words fail in confrontation with power, stones become weapons” (p. 98).

There are a few factual and typographical errors in the book. The First Zionist Congress was held in Basel, not Vienna (p. 16), and Abu-Lughod’s first name is Janet, not Jane (p. 104, n.1). Fadwa Tuqan’s poem is entitled “Nida’ al-ard”, not “Nada’ al-ard” (p. 104, n.45), and Tawfiq Zayyad’s collection is entitled Ashuddu ‘ala aydkum, not Ashaddu ‘ala aydaykum (p. 106, n.8). The title of Samih al-Qasim’s collection is misspelled with double m in Dami ‘ala kaffi (p. 108, nn. 7 and 12) and likewise in the Bibliography (p. 112). But these errors should not detract from the author’s welcome contribution to a better understanding of Palestinian literature and a deeper insight into the development of Palestinian writers’ perception of place and identity. Her short study will remain one of the most sensitive appreciations of Palestinian literature available.

_**ASSIMILATION OR CULTURAL IDENTIFICATION**_


Reviewed by Kathleen Christison

The body of literature on the Arab community in the United States, like the community itself, has grown apace in the last decade. Unfortunately, anti-Arab bias and discrimination have continued at a high level during the same period, tempting one to conclude that the literature, good though it is, only preaches to the converted, seldom reaching the general public or even opinion molders.

This latest addition to the literature grew out of a conference on the Arab-American experience held at the University of Michigan in 1990, which was in turn occasioned by an anti-Arab incident at the university in which a guest lecturer used derogatory remarks and tasteless stereotypes to describe Arabs. It is an excellent and more than usually comprehensive contribution to the collection of works on Arabs in America, but one wonders if it will be read outside a small circle of cognoscenti. The fact that it took four years after the conference to publish the book will not add to its popularity.

An essay by a Hungarian-American cultural anthropologist, Eva Veronika Huseby-Darvas, who has studied the migration patterns of, and the problems faced by, European immigrants to the United States from the late nineteenth century onward provides a backdrop for the later essays on Arab immigration patterns and identity issues.

Alixa Naff, author of the now classic 1985 study of Arab-American immigration, _Becoming American: The Early Arab Immigrant Experience_, sets the scene for later essays on Arab-Americans with a brief history of early Arab immigration. Naff outlines the marked differences between the pre- and the post-World War II immigrant waves; describes the rise of peddling in the first years of this century as a major occupation of Arab immigrants who often initially came here only temporarily; and traces the slow process by which the pre-World War II immigrants settled down permanently, pulled away from the ethnic institutions which had supported their cultural identities, and eventually completely neglected their cultural heritage. Naff concludes that these early immigrants might have assimilated themselves out of existence if the politics of the post-World War II Arab world had not brought new waves of immigrants and sparked a renewed interest in Arab developments.

Michael Suleiman and Yvonne Haddad trace the political development and the religious identification, respectively, of Arab immigrants in separate essays that demonstrate how very closely politics and religion are tied to culture both in the Arab world and among Arab-Americans. Taking up the story where Naff leaves off, Suleiman traces the growth of ethnic identity and political awareness and activism in the Arab-American community after World War II and particularly after the 1967 war, while Haddad—noting aptly that for all peoples of the Middle East “one’s religious affiliation determines one’s identity” (p. 65)—describes a plethora of religious sects that mirror those in the Middle East and fairly precisely reflect political alignments in the Arab states. Both describe a process of some adjustment to American realities without sacri-

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RECENT BOOKS

facing a strong and often growing ethnic identification.

One of the most original essays in the collection is Louise Cainkar’s study of Palestinian women in Chicago and the role they play in preserving Palestinian culture and political identity. Apart from providing useful background on immigration patterns specific to the Palestinian community in general, Cainkar’s study gives a unique perspective on immigrant cultural identification. She demonstrates that, because Palestinian women come from a traditional society and generally immigrate not on their own but as wives or daughters, their immigrant experience is quite different from that of men. Cainkar has found that the Palestinians’ statelessness and exile renders tradition-keeping a political and not simply a cultural function and that among Palestinian-Americans the principal burden of maintaining and passing on the traditional culture falls on women, who are thus often under considerable pressure to remain traditional themselves.

Almost the entire second half of the book is given over to two essays on anti-Arab discrimination in the United States. One might have hoped for a different balance, with more emphasis on positive essays on various aspects of Arab-American life in the United States and less on the now-typical lamentations over negative stereotyping. But given the reason for the conference from which this book arose and given the continued, and some would say increasing, instances of stereotyping, this kind of emphasis is probably inevitable. Both Ronald Stockton’s study of the Arab image in political cartoons and comic strips and Nabeel Abraham’s long essay on anti-Arab racism and violence are excellent compendia of the kinds of vile attitudes and actions Arabs face in this country. But both essays would have been better shorter.

THROWING HIS NET WIDE


Reviewed by Fred H. Lawson

A complete history of the Arab-Israeli conflict would be too big to hold, much less to read. Mark Tessler’s mammoth survey approaches this limit and is undoubtedly the heftiest one-volume study of the conflict to appear in print. It therefore may not matter that the book often reads like an encyclopedia, or that it lacks an analytical focus. Anyone interested in a comprehensive introduction to the conflict is almost certain to find the work invaluable.

Perhaps the most puzzling aspect of the book is the marked disjunction between the author’s conceptual predispositions and the way the text works itself out. For example, Tessler opens by observing that the conflict originated quite recently, with the emergence of the Zionist movement in Eastern Europe. Nevertheless, the text immediately turns to an excursus on ancient Israel, including a map of the territories occupied by the Twelve Tribes around 1200 B.C. (pp. 8-13). This is followed by a summary of the doctrines and traditions of Judaism during the centuries between the destruction of the Second Temple and the appearance of modern Zionism (pp. 13-16). Readers can only conclude that a very old religion provides a key to understanding the conflict after all.

Except for the initial observation that modern “Palestinians are the descendants of two ancient peoples, the Canaanites and the Philistines” (p. 69), the parallel treatment of Arab history is not focused on Palestine. North Africa is offered as the illustration of how Islam came to the Mediterranean littoral (pp. 70-71), while later developments center on Arabia, Egypt, and Iraq (pp. 74-96). Not until the start of the next section (p. 123) do Palestinian Arabs appear onstage. It is a good thing that Tessler takes pains to debunk Joan Peters’s writings (pp. 780-81), otherwise one might infer that he sympathizes with her ideas.

A similar disjunction appears in the treatment of the 1967 war. The author hypothesizes that increasing hostility in Syrian-Israeli relations “was driven not only by the complaints of each against the other, but also by domestic circumstances

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