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Review Of "Birthing The Nation: Strategies Of Palestinian Women In Israel" By R.A. Kanaaneh

Farha Ghannam
Swarthmore College, fghan1@swarthmore.edu

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As far as aspects of economic administration are concerned, Cohen says very little about the role of the muhāshīb (and the bāzarbāshī) in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Jerusalem (pp. 29–30 and 40–41 only). Even though the shaykh al-tujjar or shahbandar (the head of the merchants) is mentioned in many sijill documents, this leading figure is totally ignored in this study. Yet, the documents cite the shaykh al-tujjar in connection with the regulation of prices and the provision of services and merchandise to the district governor (see, for example, Jerusalem sijill 155, p. 416; 164, p. 313; 167, p. 178; 198, pp. 110 and 217; and 199, pp. 250–51). The hundreds of documents dealing with the guilds of Jerusalem during this period warrant a deeper discussion of their administrative role and the nature of their relations with local administrators (other than relations with the qādi, or shar‘i judge, which are discussed). Furthermore, the number of guilds is actually larger than the seventy or so mentioned by Cohen. Among those cited in the documents but missed in the book are the shawwā and tābbakh guilds in the food production category.

The author has supplemented his work with nineteen original documents, typed in Arabic with English translations. The documents provide a very important addendum for students and scholars. The reading and translation of the original documents generally are quite accurate, although there are some mistakes. For example, in document 6 (pp. 230–31) the logical and more accurate reading of the verbs is yashtāghīl and yashtāghīlu, which means “to work” (in the oil pressers), not “yastaghīl” and “yas- tāghīlu.” In document 12 (pp. 257–59) the word following “cucumbers” is clearly qāri‘, which is a kind of squash or pumpkin, not qazi‘ (؟), which is translated as “locks of sheep’s wool.” In document 13 (pp. 260–65), line 25, the word bakim was dropped before the words “alšār wa-l-nāqīh”; when this sentence is read properly it translates “in the presence of the qādi and the head of the descendants of the prophet” (i.e., Naqīb al-Asbraf) rather than “the head of the bleach- ers.” Last, quassarin, also mentioned in this document, are not bleachers (i.e., garment
workers) but rather plasterers, an important sector of workers in the building and construction industry. Such errors are minor, however, and do not affect the contents of the documents or the conclusions drawn from the data.

To conclude, the author has succeeded in uncovering how extremely valuable the *sijill* of Jerusalem is in studying the socioeconomic history of the city during the Ottoman period. This publication is an important addition to the historical literature concerning the Ottoman guilds and the history of Jerusalem. Some mistakes and shortcomings notwithstanding, students and scholars concerned with the Ottoman history of Palestine and the neighboring Arab countries have much to learn from reading this study of the guilds of Ottoman Jerusalem.

**HOLIER THAN THOU**


Reviewed by Issam Nassar

Although the conflict over Palestine is multifaceted, the question of Jerusalem is by far more complex and unique in ways that often are not taken into account by those who hold a vision for this city’s political future. The fact that Jerusalem is a holy city for three religions makes it a symbolic space but at the same time blurs that it is also a socialized historical place. For those who reside in it, Jerusalem has a real and material life that is contested: It is inhabited by two national groups, each claiming it as its own capital. Its status as a religious holy city led to the construction of a number of historical imaginations of the city that are ingrained in the minds of the followers of those religions. It is through these independent and separate imaginings that various meanings of the concept ‘holy’ have been assigned. In a sense, there are several Jerusalems coexisting next to each other and on top of each other, with each community seeing only its own and in the process ignoring what the other commun-

Issam Nassar is associate director of the Institute of Jerusalem Studies and author of Photographing Jerusalem: The Image of the City in Nineteenth-Century Photography (East European Monographs, 1998).
various means—confiscation, lease, and purchase—only made matters worse.

By taking into account these changes, Dumper concludes that the long years of Israel's occupation, with all the changes that such control brought about, have made the return to the status quo that existed before 1967 difficult. At the same time, he argues that Israel's plans for unifying and Judaizing the city largely have been a failure. The Muslim community in the city shows signs of revival and self-assertion and the Church leadership has become more assertive about its disaffection with the Israeli vision for Jerusalem.

On the issue of the Old City and the peace process, Dumper offers insights into a complex situation that to some degree can explain the failure of the Camp David negotiations of 2000. By subjecting the issue of holy places to legal scrutiny, the author explains how the various laws that are in existence have managed, on one hand, to maintain the status quo in the city and, on the other hand, to change it beyond recognition. Of particular concern are the Israeli laws that annexed East Jerusalem to Israel and dissolved its independent administrative status, particularly the Israeli Law of Administrative Ordinance. Not only do these laws conflict with the many other pre-existing regulations regarding the status of the city (such as the Ottoman Status Quo of 1856 and Article 14 of the Mandate Charter of 1922), but they also violate commitments made to the Palestinians during the peace process. Further, Israeli laws that made it possible for settlers to move into the Old City on many occasions have been responsible for redefining and sometimes fueling the conflict over the city.

This is an unusual book in its theme and scope, but not unfamiliar. It is about sacred imagination, how it is legislated and negotiated and for what it stands, as well as about part of the political negotiations in the ongoing conflict in the Middle East. Dumper has managed to write a comprehensive and coherent narrative that combines themes usually addressed separately. This well-documented historical and political study is a must read for students of Jerusalem's history and for scholars and politicians on all sides.

