The Israeli Palestinians: An Arab Minority in the Jewish State
Author(s): Raef Zreik
Source: *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 34, No. 4 (Summer 2005), pp. 114-115
Published by: University of California Press on behalf of the Institute for Palestine Studies
Stable URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/jps.2005.34.4.114
Accessed: 23-09-2016 12:26 UTC

RECENT BOOKS

BIBLICAL GENOCIDE

"Remember Amalek!" Vengeance, Zealotry, and Group Destruction in the Bible According to Philo, Pseudo-Philo, and Josephus, by Louis H. Feldman. Cincinnati: Hebrew Union Press, 2004. x + 225 pages. Bibliography to p. 237. Indices to p. 272. $34.95 cloth.

Reviewed by Nachman Ben-Yehuda

Louis H. Feldman, a world-renowned scholar of Josephus, begins *"Remember Amalek!"* by presenting the biblical divine command to the Israelites to destroy every man, woman, child, and even animal of the Amalekites, as well as the very memory of Amalek. The main questions this book addresses are who the Amalekites were and why such a divine order was given. The meager information given in the Bible does not enable Feldman to develop clear and authoritative answers to these intriguing questions. The little that we do know is that Amalek was the son of Timna, grandson of Esau, and that the Amalekites attacked the Israelites unprovoked, when the Israelites were tired and weak. The Israelites were involved in many battles, but none of their opponents was cursed with a genocidal divine command (including their animals). This book does not solve the riddle of the specificity of annihilating the Amalekites.

Feldman tries to locate every mention of the Amalekites, as well as the allegorical meanings of "Remember Amalek." This divine command became an allegory: When the Jews were threatened, commentators referred to the enemy as "Amalekites." Moreover, Feldman examines how Philo, Pseudo-Philo, and Josephus each presented this thorny issue. However, the author does not stop there; he talentedly frames the Amalekite affair in the more general historical context of mass killings, genocides, and annihilations during antiquity. He thus not only examines mass killings by non-Israelites of others but also examines mass killings by the Israelites that are mentioned in the Bible. Here he discusses such divine parallels as the destruction of life in the Great Flood, the annihilation of Sodom and Gomorrah, the plague of the first-born Egyptians, Moses's command in his farewell to the Israelites to exterminate completely the seven nations of Canaan, and such nondivine group destructions as the mass killings of Shechem as a revenge for the Dinah affair, Sihon (king of the Amorites), Og (King of Bashan), the people of Jericho (as well as decimating the city), the priests of Nob, and the lethal Zealotry of Phinehas. Here too Feldman compares the biblical presentation of these mass killings and destructions with their presentation in the writings of Philo, Pseudo-Philo, and Josephus. Feldman uses this methodology in a thorough, meticulous, and scholarly fashion. The price of using this methodological approach, however, is a somewhat tedious text.

Feldman contextualizes these awesome events by showing that such massacres were not uncommon in antiquity, whether committed by the Israelites or others. He points out that such massacres continued into the time of the Roman Empire. Although Feldman, without a doubt, is very well versed in the details of this grim aspect of antiquity, some interesting issues that are beyond the mere texts he presents seem to get lost. Focusing on mass killings and widespread destruction of property, some of them due to divine commands, raises serious moral questions. For example, how does one explain such mass killings? Throughout the book we read repeatedly what the Bible, Philo, Pseudo-Philo, and Josephus wrote about these major traumas and get absorbed in much detail and in meticulous comparisons of texts. However, what I missed most was a powerful discussion of the moral meaning of the information from the scholarly mind of Feldman, a discussion transcending the specific details of the cases. The Israelites (and others) were on war paths of conquering, destroying, annihilating, mass killings, and misery on a grand scale. For readers aware of World Wars I and II, Stalin's reign of terror, Pol Pot's massacres, and other such mass killings in South America and Africa, there may be a lesson about humanity, metahistory, our current history, or even the

Nachman Ben-Yehuda, a professor of sociology at the Hebrew University, is the author of *Betrayals and Treason* (Westview Press, 2001) and *Sacrificing Truth: Archaeology and the Myth of Masada* (Prometheus Books/Humanity Books, 2002).

Journal of Palestine Studies Vol. XXXIV, No. 4 (Summer 2005), pp. 108–124, ISSN 0377-919X, electronic ISSN 1533-8614.

human condition, and these ancient acts of violence may have some moral meaning for us today.

Feldman himself does not speculate much on the general or contemporary significance of the Amalek's slaughter. The narrow, almost technical recitation and analysis seems to numb the reader's moral sense. The allegory of God's command is almost lost in the tangle of historical and textual details. Thus, the powerful allegory in, as well as the moral and political implications of, the divine command to annihilate everything (including memory!) connected with Amalek, whoever that "Amalek" was, is, or is made to be, is—to some significant extent—lost.

Readers interested in the overwhelming Amalekite narrative and its historical contextualization will find this impressive book informative and very useful. Those searching for more general meanings and implications will have to look elsewhere. Finally, it does seem ironic that this journal solicits the review of this work when some Israeli Jews from the extreme religious Right have attempted to cast Palestinians into the role of "Amalek."

IMAGES OF IDENTITY

Israeli and Palestinian Postcards: Presentations of National Self, by Tim Jon Semmerling. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004. xii + 203 pages. Notes to p. 212. Bibliography to p. 220. Index to p. 233. $60.00 cloth; $24.95 paper.

Reviewed by Kamal Boullata

Tim Jon Semmerling is described on the book's back cover as "an independent scholar" holding "a Ph.D. in Near East Languages and Cultures." In his seemingly first publication, he sets out to show how postcards he "acquired during research trips . . . in 1998 and 1999" (p. 8) play out the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. He contends that they "are competing for claims of national identity and political rights" (p. 6).

To support his thesis, the widely read student of modish theories in cultural studies comes armed with what he calls "combined methodologies" (p. 2). By applying his eclectic combination in equal measure to analyze postcards produced by a settler society and a dispossessed and pauperized people living under military occupation, he poses as the dispassionate observer whose theoretical reading confirms equivalent features in images created by well-matched adversaries.

The book's title is somewhat misleading. Discussion of all Israeli postcards is confined to the first chapter. All the book's remaining chapters are devoted to the analysis of Palestinian postcards. Thanks to a 1985 *Jerusalem Post* article distributed by Palphot, Israel's "leading postcard manufacturers" (p. 7), Semmerling taps his main source of information on the 70-year-old history of the Israeli postcard. In contrast, nowhere is there any trace that Palestinian postcards ever existed prior to the decade preceding Semmerling's "research trips."

Founded in 1934 by Zionist settlers from Germany, Palphot controls "the postcard market in Israel and the occupied territories" (p. 13), whereas all the hard to find (p. 61) Palestinian postcards discussed were produced more recently by individual initiatives; some are "fabricated with cottage simplicity" (p. 120). Information on them was obtained only from their makers who generally offered them as "gifts" to Semmerling (p. 8).

The fact that Israeli and Palestinian postcards come from two different visual traditions and that they address totally different audiences does not enter into Semmerling's theoretical grid. Thus, he cannot see that throwing mass-produced cards in the same basket with cards created by individuals is like those who equate state-sponsored violence with individual violence. Such factors would disrupt the neatly abstract symmetry Semmerling adopts to show how both protagonists are involved equally in "manipulating the gaze" (p. 103) and in negotiating "a transnational space in world acceptance" (p. 9).

In his analysis of Israeli postcards, composed mainly of photographs, Semmerling identifies "the visual attitude" (p. 16) inherited from colonial and orientalist models reflecting "the Zionist historical vision" (p. 24). In contrast, Palestinian postcards discussed include reproductions of didactic paintings created by local talents, Holy Land photographs, photojournalist shots, handcrafted greeting cards and photographs of amateurishly conceived ethnic subjects.

Obsessed by theories, Semmerling sees in every postcard the features favoring one

Kamal Boullata, a visual artist who writes on art, is the author of *Recovery of Place: A Study of Contemporary Palestinian Painting* [in Arabic] (ALECSO, 2000) and the editor of *Belonging* (Sharjah, 7th International Biennial, 2005).

or more of those theories. By eclectically borrowing concepts formulated by social and behavioral scientists, he discusses images of the "national self" in contrast to the "national other" in a way that fits the symmetrical view he wishes to impress about his contenders.

