RECENT BOOKS

POST-ZIONIST INTERPRETATION


Reviewed by Saleh Abdel Jawad

The Palestinian People: A History is an expanded and revised edition of a work first published in 1994 as The Palestinians: The Making of a People. Its republication follows that of an expanded Hebrew edition, which was translated into Arabic by MADAR, the Palestinian Center for Israeli Studies in Ramallah. Its authors are Baruch Kimmerling, professor of sociology at Hebrew University and one of the most prominent post-Zionist sociologists in Israel, and Joel Migdal, professor of international relations at the University of Washington. Each author has written a number of important works on identity, land, and politics in Palestinian and Israeli societies.

This joint effort presents a wealth of readable material on the social and political history of the Palestinian people over a period spanning the past two hundred years. Kimmerling and Migdal regard the popular uprising in 1834—when the Palestinians rebelled against Ibrahim Pasha, son of Muhammad Ali, the powerful Egyptian ruler who occupied Palestine—as the beginning of modern Palestinian history because this event was the first political movement to unite society’s three social groups—rural peasants and their leaders, urban notables, and bedouin—in an armed uprising that extended throughout Palestine. The authors see Palestinians as endeavoring since that revolt to construct themselves as a people, both during the period of the British Mandate and under the oppressive influence of Zionism, which sought to create a political entity with no place for Palestinians. They view the challenges imposed by the Zionist movement and the establishment of the State of Israel as decisive in the formation and shaping of Palestinian identity.

The first edition of this book received considerable praise as the only academic work that covers in depth both the early modern and contemporary history of the Palestinians. It also is important for the authors’ implicit adoption of the 1834 revolt as the starting point for awareness among Palestinians that they belong to a national collective. This perspective differs significantly from that of many Palestinian and Israeli historians, who place the inception of such awareness at the beginning of Zionist settlement in Palestine in 1882 or at the commencement of the British Mandate.

Israeli and Zionist mainstream historians criticized the book as one that undermined the Zionist narrative. The point about the start of Palestinian national consciousness, in particular, roused the ire of those Israeli historians who refuse to recognize the existence of a Palestinian people as early as 1834. Conversely, some Palestinian historians—still few in number—actually date the beginning of modern history for the Palestinian people in the second half of the eighteenth century, when Thahir al-‘Umar ruled the north of Palestine and the coast from Acre. They contend that the experiment gave birth to clear signs of political awareness as well as to tangible development in the transformation of the economy.

Although the authors did not rely on primary sources, they utilized extensive secondary literature to produce a precise analysis based on political sociology, a rare approach in historical writing about the Palestinians, and it gives the book a distinctive character. Further, their analysis and division of material is more topical than historical narrative. To compensate for the lack of sequential flow, they have appended a lengthy chronology of the most significant events. Moreover, their language is both simple and penetrating. For these reasons, the first edition unsurprisingly has become a reference work.

The above notwithstanding, this readable and useful book has genuine problems that stem from the theoretical and methodological framework that the authors occasionally employ, their political motives, and empirical errors. For example, although the authors at times offer harsh criticism of Zionist...
and Israeli practices, they couch this criticism within their understanding of Zionism as a national liberation movement rather than as a colonial settler project. Moreover, their study of nineteenth-century Palestinian society—which comprises a large section of the book—falls within the framework of modernization theory. There is veiled admiration for the progress of Zionist colonialists as compared with the “backwardness” of Palestinian peasants (pp. 23–25), even though economic historians have shown that such a comparison is unjustified. For instance, they confuse Palestinian peasants’ traditional agricultural methods with subsistence agriculture. While agricultural methods and techniques mostly did continue without change, they were appropriate given the nature of the soil in the mountain regions where most Palestinian peasants used to live.

European consular sources document that Palestine produced large agricultural profits and was integrated into the global economy as a source of wheat, olive oil, soap, and cotton between 1856 and 1882 (prior to the advent of Zionist colonies). Indeed, Palestine had been partially integrated into the global export market since the mid-eighteenth century. Contrary to Kimmerling and Migdal’s assertion, the 1878 failure of Betah Tekfa, the first Jewish colony in Palestine, did not stem primarily from malaria, but rather from the failure of the settlers themselves, who lacked the skills to compete with their Palestinian neighbors when both groups were producing the same crops. Were it not for the millions of English pounds that Rothschild gave the first settlers, the Betah Tekfa colony would not have reopened in 1882, and the other settlements could not have survived.

The authors also focus more than necessary on divisions within Palestinian society, particularly countryside and city, coastal versus interior cities, and among social classes. This focus seems to contradict their discussion of Palestinian society’s harmonious unity in opposition to the Zionist project between the two world wars (p. 37). Throughout, the authors try to present a “balanced” narrative to narrow the wide gap dividing the Palestinian and Israeli histories. Perhaps they do not wish or are unable to present a narrative that goes beyond left-wing and liberal Zionist historiography; or perhaps their narrative stems from a virtuous desire to achieve peace between Israelis and Palestinians by bridging this chasm. At times, however, this makes their narrative read like a history supermarket where one can find almost everything.

Kimmerling and Migdal sometimes make questionable assertions, such as: “The mandate’s goals regarding village society were often the same as those of the Ottomans. In fact the British openly adopted nineteenth century Ottoman legal precedent—specifically, the Ottoman Vilayet Law of 1913—as its benchmark for governing Palestine. Like the Turks, they sought more tax revenue, a more efficient land registration system, a break-up of the co-owned musba’a land, enhancement of the mukhtar as the official arm of government in the village, and more productive agriculture generally. What differed was the greater British efficiency in carrying out its rule” (pp. 31–32).

In actuality, Palestine underwent drastic legal transformation under the Mandate. The Mandate authorities not only sought taxes and revenues like the Ottomans, but they also imposed a system of colonial rule that supported the Zionist movement, whose stated goal was the complete transformation of Palestine’s land policies and society for the sake of establishing a Jewish state. Contrary to their claims, the British and Zionist desire to destroy the musba’a system in Palestine did not in any way aspire to improve the position of Palestinian peasants (p. 18). Rather, their goal was to eliminate a system that prohibited, in practice, the transfer of land from Arabs to Jews and that was supported by a social network rooted in solidarity and cooperation, a system that Zionism sought to destroy at any cost. Since the nineteenth century, the course of Zionist settlement and land appropriation in Palestine developed parallel to the shift from the musba’a system to private land ownership.