FAMILY PLANNING IN GALILEE


Reviewed by Farha Ghannam

In this beautifully written ethnography, Rhoda Kanaaneh provides an insightful analysis of the politics of reproduction in the Galilee. Based mainly on fieldwork in her hometown, the author provides fascinating discussions of babies, boundaries, bodies, contraception, gender, and politics. Drawing on strong connections—family, relatives, neighbors, teachers, and friends—she provides us with an intimate view of how men and women view and negotiate their preferences for the ideal family size, happy childhood, safe and controlled sex, and beautiful bodies.

Reproductive discourses and practices, Kanaaneh argues, are shaped by “state policy, economic development, medicalization, and local dynamics” (p. 165). She starts her book by addressing the relationship between reproduction, politics, and nationalism. We read about the anxieties of Israeli politicians (from David Ben-Gurion to Yitzhak Rabin) over the national and religious identity of Israel. Since Israel's founding, the desire to keep it a Jewish state has led to such policies as budget allocations, health insurance, and medical services that attempt to encourage Jewish Israelis to reproduce while discouraging Palestinian Israelis from having children. To counter these policies and their general economic and political marginalization, many Palestinians view having babies as part of their national duty and resistance to Israeli hegemony. In this context, reproduction becomes a political project that is linked closely to gender and nationalism.

However, Israeli family planning, which emphasizes small family size, increasingly is appealing to Palestinians, who have a strong desire for modernity and a middle-class lifestyle. Thus, while many Palestinians in the Galilee “resist Israeli domination,” they “also express awe for Israel’s technological superiority” (p. 81). Family planning here becomes part of a large project of “modernization,” and reproduction becomes closely linked to modern ideals and dreams. “Reproductive

measures" (p. 105) are used more and more as key markers in classifying various social groups and showing their location in the social hierarchy. The opposition between the small family (positive and controlled reproduction) and the large family (negative and uncontrolled reproduction) is projected onto other oppositions, such as modern/primitive, Christian/Muslim, urban/rural, and foreign/local.

At the same time, having fewer children is shaped by consumerism. Many informants believed that they should secure all the consumer goods and products that their children desire. Several mothers and fathers see the ability to provide for one's children as central to good parenting, happy childhood, and healthy family life. In addition, the increasing medicalization of reproduction plays a central role in the Galilee. Medical assistance not only is allowing people to control reproduction (through contraception), have babies (reproductive technologies), and acquire the ideal body (through plastic surgery), but also it is allowing them to draw on science and medicalization to help in gender selection and securing a male heir.

Despite its many virtues, the book could have benefited from further discussions of some key issues. For example, the absence of an explicit discussion of class is noticeable in this book, especially in chapter 3. Distinctions based on education, clan, religion, and urban/rural differences imply a class dimension that the author has not analyzed. Furthermore, there are two important concepts that remain rather underconceptualized in this study. The first is modernization, which the author often equates with modernity, “development theory,” and Westernization (see, for example, pp. 22 and 78). How are these concepts linked and different? And how is modernization related to globalization, another notion the author uses? The second concept is resistance, which, the author repeatedly argues, “mimics power” (p. 18). Yet, this assertion is not developed conceptually in the book. While it is clear that most of Kanaaneh’s informants internalize modern discourses on reproduction and bodily forms, it is less clear how they contest and “resist” them. When does an act or a discourse become resistance? When does a discourse become a counterdiscourse (see, for example, pp. 135 and 152)? These issues are not sufficiently addressed in the book, and resistance seems to be everywhere and nowhere at the same time.

Still, this book is an engaging ethnography and a valuable addition to Middle Eastern anthropology in general and Palestinian studies in particular. I highly recommend it for students and scholars of gender, medical anthropology, and Middle Eastern studies.

A LIFE EXAMINED

Strangers in the House: Coming of Age in Occupied Palestine, by Raja Shehadeh. South Royalton, VT: Steerforth Press. xv + 238 pages. $25.00 cloth.

Reviewed by Carol Bardenstein

Rarely does one encounter a memoir that so artfully, richly, and poignantly balances the tensions between telling an individual and a collective story as Raja Shehadeh does in his riveting memoir. A master of understatement, a gifted raconteur of anecdotes that are parable-like in their compactness, richness, and in being eminently re-tellable, and as subtle and introspective a narrator and observer of himself and all in his midst as one could possibly hope for, Shehadeh offers a moving and nuanced account of the arduous path of his sense of coming into personhood, of the complex relationship with his father, of people and social relations within his upper-middle-class milieu, and of living a life examined under the conditions of dispossession and occupation in the West Bank. Incredibly enough, he manages to impart much in all of these areas without emphasizing or developing one at the expense of another.

Even for those who have read widely about Palestine, the conditions of occupation, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, and the intersection of the lives of individuals with all of these, Strangers in the House offers a refreshing and invaluable contribution. While Shehadeh certainly is presenting an account of the collective experience of Palestinians, it is clear from the outset that he has no interest in delivering a “generic” or predictable composite portrayal for readers seeking affirmation of what they expect to read about the life of a Palestinian under Israeli occupation. At every turn, his narrative is enriched, textured and layered with idiosyncrasy, at times with humor in the written equivalent of a deadpan delivery and always with an irrepressible impulse and dedication to appre-

Carol Bardenstein teaches in the Department of Near Eastern Studies at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor.
hending things, people, and events in their irreducible complexity.