Seeing cards merely as "semiotic currency" (p. 8), he does not distinguish between a commercial tourist postcard and a reproduction of a bad painting. Yet he considers his work "a visual study" (p. 2) and goes on to interpret Palestinian postcards out of context of their history, just as he interprets "artwork postcards" (pp. 61–97) out of context of the history of Palestinian painting. In the process, the illustration of a popular painting appearing reversed (p. 72) goes unnoticed, just as his repeated misspelling of Nabulsi becoming Nablusi (pp. 78, 81, 194) and Bayt Jala becoming Beit Jalil (p. 186). Conversely, he uses every argument to show how Mardo Nalbandian's photography is orientalist (pp. 135–56), overlooking the historic fact that the Armenian photographer is heir to a profession introduced in Palestine by Jerusalem Armenians only a few years after photography was invented in Europe.

In his analysis of two postcards on the book's cover, we learn that a postcard maker candidly informed Semmerling that the postcard portraying her waving the Palestinian flag above Jerusalem's panorama is a composite of two photographs (p. 192). Yet, that kept him blind to the other photograph. In it, an obvious cutout studio photo showing a rabbi blowing the *shofar* is superimposed over a long shot of the Noble Sanctuary and the Wailing Wall (p. 46).

The convoluted theories Semmerling embraces and the obscure terms he parades seem as superfluous as the dim black-and-white reprinting of all the book's 15 color illustrations. Discussing the difference between *gemeinschaft* and *gesellschaft* (p. 120) seems out of place in appreciating photographs of nature taken by someone of peasant stock. Peasants everywhere identify trees as they would human beings. That is why Palestinian villagers working in Kuwait rushed to get Ziad Izzat's photographs as they would a relative's portrait. Naturally, he offered them for free.

The book's intellectual hanky-panky is as irritating as its accompanying and unwarranted jargon. The over-interpretation of his potpourri of Palestinian postcards lacks a basic contextual perspective. The "concentrated bravado" (p. 202) that he claims professional postcard manufacturers in Israel share equally with amateur postcard makers on the West Bank is what Semmerling himself exerted to sustain a thesis that flies in the face of facts. Were he to confine his analysis to Israeli postcards, his theoretical armory may have served his purpose better. However, dedicating the major part of his book to that motley collection of recent Palestinian postcards, many of which he admits only could be found in "boxes, envelopes and racks" (p. 62) relegated to the back of Palestinian postcard stores, reveals how little Semmerling cared to learn about the basics of Palestinians' cultural history.

VISUAL ARTS

Liberation Art of Palestine: Palestinian Painting and Sculpture in the Second Half of the 20th Century, by Samia A. Halaby. New York: H.T.T.B Publications, 2004. iv + 95 pages. $50.00 paper.

Reviewed by Adila Laïdi

This book by prominent Palestinian-American artist Samia Halaby analyzes an important feature of Palestinian visual arts, albeit one that has been disappearing slowly in the last decade, in favor of more intimate meditations on Israeli oppression and the Palestinian condition, using contemporary multimedia tools. The originality of *Liberation Art* further lies in its thesis that there is a "liberation art of Palestine" (p. iv) akin to the traditions of cubism, constructivism, and the Mexican muralist movement. In terms of existing research, the book has the merit of focusing on a relatively under-studied aspect of Palestinian culture—the visual arts—albeit one dominated by the meticulous and complex scholarship of Kamal Boullata. The target audience of the book seems to be one unfamiliar with Palestinian history and art and also a potentially hostile one.

Liberation Art begins with an interesting analysis of the organic relationship of Palestinians' visual production with the physical makeup of the land of Palestine, through a formal linkage in modern art with the art of the Canaanite and Byzantine periods.

Adila Laïdi ran the Khalil Sakakini Cultural Centre in Ramallah for eight years, where she curated the exhibition "100 Shaheed—100 Lives." She is now preparing a Ph.D.

The book vividly documents the enormous difficulties faced by Palestinian artists. Repeated cycles of production, destruction, and reestablishment are imposed on artists dispersed from Palestine to one diaspora center after another, as they try to salvage their art works and adapt their scale and materials. The book also charts extreme Israeli exactions, ranging from prohibition to paint the colors of the Palestinian flag, confiscation of art works, refusal to license artists' organizations, arson of exhibit halls, discrimination, surveillance, arrests, and torture, resulting in psychological breakdowns, illness, and other problems.

Halaby's brief biographies of selected artists recreate the disappeared worlds of pre-1948 art workshops in Jerusalem and Lod or the cultural ebullience of 1970s Beirut. For sources, she chiefly used communications with local and diaspora artists, some of whom have passed away, making *Liberation Art* a valuable record of these interviews. More important, however, is the selected artists' works, for which she provides detailed descriptions, interpreting their motifs and symbols and analyzing their political allegories and historical influences. Whereas Halaby mentions artists who worked before 1948 in Palestine, she rightly dates the start of the political trend in art to the 1953 Ismail Shammout exhibit in Gaza, an exhibition devoted to figurative depictions of the impact of the *nakba* and the exodus.

Liberation Art records aspects of post-1948 Palestinian art history, such as the little-known 1960s Jerusalem art scene, as well as the more widely known, multidisciplinary cultural dynamism in 1970s Beirut. The artistic activity in Beirut led to major local and international group exhibitions, outreach to refugee camps, and artist sponsorship to study aboard, and it culminated in the formation of the nucleus of the Museum of Solidarity with Palestine in 1978, its 1982 destruction, and attempts to salvage its contents.

In the first intifada section, the author charts the transfer of the scene of political activism from the diaspora back to Palestine, accompanied in the arts by a similar phenomenon that took the form of increased output by artists, mirroring political concerns. Organizationally, the number of local and traveling art exhibitions multiplied, and artists' leagues and exhibition halls were established. This chapter also features a valuable subsection on the little-known development of prisoner pictorial work, the materials used, Israeli retribution, and biographies of prisoner artists.

Stylistically, Halaby's writing is militant and often emotionally engaged. History is narrated with expressions such as "The Zionist settler entity which is merely the tip of the iceberg of imperialism" (p. 17); "The masses" (p. 3); "Bourgeois power" (p. 18); "Loving attention" (p. 20); "Disgustingly" (p. 26); and "Bravely" (p. 37). The successive intifadas are described as "Uprising of the Palestinian working class" (p. 26).

Liberation Art defines political art as "a practical art [that] needs to be clear and useful as a poster, leaflet, or banner" (p. 45). Furthermore, the author presents as axiomatic that "good" art is "political" art. As a result, there is a focus on artists whose works are thematically overtly political, sometimes regardless of their depth, complexity, and influence in the overall development of Palestinian arts. This approach also is articulated in the narrative:

> The quality of art work rose with the uprising and declined with its recession . . . . (p. 32)
>
> The art of Palestine rests on the Palestinian struggle for liberation. Without that base, Palestinian artists would be an atomized collection of imitators of fashionable international styles, and many are. The liberation artists of Palestine are aware that they are fortunate to have a cause, and in fulfilling their duty to serve it, their art gains historical significance as a school with particular characteristics . . . . (p. 54)
>
> Those who feel very vulnerable focus on subjects of individual rather than social identity. Palestinian artists who disregard liberation themes create regionalist art twice removed from the internationalist, capitalist currents of the late 20th century. They imitate the Israeli imitators of art from capitalist centers. (p. 37)

In addition to the political criterion, there is also a focus on the drawn pictorial output, with the exception of a few photographers and sculptors. As a result of these twin approaches, the integrity of major Palestinian artists implicitly is questioned, and major artists who work with installation and video go unmentioned. Using personal political opinions poses problems not only because of the placing of nonartistic value judgments on artists and their work, but also because it undermines the soundness of the book's argument: That heterogeneous political artworks form an art movement.

Cubism, futurism, constructivism, the Mexican muralist movement, and indeed all art movements are characterized by a relative unity of time and often place. Some of them sprang unselfconsciously but

evidenced a unity of style, whereas others arose from intellectual manifestos and/or political projects. Because of the occupation, Palestinian artists have always been conscious of their social and political responsibilities, an awareness realized in their artwork and/or through activism. Artistically, this commitment was manifest in a common political thematic, either of a direct expression as showcased in *Liberation Art* or through original and illusive approaches. Therefore, the book's valuable listing of explanations of recurring themes and motifs in Palestinian pictorial art and its appendix of sixty-two color plates evidence a shared thematic of preoccupation with politics, resistance, and yearning for a lost Palestine, through the use of clear visual compositions or through drawing from the semiotic reservoir of Palestinian culture, history, politics, and geography, a characteristic shared with Palestinian militant poetry and popular culture.

