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Masalha: The Politics of Denial: Israel and the Palestinian Refugee Problem

Review by: Ilan Pappé

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RECENT BOOKS

DISPOSSESSING REFUGEES

The Politics of Denial: Israel and the Palestinian Refugee Problem, by Nur Masalha. London and Sterling, VA: Pluto Press, 2003. vi + 269 pages. Bibliography to p. 290. \$24.95 paper.

Reviewed by Ilan Pappé

The title of this book is somewhat misleading. It is in part a book about the Israeli "politics of denial," as its title promises, but it also exposes even more forcefully, and to my mind more importantly, the Israeli politics of dispossession. The two, denial and dispossession, of course, are intertwined. Those who dispossess are powerful enough to erase their crimes from their own and others' official narratives.

The chapters on denial are part of a new field of inquiry for this prolific historian. One chapter is devoted to the beginning of the struggle against denial of the 1948 *nakba* in Israel, through the works of both the new historians and the professional Palestinian historiographies that appeared more or less at the same time. A later chapter examines thoroughly the way denial of the 1948 ethnic cleansing has been perpetuated by the peace efforts since 1967. The epilogue calls for a future peace in Palestine based on Israeli acknowledgment of the 1948 ethnic cleansing and the restitution of its victims' rights, through the implementation of UN resolution no. 194 and the right of return.

The rest of the book is, to my mind, one of the first, and definitely one of the most successful, attempts to present the Zionist and Israeli politics of dispossession through the years. Masalha earlier wrote a sort of trilogy: His first book dealt with the 1948 expulsion (*Expulsion of the Palestinians*, Institute for Palestine Studies, 1992); his second book examined transfer plans in the State of Israel well into the 1990s (*A Land without a People: Israel, Transfer, and the Palestinians*, Faber and Faber, 1997); and his last book (*Imperial Israel and the Palestinians: The Politics of Expansion*, Pluto Press, 2000) analyzed contemporary

policies of expansion and uprooting. The books were detailed and left very few holes in this chronology of state crimes, of which very few readers in the West, particularly in the United States, are aware. In this rather thin book, this same narrative is presented concisely, and consequently the picture is clearer and even more chilling.

The advantage of having in one place the continuum of thought and praxis of dispossession can be seen particularly in the less-known episodes of transfer and expulsion. One such example is the story of Gaza, narrated in chapter three of this book. Masalha points out the direct link between denials of the *nakba*, Israeli advocacy of resettlement plans for the refugees far away from Palestine, and the actual policies of expulsion. He is right in stressing the need to analyze each of the three objectives in relation to one another. Whenever the historical opportunity seemed ripe, the Zionist movement or the state of Israel pushed strongly in all three directions: trying to wipe out the refugee issue from the peace agenda, attempting to resettle the refugees away from Palestine, and uprooting the Palestinians who had not yet become refugees. This relentless effort of dispossession has not ceased for one moment since 1948. In 1956, such a historical juncture seemed to be available for the Israelis, but they did not have enough time to fulfill their plans on all three fronts. In conjunction with the 1956 Anglo-French-Israeli attack on Egypt, the Gaza Strip fell under Israeli control for a short while. The historiographers of that war tend to focus, naturally, on the Egyptian-Israeli scene, forgetting about Gaza with its large refugee community. The Israeli government initially thought Gaza would remain forever part of Israel and could not have predicted the international pressure that eventually forced its army to withdraw. In those early days, the government could satisfy its territorial appetite by adding yet another part of Palestine to the state of Israel, but at the same time the annexation enlarged the number of Palestinians under Israeli rule. As always in Zionist history, the question was how to incorporate as much of Palestine as possible with as few Palestinians as possible. The same Israeli officials involved in the 1948 ethnic cleansing were busy devising plans to disperse the refugees in Gaza far away from

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Palestine, but the short-lived occupation did not allow them the time to implement their scheme.

The Gaza Strip again became a relevant topic for Israeli transfer policies in 1967. However, the old veterans of the 1948 depopulation operations conceded the initiative to someone else: Ariel Sharon, who wanted to introduce Jewish settlements there and reduce the population of the refugee camps. He was then, as he is now, at the center of a Gaza initiative.

I am sure that readers of this book would experience the same déjà vu feeling as I had while reading it. However, the difference today is that Sharon finds the settlements an inefficient tool of depopulation and resorts to direct killings, starvation, and economic stagnation. Yet, the wider picture today is still the same as the one Masalha portrayed so skillfully in his historical survey. It applies not only to Gaza, but also to the West Bank, and in the more distant future, to the Palestinian areas inside Israel. Thus, the author's analysis of Israeli policies remains relevant: isolation of vast areas by means of building high walls and electric fences, operations aimed at thinning the population, schemes of expulsion, and a constant effort of deception and denial to absolve the Israelis from any responsibility and accountability. By exposing the ideology behind the atrocities and by telling the full story of their history, Masalha's book is an invaluable contribution in the struggle against such horrendous programs in the future. No less significant is his critique of the pseudo peace plans such as Oslo, the road map, and the Geneva Accords that undermined, intentionally or unintentionally, the struggle against denial and dispossession in Palestine.