He gives an unparalleled portrayal—in uniquely Palestinian-inflected terms—of a second-generation, “second-hand” subjectivity, characterized by “postmemory,” the “experience of those who grow up dominated by narratives that preceded their birth, whose own related stories are evacuated by the stories of the previous generation shaped by traumatic events” that cannot be accessed or apprehended directly (Marianne Hirsch, *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative and Postmemory* [Harvard University Press, 1997], p. 23). Most pointedly through his maternal grandmother, Julia, and his father, and more diffusely and constantly in almost all aspects of his everyday life in Ramallah, Shehadeh tells how he grew up feeling that his and his family’s real life was in Jaffa, how he constantly was reminded of their “cataclysmic fall from grace” (p. 11), of the details of life in Jaffa—its streets, smells, breezes, sea, opulence, worldliness, people—of its being the place where he and his family truly belonged. Even the description of the symptoms of his grandmother’s hypotension are described by her in terms of Jaffa, the sensation of throbbing pain being likened to the rhythmic movement of the waves along Jaffa’s coast. He describes his grandmother’s eyes as always fixed on the string of lights along the shore in Jaffa, visible from Ramallah on the horizon, and how he too “learned to avoid seeing what was here and to fix my sight on the distant horizon” (p. 4), ardently yearning to know Jaffa, to exist there. The unique texture of this memoir is evident in his not being loath to reveal what the family discovered upon his father’s return visit to Jaffa in 1967: The lights they were gazing at on the horizon all those years were in fact those of Tel Aviv, not of Jaffa. Shehadeh conveys the poignant irony of this realization without a trace of irreverence toward the memory of Jaffa or those who gazed at it wistfully from afar.

Shehadeh gracefully and empathetically portrays how “history writ large”—including the guideposts of the nakba, displacement into exile in 1948, Israeli conquest and occupation of the West Bank in 1967, return visits to the lost homeland—intersects with the lives of the very three-dimensional protagonists of his memoir. Without detracting from just how seriously these events affected his family, he is able to relay some of their particular and idiosyncratic experiences with a sense of humor, irony, and the absurd. Shortly after their fateful departure from Jaffa in 1948 (before Shehadeh’s birth), his father is sent by his mother-in-law to retrieve what he can of their furniture and other valuables. Overwhelmed by his encounter with the reality of his home and hometown abandoned and emptied out, his father returns to exile in Ramallah with only one souvenir of their former life in Jaffa: a porcelain statue of a Buddha with a mocking smile. Grandmother Julia relentlessly reminds the entire family of this act—its absurdity and its consequences for the family—as it enters the annals of family lore, resurfacing often in fights between mother-in-law and son-in-law. Shehadeh exquisitely portrays how this grandmother tenaciously struggles to maintain the aristo- cratic demeanor and lifestyle of her former life in the face of its objectively having been stripped away in exile in Ramallah. She repeatedly expresses consternation at the fact that she cannot serve tea to visitors in her bone china tea set, lamenting the fact that tea simply does not taste as good in other cups and reminding everyone of Raja’s father’s failure to retrieve it from Jaffa. Shehadeh confesses that as a boy he found himself wondering “which loss was worse—Jaffa, or tea in her own cups” (p. 20).

It is refreshing to read a memoir that does not blur or submerge class and its stratification within Palestinian society from view in the course of telling the collective story of Palestinian displacement, dispossessions, and occupation. The author is very precise about situating his own family’s class standing, keenly aware that his fate is not “equal” to the fate of those in the tents of refugee camps but also not as protected and privileged as those in the uppermost echelons and powerful families of Palestinian society. His memoir affirms that narratives of loss by those in positions of relative privilege can be just as compelling and poignant as those by others who suffered more extreme or different loss.

The relationship between Shehadeh and his father, Aziz, his grappling with it, and the degree to which his sense of self was displaced and shaped by it, figures centrally throughout the memoir. At times, such as when Shehadeh recounts the story of his father’s first return visit to Jaffa in 1967 (without Raja), and Shehadeh attempts to be his father—almost literally placing himself inside his father’s mind and body in the process of trying to imagine and reconstruct his father’s
feelings, observations, and sensations on this fateful trip— is almost as wrenching as what we learn of his father’s encounter with lost home, hometown, and homeland. Even when the author has come into his own, carved his personal, professional, and political path with independence and integrity, even after his father’s tragic murder, Shehadeh still hopes that his father would support his choices—for example, his whole-hearted participation and faith in the first Palestinian intifada.

Reading this memoir, one feels privileged to be made privy to the expansive and subtle mesh of Shehadeh’s “eye view” of his father’s controversial political views and initiatives, both path breaking and rank breaking, as well as of his own path-breaking human rights and legal work; his first experience of falling in love; his encounters with Israel and Israelis; his keen experience of his body—from an eating disorder, extensive childhood illness, and physical frailty to discovering the deep delights of yoga, the grinding humiliation of daily life under occupation, and a subtle, self-conscious account of his associations with shaving and being accepted within the ranks of manhood; and his surprisingly beautiful and lyrical descriptions of his natural surroundings and landscape. His ability to weave these seemingly disparate threads together into a richly textured, integrated whole offers his readers a singularly nuanced, sensitive, and eminently readable portrayal of a life—a particular Palestinian life—poignantly examined.

UNJUST RULES


Reviewed by Ardi Imseis

This book, one of the latest volumes in the SUNY series in Israeli studies, attempts to present the first comprehensive discussion of the Supreme Court of Israel’s major decisions on petitions challenging the policies and actions of Israeli military authorities in the occupied Palestinian territories since 1967. Part 1 examines “the basis for the Court’s jurisdiction over actions carried out by Israel’s military” in the occupied territories; part 2 analyzes the Court’s decisions relating to Jewish settlements and the status of Palestinian residents there; and part 3 assesses the “manner in which the Court has handled petitions challenging security measures against Palestinian[s]” in the occupied territories (p. 16).