The authors’ account of the 1948 war does not go beyond that of Israeli historian Benny Morris, i.e., a schizophrenic narrative that fluctuates between empirical findings and assertions. Palestinian refugees, for example, are described as “displaced,” and the authors mainly avoid interrogating Zionist-Israeli policies by resorting to the formulaic phrase, “evidence is far more equivocal.” Their material on the 1967 war omits essential and relevant information, such as the Israeli government’s appointment in 1964 of General Haim Hertzog as future military governor of the West Bank. Such missing information is crucial, because it fundamentally alters one’s understanding of the Arab-Israeli conflict.
The chapter devoted to the Oslo negotiations and accords skips over necessary information about the Washington talks that followed the Madrid Conference as well as the personal reasons that prompted Yassir Arafat to bypass the Palestinian delegation. Moreover, the authors deal delicately with the incompetence of Palestinian negotiators during the Oslo negotiations and the subsequent failure of the Palestinian Authority to manage conflict. However, they do put forth many significant reasons for the failure of the political process and clearly illustrate Israel's responsibility in it: the absence of an external power to act as a genuine impartial arbitrator between the two sides; the unequal balance of power between the two sides; and the failure of both Palestinian and Israeli leaders to communicate to their respective constituents the truth of their situation and the painful compromises necessary to reach a peace agreement. The authors also explain how, despite Oslo, the Palestinians find themselves in a situation of increased Israeli settlement and land confiscation, as well as a decline in their per capita income.

A definitive appraisal of Kimmerling and Migdal's book is difficult. On the one hand, the authors are historians who do not subscribe to the traditional Zionist historical perspective, lean toward an understanding of Palestinian suffering, and contribute to an area in which much research is needed. On the other hand, they are unable to traverse a certain boundary, and this leads to some confusion. Thus, although this book bears witness to the post-Zionist phenomenon, it does not necessarily assume a hostile stance toward Zionism or question its central tenets of denying legitimate rights to the indigenous Palestinian people. While reconciliation of historical narratives is welcome, history must not be politically compromised in the process. Israelis, particularly historians and politicians, must learn from the experience of South Africa: Acknowledgment of tyranny and oppression precedes reconciliation and forgiveness.

FEMINISM UNDER THE MANDATE


Reviewed by Islah Jad

This book covers the history of the Palestinian women’s movement (and nationalist gender construction) during the British Mandate, a period about which little is known concerning that subject. It provides a detailed account of the movement’s history and thus constitutes an important addition to the literature on Palestinian women. The author’s intention mainly was “interrogating the triadic relationship between nationalism, feminism, and colonialism,” but she was confronted by “an unusual situation . . . [of] almost no written history that focuses on the experience of Palestinian women” (p. 11). Even though “there is little data on women’s function in or relationship to economic structures, education, culture, law, the family, political institutions, or agriculture—all areas of study that could inform the context of women’s history” (p. 12), the author concludes that “the very existence of women’s dynamic activism defied the definitional foundations of Palestinian nationalism” (p. 205), that the “Palestinian women’s movement was an indigenous feminism that did demonstrate awareness of gender inequality and desires to mitigate it” (p. 205), that “Palestinian women necessarily had to make accommodations and negotiations between nationalism and feminism,” and that “gender and nation rub up against each other” (p. 208).

The book is useful for learning about the history of the Palestinian women’s movement, especially its main figures, internal dynamics, and limitations. The author has sought out primary sources, such as the printed press and British Mandate archives not previously used in order to reconstruct the history of the women’s movement. She also employed oral history techniques.

Despite its value, the book has some methodological problems that need to be pointed out. For example, Fleischmann attempts to use gender as a category for analysis, but she does not define it in the Palestinian context. Scant discussion is provided to help readers understand the dynamic between precolonial gender norms and the

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new construction (or reconstruction) of gender roles brought about by the British Mandate. As a result, one can sense the author's confusing attempts to use gender as a tool of analysis while at the same time focusing on women and their movement and the minute details surrounding both.

Although the book contains an abundance of valuable information, many essential questions are broached but left unanswered. For example, the author speaks of a gap between urban elite women and rural women, but she does not clarify why this gap exists and persists. Is it due to class segregation and the snobbery of elite women, or is it because of regional differences, colonial policies, etc.? More importantly, no explanation is provided as to why the women's leadership failed to organize peasant women. The book also leaves unanswered the vital question of the nature of the link between the women's movement and the male-dominated national movement.

Fleischmann expends much effort to assert the "autonomy" of the Palestinian women's movement from the national movement. As autonomy is a relatively new concept used to examine recent women's movements, it is not clear why this concept is relevant in studying an earlier women's movement, like the Palestinian one, which, as all evidence shows, was encouraged and supported by, and even emerged from within, the male national movement. Furthermore, the concept of "autonomy" refers to the ability of women's movements to assert a women's agenda not subordinated to the male-dominated political movement. Numerous citations provided by Fleischmann reveal that Palestinian women formed their movement in order to support and complement men's work and not to separate themselves or to seek autonomy from them.

While the author has compiled numerous details concerning the women's movement, the abundance of these details came at the expense of a comprehensive analysis and as a substitute for an indispensable theoretical framework. These overwhelming details confuse rather than help the reader, who is at a loss as to what was said and why. In an attempt to focus the analysis, each chapter has a concluding section, but these conclusions often are not helpful, because, instead of highlighting the main points, they provide new information and analyses (e.g., pp. 112–14).

While engaging with existing scholarship, the author occasionally is more preoccupied with refuting arguments than in presenting a clear account of her different conclusions. For example, one of the main arguments of Ted Swedenberg's book about the decline of the women's movement is that gender was a site of contestation as a result of the urban-rural divide and of the class tension that this contestation reflected by focusing on the role of urban upper- and middle-class women in the public sphere (Swedenburg, Memories of Revolt: The 1936–1939 Rebellion and the Palestinian National Past [University of Minnesota Press, 1995]). Fleischmann starts by "confirming" that she found no evidence to indicate the decline of women's "involvement" in national politics, but she concludes that women turned to "less public and controversial types of protest activity" (p. 135). In another instance, she mentions that one of the major failures of the women's movement in building a mass-based organization was its inability to broaden its narrow class base. Instead of explaining this failure, the author simply mentions that women "mirrored the male-led national movement" (p. 203). The symmetry here is not accurate, as the male-dominated national movement managed to lead the major peasant revolt of 1936–39, while elite women's political role in the public sphere was targeted by the same revolt. Finally, the title of the book does not reflect the analysis provided therein, especially as the women's movement and the male-led national movement both failed to establish a new nation-state that would construct a new man or a new woman.