However, like all aspects of Palestinian life, Palestinian art has suffered remarkable dislocation: Many artists have not built on the experiences of their predecessors and are largely unaware of the work of their contemporaries. Indeed, recurrent themes and motifs do not suffice to make an art movement in the combined absence of unity of time and place, and of a founding intellectual paradigm. Iterated themes have been used for centuries across heterogeneous art movements' styles and schools.

Liberation Art tries to mold select art works by diverse artists, chronologically and geographically dispersed throughout almost a century of Palestinian art practice, into a coherent art movement. However, that only has been evident when there was a unity of time, place, and purpose: the deliberate revolutionary fervor of late 1960s–mid 1970s Damascus and Beirut's art scenes. Also, the stylistic and political coherence of 1980s West Bank and Gaza output on canvas and ceramics, celebrating the Palestinian village and its stylistic and visual vernacular, recalls the *Indigenismo* of the Muralists. The clear intellectual and political impulsion of the West Bank's late 1980s artists "New Visions" movement focuses on local media, eschewing imported materials. Thus, three different approaches artistically accompany and celebrate different phases of the Palestinian national movement.

Liberation Art is a strongly personal articulation of its author's keen sense of social and political responsibility. Born in Jaffa in 1936, Halaby and her family were exiled after the *nakba*. She taught art in American universities, including Yale. She widely exhibited across the world. Her work includes paintings, set designs, and kinetic paintings from software she designed. She was the driving force behind the organization of the recent major exhibit "Made in Palestine" in the U.S. She is also active in Palestinian diaspora political organizations. Her Web site (www.art.net/Studios/Visual/Samia/4WALLS/4walls.html) features a panorama of her remarkable artwork, as well as her writings.

LITERATURE OF DISSENT

Inextricably Bonded: Israeli Arab and Jewish Writers Re-Visioning Culture, by Rachel Feldhay Brenner. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2004. ix + 288 pages. Notes to p. 323. Bibliography to p. 337. Index to p. 349. $35.00 cloth.

Reviewed by Amal Amireh

Offering close readings of what she calls literature of dissent written by Israeli Jews and Israeli Arabs, Rachel Feldhay Brenner argues in this study that, in opposition to the dominant Zionist national ideology that sees Jews and Arabs as irreparably antagonistic, "the two literatures affirm a complex yet indissoluble affinity between the two communities" (p. 3). Drawing on the theories of Sigmund Freud, Georg W. F. Hegel, Jacques Lacan, Jacques Derrida, and Walter Benjamin, among others, Brenner juxtaposes works by Jewish writers such as S. Yizhar, A. B. Yehoshua, Amos Oz, and David Grossman to those by the Arab writers Atallah Mansour, Emile Habiby, and Anton Shammas. According to Brenner, these juxtaposed readings demonstrate "[t]he possibility of dialogic interaction between victors and victims, which signifies a relationship of equals, [that] unsettles the normative understanding of victory and defeat" (p. 13).

To contextualize her readings, Brenner devotes the first part of the book to a historical discussion of the Jewish literature of dissent. She focuses on Zionist politics and culture and early dissenting voices, such as those of Ahad Ha'Am and Martin Buber,

Amal Amireh is associate professor in the English department, George Mason University.

who challenged the secular Zionist suppressions of both Diaspora history and the Arab presence on the land.

In the second part, Brenner delineates the Zionist establishment's reception of dissenting literature. She explains that this literature has been canonized, depoliticized, and made ineffective in challenging the dominant ideology through critics' employment of reading strategies that abstract subversive works from their historical context and view them through universalizing Western modern and postmodern lenses. By privileging "existential motifs" and psychological arguments, critics read the Arab characters in works by Jewish writers narcissistically as either allegories of the Zionist modern sense of alienation and anxiety or as "refractions of Israeli Jewish psyche" (p. 99).

Brenner shows how the critical establishment co-opts Arab writers through an ideology of "enlightened tolerance," which "validates all stories in the name of democratic liberties." Thus, "the Arab story of victimization and injustice can be accorded recognition that, paradoxically, will neutralize and silence the protest of its dissent" (pp. 123–24). But taking no chances, critics dismiss the political content of the dissenting works either on aesthetic grounds, as in the case of Shammas, or on universal humanistic grounds, as in the case of Habiby.

Brenner is persuasive in showing that the Jewish authors themselves facilitate the mainstream depoliticized readings of their works. They do so by aligning themselves in their nonfiction writing with the canonizing establishment, which celebrates them as left-wing liberal Zionists, a label they eagerly embrace. Yehoshua is one such writer. His discomfort with the Arab-authored Hebrew text, which, as Brenner cogently argues, "challenged the Zionist exclusionary claim to Hebrew culture" (p. 111), mirrors the anxiety of the Zionist establishment as a whole. Yehoshua's fiction may be dissenting in its recognition of the Arab other, but, unfortunately, his dissent hardly translates into subversive politics: We learn that for him a Palestinian state is necessary, not because he believes in the Palestinians' right to self-determination, but because he is eager to keep Arab and Jewish cultures apart in the hope of protecting the latter from the former. Brenner, however, insists in the book's third part on "liberat[ing] the silenced voices of dissent," thus implying—problematically—that dissent is a quality inherent in these texts in isolation from reception and authorial intention discussed in the book's central section.

Another problematic aspect of this study is its Jewish-centric perspective. The author limits her analysis to works by Arab writers available to her in Hebrew, thus basing her ambitious hypothesis about "bonding" on four texts. In addition to this limited access, she leaves out the Arab context of reception, exclusively focusing on these texts' effects on Jewish readers and relation to the Jewish establishment. In doing so, she ignores that works by Habiby, in particular, were written with an Arab reader in mind and were read in an Arab context as examples of what the Palestinian writer Ghassan Kanafani termed "resistance" literature. To call Habiby's works, and even those of Atallah and Shammas, "dissenting" literature is to view them only from within Zionist ideology. Arab-authored works cannot be said to "dissent" from the Zionist project because Arabs were, by the Jewish state's own self-definition, always excluded from this project. While Israeli writers may have the luxury of dissent, Arab writers only can *resist* the ideology of the Jewish majority by asserting their presence in a state that seeks to erase them.

This resistance sometimes eludes Brenner. For example, she uses Arab writers' declarations that they will not move to any future Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza to prove that they embrace their Israeli identity. Eager to counter Yehoshua's vision of Arab citizens as threats to the Jewish state, she fails to hear, for instance, in Salem Jubran's insistence on living in his "homeland" (p. 106), his resistance to the Zionist discourse of the empty land that always has rendered the Palestinians invisible.

Such resistance does not rule out Arab writers' interconnectedness with their Jewish counterparts. On the contrary, as Brenner's own discussion shows, Arab writers consistently assert in their interviews and nonfictional writing their bond with liberal Jewish writers at the very same time that they condemn the injustice of the Israeli establishment. This consistency renders false Oz's offensive claim that Israelis are morally superior to the Palestinians when it comes to recognition of the other. It also renders questionable Brenner's innocuous conclusion that "The stories end on . . . [a] pessimistic note, underscoring the immense difficulties that characterize relationships between Jews and Arabs" (p. 174). Unfortunately, the liberal compulsion to privilege balance over

morality leads Brenner to equate both sides, even when her own readings of the fiction show that the responsibility for the abortive endings lie at the feet of the Zionist refusal to recognize the Arab other. This equation of both sides is evident when she asserts that the war "constituted a traumatic experience for both the winner and the loser" (p. 176). Yes, but can we morally equate the two sides? And does this mean there are no victims and victimizers anymore?

In the epilogue, the author admits that the book was conceived at the time of the Oslo agreements, "when hopes for peace were high" (p. 284). The rosy perception of the Oslo agreements on the part of the Israeli Left is mirrored in this study. That perception got darker in the shadow of the events of the past four years. This book, one can't help feel, like that perception, chooses to see what it wants to see, sometimes at the expense of the painful reality that it so much wants to transform.