David Kretzmer does a very good job in covering the main procedural and substantive issues relevant to the topic, including an assessment of how the Court has applied and interpreted international humanitarian and human rights law, a critique of the Court’s historical subscription to the “benevolent occupant” approach in petitions before it, and an examination of its principal rulings concerning Jewish settlements, Palestinian residency rights, security powers, freedom of movement, administrative detention, torture and ill-treatment, house demolitions, and deportations. After reviewing all of the major cases, Kretzmer concludes that in virtually every aspect of its jurisprudence in the occupied territories “[t]he Court has not seen itself as a body that should question the legality under international law of policies or actions of the authorities, or should interpret the law in a rights-minded fashion. On the contrary it has accepted and legitimized policies and actions the legality of which is highly dubious and has interpreted law in favor of the authorities” (p. 163).

Unlike many of his peers in the Israeli legal establishment, Kretzmer argues that this is a result of the fact that the Court, as a governing institution of an occupying power, finds it impossible to “be neutral in judging the conflicting claims of the government and Palestinians subject to [its] military rule” (p. 196). Thus, despite its somewhat misleading title—a more apt title would have been “The Occupation of Injustice”—this study is not an apology for the Court. Rather, it is a very well-researched and sober account of the role the Court has played in upholding the manifestly illegal practices of Israel’s military authorities in the occupied territories over the course of the past thirty-five years.

Having said that, the book is not without its faults. One problem is the author’s failure to discuss the binding nature, at customary international law, of the Fourth Geneva Convention in his analysis of the Court’s position that the Convention does not apply de jure to the occupied territories because (1) it is not custom, and (2) it has not been incorporated formally into Israeli domestic law by an act of the Knesset (i.e., because it is consid-
ereed non-self-executing by the Court). Although he must be aware that it is the very nature of the Fourth Geneva Convention as a codification of customary international law that renders the Court's position on this crucial legal point defective, Kretzmer inexplicably overlooks it.

Another, more substantial, problem concerns Kretzmer's failure to delve sufficiently into the role official Israeli-state ideology has played in influencing the development of the Court's jurisprudence over the years. On this score, Kretzmer almost exclusively attributes the consistently state-centered approach of the Court to its concern with the security of the Jewish state, which is, in its view, involved in an existential struggle against Palestinian aggression. Viewed in this way, Kretzmer's explanation of the Court's pro-government stance comes across as nothing more than a reasonable mechanism of self-preservation, a reaction necessitated by the unceasing attempt by enemies of the state to do away with it. However, one could reasonably assert that the rulings of the Court have more to do with the overarching political Zionist ideology of the state and its public institutions. For instance, the Court's decisions refusing Palestinian family reunification applications or supporting Jewish settlement construction (especially after the emergence of Gush Emunim) would seem to be explained better by considerations of the classic Zionist obsession with demographic superiority rather than by the need to ensure Israel's security (although the two usually are linked in Zionist discourse). Unfortunately, these points are not discussed in Kretzmer's study, which otherwise is a valuable addition to the legal literature on the conflict.

POETIC RETURN


Reviewed by Fouad Moughrabi

Mourid Barghouti has written a beautiful testimony for his generation and mine. I see myself in every paragraph and page of this book. It is an accurate record of our personal history and a journey of reflection on the moments of pain, occupation, dislocation, and exile that have shaped our lives. I am happy that he wrote it, and I sincerely hope that every Palestinian, at least of our generation, also will read it. Those on the outside, so to speak, or those who belong to another generation who may wish to know why we feel and think the way we do are likely to find this book instructive indeed.

A well-known poet whose collections of poems have been published in Amman, Beirut, and Cairo, Barghouti was born in 1944 in the beautiful village of Deir Ghassana, near Ramallah. After finishing high school in Ramallah, he went to Egypt to attend Cairo University, graduating from that institution’s Faculty of Arts in 1967. Subsequently, he served for several years as the PLO representative in Budapest, commuting to Cairo to see his wife, Egyptian academic and novelist Radwa Ashour, and their son Tamim. I was educated in France and in the United States and spent my years of exile in the latter. And yet, our journey is almost the same, and our Palestine is also the same. I could not help thinking about these parallels as I read through the text, wondering about the things that tie us together despite the disparate fragments of experience and the passage of cruel time.

This book is a record of Barghouti’s observations on his return to the West Bank in 1995–96, a first visit after nearly thirty years of exile. It is one of the best works written after Oslo by Palestinians who have tried to chronicle their experience of return after many years of exile. Originally published in Arabic, it won the Naguib Mahfouz Medal for Literature in 1997. This English translation has been so ably done by Ahdaf Soueif, a leading Egyptian novelist (whose works include In the Eye of the Storm and The Map of Love). In reality, Barghouti’s book is not a mere chronicle but a journey of rediscovery of Palestine and what it means to be a Palestinian.

For those who come to Palestine from the Arab world, getting there means crossing “the bridge” over the River Jordan. This is no ordinary passageway. The author describes it as “A bridge no longer than a few meters of wood and thirty years of exile” (p. 9). Barghouti asks, “How was this piece of dark wood able to distance a whole nation from its dreams? To prevent entire generations from taking coffee in homes that were theirs?"
How did it deliver us to all this patience and all that death?” (p. 9).

Webster's defines a bridge as “any structure of wood, stone, brick or iron raised to afford convenient passage over a river, pond, etc.” This particular bridge is not designed to afford convenient passage but rather to do the exact opposite, namely, to keep Palestinian exiles away and to facilitate the permanent exit of those who are still on the inside. It is more like one of those crusader fortresses that dot the Palestinian countryside, sitting atop strategic hills, controlling entrances and exits—a monument of panoptic control by force of arms.