The above criticisms are not intended to undermine the importance of this book. It is a valuable source for learning about the history of the Palestinian women's movement and for the wealth of information that it contains. The book provides a solid base for new researchers to build on in order to complement the narrative, usually absent from most written references on Palestinian history, on women and their movement.

**SUBORDINATION OF WOMEN**

Reviewed by Julie Peteet

Cheryl Rubenberg's book is a welcome, although ultimately depressing, addition to the body of scholarly literature on Palestinian women. She deftly captures the historic period of the 1990s, the post-intifada period when the Palestinian Authority (PA) arrived and the elements that rendered women subordinate were reinforced in new ways. Most important, she raises provocative questions about the nature of social change in the absence of a state structure.

Since the beginning of the Palestinian women's movement in the 1920s, rural, peasant women (and later refugee camp women) have been targets of mobilization by the urban-based women's movement, but rarely have their voices been heard. In this book, the author explores the understandings West Bank refugee and rural women have about their social worlds, the production and reproduction of gendered relations and identities, and the heavily restricted socioeconomic worlds in which they live. Rubenberg identifies the strategies these women use to resist repressive patriarchal practices and illustrates how they also accommodate and reproduce them as well. It is a sad and shocking book because the litany of abuse, repression, and generally wasted potential she presents is an indication of the state of Palestinian society at the turn of the century. Statelessness and living under a particularly brutal occupation have meant that family and kin structures have remained the dominant principle of social organization, belonging, and identity.

Rubenberg's methodology is quasi-ethnographic: semistructured interviews of Palestinian Muslim and Christian women of various ages; quantitative data; and a loose form of participant-observation. Her statistics on women's status are chilling and cause for serious concern: 50 percent of girls drop out before completing twelfth grade, and women are no more than 14 percent of the labor force (p. 17). Fifty percent of married women reported having been abused physically by their husbands (p. 42). Girls' knowledge of their bodies and sexuality is negligible. In other words, this is a society in the throes of extreme and continuing under-development compounded by a generalized social crisis of paramount proportions. The author states: "Women's lives have become immeasurably more restricted, confined, and isolated than in earlier periods of Palestinian history" (p. 65). Her research underscores the absolute necessity to historicize analyses of Palestinian women. With respect to more recent developments, Rubenberg contends that both the intifada and the 1994 arrival of the PA, which dampened grassroots democratic organizing and principles, were harmful to women. It would have been helpful to compare these indicators with those of Palestinians in other areas of the Middle East and in previous periods.

Rubenberg locates women's oppression in the structures of kinship and their identities in the webs of kin relations. She claims that the PA's revival of tribalism to maintain loyalty and distribute rewards has strengthened patriarchal controls over women. Families that function as political units tend to place intensified controls on female sexuality, mobility, and public life.

The author cleverly intertwines internal and external elements, patriarchal relations, and ideologies in conjunction with the occupation and the presence of the PA to arrive at an understanding of the parameters of women's subordination. With the enactment of masculinity challenged daily by an occupation that deprives men of the sources of their gender identity—land and the ability to support and defend their families—women's status as markers of family honor and respectability has been enhanced. A culture of shame and control, ranging from gossip to honor killings, and the subsequent and corresponding internal constraints, serves to keep women isolated and vitally aware of the consequences of the minutest aspect of their behavior.

Rubenberg astutely notes that religious affiliation, Muslim or Christian, counts for little in matters of honor. Indeed, the issue for women is not Islam but tradition, a rebuke to the contemporary scholars and analysts who daily contend that Islam is the source of women's subordination. For example, girls are socialized into obedience and deference to fathers and brothers. They sometimes forgo their rights in Islam to reject a marriage partner in order not to displease their parents.

One of Rubenberg's most interesting observations concerns the solutions women posed to solve their myriad problems. They understood that their lack of rights to education, to work, to mobility, to choose...
a marriage partner, to be free of domestic violence, and to inherit resided in the family itself. The “concept of working together with other nonkin women as a means of resolving common concerns was essentially unacceptable” (p. 148). The women she interviewed “overwhelmingly believed that independent (between a husband and wife) solutions to problems are preferable to anything involving female organization, solidarity, social groups, or the like” (ibid.). Furthermore, these women believed that laws to protect and promote women’s rights would be “useless” because the government should not interfere with the family (pp. 149–50). These attitudes do not bode well for the development of Palestinian quasi-state institutions and indeed are in sharp contrast to the Palestinian women’s movement, urban and middle and upper class, which for decades worked to mobilize women to act in unison for the nation and the rights of women. Rubenberg’s research raises provocative questions for the future. If a state were to emerge, what would the relations between kin and state look like? What is the meaning of citizenship and nationalism in a kin-based social order?

Although the author foregrounds patriarchy and a kin-based society in explaining women’s subordination, she also frequently reminds the reader that statelessness, occupation, lack of a national educational system, the absence of the rule of law, poverty, and isolation act together to reinforce kin ties. Where access to resources is mediated through kinship networks, rights and obligations inhere in these relationships.

Finally Rubenberg points to the failure of the Palestinian women’s movement to advance its cause. She astutely locates this failure in the lack of a systematic analysis of patriarchal power in Palestinian society and the inability to confront and work to reform patriarchal relations and ideologies. Occupation confounds these problems through policies that promote and strengthen familial and male control over female sexuality. What makes patriarchy so persistent is the interconnectedness of social institutions, ideologies, roles, morality, and so on that has generated a system for reproducing female subordination in which women themselves are active participants. Women themselves have voiced little desire for a fundamental transformation of the family or society. Citing the failure of the women’s movement and the hopelessness of the PA, its corruption, authoritarianism, and revival of tribalism, and noting the association between economic and social development and changes within the family, she comments that “impoverishment and the continuing economic problems in West Bank society militate against such trends” (p. 260). So how will change occur? This has been a persistent question in studies of Palestinian women and has been posed by women themselves. In the absence of a state, how much directed change could be accomplished? Can women be agents of transformation on the ideological front and in their personal and familial relations without any accompanying transformation in law, the political realm, and the economy?