DISLODGMET OF CHRISTIANS

Dying in the Land of Promise: Palestine and Palestinian Christianity from Pentecost to 2000, 2nd rev. ed., by Donald E. Wagner. London: Melisende, 2003. 285 pages. Appendix to p. 292. Bibliography to p. 307. \$21.95 paper.

Reviewed by Bernard Sabella

Donald Wagner is an Evangelical Presbyterian minister and executive director of the

Center for Middle Eastern Studies at North Park University in Illinois. His love for learning and search for truth, as a firm believer and as an academic, led him to move from a pro-Israel position in his younger years to a more comprehensive view of the Arab-Israeli conflict. This transformation is reflected in at least five publications and numerous chapters and journal articles that he authored focusing on Christianity and Israel. *Dying in the Land of Promise* is the most recent of his many publications. Out of his conviction for the need for a more accurate understanding of the Middle East and the Arab-Israeli conflict and its repercussions, he cofounded in 1986 Evangelicals for Middle East Understanding and served as its national director for ten years until 2000.

In *Dying in the Land of Promise*, Wagner expounds the reality that Palestinian Christians are an integral part of their people attested by the details of the more recent and as well distant history. Wagner is alarmed by the dwindling numbers of Palestinian Christians, a development that he sees linked to the creation of Israel and to the various Israeli policies of negation of Palestinian rights, dispossession of land, and forced migration of Palestinians since 1948. The work is an encyclopedic summary of the history of the church in the Holy Land, with Palestinian Christians contextually placed in each of the successive historical stages. In this revised edition—the first edition was in 2001—Wagner also points out the effects on Palestinians of the present intifada, which started in September 2000. His concern, which is shared by population experts, is that with continuing Israeli occupation and its various ongoing measures of control and containment, more and more Palestinian Christians, as well as Palestinian Muslims, will leave, thus emptying the land of its living stones. The decline of Palestinian Christians troubles Wagner because their numbers in the occupied Palestinian territories do not reach 50,000, while Palestinian Christians within Israel number no more than 110,000. Altogether, Palestinian Christians constitute less than 2 percent of the total population of what was pre-1948 Palestine, a decline from 15 percent at the end of the nineteenth century. In contrast, more than a quarter of a million Palestinian Christians are found in

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articles and chapters in books on Palestinian Christians.

diaspora communities ranging from Sydney, Australia, to San Pedro Sula, Honduras.

Clearly the ingathering of the Jews in Israel has led to a process of dislodgment of Palestinians, Christians included, from Palestine. The two processes go together: on the one hand, rebirth; on the other hand, dislodgment or death. The example of the Palestinian Christian community is perhaps the best crystallization of this interdependent process of rebirth and dying. Wagner methodically and painstakingly points out the metamorphosis of the dying Palestinian Christianity through historical and contextual details. For a reader who may like to concentrate more on present realities of Palestinian Christianity, this may be detracting. Wagner's intention, however, is to show the devastating historical and other effects of the disappearance of Palestinian Christians. Proportionately higher numbers of Palestinian Christians than Palestinian Muslims leave, but the willingness to remain shown by Palestinian Christians who refuse to leave best is exemplified by a sixty-five-year-old Ramallah Christian woman who, when asked, in one of those surveys intended to gauge intention to emigrate, whether she wanted to join family members abroad, insisted that she would stick to the land even if it meant living only on thyme and olive oil, a popular Palestinian dip.

The defiance of those Palestinians, Christians and Muslims alike, who insist on sticking it out in the land are the hope for the regeneration of Palestine. Israel and its Christian Zionist supporters particularly in the United States are manipulating Christianity ideologically to suit the political agenda of Israeli military occupation and the consequent Palestinian dislodgment. But what is the responsibility of Christianity and its biblical heritage in the face of this apparently interminable conflict? Wagner seems to stress that the answer lies in justice. In this sense *Dying in the Land of Promise* is a call to Western Christians, particularly those sympathetic to Israel on biblical grounds, to reconsider their position, especially when this position leads to the negation and actual disappearance of a Palestinian Christian community that has been in place in the Holy Land since the beginning of Christianity.

INSTITUTIONS OVER REALITY

Palestinian Politics after the Oslo Accords: Resuming Arab Palestine, by Nathan J. Brown. Berkeley: University of

California Press, 2003. xii + 254 pages. Notes to p. 302. Bibliography to p. 315. Index to p. 323. \$19.95 paper.