The “bridge,” very much like Ben Gurion airport, the Rafah crossing, or any other entry point, is a place where Palestinians endure humiliation by the Israelis as well as by the Jordanians and the Egyptians as they try to cross it. It also has become a Palestinian metaphor for endurance, tenacity, and persistence, for the ability to suffer monstrous humiliation while maintaining one’s dignity and self-respect. Palestinians often talk about the bodies of the many thousands who have fallen as martyrs as well as those who continue to fall until this very day as constituting a bridge.

It took us only a few minutes to cross the bridge on the way out in June 1967. It takes many years to cross it on the way back. Each year, this tiny bridge becomes longer and more difficult. One wonders how much longer it will be before we are ready to make our final journey back.

Barghouti shows us that there are many Palestinians: the Palestine of our childhood, the Palestine that inhabits the imagination of exiles, the Palestine that lives in the refugee camps, and the West Bank and Gaza towns and villages that continue to endure the ravages of the Israeli occupation. Just as eloquently, Barghouti suggests what links all these different Palestines together. Take, for instance, the following verse of his poem: “The fish, Even in the fisherman’s net, Still carries The smell of the sea” (p. 151).

During his return, Barghouti enjoyed a rare opportunity for a Palestinian poet—to read before an audience in his own village: “For the first time in my life I read poems in front of row upon row of villagers in their traditional dress, among them the eight-year-old and the eighty-year-old; most of them had never entered a theater or owned one volume of verse” (p. 84). Reflecting upon this unique and emotional encounter, he remarks, “They lived their time here and I lived my time there. Can the two times be patched together? And how? They have to be” (p. 89).

Barghouti has begun the process of trying to patch these two times together. And how refreshing it is to read a Palestinian work that is devoid of political clichés or self-righteous statements, one that neither glorifies defeat nor demonizes the enemy. This touching narrative should have a place of honor in every Palestinian library.

REVIVING CLASS ANALYSIS?


Reviewed by Avram Bornstein

Most Arab leaders have internalized defeat and become compliant with imperialism and Zionism despite the continuation of Israel’s aggressive, settler-colonial project and a newly expanded effort by a first world capitalist alliance to integrate the “Arab homeland” through domination. This, in summary, is the charge that Adel Samara, a veteran writer, editor, and activist from the Palestinian Left, has made in his recent book attacking free-trader globalization, Israeli apartheid, and Palestinian corruption. Samara faithfully explains how “capital and class interests are the underlying and driving forces behind” what appears as ethnic, cultural, and religious conflict (p. xiv). Few other books in English draw such sharp connections between local and global political economies in order to explain the current dilemma that popular Palestinian classes now confront.

According to Samara, a stratified multinational capitalist class has created a globalized public sector with organizations such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, run by their own financial institutions, to administer first world enrichment projects at the expense of workers across the globe. At the bottom of this capitalist pyramid is the third world bourgeoisie who repress their own masses in exchange for financial, military, and policing assistance from the first world (p. 7). By relying on international or-

Avram Bornstein is assistant professor, Department of Anthropology, John Jay College, City University of New York.
ganizations and multinational corporations for these “investments,” regimes on the periphery can avoid democratizing political life.

Like other ruling regimes in the Arab world, the Palestinian Authority (PA) adopted neoliberal economic policies designed by the World Bank that cater to the private sector and favor foreign capital (p. 113). It has neglected agriculture, and the projects it has undertaken, such as border industrial zones, “will obstruct the development of the industrial sector in the [West Bank and Gaza], which was already obstructed by the occupation” (p. 127). Meanwhile, trade agreements have given Israeli capitalists the opportunity to become a regional center for the Arab periphery (p. 131).

Samara argues that normalization and a so-called peace with imperialism and the “Zionist Settler-Colonial Ashkenazi entity—Israel” under the terms currently offered are really submissions to dependency and aggressive domination. As the weak party, Palestinians need protectionism and de-linking, which Samara calls “development by popular protection.” He advocates self-reliance by supporting import substitution, eliminating foreign investments, starting cooperatives, terminating merchant monopolies, and giving democratic parliamentary representation to the masses (pp. 14–25). In the meantime, popular classes should, whenever possible, boycott commodities and capital from Israel and all imperialist countries. “What is important for the Arab popular classes is to create a culture of boycotting” (pp. 65–66). This effort should be “part of the world revolutionary struggle to terminate capitalism for good” (p. 69).

Samara also condemns the tragic “political economy of corruption” that has emerged under the PA. Samara describes an unofficial chain of patron-client relations between the ruling party and all areas of society: An inner circle of the PA controls monopolies of basic goods (pp. 120–21); nearly 150,000 people, from schoolteachers to police, maintain their jobs according to their loyalties (p. 138); party cadre receive appointments as judges, trade union leaders, education directors, and other civilian posts; and innumerable local power brokers distribute entitlements and privileges through their personal connections. In addition to decrying the authoritarianism, consumerism, and paternalism that this system creates, Samara explains that foreign loans spent on wages, luxury items, or private bank accounts, instead of on productive enterprise, mean that “the PA debt cannot be financed without incurring more debt. This will create a repayment crisis, but the solutions will not be those typically employed in third world countries. . . . In the Palestinian case, the price that will be paid is a political one: further concessions to Israel and its western sponsors” (pp. 130–31). Donor nations and banks could control this corruption, but their complicity allows stolen funds to return to them through expensive imports and laundered money (pp. 155–56), and it allows agents of capital in the periphery to maintain political control (p. 140).

Samara also has darts for his colleagues, if not his comrades. He criticizes, generally and specifically, activists and intellectuals who work with foreign governments or for foreign-funded nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in the West Bank and Gaza. Contrary to their explicit purpose of aiding development, Samara argues that they exacerbate Palestinian dependency: “NGOs are a new form of the traditional European capitalist missionaries” (p. 156). NGO budgets can address the needs of individuals, but they do little for, and even can retard, national independence and development (pp. 164–65). Furthermore, NGOs distance Palestinian intellectuals from radical politics, make them into a Westernized elite, and alienate them from the masses by offering high salaried jobs and trips to overseas meetings (pp. 170–75).