NON-JEWS IN ISRAEL

The Israeli Palestinians: An Arab Minority in the Jewish State, ed. by Alexander Bligh. London: Frank Cass Publishers, 2003. viii + 308 pages. Index to p. 324. $64.50 cloth; $26.50 paper.

Reviewed by Raef Zreik

The editor of this volume, Alexander Bligh, introduces himself in the opening article as "a senior lecturer and the chair of the political science and Middle Eastern Departments at the Academic College of Judea and Samaria" (p. 3). This college is in Ariel, one of the largest Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory of the West Bank. The college's location and Bligh's decision to teach there are far from being mere accidents. As Bligh proclaims, "This [Ariel] is a part of Israel, we have to make sure that the message is very clear" (quoted in Tovah Lazaroff, "Education Under the Gun," *Jerusalem Post*, 13 July 2001). In reaction to the building of the separation wall, which Israel calls a "fence," he said, "I have no problem with a fence, as long as it is around Jenin" (quoted in Alan D. Abbey, "Don't Fence Me Out," *Jerusalem Post*, 19 September 2003). He dismisses the Israeli official diplomatic language portraying the wall as if it were a temporary response to security threats and instead asserts that "it is critical for establishing facts on the ground" (quoted in Dina Kraft, "On the Fence," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, 19 February 2004). Bligh also served as an adviser to the Israeli prime minister on Arab affairs.

One way of reading this book is to view it as part of a process of normalizing the "College of Judea and Samaria" and the wider settlement project. One can be an enthusiastic supporter of settlements in the West Bank, of building "fences" around Jenin, of eliminating 300 leaders of "terrorist" organizations and "dealing" with what Bligh estimates as 35,000 "terrorists" in the West Bank and Gaza, of denying the Palestinians in the West Bank their basic rights, and still be a legitimate discussant and contributor to the debates on Israeli citizenship and civil society, as if business is as usual. Bligh wants to claim that Ariel and the "College of Judea and Samaria" are *in* Israel and as such are participants in the debates regarding the future of Israeli citizenship. In this sense one can live in a state that institutionalizes apartheid and still discuss democracy. These unpleasant facts, however, have little or nothing to do with the quality of articles in this book or the intentions of the contributors who represent diverse political views.

The book comprises fourteen essays, which are grouped into five chapters. In this sense the volume is comprehensive and covers different fields and areas of studies. The first chapter, "After October 2000," focuses on the tension between civic and liberal identity and national identity. An essay by Bligh traces the tensions resulting from the activities of the fifteen Arab members of the Israeli Knesset, while A. Fraser and A. Shabat analyze the political thought of Azmi Bishara, the most famous Arab member of the Knesset. In contrast, the second chapter covers social issues. Onn Winckler writes about fertility patterns among Arabs in Israel; Khawla Abu Baker discusses the social and welfare policy toward the Arabs; and Dan Soen assesses the possible role that the education system can play in a binational society such as the Israeli one.

The third chapter opens with Mahmoud Yazbak's historical overview of the city of Haifa between 1870 and 1948. He places special emphasis on the social and economic origins of the 1936 revolt against British policies. Next, A. Golan examines in an interesting analysis the Judaization of two former

Raef Zreik is a doctoral candidate at Harvard University Law School.

Arab towns in the early 1950s: Beisan, which became Beit Shean; and al-Majdal, which became Ashkelon. Hillel Frisch ends this chapter with another interesting study comparing the *nakba* narrative among Palestinians in Israel with the one among Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. Note, however, that the newspaper quotations on which he builds his arguments are hardly representative.

Ilan Asya shows in the fourth chapter the close ties between the defense establishment and the Hebrew newspapers' editorial board during the years of the first intifada (1987–93), when the newspapers played a role—as a de facto government agent—in transmitting messages from the establishment to Israeli Palestinians. Haim Koren traces Arab media perspectives on the issue of Israeli Arab citizens. He covers four fields of Arab media: within Israel, in the West Bank and Gaza, in Arab countries, and in the Arabic media in Western countries.

The last chapter deals with general issues of identity and citizenship, the status of Palestinians within the Jewish state and possible future solutions explicated by contributors Ilana Kaufman, Muhamad Amara, A. Ghanem, and S. Ozacky Lazar. Kaufman, for example, sets forth a general theoretical and comparative framework for reading Israel as a nation-state, but she is very skeptical regarding the possibility of cultivating a unified civic identity for Jews and Arabs in Israel in the near future. Amara writes optimistically about the collective identity of Arabs in Israel in an era of peace but concludes that the separate Arab and Jewish identities will pose a real challenge to "a common Israeli super-identity" in the near future (p. 260). The essay by Ghanem and Ozacky Lazar deals with the status of the Palestinians in Israel in the shadow of the peace process and potential future developments. They claim that any historical compromise must take the Palestinians in Israel into account. Bligh's concluding essay traces the unique and distinctive identity of the Palestinians in Israel: While they are fully aware of their Palestinian identity, they stress their distinctive questions and their civil rights within the Israeli polity. As in his opening essay, Bligh stresses the tensions and the dual loyalties of the Israeli Palestinians. He shifts the locus of contradiction from the state—which is trying to define itself as Jewish and democratic (which he contends is the whole point)—to the Palestinians themselves, whom he says are oscillating between nationalism and liberalism. Thus, instead of dealing with the tension caused by state policy, he exports it outside, projecting it onto the Palestinian citizens of Israel as if they have to define and solve the contradiction of a state being both Jewish and democratic. In the end, while offering some insights about being an ethnic minority in a state defined in exclusive religious and ethnic terms, the book's main achievement is to provide a measure of legitimacy for the "College of Judea and Samaria."

"CONSTANTINIAN JUDAISM"

Toward a Jewish Theology of Liberation, by Marc H. Ellis. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2004. 3rd expanded edition, xviii + 225 pages. Notes to p. 252. Index to p. 260. $34.95 cloth.

Reviewed by Mark Chmiel

At the sixtieth anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz death camp, U.S. Vice-President Richard Cheney stated, "The story of the camps reminds us that evil is real and it must be called by its name and it must be confronted." Palestinians who experience the contemporary evils of home demolitions, the apartheid wall, and "collateral damage" from extrajudicial assassinations may wonder when the U.S. government will confront *these* evils as it retrospectively confronts those of Nazi Germany. It is this juxtaposition—formal, solemn remembrance of the Holocaust in Europe now presided over by influential government leaders and the ongoing atrocities and injustices in Palestine—that Marc Ellis has spent two decades trying to fathom. Here, in the third edition of his *Toward a Jewish Theology of Liberation*, Ellis presents an updated and concise record of this journey in understanding.

Jewish theology necessarily arises out of the formative events of the Jewish people. And the two universally recognized formative events Jews have experienced in recent times are the Holocaust and the founding of the State of Israel. Ellis surveys the work of Holocaust theologians who attempted to respond to the mass murder of millions of Jews in Christian Europe and how they

Mark Chmiel, adjunct professor of theological studies at Saint Louis University, is author of *Elie Wiesel and the Politics of Moral Leadership* (Temple University Press, 2001).

variously developed critiques not only of Christianity but also of the Jewish tradition and modernity as well.

It was only after the June 1967 war that Holocaust theology took off and moved to the center of Jewish life. In subsequent years, the operative framework for many Jewish theologians and institutions was this remembrance of the Holocaust and the support for Jewish empowerment, most notably in the State of Israel. It is this empowerment, both in the Middle East and in the United States, that Ellis finds in need of religious reflection, specifically, the time-honored Jewish refusal of idolatry. Such a critique leads Jews to practice solidarity with those whom Edward Said once described as "the victims of the victims," the Palestinian people.

Ellis identifies a long lineage of Jewish dissent on Israel and Palestine that goes from Martin Buber and Hannah Arendt through Noam Chomsky and Sara Roy on to Gideon Levy and Amira Hass. He also examines the Jewish liturgy of destruction in which Jews use ancient archetypes to reckon with and make sense of modern catastrophes; he argues that in order to be historically accurate and ethically authentic, the Jewish people also must include the narrative and affliction of the Palestinians in their own Jewish narratives.

