical research. . . . This rich and exhaustively researched study is indispensable for academics and students of Turkish and Middle Eastern studies alike. It is the definitive biography of Atatürk and an instant classic in the field."--**Douglas H. Garrison**, *Digest of Middle East Studies*

"Cutting through years of writings filled with admiration for this charismatic leader and a popular sentiment close to hero worship, Hanioglu performs a skillful analysis, focusing on the ideas and intellectual movements that shaped the statesman, rather than recounting Atatürk's personal life. . . . Hanioglu does a stellar job highlighting the scientific trends Atatürk used to validate his Turkish national ideal."--*Library Journal*

"Hanioglu has prepared a concise, compelling biography of the founder of modern Turkey, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. He examines the political and intellectual movements that influenced Atatürk from his early school years until his death in 1938, along with the implementation of their ideas, which led to the development of the Republic of Turkey. . . . This work provides the essential intellectual framework to understand Ataturk and the enormity of his accomplishments."--*Choice*

"M. Sükrü Hanioglu probes the bold and pragmatic mind of Atatürk in his new book. . . . Hanioglu provides us with a fresh way to look at Atatürk."--*Saudi Gazette*

"Professor Sükrü Hanioglu . . . combines elegance and meticulousness in *Atatürk*."--**Andrew Mango**, *Literary Review*

"Professor Hanioglu's study, based on meticulous research of primary sources, deals with the social setting and intellectual sources that shaped the ideas that have directed Ataturk's actions and policies. The book not only helps demythologize Ataturk, it also provides a most valuable contribution to a better understanding of the state he founded. . . . Ataturk is indispensable reading for anyone who wishes to understand Turkey's politics."--**Sahin Alpay**, *Today's Zaman*

"M. Sükrü Hanioglu's latest book, *Atatürk: An Intellectual Biography*, is probably the best book on Atatürk's legacy and his historic role. . . . Hanioglu managed to combine both impartiality and immediate access to Turkish sources to produce a classic."--**Herkül Millas**, *Today's Zaman*

"This book has the potential to inspire a new period of much needed assessment of Atatürk's thought, work and legacy."--**Rifat Kandiyoti**, *Political Quarterly*

"This book breaks new ground in seeking to determine what Ataturk's reforms actually meant for their creator instead of trying to fit together his policies into a coherent doctrine called Ataturkism, as others have done. It is an important addition to the literature on the republic that Ataturk sought to define, and was determined to create."--**Clement Dodd, *Journal of Islamic Studies***

"This book is aimed less at historians of the Ottoman Empire or of Turkey than at a wider public. It is a fine work of synthesis, fully accessible to non-specialists, which takes account of the complexity of the transitional period between the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Turkey. Hanioglu's line of argument is perfectly clear and his account is easy to follow."--**Clélia Delbarre, *booksandideas.net***

"By setting [Ataturk's] remarkable achievements within their historical context, Mr Hanioglu has not only done him a service, he has also provided the reader a better understanding of the contradictions of the fascinating country that is modern Turkey."--**Kanika Datta, *Business Standard***

"Professor Hanioglu has developed a well-informed and in-depth theoretical account, perhaps the most successful so far, of the ideological elements that shaped the ideas and mindset of Mustafa Kemal (later Ataturk). Although readers may be tempted to pass over yet another Ataturk biography, I would urge them to read this one. . . . [T]he present study will undoubtedly become an indispensable tool to historians of modern Turkey. It will be widely consulted by anyone seeking to understand not only the historical roots of modern Turkey, but also the present conditions in that society. Professor Hanioglu's essential biography places Ataturk firmly within his historical and intellectual contexts, offering to the public a solid, well-written and comprehensive study."--**Nikos Christofis, *New Middle Eastern Studies***

"Hanioglu examines the development of his political philosophy in the context of historical events, allowing for better comparison between Ataturk's accomplishments and other statesmen of his time. Because of the care the author shows in establishing the international context, this book will be of interest to any student of political ideologies and the emergence of nation-states between the wars."--**Christianne Gates, *History***

"Teachers of Turkish history in particular will be very grateful for this concise and accessible study of one of the most enduring national leaders of the twentieth century. . . . Hanioglu's approach to Ataturk is helpful and refreshing."--**Gavin D. Brockett, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies***

From the Back Cover

"Learned and deeply insightful, this elegantly written book offers a unique perspective on the founder of modern Turkey. Hanioglu's exploration of the evolving ideas of Ataturk, their provenance and context, and their impact on the policies of the Turkish Republic is a singular contribution to understanding Ataturk and his legacy. It is also a brilliant intellectual and cultural history of his age, and a veritable model of how the intertwined paths of politics and the history of ideas can be explored through the medium of biography."--**Muhammad Qasim Zaman, author of *The Ulama in Contemporary Islam***

"This is the best book on Mustafa Kemal Ataturk ever written. Hanioglu deals with virtually every single aspect of Ataturk's biography without drowning in the partisan battles surrounding it. I am certain that this powerful book will become a classic."--**Cemil Aydin, author of *The Politics of Anti-Westernism in Asia***

"Hanioglu has produced a work that is both accessible and intellectually stimulating. It is safe to say that there are few scholars alive today who are able to provide the rich historical perspective on Ataturk's life that Hanioglu provides here."--**Benjamin C. Fortna, author of *Imperial Classroom: Islam, the State, and Education in the Late Ottoman Empire***

## About the Author

M. ukru Hanio lu is the Garrett Professor in Foreign Affairs in the Department of Near Eastern Studies at Princeton University. His books include "A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire" (Princeton)."

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