**SAID ON IDENTITY**


**Reviewed by Neville Hoad**

This extended essay derives from the text of a lecture that Edward Said gave at the Freud Museum of London in 2002. With characteristic elegance and economy of prose, Said outlines the implications of Freud’s famous speculations on the problem of identity for an ethics of human differences generally and for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict more specifically. Working from the last text Freud wrote, Moses and Monotheism, Said elaborates a vision of identity that never is whole or fixed but necessarily contains foreign elements at its core. For Freud, it is the claim that Moses was an Egyptian that does this work for Jewish identity. Moving outside the text of *Moses and Monotheism*, Said invokes Freud’s famously ambivalent relationship to his own Jewish identity as supplementary evidence for the wounded but necessary and inclusive nature of individual and collective identity for Freud. Said argues that through mandating a restricting, excluding Jewish character for the sliver of land—Palestine—in the eastern Mediterranean, “Israeli legislation countervenes, represses, and even cancels Freud’s carefully

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maintained opening out of Jewish identity toward its non-Jewish background” (p. 44). In addition to legislation, Israeli archaeology becomes the terrain upon which the transformation of multiple peoples, histories, and relationships within the region into a narrative of singular identity is rendered visible. Implicit in this invocation of Freud’s final thoughts on individual and collective identity resides a more generalizable critique of the psychic life of nationalism and its possibility of resolution: “Freud’s meditations and insistence on the non-European from a Jewish point of view provide, I think, an admirable sketch of what it entails, by way of refusing to resolve identity into some of the nationalist or religious herds in which so many people want so desperately to run” (p. 53).

In an exquisitely nuanced response, Jacqueline Rose suggests, “that the fixity of identity—for Freud, for any of us—is something from which it is very hard to escape—harder than Said for wholly admirable motives, wants it to be” (p. 74). For her, this difficulty arises “—not only because as Edward Said puts it—history represses the flaw, but because the most historically attested response to trauma is to repeat it” (p. 77).

For Said, Freud’s text allows for visions of political and social collectivity that can contain robust differences by acknowledging that identity is never what it seems. Said’s reading does so without falling into the liberal pieties of tolerance and compassion. In this brilliant reading of Freud, Said pithily performs and recuperates what he has elsewhere termed “contrapuntal reading.” Instead of berating Freud for his historical blind spots—most obviously his sustained invocation of the shadowy figure of the primitive and “no thought of Europe as a malevolent colonizing power” (p. 50), Said uses his own position as a reader of Freud in Freud’s future to use Freudian ideas and strategies to stage an intricate dialogue between Freud’s time and our time. On the one hand, this position is scrupulously loyal to Freud. Said writes, “[Freud] thus lends himself especially to rereading in different contexts, since his work is all about how life history offers itself by recollection, research and reflection to endless structuring and restructurering, in both the individual and collective sense” (p. 27). On the other hand, Said must extend these Freudian insights into arenas unimagined by their author: “I very much doubt that Freud imagined that he would have non-European readers, or that in the context of the struggle over Palestine, he would have Palestinian readers. But he did and he does” (p. 43). Thus in Said’s reading, we see a parallel performance of the central argument of the complex interweaving of identity and difference in the late Freud and its powerful implications for the history and future of Palestine and Israel.

This remarkable essay reveals Said at the height of his intellectual powers. His scholarly and political interests illuminate each other without compromising the integrity of either. Freud and the Non-European is essential reading for anyone interested in the political utility of psychoanalytic modes of thought, in thinking beyond the current impasse of competing nationalisms in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and for scholars, activists, politicians, and public intellectuals grappling with the limits and possibilities of identity-based social and political movements. As Jacqueline Rose puts it, “Edward Said has paid the most extraordinary tribute to Freud by taking out of his last work a vision of identity as able to move beyond the dangers of identity in our times” (p. 78).

POLITICS OF JUSTICE


Reviewed by Bashir Abu-Manneh

Culture and Resistance brims with Edward Said’s humanist commitments. Human progress, reason, and freedom are concepts that come readily to hand in Said’s responses to David Barsamian’s studied probing. Postmodern intellectuals, Said says, have abandoned the goal of human emancipation (Césaire’s “the rendezvous of victory”), and this constitutes a deep failure on their part. The Enlightenment belief in common humanity and equality, he suggests, has been undermined by the endless search for difference, which, I would add, only can lead to more partition, separation, and racism. Colonialism and imperialism, Said argues, actively

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SHARON AND THE PALESTINIANS

Politicide: Ariel Sharon’s War against the Palestinians, by Baruch Kimmerling.

Reviewed by Peretz Kidron

Baruch Kimmerling disavows any intention of producing yet another biography of

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Ariel Sharon and instead aims to "describe and analyze his relations with the Palestinian people within their broader context and kaleidoscopic cultural background" (p. 54). He achieves that goal with a broad survey of the events and personages that have played a role in Zionist-Israeli relations with the Palestinians.

Resting on an impressive array of facts, Kimmerling pulls no punches (the chapter on Sharon's rebellious military career is entitled "An Officer but Not a Gentleman"). Without dwelling on ideas bandied about in the first part of the twentieth century, when Zionist leaders and their sympathizers proposed a "transfer" of Palestine's Arab population to neighboring lands, Kimmerling presents the historical setting to Sharon's war on the Palestinians by plunging directly into "Plan D," drawn up by then Haganah strategist Yigal Yadin in March 1948. In the preamble to the plan, drafted in advance of the British evacuation that would clear the stage for all-out confrontation between the Jewish Yishuv and its nascent state, and the Arabs of Palestine and the neighboring countries, the objective appears modest and legitimate: to "control the area of the Jewish state" as set down in the United Nations partition plan. But its operational details come closer to spelling out the true aim: should an Arab town or village offer resistance, the response would entail "expelling the population beyond the boundaries of the state" (p. 24).

In the event, this purpose was carried out with great thoroughness, and entire villages and towns were cleansed of their inhabitants, even when there was no obvious resistance. These mass expulsions and the attendant heavy bloodshed on both sides intensified existing ethnic rivalry into apparently implacable enmity. A hoary joke of the time has a military man (Sharon?) being asked how he regards "the Arab problem," to which he replies, "Through the sights of my rifle." Kimmerling's account offers overwhelmingly effective evidence that this is Sharon's viewpoint right up to the present day.