Ellis's work is not a systematic theological treatise. Indeed, its indebtedness to a dynamic history forecloses this possibility, as he continually seeks resources from the margins to illuminate the Jewish struggle to respond to the crisis in Israel/Palestine. As Ellis has incorporated in this volume his further reflections on the first and second intifadas as well as the terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001, he has come to a new articulation of the fundamental danger facing Jews. That danger is what he bitingly refers to as a "Constantinian Judaism" whose qualities include "the normalization of Jewish life in Israel and America; the continued and expanded empowerment of Jews in both societies; the conquering of Palestine and with that, and for all practical purposes, the quieting of Jewish dissent" (p. 232).

Reading Ellis's work reminds me of a favorite maxim of Italian philosopher Antonio Gramsci: "Pessimism of the intelligence, optimism of the will." Ellis does not shrink from the awful facts on the ground and the grim struggle for survival among the Palestinians. And yet, the prophetic impulse itself is based on the hope for a transformation—individual, cultural, political, and religious. Surely there continue to be hopeful signs of fidelity, if only at the grass roots, such as the Israeli refuseniks and the International Solidarity Movement (both of which embody the dangerous practice of critical solidarity that Ellis long has championed).

In the early 1990s, someone asked the Catholic El Salvadoran theologian Jon Sobrino if liberation theology had become passé. He responded that, as long as there was oppression, there will be liberation theologies to respond to this suffering. Like Rosemary and Herman Ruether's similarly critical work from an American Christian perspective (*The Wrath of Jonah*), Ellis's *Toward a Jewish Theology of Liberation* will remain a valuable resource for Jews, Christians, and others as long as the Israeli oppression of the Palestinians continues.

RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

Islam, Judaism, and the Political Role of Religions in the Middle East, edited by John Bunzl. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2004. xii + 189 pages. Contributors to p. 193. Index to p. 202. $59.95 cloth.

Reviewed by As'ad AbuKhalil

Books and conferences that deal with dialogue or relationships among religions by definition are limited in scope and objectives. Usually, the positive aspects of the religion of the "other" are stressed, while fundamental disagreements are obscured so that harmony and amity are encouraged. Although these are laudable goals, they do not necessarily reflect reality. Creating a permanent record of attempts at dialogue by means of an edited book often results in a volume that is varied and disparate in content. The book under review is no exception, as even its title does not cohere, and the various essays cover different, and sometimes divergent, topics and treatments. The individual essays are good, but one should read them as separate articles without trying to tie them together, or even to relate them to the very general—if not ambitious—title.

As'ad AbuKhalil is professor of political science at California State University, Stanislaus, and visiting professor at University of California, Berkeley. His latest book is *The Battle for Saudi Arabia: Royalty, Fundamentalism, and Global Power* (Seven Stories Press, 2004).

The essays are written by noted experts, and several deal with Islam and Judaism, with special references to Palestine and Israel. Hans-Michael Haussig's essay (pp. 19–27) on the "self-conception" of "religion" in Islam and Judaism is a good but rather brief introduction to the volume, although the author seems to have a far better knowledge of Judaism than of Islam, the treatment of which seems perfunctory. Nissim Rejwan provides a review of the literature (pp. 28–57) rather than an essay with original arguments and insights; sometimes he does not even evaluate the thesis of the authors he cites (such as Poliakov, pp. 32–33), although he seems to agree with Franz Rosenthal that Jews under Islam were able to maintain "their distinctive character as Jews with a vigor and determination hitherto unknown" (p. 40). Herbert Kelman provides a different kind of essay, in which he reports the findings from his decades-long involvement in bringing Arabs and Israelis together to break the "psychological barrier," as Anwar Sadat dubbed it. Kelman is a well-meaning peace advocate but his approach is naïve: The notion that bringing a selected group of Arabs and Israelis together could reduce tensions tends to imply symmetry of grievances and injustices; assumes that the masses do not matter, and the "gifted" educated elite can speak on their behalf; and also reduces the burden on the occupier and oppressor to offer real concessions and compromises. Furthermore, Kelman's proposal to disaggregate the identities of the warring factions (p. 64) is impractical at best.

On a different topic, Helga Baumgarten provides an informed and original treatment of Muslim-Christian relations in the Palestinian national movement, and she shows the extent to which the Zionist movement and Israel tried to no avail to divide and separate Palestinian Muslims and Christians. Impressively, the Palestinian people, unlike the Lebanese, have constituted a monolithic united front against attempts at religious segmentation even with the rise of the fundamentalist groups. Raja Bahlul's essay offers a fine summary of Muslim discourse on democracy. However, the shortcoming of the essay, or of the approach itself, is that it only requires a verbal commitment from Muslim fundamentalist writers even if their records (like that of Hasan al-Turabi) do not match their words. And I cannot agree that the John Rawls reference to the democratic containment of "mad" or "irrational" ideas is similar to Rashid Ghannushi's references to ideas that are "beyond the pale" (p. 112), because, based on other writings and statements by Ghannushi, one safely can assume that his category of ideas that are beyond the pale is larger than that suggested by Rawls. Bahlul also seems to accept the classical Orientalist assumption that in Islam there is no "divide between belief and life in society" (p. 113). But who can make such a blanket general statement about societies that encompass a variety of Islamic religious belief and practice, from the strictly devout and pious to the extreme agnostic? And did not Christianity, like Islam, for centuries conflate the church and the state? Bahlul needs to answer why a democracy for Muslims—I prefer to avoid using that demagogic term "Islamic democracy"—should have contours and parameters that are exceptional or peculiar, especially when they seem to make that democracy less democratic than other democracies.

Four other essays provide diverse perspectives. Adam Seligman's essay on "tolerance" (pp. 118–33) is interesting, but he needs to emphasize that tolerance is not tantamount to equality; tolerance sometimes can be as limited as only allowing members of the "other" faith to live as opposed to being executed. Joel Beinin has an excellent and original essay in which he succinctly traces Egyptian attitudes toward Jews and Israel and critically evaluates the impact of the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty on Egyptian popular attitudes toward Israel and its representatives in Cairo. Alexander Flores's essay deals with a period when Islamist discourse did not dominate the political literature of the Palestinian national movement. Finally, Avishai Ehrlich traces in his essay the power of Israeli religious parties and the impact of religion on attitudes toward peace.

SUBORDINATE MINORITIES

The Logic of Democratic Exclusion: African Americans in the United States and Palestinian Citizens in Israel, by Rebecca B. Kook. Oxford: Lexington Books, 2002. x + 187 pages. Bibliography to p. 208 pages. Index to p. 221. $24.95 paper.

Reviewed by Adolph Reed, Jr.

In *The Logic of Democratic Exclusion*, Rebecca B. Kook, a political science professor at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev in Israel, proffers a novel and provocative comparison. The theoretical link joining the cases of African Americans in the United

States and Palestinian citizens in Israel is the problem of the relation between inclusion and exclusion in democratic polities. This is in principle an interesting issue to pursue, and Kook builds sensibly on the work of Rogers M. Smith and others who have grappled with it. Comparing the political situation of Palestinians inside Israel to that of black Americans under the Jim Crow system and since proceeds from the same assumption: that each group is a marginalized and subordinate minority population with a history of suffering civic exclusion—literally, for Palestinians in particular, second-class citizenship—and systematic discrimination.

Although Kook's discussion of the black American situation is intelligent and nuanced, the comparison is imbalanced, as her primary focus is on the Palestinian case. The black American case is hardly as well developed, and sometimes it seems like a prop. Nevertheless, noting the similarities and dissimilarities of the two populations' positions in their respective societies helps throw into relief a perspective on the evolution of Palestinians' status within official Israel.

Black Americans under the Jim Crow regime typically were regarded as in, but not of, the U.S. polity. From the post-Civil War amendments to the Constitution, which created and affirmed a category of national citizenship, blacks in the United States were nominally or officially citizens. However, they routinely were denied voting rights in the South, where they also lived under an official regime of apartheid. Less stringent, largely customary forms of subordination were the norm for blacks outside the South as well for much of the twentieth century. As Kook's account shows, the situation of the Palestinian population in Israel has been in some ways at least superficially similar. Certainly both populations at times have been excluded or marginalized by law or institutional practice.