When it comes to uncovering the alliances of international imperialists and their local agents, Samara’s work, here and elsewhere, is unparalleled, but his style will raise problems for some. Samara tends to divide the world strictly into those for imperialism and those against it. This leaves little tactical or strategic room for the ambiguous and contradictory choices that many progressive activists face. His strict reading of class as the driving force of history is somewhat compromised by the primacy of national identity in his theory of liberation and his occasional use of terms like “culture” or “tradition” to explain patterns of work or consumption. Samara, however, seems less interested in engaging these ambiguities than in developing new concepts, often presented as unique acronyms (over which some readers temporarily will stumble) designed to confront the distorting and class-obscuring language of imperialism (p. 181).

While some readers may view his modifications of world systems theory and Mao Tse-tung as antiquated, Samara’s detailed
knowledge of the political economy on the ground in the occupied territories is outstanding. Despite the book’s inadequate editing—there are excessive typographical, grammatical, and syntactical errors—it provides a valuable, up-to-date class analysis of the Palestinian struggle. Given the overwhelming attention to religious fanaticism and political diplomacy in studies of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and a general ignorance of the problems of neoliberal imperialism, this comprehensive, insightful, and courageous book is important. It is a valuable contribution to the specialist literature on Palestine and also will be appreciated by those interested in studies of globalization.

**WHOSE AQUIFER?**


**Reviewed by Sharif S. Elmusa**

This thick anthology, edited by a Palestinian engineer and an Israeli geographer, is the outcome of a series of workshops attended by Israeli, Palestinian, and international water experts. The stated objective was to investigate issues related to joint management of groundwater reservoirs, or aquifers, and ultimately to propose options for the management of the Mountain Aquifer, the largest common Israeli-Palestinian groundwater resource. The book contains a wealth of analyses and insights by individual authors. But the editors have not summed up the ideas adequately, thus leaving the reader adrift as to how they are linked. For example, how does an essay on “The Islamic Management of Water Resources” aid negotiations or joint management when there is no corresponding piece on “The Biblical Management of Water Resources”? Or, more critically, what is the value of having an entire section on water rights allocations that fails to draw overall conclusions?

The book, although it is about the politically charged water question, insists on appearing as a technical document, to the disadvantage of the Palestinians. This approach parallels the Israeli one to the water (and other) negotiations of presenting seemingly technical positions to mask political agendas. It is an embodiment of the attempt during the “peace process” period to convert the Palestinian question into an economic one. On a more general epistemological level, it reflects the abiding technocratic belief that issues can be resolved technically and that politics are not central. The book thus addresses only joint management of the Mountain Aquifer, which is an Israeli interest; water rights, the core Palestinian demand, are absent. Because the West Bank is upstream of the Mountain Aquifer, it makes little bargaining sense for Palestinians to consent to joint management before securing their water rights. This is the kind of generous offer that the Palestinians gave in the 1993–2000 negotiations without getting so much as even an acknowledgment in return.

One also may ask why a book about groundwater resources investigates only the Mountain Aquifer. True, it is the single most important water source common to the two adversaries, but the Palestinians also have substantial claims to the water of the Jordan River, so why omit this watercourse without explanation? The editors offer in the introduction a general legal definition of what constitutes an international or common water resource, but they do not identify all the common water resources in Palestine-Israel or clarify the reasons for the focus on the Mountain Aquifer.

In the discussion of proposed joint management structures, the accent is on economics; the political dimension is overlooked, except for an appendix in table form at the very end of the book that qualifies the impact on sovereignty of various management tasks as “limited,” “very high,” and so forth. However, there is no guidance in the text as to what these terms mean. For example, if a government were to have a certain degree of infringement on its sovereignty, how would this affect a combination of tasks pertaining to water management? Further, the implicit assumption is that Israeli and Palestinian sovereignties would be affected equally. This is
Recent Books

Reviewed by Naseer Aruri

Marwan Bishara is a young scholar-journalist from Nazareth who is based in Paris, where he lectures at the American University and holds a research fellowship at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales. His book demonstrates that the Oslo “peace process” is contrary to genuine peace. Rather, it is an attempt to “defuse the Palestine question without resolving it” (p. 129) as well as an instrument to ensure Israeli economic power over the Palestinians and to achieve through “peace” what it could not achieve through war—“regional domination” (p. 109). Bishara reveals the horrendous economic consequences of Oslo for the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza: the distortion of the social structure by creating parasitic classes that developed a vested interest in the social, economic, political, and security aspects of the “peace process.” Together with Israel’s determination not to decolonize, not to concede any sovereignty over the occupied territories, and not to dismantle the apartheid system, this process ensured the outbreak of the second intifada. The uprising was directed not only against the occupation regime but also against the Palestinian Authority (PA), acting as Israel’s enforcer, an aspect that leads the author to conclude that returning to the security-laden “peace process” is bound to fail.