Surveying Sharon's role in subsequent Arab-Israeli wars, Kimmerling highlights his habit of taking the bit between his teeth and pressing ahead above and beyond the more prudent orders of his formal superiors, most notably and at a heavy cost in his unsupported lunge across the Suez Canal in the 1973 war. This unruly pattern stands out in Sharon's pursuit of Palestinian resistance in all its forms. The text records how he, as head of the Southern Command, conducted a ruthless campaign against resistance in the Gaza Strip in the early years of the Israeli occupation. Kimmerling also recounts the tricks whereby "Arik," now elevated to defense minister, pushed Israeli forces deep into Lebanon, far beyond the 40-kilometer limit laid down by the cabinet in 1982. Following Sharon's political career through a series of offices, the book records his "bulldozer" role in ramming through systematic Jewish colonization of Palestinian land, with settlements planted at strategic locations to break up the continuity of Arab population and thus preclude a future surrender of Israeli control. Both as soldier and politician, Sharon pressed home his war against the Palestinians with all the means at his disposal.

Kimmerling does not pretend to take the mantle of an objective historian, but rather writes as a passionate and committed commentator. Factual inaccuracies are few and those observed do not weaken the thrust of his argument. For example, Colonel Eli Geva, who defied Sharon's orders to lead a thrust into Beirut in June 1982 (p. 90), did not command paratroopers; he was head of an armored brigade. (Geva refused to lead his unit in the attack, but declared himself willing to drive one of the tanks; he was dismissed nevertheless.) Such minor slips do not blemish a forceful and persuasive book. Its portrayal of Sharon should put to rest, once and for all, the forlorn hopes still entertained by some peaceniks, who fantasize on Sharon undergoing some miraculous transformation to emerge as an "Israeli de Gaulle" who would terminate the occupation with the same ruthless realism whereby French president Charles de Gaulle put an end to the futile war in Algeria.

Writing at a time when all moves toward peace have been sabotaged and blocked, Kimmerling's tone is grim, with dire forebodings about the intentions of Sharon and his racist allies. But his pessimism is belied right on the first page, with the book's dedication to Israel's peace activists and soldier refuseniks who "express the genuine nature and true soul of Israel." After all, and in

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My Home My Prison (Zed Books, 1984); and activist in Israeli peace and human rights groups. His anthology on the refusenik movement, Refusenik! was published in English in 2004 by Zed Books.
defiance of the logic of his own narrative, Kimmerling keeps hope alive.

SPANISH PERSPECTIVES


Reviewed by Ferran Izquierdo Brichs

This book brings together some of the finest specialists in Spain on the Palestinian question. The editors, like the majority of contributors, are part of a young generation of researchers working on Palestine. The exceptions are the chapters by Miguel Ángel Moratinos, the special envoy of the European Union for the Middle East peace process, and his former chief of staff, Bernardino León. Their analyses, as diplomats directly involved in Spanish and European policy, offer an official vision of the Spanish rapprochement with Israel and of the conflict in Palestine. The other authors are well versed in the subjects analyzed, and their collective expertise allows for an analysis of different aspects of Spain’s relationship with the Palestinian question and also with Israel. As can be expected, some chapters go deeper than others in their analyses, although in general all are useful for the interested reader.

We are used to considering the Palestinian question as one of the most important dynamics within international relations since World War II. However, for many countries, the conflict created by the Zionist colonization of Palestine remains distant from their direct interests. In such cases, how are relations established with the actors involved in the conflict? What are the foundations on which the foreign policy of a state is constructed? The case of Spain can be regarded in a similar light to that of many other European countries, in that despite not being directly involved in the conflict, it has been forced into adopting a position and defining a policy line toward the Israelis, the Palestinians, and the Arabs.

One of the strong points of the book is that it helps us to understand the form in which Spanish foreign policy toward the Palestinians and Israel has developed. In addition, the book is not only about foreign policy but also about the relations between Spanish society and the conflict. In both ways, the book goes beyond the purely Spanish dimension and may be useful in understanding similar situations in other countries, in addition to allowing us to see how every European state has been affected by the conflict. The book also analyzes how some governments have found the Palestinian question to be a means of achieving greater presence on the international stage, as has been the case of Spain and Norway in the “peace process” begun in the 1990s.

The chapters by María Dolores Algara, Loles Oliván, Miguel Ángel Moratinos, and León trace the evolution of Spanish foreign policy toward Israel, the Arab states, and the Palestinians from Franco’s dictatorship to the socialist governments. The different vision offered by Oliván, Moratinos, and León concerning the policy of the socialist governments goes beyond the strictly Spanish dimension, allowing us to see how the efforts to achieve a common European foreign policy have led EU member states to adopt positions of support for Israel. In addition, we also see how the pro-Israeli lobby does not limit itself to the United States, but also has influence over foreign policy in other countries. In these chapters, another dimension of Israeli foreign policy, to which little attention has been paid until now, becomes apparent: The utilization of the Socialist International by the Labor party as an instrument of Israeli foreign policy.

The foreign relations of a state are not limited to government foreign policy. Other dimensions also play an important part and have influence over both policy and public opinion. The analysis of several of these areas is to be welcomed, given that they often are overlooked, despite their undoubted importance. In this respect, Mar Carlavilla and Isaías Barreñada analyze governmental and nongovernmental cooperation with Palestine, Ignacio Álvarez-Ossorio studies the perception of the conflict provided by the media, while Agustín Velloso offers a useful review of the bibliography in Spanish concerning the Palestinian question. However, a chapter on Spain’s solidarity movement with the Palestinian cause is missing,
even though several contributors, including Roberto Mesa, the author of the prologue, and the editors, are notable members of that movement. In addition, the bonds between the Palestinian solidarity movement and the opposition to the invasion of Iraq help to explain the success of the 2003 anti-war demonstrations in Barcelona, Madrid, and other Spanish cities, and for this reason, such a chapter would have been most topical.

Mention also should be made of José Abu-Tarbush’s article, which explains the evolution of the Palestinian diaspora, and its social and political activities. The chapter exudes a certain degree of longing for the politicized decade of the 1970s, and disillusionment with the political division and demobilization of the Palestinian diaspora today.