It is not clear that effective comparison can go much beneath that level of generality, however. The exclusion of black Americans and that of Palestinians is asymmetrical in significant ways. Before the Civil War, blacks' official citizenship status varied over time and place, as national citizenship in the United States was not so clearly defined. Although naturalization as a national citizen was nominally restricted to whites at least after 1790, substantive theories of racial difference did not harden enough to make race a substantial factor in official restriction of access to citizenship until after the Civil War amendments had extended citizenship to people of African descent.

Because first-class membership in Israel has been defined in religious terms that are simultaneously ethnoracial, in some ways Israel is a more closed polity than the United States ever has been. Palestinians in Israel, as Kook points out, for nearly the first two decades of the state's existence lived literally under military rule. Their identity as Palestinians was denied in official discourse. Since then, the question of Palestinians' status in Israel has remained shaped in large part by the fact that Israel is officially and unambiguously a Jewish state. Kook certainly recognizes the limitation thus posed for Palestinian Israelis' full incorporation as equal citizens. As she notes, economic liberalization, which in some ways presses for secularization in Israeli life, does not necessarily warrant Palestinian incorporation. Indeed, the associated regime of deregulation and reductions in public social provision quite likely will make things more difficult for Palestinian Israelis in the aggregate. And the unacknowledged gorilla in the room is the continuing Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories, whose Palestinian inhabitants lack even the second-class citizenship rights accorded to Palestinians inside Israel.

The fundamental problem with this comparison is Kook's failure to examine its most basic conceptual category. How does it make sense to describe as democratic a state that excludes substantial elements of its population from access to citizenship on the basis of ascriptive status categories such as race, national origin, or gender? This is a question political theorists too seldom ask. Characterization of states or regimes as democratic can be perversely circular. States may merely be stipulated to be democratic, and their practices then are taken as illustrative of what democracies do. As Rogers Smith notes in *Civic Ideals: Conflicting Visions of Citizenship in U.S. History* (Yale University Press, 1997), though, for much of U.S. history most people who lived here—black slaves

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Adolph Reed, Jr., a professor of political science at the University of Pennsylvania, is the author most recently of *Class Notes: Posing as Politics and Other Thoughts on the American Scene* (New Press, 2000) and *Stirrings in the Jug: Black Politics in the Post-Segregation Era* (University of Minnesota Press, 1999).

and later disfranchised free black people, women of all races, Native Americans—were denied political participation and direct civic voice. How, then, does this country qualify as a democracy? It clearly would not from the standpoint of those excluded. A typical defense of such states is that *some* of the population can participate; but this defense is not especially persuasive to those who cannot. For most of its history, political theorists generally considered the apartheid regime in the Republic of South Africa to be a democracy because whites—who were less than a quarter of the total population—were able to participate. But at what percentage of exclusion does a regime no longer qualify as democratic? Similar questions could be raised concerning the notion of Israeli democracy, and Kook's account may have been sharper and more powerful if it had addressed them.

FAULTING JUNIOR OFFICERS

Arabs at War: Military Effectiveness, 1948–1991, by Kenneth M. Pollack. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2002. A Council on Foreign Relations Book. xii + 583 pages. Notes to p. 653. Bibliography to p. 675. Index to p. 698. $49.95 cloth; $24.95 paper.

Reviewed by Donald Neff

As director of research at the Brookings Institution's Saban Center for Middle East Policy, and before that a deputy director for national security studies at the Council on Foreign Relations and an analyst at the National Security Council and the Central Intelligence Agency, Kenneth M. Pollack is a frequent writer and an occasional television commentator on the Middle East. Pollack is one of America's most articulate experts on military affairs in the region and was an early advocate for invading Iraq in his 2002 book, *The Threatening Storm: The Case for Invading Iraq* (Random House, 2002).

In the same year that his Iraq book appeared, the University of Nebraska Press published Pollack's massive study, *Arabs at War*, a highly detailed examination of the performance of the military forces of six Arab nations—Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Libya, Saudi Arabia, and Syria—between 1948 and 1991. Pollack's quest was to determine why the Arabs consistently have fared worse in battle than the strength of their forces would have led observers to expect.

Pollack finds unconvincing many of the usual explanations for Arab defeats, ranging from inept generalship, cowardice, and military imbalances to poor air support, unit cohesion, and logistics, among other conventional reasons. Instead, Pollack concludes that "while the Arab armies were far more active in their pursuit of greater success in war than most authors have acknowledged, certain other factors, which remained constant throughout the modern era, limited the scope of that success" (p. 553). Pollack argues that the Arabs' failure lay mainly with the poor performance of Arab junior officers. These officers consistently "failed to demonstrate initiative, flexibility, creativity, independence of thought, an understanding of combined arms integration, or an appreciation for the benefits of maneuver in battle" (p. 557). Pollack believes "their problems with tactical leadership, information management, and technical skills were devastating in an age of warfare in which decentralized command, aggressive and innovative tactical leadership, accurate information flows, and advanced weaponry were the keys to victory" (p. 582).

Pollack's numerous examples more than support his indictment of the junior officer corps. But his exhaustive evidence is also the essential problem with this book, which weighs in at 2.6 pounds. The reader is left with the sense that *Arabs at War* is more like the compilation of the undigested field notes for a war college seminar than a tome for the average reader. His examination of the minutiae of Arab battles over four decades is ultimately numbing in its relentless recitation of tiny fact piled on tiny fact. His focus is so narrow, in fact, that he completely ignores more interesting and important subjects such as the intriguing political dimension of war as well as the colorful personalities of the warriors. Moreover, there is no discussion of the overarching international political maneuvering that regularly roils the region. Nor is there any mention of the domestic political scene of the nations involved.

The University of Nebraska does not burnish its publishing reputation with its careless editing of this book, if it did any editing at all. Certainly it spent no time on making the format friendly for readers.

Donald Neff's latest book is *Fallen Pillars*, reprinted in 2002 by the Institute for Palestine Studies.

Despite its excessive length (583 pages), *Arabs at War* was published with a table of contents of exactly fifteen short lines to guide the reader through its thickets.

ISRAELI-ARAB RELATIONS

Israel and the Maghreb: From Statehood to Oslo, by Michael M. Laskier. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2004. xv + 286 pages. Appendices to p. 303. Notes to p. 330. Bibliography to 340. Index to p. 351. $65.00 cloth

Reviewed by John P. Entelis

The unexpected announcement on 25 February 2005 that Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon had accepted the invitation by President Zayn al-'Abidin Ben 'Ali to visit Tunisia during the second World Summit on the Information Society in November 2005 would not have surprised anyone who had read Michael Laskier's book. The author has devoted the bulk of his professional and publication career researching and writing on the Jewish communities of the Middle East and North Africa, with particular focus on the Maghreb's relationship with Israel. This volume is the latest representation of his ongoing work, based in part on the wealth of archival materials on the subject that have become available since the early 1990s. It is written with authority, a balanced perspective, and a fidelity to details and historical accuracy. From my close reading of the book I only discovered one rather minor error of fact: Chadli Benjedid became president of Algeria in February 1979, not 1980 (p. 274).

The book is organized into seven substantive chapters and a conclusion. A brief introductory first chapter locates the "common interests and encounters" that led pre- and post-independence Israel to pursue informal and backdoor channels of communication through a variety of private and public interlocutors as a way by which to escape its political isolation, promote economic opportunities, and fortify intelligence and military links with parties sharing similar regional animosities, as was the case with Moroccan and Tunisian opposition to Nasser's pan-Arabism, socialist, and revolutionary ambitions. Chapter 2 provides a detailed historical narrative of the ambiguous status of Maghreb Jews during the zenith of French colonialism, focusing on the cases of Tunisia and Morocco. In the third chapter Laskier demonstrates his specialized knowledge of the situation of Moroccan Jews and how through both clandestine and semi-legal means they were able to immigrate to Israel often with the explicit collaboration of high-level Moroccan officials including both King Muhammad V and King Hassan II.