Bishara’s discussion of the intifada and Israel’s excessive use of force, not only against the Palestinians in the occupied territories but also against its own Arab citizens, makes this book one of the few that are not restricted to the territories occupied in 1967. In fact, he devotes an entire chapter to the “million forgotten Palestinians . . . the enemy within” (pp. 28–40). He presents the Palestine question, now consisting of three fragmented elements—refugees, citizens, and captives under occupation—as one whole. He perceives the destiny of the Palestinians in the occupied territories and that of the Palestinian citizens of Israel as being more interdependent than at any previous time: “Israel has failed to segment and compartmentalize the Palestinian issue, which reemerged in October [2000] as the cause of

OSLO BETRAYED


Naseer Aruri is Chancellor Professor (emitus) at the University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth, and the author of Dishonest Broker: America’s Role in Israel and Palestine (South End Press, forthcoming).
a whole people, and as the existential challenge facing Israel” (p. 38). In his coverage of the impasse in the diplomatic process and the U.S. role in it, Bishara correctly places major responsibility for the failure on former president Bill Clinton, who for seven years “manipulated and coerced the Palestinians to follow Israeli dictats” by taking Israeli’s side (p. 6). Washington and Tel Aviv cynically blackmailed the Palestinians by manipulating other Arab actors, particularly Syria, during former Israeli prime minister Ehud Barak’s rule, to the detriment of peace.

Bishara devotes two chapters to Jerusalem and the refugees, both of which were designated as “final status issues,” and analyzes their role in the Camp David II talks. His keen knowledge of Israeli domestic politics enriches the discussion of the diplomatic impasse and the Camp David deception. For example, he states that the Israeli army, which had been radicalized during the past two decades, “played a role in torpedoing the process” (p. 52). Chapters 7 and 9 are particularly lucid and insightful. The former, entitled “Seven Fat Years for Israel, Seven Lean Years for Palestine,” delineates the economic imperatives for Oslo in conceptual terms and at the micro level, supplying important economic data. Oslo facilitated entry for Israel into the emerging global markets that brought it lucrative economic investments. Moreover, in order to globalize, “Israel had to restructure its colonial economic ties” in the occupied territories (p. 99). The chapter demonstrates how Oslo was, in fact, primarily “an economic document.” But while the benefits went to Israel, the Palestinian economy began to deteriorate even further, as the Palestinians suffered greater unemployment and reduced access to education and health care.

The draconian measures that were imposed on the Palestinians despite “peace” disrupted the day-to-day lives of the people. The PA budget went largely for “security” and salaries; only a negligible amount was spent on health, social services, and education. Bishara demonstrates Washington’s total disregard for the plight of the people as it now suddenly awakes to the necessity of Arabs previously published by International Socialist Review. The pieces are grouped into three sections: Israel, Zionism, and Imperialism; Oslo and the Al-Aqsa Intifada; and The Struggle for Palestine. Most of the authors are associated with the International Socialist Or-

In the end, apartheid and peace are not possible, and the way out of the malaise is for the two people to live together in equality or else “let their divorce be a fair one” (p. 138). This penetrating analysis of the Oslo period is insightful, lucid, and well-written. The reader will certainly appreciate the critique of Oslo, which casts considerable light on one of the most vexing problems of our time.

SHORTER NOTICES


Autobiographical narratives can help put the work of scholars dealing with the Middle East conflict into its proper context. Michael Prior’s compilation contains eighteen short autobiographical episodes of Christians explaining their experience in Palestine and adjacent territories. The literary and informational quality of the contributions varies greatly, but generally they provide insightful information into understanding the motivations of the contributors, who include Elizabeth Barlow, Ray Barraclough, Katya Berg, David Burrell, Kenneth Cragg, William Dalrymple, Janet Davies, Garth Hewitt, Ruth and Thomas Hummel, Elaine Kelley, Duncan Macpherson, Peter Miano, Carol Morton, Colin Morton, Michael Prior, Rosemary Radford Ruether, Stephen R. Sizer, and Don Wagner. Readers of JPS will be interested in Dalrymple’s journey in the footsteps of John Moschos, a sixth-century monk, and Radford Ruether’s stories on the genesis of her scholarly work. The usefulness of the other contributions will depend on individual familiarity with the respective authors.


The pieces are grouped into three sections: Israel, Zionism, and Imperialism; Oslo and the Al-Aqsa Intifada; and The Struggle for Palestine. Most deal with historical analysis of certain aspects of the Palestinian question up to and including the current violence. Most of the authors are associated with the International Socialist Or-
organization, and only interviewees Naseer Aruri and Edward W. Said are likely to be recognized by most scholars.

Generalists are likely to be put off by the overtly revolutionary socialist polemics of this collection. Specialists will find little new in this political tract, although two pieces stand out. The first is a translation of the joint statement issued in the summer of 1967 by two radical socialist organizations: Matzpen, the Israeli Socialist Organization, and the Palestinian Democratic Front. The other is a Marxist critique of the Palestinian national movement by activist Mostafa Omar. Such views are rarely encountered in English, although they are likely to remain obscure since this book is not likely to reach a wide audience. As a consciously “revolutionary” work, its appeal primarily is to readers interested in an anti-nationalist, anti-Zionist, Marxist discussion of the question of Palestine.

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This competent analysis of international legal sources with respect to the right of refugees to return to their homes and places of origin following violent conflict that results in their voluntary or forced flight shows how the Palestinian refugees who fled or were expelled from areas that became part of the state of Israel in 1948 have an absolute right to return under international law. The author, a lawyer and the coordinator of BADIL’s legal unit, carefully reviews this right of return as it is enshrined in United Nations General Assembly Resolution 194 (originally passed in December 1948 and subsequently reaffirmed in annual votes), the customary laws of nationality, humanitarian law, and international human rights law.


Between 1995 and 2001, long-term peace activist Arthur G. Gish went on five separate “tours of duty” to Hebron for the Christian Peacemaker Teams, a faith-based grassroots movement engaged in nonviolent intervention, observation, monitoring, and reporting in international hotspots. The daily journal entries provide an abundance of anecdotal details on the harsh living conditions of Palestinians in Hebron. Unfortunately, Gish’s personal impressions contain little new information, which makes the reader wonder why some activists believe they have to publish everything they think and experience, especially when the writing is of mediocre literary quality.