The publication of this book is welcome, since it reflects Spanish public opinion’s increasing interest in the Palestinian issue, and that it is possible to go beyond popular works to publish more specialized books on the subject. Thus, España y la cuestión palestina allows us to deepen our understanding of the influence of the Palestinian question on the policies and relations of states not directly involved in the conflict.

CONVENTIONAL DIPLOMATIC HISTORY


Reviewed by Lawrence Davidson

Douglas Little is a diplomatic historian whose prior book is on the origins of the Spanish Civil War. He teaches at Clark University, where he is also associate provost, and according to his university Web page, he has written four articles dealing with modern U.S. diplomatic relations with the Middle East. This earlier research must have sparked an awareness of American Orientalist thinking and led to the present volume.

American Orientalism is, however, a strange work. The title has little to do with most of the book’s content, at least in terms of supplying an analysis based on the paradigm of Orientalism. Although the book’s introduction provides a survey of the mostly Bible-based assumptions, biases, and racial stereotypes that have shaped American behavior toward the Middle East, starting with chapter 1, the author drops the Orientalist model and proceeds to give the reader little more than an overview of diplomatic history from Presidents Harry Truman to George W. Bush. Thus, most of the text is a standard tour of cold war imperatives, the Baghdad Pact and tactical differences with the British, the approach-avoidance feelings toward Arab nationalism, the growing affinity for the shah of Iran and its anti-American consequences, the tail-wags-dog alliance with the Israelis and corresponding vilification of the Palestinians, the minor disasters of President Reagan’s administration, the 1979 and 2000 Camp David summit meetings, and finally, the two Gulf wars through which American leaders sought, among other things, to “kick the Vietnam Syndrome” (p. 229).

Where in this comprehensive survey do we find the Orientalist mindset? It is not part of any critical analyses, but rather is found in the seemingly unconscious asides and characterizations given by the author himself. That is, Little’s own words too often become examples of the Western assumptions so aptly described in his introduction. For instance, there is “pan-Arab skullduggery” (p. 129); Egyptian and Syrian governments are “radical regimes” (p. 133); those who, in 1958, take over Iraq in order to eliminate British and American influence while seeking aid from the Soviets are “anti-Western” (p. 134) (since when are the Russians not “Western” relative to the Arab “East”?); the House of Saud is “corrupt and unpredictable” (p. 138); Iran and Iraq are two “rogue states” (p. 155); and Arabs who attack American interests are “devilish terrorists” (p. 155). Moreover, Little describes Arabs who “developed an ideology of national liberation during the 1920s as “Arab radicals” (p. 160) and Gamal ‘Abd al-Nasir’s Arab nationalism as “radical” (p. 167) and “left-wing adventurism” (p. 187). Nasir’s successors are “more sympathetic to Washington because they are willing to eschew revolutionary romanticism and embrace peace, progress, and
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pragmatism" (p. 191). Similarly, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini is the “sixty-four-year-old cleric with fiery dark eyes and a flowing white beard” (p. 220); those who attacked the marines in Beirut in 1983 were “anti-American fanatics bankrolled by Iran” so that they could “plot their campaign of terror” (p. 247); Hizballah adherents are “pro-Iranian extremists” (p. 250); and, finally, Israel is “democratic and pro-Western but militarily vulnerable” (p. 308) (even while managing never to lose a war and becoming a “strategic asset” in the eyes of Washington). The book continues in this fashion. Quite frankly, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that it suffers from the same “hierarchy of race and culture” (p. 30) that for so long has dominated the minds of American policymakers.

Orientalism is a way of seeing the East as an inferior sphere, less progressive, modern, and rational than the West. This perceptual framework not only denigrates the “Other” but also simultaneously allows those in the West to rationalize aggressive and exploitative policies in the name of progress and enlightenment. This worldview functions best in a closed informational environment, where propaganda and the Orwellian use of words stands in for reality. Particularly at this moment, with the United States reviving colonial power in Iraq (in the name of democracy) and assisting in the theft of the West Bank and Gaza Strip along with the destruction of Palestinian civil society (in the name of Israeli self-defense), it is more important than ever that a book on “American Orientalism” reveals the dangers of this state of mind. After all, what would one call the outlook of the Christian fundamentalists, Zionists, and neoconservatives who have attained power in Washington if not a particularly virulent revival of the themes of Orientalism? But, unfortunately, Little does not take up the analytical challenge implied in the title of his book. Rather he shows, despite his introduction, that he also is a captive of the Orientalism outlook. It is a sad yet quite remarkable schizophrenic performance.

AMERICA TO THE RESCUE


Reviewed by Donald Neff

As a retired air force colonel and former director of the popular National Air and Space Museum, Walter J. Boyne has a keen appreciation of the role of the airplane in conflict. In The Two O’Clock War, so titled because that is the time the 1973 war between Israel and Egypt and Syria began, Boyne focuses on the enormous emergency airlift the United States launched to provide military materiel to Israel. This supply effort was of heroic dimensions.

The war erupted on 6 October, and almost immediately the United States began providing Israel with supplies via El Al commercial airliners. These soon proved inadequate to meet Israel’s demands, as it simultaneously fought on the Golan Heights and in the Sinai Desert. President Richard M. Nixon ordered the start of a massive U.S. airlift to Tel Aviv on 14 October, directly under the U.S. Military Airlift Command (MAC), with its huge C-5 Galaxy and C-141 Starlifter cargo planes.

Mounting a major airlift is not, as Boyne notes, simply gathering together “a bunch of aircraft carrying freight” (p. 99). Rather, it is a complex operation involving trained crews, navigational routes, loadmasters, and specialized landing facilities. Moreover, adds Boyne, flying supplies and equipment was only part of the problem. Other air force commands had to be involved, particularly the Air Force Logistics Command, which was needed to oversee movement of supplies from factories and warehouses and organize operational units to coordinate their loading on planes and the off-loading in Tel Aviv.

Within two days, MAC delivered 1,352,689 pounds of materiel to Israel. This included two M-60 battle tanks and massive numbers of 105mm artillery shells, air-to-air missiles, and electronic countermeasures. Boyne estimates that by the end of the airlift, which continued to 14 November (although a much-violated cease-fire came into force on 22 October), the United States had flown to Israel about $10 billion worth of equipment. This included nineteen M-60 battle tanks, nineteen A-4 fuselage

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and tail sections, sixty-three M-48 Chaparral guided missile systems, and sixty-four CH-55 helicopters.