Each of the next three chapters is devoted to relations between Israel and Morocco, Tunisia, and Algeria, respectively. In the case of Morocco, Israel has been particularly active in forging military and intelligence ties involving, among others, using the Mossad, Israel's intelligence and security service, to provide "military assistance, training the Palace's royal guards, placing surveillance over the monarchy's opposition leaders, and lobbying in the West for economic and military aid on Morocco's behalf" (p. 140). Most disturbing was Mossad's role in providing intelligence data-gathering techniques in tracking down and abducting Mehdi Ben Barka, the popular left-wing politician assumed to have been murdered by Moroccan and French intelligence agents in Paris in 1965. This dastardly act continues to reverberate within both French and Moroccan political circles but has not reduced Mossad's involvement with Morocco, as it continues to provide intelligence and training as applied to a variety of security-related issues whether in the Western Sahara, on the border with Algeria, or along the Mediterranean coast.

Israel's relationship with Tunisia has fluctuated widely under both Habib Bourguiba and Ben Ali as a function of developments in the Palestine-Israel conflict and/or the status of Nasser's regional ambitions. Given the relocation of PLO headquarters from Beirut to Tunis in 1982 following Israel's invasion of Lebanon, it was no surprise to see a sharp decline in those relations once Tel Aviv began targeting PLO officials in Tunis for assassination, as was the case with the killing of Khalil al-Wazir (Abu Jihad) in 1988. The chapter devoted to Algerian-Israeli relations, appropriately entitled "Irreconcilable Differences," makes clear how Algeria's militant anti-imperialist ideology under Ben Bella and Boumediene made ties with Israel virtually impossible. This situation changed only slightly under Benjedid but dramatically under the army-led regime that assumed power after the military coup d'état of 11 January

John P. Entelis, professor of political science and the director of the Middle East studies program at Fordham University, is editor of the *Journal of North African Studies*.

1992. Since 'Abd al-'Aziz Bouteflika's election and reelection to the presidency in 1999 and 2004, Algiers has been much more forthcoming in pursuing ties with Israel, especially in the area of intelligence data-gathering techniques as part of its efforts to combat Islamic radicalism within and immediately outside its borders.

Laskier has performed a yeoman service in assembling and interpreting such a massive amount of information. A more conceptually oriented approach, however, would have made this process more comprehensible to the reader, who is otherwise bombarded by one lengthy fact-packed passage after another. Also useful would have been an investigation into Mauritania's distinctive status in the Maghreb as the area's only Arab state that has maintained unbroken diplomatic relations with Israel since they were first established in October 1999. Yet none of these minor asides detract from the essential usefulness of a book covering an increasingly important subject and from which scholars and analysts alike will benefit.

STAGING MEMOIRS

When the Bulbul Stopped Singing, by Raja Shehadeh, adapted for the stage by David Grieg; directed by Philip Howard; music by Max Richter.

Reviewed by Ellen Cantarow

The Manhattan premier of Raja Shehadeh's play, "When the Bulbul Stopped Singing" in April should have inspired and instructed New York's theatergoers. Adapted by David Grieg from Shehadeh's memoir about the Israeli invasion and siege of Ramallah in April 2002 [*When the Birds Stopped Singing: Life in Ramallah under Siege* (Steerforth Press, 2003); reviewed in *JPS* 34, no. 1 (Aut. 2004), pp. 84–86], this is the work of a writer praised for his humanity and rationality by the *New York Times*'s own columnist, Anthony Lewis. Shehadeh invariably brings his readers an almost meditative understanding of his occupiers, his people, and himself. From his first diary, *The Third Way: A Journal of Life in the West Bank* (Quartet Books, 1982; reviewed by this writer in *The Village Voice*, 1982), his voice has been characterized by a singular mix of intimacy and almost clinical detachment in conveying his thoughts, feelings, and the details of life around him under Israel's occupation. He writes with short declarative sentences devoid of apparent judgment—often, amidst tragedy, with ironic humor:

> It's the first day of April. For a number of years my mother's old neighbor, the credulous Nabiha Salah, has been a candidate for an April fool joke. Last night she was found dead, alone in her house. She was one of my mother's oldest friends . . . My mother was worried that she might be buried without the religious rites. So she was on the case, trying to make arrangements. The priest said he was willing to perform the last rites. The problem was how to get the body from there to the cemetery . . . [and the] hospital was unwilling to receive another corpse because the morgue was full to capacity. (p. 41)

On stage, a spare set delineates the shrinking confines of Palestine around "Raja," whom the British actor Christopher Simon played in both the work's debut at Edinburgh's Traverse Theater in 2004 and at New York's 59 East 59:

> Over these past nineteen months since the intifada began my space has been constantly narrowing. First it became too dangerous to go for walks in the hills around Ramallah, then I stopped being able to drive to Israel, then driving between the Palestinian towns and villages was prohibited. Now I cannot even step outside the door of my house. The perimeters of my house are all that is left for me of Palestine that I can call my own, and even this is not secure. (p. 33)

Grieg's excerpts create a series of monologues faithful to the same mix of quotidian detail and political reflection as the book; the same tragedies Shehadeh's TV set brings to his confinement under siege; the same severe reflections on the Palestinian leadership; the same descriptions of Israeli's stunning savageries. The monologues unfold against a bare-bones backdrop: a single chair, a TV monitor and, on the stage-floor, a brick-colored sand design that mimics tiles in the author's Ramallah home. Actor and real-life character are nothing alike. Short, slight, in his early 50s, Shehadeh is all reserve, with a quiet, focused intensity. A decade younger, Simon is tall and expansive; the passion he brings to the play is declamatory. Yet the drama works superbly, often with wrenching pathos.

Edinburgh audiences were warm and enthusiastic. In New York some theater-goers shouted insults and epithets; at least one person cornered Simon afterwards, accusing him of lying about Israel. "I have never

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Ellen Cantarow, a Boston-based writer, has observed and written about Palestine affairs since 1979.

felt such hatred," he told me after the showing I attended, adding in an e-mail several weeks later that he also had never felt "such love and empathy from different parts of the auditorium." Shortly after the play opened, a *New York Times* review lambasted it as mere "propaganda." Among other things the reviewer took Shehadeh to task for not mentioning, alongside his reflections about the 2002 invasion, a suicide bombing in Netanya in the same period. What was truly staggering was the reviewer's utter failure to comment on anything like the actual play—it was as if she hadn't bothered to attend. Here is a key moment in the play, the author's reflections on suicide bombings:

> In these moments everyone falls back on their own experience and remembers the interrogator who tortured them, the soldier at the checkpoint who harassed them, the official at the ministry who mistreated them, the settler who shot at them, who took their land—these are the people we imagine hurt. Every one of us has a grievance, a sore spot in their heart. And then, on the television, we see a woman crying by the roadside. She can be our mother, our sister, our neighbor. This is sour victory, embittering, sobering. How could it have come to this? After the bomb is unbearable silence. In silence we are joined together with our enemy. We are both shattered and raised up into the air before the pieces begin to fall and scatter on the ground and the victims are counted. (pp. 78–79)

Other passages describe Israeli brutalities—the deliberate destruction of governmental and nongovernmental offices; all five Ramallah radio and TV stations of which one, al-Watan, is kept open "for Israeli soldiers to hook . . . to a European pornographic station to 'entertain' the Palestinian population as they sit in their houses under a twenty-four-hour curfew" (p. 58). In a later scene "Raja" conveys to his audience the messages Israeli soldiers write on the walls of the Palestinian ministries whose data they have wiped out: "Born to Kill"; "Eat, Drink, and Destroy"; "Eat, Drink, and Shit"; "Fucking Arabs Never Mess with Us Again" (p. 123). As Shehadeh points out in the book, even the IDF "admitted to what was described as 'ugly vandalism' against Palestinian property." Israeli military savagery also has been documented by Israeli Jewish sources, including B'Tselem. What is continuously alarming is how obdurately the American political elite, first and foremost among them various pro-Israel lobby organizations, ignore—indeed, obliterate—historical and contemporary factual evidence.

When I attended the play there were only fifteen people in the audience. Simon and the theater's owner, Elysabeth Kleinhans, attributed this to the *Times* review and what appears to have been a well-organized assault on Shehadeh's work. The same totalitarian mind-set that has orchestrated attacks on balanced representations of Palestine in academe swept over 59 East 59, killing this play, which should have brought instruction and a reminder of shared humanity to an American audience in desperate need of both.

SHORTER NOTICES

Visions: Palestine, by Andrea Künzig. Introduction by Udo Steinbach. Heidelberg, Germany: Kehrer Verlag, 2004. 104 pages. $40.00 cloth.