NS


The Israeli state often is considered to be too new to warrant comparative studies. As a result, political scientists have focused on the impact of leaders or dominant groups on the constitution and perpetuation of state structures. Joel S. Migdal, a professor at the University of Washington, introduces a more sophisticated model that he calls the “state-in-society approach.” This framework analyzes state and society formation through the lens of the interrelationship between state and society. One of his findings is that Israel has a strong state with a weak government because the continuing preponderance of exogenous factors have weakened and neutralized the actors involved in state formation, including old rule makers, such as local strongmen and the ancient regime; potential rule makers, such as dissenting factions; and potential state breakers, such as neighboring states or global powers. The Palestinians, either internal or external to Israel’s territory, represent one of the forces influencing the ongoing development of the Israeli state.


The book contains summaries of the various documents and public talks presented from July 2000 to June 2001 at the Washington-based Center for Policy Analysis on Palestine (CPAP). These are organized by type of presentation: the For the Record public lecture series, the Information Briefs commis-
sioned by CPAP; and the group’s Policy Briefs. The three appendices include summaries of the conclusions reached by various international fact-finding missions to Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories during 2000 through 2001 as well as the complete texts of United Nations Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.

Taken together, these summaries present a picture of the myriad topics and opinions about the Middle East and the Palestinian question that surfaced at CPAP during the first year of the al-Aqsa intifada. Of particular interest are the summaries of the For the Record comments delivered at CPAP’s luncheon meetings of various academics, activists, professionals, and policymakers. The Executive Summary presentations of the topics will appeal largely to the Washington-area policy community.

MRF


This collection consists of sixteen papers delivered at the tenth annual conference of the Center for Policy Analysis on Palestine (CPAP), held in November 2001. The focus was a critical appraisal of U.S. foreign policy toward the Middle East and Central Asia with a particular stress on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The papers are gathered into four sections: U.S. Policy and the Palestinians; U.S. Policy in the Middle East and Central Asia; International and Grassroots Initiatives; and Where Do We Go from Here: Palestinian and American Perspectives. The papers cover topics ranging from U.S. media coverage of the al-Aqsa intifada; U.S. policy in Afghanistan and Pakistan; the United Nations racism conference in Durban, South Africa; and assessments of the future. Speakers included John Duke Anthony, Mustafa Barghouti, Marwan Bishara, Kathleen Christison, Richard Falk, Scott Ritter, and Hisham Sharabi, among others.

MRF


Martin Stäheli’s study chronicles in minute detail Syria’s rise to regional power starting with former Syrian president Hafiz al-Asad’s politics toward Palestine and Israel in the early to mid-1970s. The author then explores Syrian foreign relations with the United States and the Soviet Union, Syrian’s Lebanon politics, and Asad’s foreign policies during the 1990s. Stäheli concludes that under Asad, Syrian foreign policy was largely autonomous from internal developments and mainly served the purpose of bolstering the country’s nationalist ambitions within a pan-Arab order. For a 500-page book, this is a very thin conclusion, especially since the author does not address it systematically throughout the various chapters. With nearly 3,000 footnotes, Stäheli follows the detail-oriented tradition of Germanic academic inquiry and impressively demonstrates that he has read all available secondary literature on Syrian foreign policy in English, German, and French. However, the author has omitted Arabic sources, the examination of which could have added some originality to his research. Nevertheless, this work offers the most pounds per volume of any book on Syrian foreign politics, although its primary appeal will be to specialists seeking details on obscure facets of Asad’s foreign policies.

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Although a theater director by training, Laila Abou-Saif assembled this collection of interviews with such diverse persons as Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Shaykh Kishk, Pope Shenouda II, Naguib Mahfouz, and others in an attempt to explain to Americans why anti-American anger exists in the Middle East. She conducted the interviews mostly in her native Egypt, but also with a few non-Egyptians, such as Sa’id Kamal, aide to PLO chief Yasir Arafat, and Arafat himself. The topics discussed in the interviews vary but generally focus on political issues relevant to the time period 1986 to 1988. Abou-Saif’s Foreword indicates that she felt that reissuing this book after the events of 11 September 2001 might be instructive, but the book is too dated to be of value to the general reader she targets and too simplistic for the specialist.

MRF

This collected volume emerged from a conference, “Lebanon in the Twenty-first Century,” held in October 1998 at Villanova University and sponsored by Villanova’s Center for Arab and Islamic Studies and the Lebanese American University. Its eleven articles, mostly written by Lebanese authors (half of whom are academics), discuss a range of challenges facing Lebanon in the post-Ta'if period. These are grouped into three sections: Lebanon and the Middle East Peace Process; Religion, Culture, and Gender; and Problems of Urbanization, Ecology, and the Economy. Two essays of specific relevance to Palestinian studies are Julie Petee’s “The Dilemma of the Palestinians in Lebanon” and Kirsten E. Schulze’s “Israeli-Lebanese Relations: A Future Imperfect?” Other interesting essays are those that diverge from the “usual suspects” one finds among works dealing with Lebanon (e.g., confessional identity or regional and international power politics): Mona Chemali Khalaf, “Women in Postwar Lebanon”; Michael F. Davie, “The Emerging Urban Landscape of Lebanon”; Wassim N. Shahin, “The Lebanese Economy in the Twenty-first Century”; and Fouad Hamdan, “The Ecological Crisis in Lebanon.”

ERIC HOOGLUND

ERIC HOOGLUND is consulting editor of JPS and editor of Critique: Critical Middle East Studies.

NORBERT SCHOLZ holds a Ph.D. in history from Georgetown University.