Nor was the traffic all one-way. Boyne reports that some of the planes returned from Tel Aviv with captured Soviet equipment. These included the latest battle tanks, missiles, and radar provided to Egypt and Syria by the Soviet Union. The U.S. intelligence community valued the Soviet weapons at a time when the cold war continued.

The U.S. airlift was made possible by excellent equipment and superbly trained crews, who quickly mastered the complexities of moving massive amounts of materiel. As Boyne observes, the operation soon became a “routine system of off-loading, refuelling, and dispatching the endless stream of aircraft that moved like clockwork” (p. 264).

The supreme competency of the U.S. airlift in the end mars Boyne’s book. Once he has demonstrated how well the airlift worked, the author is left with little to add. Nevertheless, he ventures into geopolitics, where his expertise is considerably less than his familiarity with planes and crews. As a result, Boyne spends the majority of his book tracing the actions of the top officials in the United States and the Soviet Union, as well as following the fighting on the battlefields. Thirty years after the events, he brings little that is new to the literature, and much that is naive.

Despite all the evidence to the contrary, Boyne asserts that the Arab attacks in 1973 “almost spelled the end of Israel as a nation” (p. 2). It is true that Israel’s troops were caught off-guard by the attack on a religious holy day (Yom Kippur), but neither the Egyptians nor the Syrians had the resources to move much beyond the limited gains they made in the initial hours of the war. Certainly they were not capable of reaching either Tel Aviv or Jerusalem.

Boyne seems insensitive about or unaware of the basic Arab motive in launching war, which was to liberate land Israel had occupied since the 1967 war. Instead of crediting European nations for their opposition to Israel’s occupation, he complains that they were “terrified” by the threat of an oil boycott. Thus, they “turned their backs on both Israel and the United States” and refused to allow landing rights to airlift planes (p. xv). It apparently did not occur to him that the Europeans restricted their airspace because they did not want to aid Israel in perpetuating its military occupation. Although Boyne attempts to be fair to the Arabs, his pro-Israel blinders constitute an inherent flaw in the book.

PHILIP HABIB AND SHARON


Reviewed by Philip C. Wilcox, Jr.

This detailed and vivid portrait of Philip Habib and his mission to Lebanon in the early 1980s describes the efforts of a master diplomat to rescue Lebanon, Israel, and the Palestinians from a bloody conflict brought on, in part, by the Israeli invasion of Lebanon led by Ariel Sharon. Based on exhaustive interviews, diplomatic reports, and other sources, Cursed Is the Peacemaker celebrates Habib, the man who rose from humble origins in Brooklyn to become America’s premier diplomatic troubleshooter. It is also a definitive account of Habib’s work as President Ronald Reagan’s envoy to the Middle East, the cease-fire he brokered between Israel, Syria, and Lebanon in 1981, his failed efforts to stop Sharon’s invasion in 1982, and his success in ending the Israeli siege of Beirut and brokering the evacuation of the PLO from Lebanon.

Boykin juxtaposes his admiring portrait of Habib with an amply documented indictment of Sharon, who dragged Israel into the disastrous war in Lebanon for the purpose of destroying Yasir Arafat and the Palestinian national movement and resisted Habib’s peacemaking efforts every step of the way. Sharon’s Lebanon war cost thousands of lives before Israel finally withdrew its forces in 2000, eighteen years later, without achieving any of its goals. It drew the United States into the morass, with the ill-fated deployment of the Marines to Beirut, their ignominious “redeployment” after terrorists bombed their barracks, and U.S. support, notwithstanding Habib’s warnings, for the Israel-Lebanon peace agreement that collapsed immediately. And it led to Sharon’s temporary eclipse after he was censured for the massacres of Palestinian refugees in

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Sabra and Shatila. The war also undermined the Reagan Plan of 1981 and distracted U.S. attention from the Palestinian issue for years. It is a huge irony that Sharon has recovered from his ruinous adventure in Lebanon to become Israel’s prime minister, and it is all the more remarkable that he seems to have learned nothing from that debacle. Today, he has reversed a decade of Israeli-Palestinian diplomacy that, although it had broken down for lack of wise leadership on both sides, might have resumed. Instead, Sharon is again chasing his obsession with defeating the Palestinians. By rejecting diplomacy and political compromise, promoting continued settlement and a security “fence” inside the West Bank, and relying exclusively on force to stop terrorism, Sharon’s policies have deepened Israel’s insecurity, alienated most of the world, and robbed both Israelis and Palestinians of hope for peace.

Sharon’s policies today are an eerie reprise of his actions in Lebanon and his relentless opposition to Habib’s peace efforts. Sharon’s war in Lebanon led to the exodus of the secular PLO, but the Palestinian fighters were replaced by the militant Hizballah, which ultimately drove the IDF out of southern Lebanon. Habib had said, “If you don’t like the PLO, take a look at the alternatives” (p. 311). Today, Sharon’s assault on the Palestinian Authority and reoccupation of the West Bank have strengthened the radical and uncompromising Hamas and Islamic Jihad.

In Lebanon, Sharon repeated gave lip service to Habib’s appeals for cease-fires and cooperation after the 1982 invasion, and as Habib worked doggedly for evacuation of PLO forces from Beirut and protection of Palestinians in the camps thereafter. But Sharon regularly violated his promises, most disastrously when he allowed the IDF and the Phalange to enter West Beirut, which led to the massacre at Sabra and Shatila (pp. 68, 95, 162). Sharon’s duplicity led Habib to consider him “the biggest liar this side of the Mediterranean” (p. 175). Today, Sharon has more finesse, but he has displayed similar duplicity by accepting President George W. Bush’s road map while working assiduously to undermine it by expanding settlements, building a wall over Bush’s objection, and other acts designed to foreclose compromise.

Boykin’s account of Habib’s work proves the value of diplomacy. But even Habib prevailed only when he had Washington’s and especially President Reagan’s full backing. He failed when he was undercut, for example, by Alexander Haig, the secretary of state during the early months of the war. Today the Israeli-Palestinian crisis cries out, not only for an American envoy of Habib’s stature, but for a clear, strong mandate from President Bush that neither Israel nor the Palestinians can defy. With the 2004 U.S. elections approaching and the administration’s preoccupation with Iraq, the chances for this look dim.