This book is a collection of Andrea Künzig's photographs taken in the occupied territories and Israel between the 4 May 1994 signing of the Gaza-Jericho agreement and April 2004. Thus, Künzig takes the reader on a visual journey from the celebratory mood that ushered Yasir Arafat into Gaza to the separation wall, half-completed, grimly slicing through Abu Dis. Künzig's photographs mostly chronicle daily life in the occupied territories, documenting the settlement expansion, the land confiscation, and the poverty and unemployment that continued during the Oslo years. At times juxtaposing the disparate conditions of Jewish Israelis/settlers and Palestinians (e.g., photos of the beach in Gaza and Tel Aviv are presented side by side), the photographs are rich in composition, exploring the hope, suffering, violence, and the human impact of the political failures that comprised the Oslo process.

AW

The Case for Palestine: An International Law Perspective, by John Quigley. Revised and updated ed. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2005. xii + 238 pages. Notes to p. 331. Index to p. 344. $22.95 paper.

This updated edition of the original 1990 book reflects the vastly changed circumstances surrounding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Ohio State University professor John Quigley has added five new sections that deal with the peace process set in motion by the 1991 Madrid Conference and the 1993 Oslo Accord. Quigley's focus in both editions is the international legal dimensions

of the Question of Palestine. Beginning with the origins of Zionism, he offers an international legal perspective framed within a history of Palestinian-Israeli relations. Throughout, the author maintains his emphasis on the "legal entitlement" (p. xii) of the parties, particularly the Palestinians, as well as his belief that any final settlement to the conflict must respect international legal principles. In this regard, Quigley argues for the UN Security Council to take up, finally, resolution of the conflict according to its peacekeeping mandate and the principles of international law, especially since the bilateral peace process created by Oslo largely has failed.

Quigley's notes and sources are useful, particularly for those already familiar with the conflict. Most especially, the book will be welcomed by those sympathetic to the Palestinian cause and are seeking to bolster their legal arguments. Although the book's clear, pro-Palestinian stance and its structuring of the legal and historical discussion certainly mirror international opinion about the conflict, it is unlikely to appeal to partisans of Israel.

MRF

Sharing the Land of Canaan: Human Rights and the Israeli-Palestinian Struggle, by Mazin B. Qumsiyeh. Foreword by Salman Abu Sitta. London: Pluto Press; and Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004. xix + 219 pages. Notes to p. 232. Index to p. 236. $22.95 paper.

Mazin Qumsiyeh of Yale University is a Palestinian-American geneticist who also is a cofounder of the Palestine Right to Return Coalition. This ambitious, well-researched book discusses a wide variety of issues relating to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, from linguistics to genetics, from politics to international law, as is evident in the titles of its thirteen chapters: introduction; "People and the Land"; "Biology and Ideology"; "Palestinian Refugees and Their Right to Return"; "Jerusalem (Ur-Salem, Jebus, Yerushalaym, Al-Qods): A Pluralistic City"; "Zionism"; "Is Israel a Democracy?"; "Violence and Terrorism"; "Human Rights"; "The Conflict and Sustainable Development"; "The Political Context"; "The International Context and International Law"; and "Peace Can Be Based on Human Rights and International Law." Throughout, Qumsiyeh's essential purpose is to offer a strong critique of Zionism and Israeli policy toward Palestinians.

The author's ultimate thesis is that continued separation of the peoples inhabiting what he calls the "Land of Canaan" never will result in peace. Likewise, establishing "ethnocracies" or separate national states are doomed to fail. Instead, he proposes a version of the unified, secular, and democratic state idea as the only logical, just, and effective solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Qumsiyeh's wide-ranging book is likely to be received well only by readers already predisposed to the idea of transforming Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories into one state in which Jews and Palestinian enjoy equal rights, privileges, and responsibilities.

MRF

Bridges over Troubled Waters: A Comparative Study of Jews, Arabs, and Palestinians, by Dahlia Moore and Salem Aweiss. viii + 148 pages. Appendices to p. 200. References to p. 222. Author Index to p. 227. Subject Index to p. 237. Westport, CT and London: Praeger, 2004. $92.95 cloth.

Coauthored by an Israeli and a Palestinian academic, this study presents the results of two surveys that probe Jewish-Israeli, Arab-Israeli, and Palestinian identities. The first survey includes 4,000 Jewish, Arab, and Palestinian high schools students and was conducted between 1996 and 1998. The second survey was conducted in 2002 and includes 510 Jewish and Arab adults. The authors attempt to establish correlations between variables that constitute identity, including religiosity, ethnicity, gender, income, education, and political attitudes. Many of the findings are highly relevant. For example, the authors provide evidence that Arabs are less extreme in their hatred of others than Jews and that religious Jews hate others more than do secular Jews and Arabs. Unfortunately, Moore and Aweiss have written a tedious text that requires readers to shift through extensive and marginally relevant theoretical material, as well as incessant name dropping of kindred academicians, before reaching the information gathered in the surveys. If they had focused on the findings and their implications and also negotiated a more affordable retail price for the book, these fascinating surveys would reach more readily the broad audience they deserve.

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The Middle East and Palestine: Global Politics and Regional Conflict, edited by Dietrich Jung. New York and Houndmills:

Palgrave Macmillan, 2004. xii + 238 pages. Index to p. 244. $59.95 cloth.

This collection of eight articles offers a rejection of what editor Dietrich Jung of the Danish Institute for International Studies calls the "stereotypical and exceptionalist image of the Middle East in general and of the Palestine conflict in particular." Together, the articles argue that the contours of the Arab-Israeli conflict have been shaped fundamentally by regional and transnational relations and are not the result of "a peculiar Middle Eastern culture" (p. ix). To accomplish this, the book is organized around two parts: "Global Discourses and Regional Politics" and "Global Schemes and Local Realties: Transnational Islam and the Palestinian Refugee Problem." The two parts contain articles on such divergent topics as Egyptian media perceptions of Nazism; Egyptian anti-terrorist efforts; Syrian attitudes toward international Islamic networks; images of Middle Eastern conflicts in international relations; popular mobilization in the 'Ayn al-Hilwa refugee camp; and resolution of the Palestinian refugee problem.

The contributors, most of whom are political scientists at European universities, are editor Jung, Morten Valbjorn, Götz Nordbruch, Jeong-Min Seo, Annabelle Böttcher, Bernard Rougier, Dan Tschirgi, and Walid Kazziha. Their arguments will appeal particularly to other political scientists interested in situating the Middle East within wider international relations studies.

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The Empire Has No Clothes: U.S. Foreign Policy Exposed, by Ivan Eland. Oakland, CA: The Independent Institute, 2004. 258 pages. Notes to p. 284. Index to p. 292. $24.95 cloth.

In six chapters, Ivan Eland, the author of numerous articles and essays on U.S. foreign and national security policy, provides an historical overview of U.S. imperialism since 1898, including its evolution into an informal but powerful nonterritorial empire since 1945, and he makes compelling arguments for why such an empire contradicts constitutional principles and even threatens cherished civil liberties. The book's focus is on the domestic consequences—virtually all adverse—of maintaining an overseas empire in the "modern" version of military alliances and military bases. Nevertheless, Eland does make clear that foreign terrorism, even that of al-Qa'ida, has "nothing to do with jealousy of American freedoms" (p. 195), as claimed by President George W. Bush and the U.S. media. Rather, he sees terrorism as being a direct response to "interventionist U.S. foreign policy in support of the informal American global empire . . . particularly toward the Middle East" (p. 197). He even cites Israel, albeit briefly, as an example of an ally whose "costs" far outweigh its "benefits" and overall "has a negative effect on U.S. security" (pp. 235–36). Given his concern for the impact of U.S. imperial polices on internal institutions and political processes, however, Eland overly relies on footnotes to refer readers to others' analyses of U.S. policies in the Middle East, as well as elsewhere.

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Michael R. Fischbach is associate professor of history at Randolph-Macon College in Ashland, VA, and the author of *Records of Dispossession: Palestinian Refugee Property and the Arab-Israeli Conflict* (Columbia University Press and Institute for Palestine Studies, 2003).

Eric Hooglund is editor of *Critique: Critical Middle East Studies* and consulting editor of *JPS*.

Norbert Scholz holds a Ph.D. in history from Georgetown University in Washington, DC.

Alex Winder is the assistant editor of *JPS*.