**SHORTER NOTICES**


Most studies on Arab nationalism during the Mandate years focus on Damascus and tend to neglect developments in peripheral areas, such as the *sanjak* (district) of Alexandretta/Antakya. The author tries to rectify this situation by shedding light on her uncle’s political involvement in Alexandretta, especially during the crisis of 1936–39 that led to the ultimate separation of the *sanjak* from Syria. As the leader of Alexandretta’s *Ušba al-'Amal a-Qawmi* (National Action League), Arsuzi called for Arab renewal, coexistence of minorities, and social justice. However, he met with resistance from Arab nationalists in Damascus and ultimately failed to prevent the region’s cession to Turkey because of French and British geographic interests. As a dissertation submitted to the University of Erlangen (Germany), this study is lavishly documented and provides the additional bonus of eighteen primary documents in English and Arabic, excerpts from the author’s interviews with Arsuzi’s contemporaries, historical photographs, and maps.

Norman Finkelstein’s examination of Zionist representations of the Palestine-Israel conflict, originally published in 1995, is one of the seminal scholarly texts challenging the Zionist narrative of what happened in 1948 and subsequently. For this reprint edition, Finkelstein has written a new introduction that critically analyzes the peace process and its collapse (pp. xi–xxxviii) and a new final chapter entitled “Oslo: The Apartheid Option” (pp. 172–83), which discusses the effective Bantustanization of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The second edition also features as an appendix Finkelstein’s critical review of Michael Oren’s *Six Days of War*, a version of which was published as a review essay in *JPS* 32, no. 3 (Spring 2003), pp. 74–89. Ilan Pappé reviewed the first edition of this book in *JPS* 26, no. 4 (Summer 1997), pp. 113–15.

EH


This is a collection of short narratives, largely by Palestinians and Jews, reflecting on the violence in the region and that, together, offer a plea for peace. The stories were collected by Armbruster, executive director of the American Friends of Neve Shalom/Wahat-Al-Salam, and the late Michael Emery, longtime journalist and professor. Clearly aimed at a sympathetic audience, the collection is one more in a long list of “personal stories” collections dealing with the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

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Stohlman and Aladin are both U.S.-based writer-activists, who have assembled dozens of firsthand accounts chronicling daily Palestinian life under occupation and foreign peace activists’ observations. The stories are grouped under four headings: “Dignity Under Occupation”; “Catalyst for Change”; “Through Our Eyes”; and “Solidarity Movements.” The first and third sections contain firsthand accounts of life in the occupied territories, the former by resident Palestinians, and the latter by foreign volunteers who served as human shields/observers as part of the global solidarity movement. The second and fourth sections are analytical accounts about both Palestinian and international nonviolent direct action campaigns in the territories.

Containing firsthand, personal stories from the region directed at generalists, *Live from Palestine* also offers specialists a few interesting accounts. Among these are Kristen Schurr’s piece written after she and dozens of Palestinians were besieged inside Bethlehem’s Church of the Nativity in 2002. Also interesting is the collection of letters by Rachel Corrie, the young American who was run over and killed by an Israeli bulldozer in 2003 as she tried to prevent a Palestinian home from being demolished.

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Yet another in a series of personal accounts from the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, this impassioned collection features pieces written by Israeli, Palestinian, and foreign observers about Israel’s assault on the West Bank in the spring of 2002. Following a chapter entitled “Origins of an Israeli Military Strategy,” the bulk of the book is contained in the second chapter, “Witnesses to Operation Defensive Shield.” Two shorter chapters then follow, “Effects of Operation Defensive Shield” and “US, European, and Arab Responsibility.” Editors Hamzeh (Palestinian-American journalist) and May (philosopher and activist, Clemson University) present the various electronic eyewitness narratives of the destructive month-long campaign that Israel called Operation Defensive Shield in support of their view that the campaign was a prelude to future Israeli ethnic cleansing in the territories.

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**Nonviolence and Peace Building in Islam: Theory and Practice**, by Mohammed

Abu-Nimer (American University) offers a rigorous academic study of nonviolence in Islam that is informed both by theories from the fields of conflict resolution and peace studies and his long personal involvement in conducting workshops on these issues in several countries (including among Jews and Palestinians in Israel). Abu-Nimer seeks to change the Western stereotype that Islam as a faith is inimical to nonviolent resolution of conflict. He includes information culled from three case studies involving Muslims in regions of conflict as well as an entire chapter entitled “Peace Building and Nonviolent Political Movements in Arab-Muslim Communities: A Case Study of the Palestinian Intifada.” In addition to his firsthand experience, the author based this study largely on English-language secondary works.


This write-up of a 2001 symposium and workshop at the University of Toronto explores how the modern state has used and sanctioned methods of isolation and exclusion during the past two centuries. Although the twelve case studies cover a variety of minorities and geographies, JPS readers will derive most value from Randa Farah’s treatise on the al-Baq’a refugee camp in Jordan. Following the reasoning of her 1999 doctoral dissertation, Farah probes the camp dwellers’ evolving identities that are torn between their efforts to maintain ties with their villages of origin, the Jordanian government’s denial of their Palestinianness, UNRWA’s emphasis on refugee aid, and the repercussions of broader economic, political, and religious developments in the Palestinian and Islamic contexts. As a result, those who remain in the camp experience both exclusion from their place of origin and their host country and inclusion into a broader movement. This combination of identities has transformed the camp into a symbol of resilience and identity.


Carroll, an American political scientist currently at Vanderbilt University, studies the changing relationship between the Jordanian bourgeoisie and the state from 1983 to 2000. She argues that this period saw Jordan’s economy shift from that of a “rentier state” to a market-oriented economy that is part and parcel of the drive toward globalization. Following a short discussion of the history of the state’s relationship with business in Jordan, she offers several chapters detailing the complexities of this relationship and the various means by which this relationship is played out (usually outside the newly created democratic institutions that emerged after 1989). Carroll based her study largely on Jordanian government statistics, interviews, and English-language secondary sources. The author concludes that the Jordanian business sector is flexible and much less “parasitic or comprador-oriented” (p. 265) than the stereotypical view of Arab bourgeoisies would have us believe. She also argues that state-business relations are moving toward greater openness and trust in Jordan. This case study defies many existing political theories.

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