Reviewed by Jamil Hilal

Nathan Brown did most of the research for this book in 1999 and 2000 while holding a Fulbright teaching fellowship at Ben-Gurion University in Israel. Apart from his above research interest, Brown does not hide his interest (and that of all members of his family) in living for a period in Israel. He states the central theme of his book to be "that the struggle over defining Palestine concerns not how Palestinian politics should begin but over how it should be resumed" (p. 5). He contends that much of Palestinian politics since the signing of the Oslo accords "has consisted of a struggle over how to build a Palestinian polity as detached as possible from the context of the struggle with Israel" (ibid).

In other words, the book is set to prove that the Palestinian national narrative—in which the Zionist movement in Mandate Palestine, the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948, and its occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 1967 figure prominently—is of minor relevance to the understanding of present-day Palestinian politics. Hence, the stress of the book's seven chapters is not really on the central issues of Palestinian politics (self-determination, sovereign statehood, and the refugee question) but on legalistic, constitutional, and institutional aspects of the Palestinian Authority (PA) in its attempts, unsuccessful so far, to build a semblance of a state under extremely adverse conditions imposed by a colonial settler regime.

It is no accident that the book stresses the "Rocard Report" (published in 1999) sponsored by Henry Seigman of the U.S. Council on Foreign Relations, which is very critical, rightly, of the performance of the PA. (The reviewer was a member of the Palestinian team, which contributed to the report.) The report's mandate was confined to examining the institutional structure and performance of the PA at the end of the interim period

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and the onset of the final status period for negotiating the core issues of statehood, refugee rights, the status of Jerusalem, borders, the removal or evacuation of Israeli colonial settlements, and control over water resources. The Rocard Report is basically a policy oriented technocratic document, not a political treatise or a study of Palestinian national politics. The contest over the formation of the Palestinian political system continued with renewed struggle after the Oslo accords, with new contenders entering the field (e.g., Hamas). Unresolved questions related to the Palestinian national project, the rights of the Palestinian refugees, the borders of the future Palestinian state, and its relations with Israel continued to dominate politics. In fact, one major reason behind the second intifada was the failure of the “peace process” to move Palestinians toward independent statehood.

Despite its details about internal institutional and legislative issues, the book fails to conceptualize the relationship between Israel and the West Bank/Gaza Strip as a settler colonial relationship with all its implications. Hence, it deals with Israeli policies and actions only as responses to the intifada, which is referred to in terms of violence (p. 2) rather than—regardless of the methods some of its political activists employed, particularly against Israeli civilians—as an uprising aimed at ending the military occupation and achieving political independence. Even when the Israeli army reoccupied most of the West Bank in April 2002, this is referred to as a military campaign (pp. 105, 204). Although the author acknowledges “the widespread destruction, the confiscation of records, the scale of looting and the targeting of apparently innocent organizations” (p. 249) by the Israeli invading army, he refrains from explaining the political aims behind such actions, and, in fact, insists that the purpose behind the destruction “remains unclear and selection of targets obscure” (ibid).

The author’s technocratic paradigm of politics does not allow him to see the colonial dimension nor the similarities (and specifics) of Israeli policies toward the Palestinians compared with other colonial settler situations or with apartheid-type policies (e.g., the closures, the curfews, the “separation wall,” the bypass roads, the classification of Palestinian territory according to the degree Israel allows administrative powers to Palestinians, the pass system, the slicing of the West Bank into a number of separate and self-enclosed “Bantustans,” the cutting off of

the Gaza Strip from the West Bank and both from East Jerusalem, the daily humiliation of tens of thousands of Palestinians at the hundreds of checkpoints, etc.). The author does not see that the weakening of the PA, the fragmentation of Palestinian society and its impoverishment, the detention of thousands of political activists, and the assassination of political leaders and cadres, all had the aim of destroying the possibility of a viable and independent Palestinian state and the rectification of the historic injustice done to the Palestinians, through dispossession, dispersal, occupation, and land confiscation. A language of neutrality is often nothing but a language to hide the inherent partiality to the occupier and oppressor. Even though this book is rich in details about many Palestinian governmental institutions as they operated on the eve of the second intifada, linguistic neutrality cannot replace objectivity, which demands looking at sociopolitical reality without distorted lenses and calling an occupation an occupation, a colonial power a colonial power, and an apartheid system an apartheid system.

(RE)OCCUPATION OF RAMALLAH

When the Birds Stopped Singing: Life in Ramallah under Siege, by Raja Shehadeh. South Royalton, VT: Steerforth Press, 2003. viii + 152 pages. \$12.95 paper.

Bienvenue à Ramallah [Welcome to Ramallah], by Théodora Oikonomides. Paris: Flammarion, 2003. 221 pages. Glossary to p. 225. Chronology to p. 229. 18 euros paper.

Reviewed by Nubar Hovsepian

Diaries and eyewitness accounts, as a genre of writing, convey the meaning of the quotidian as experienced by individuals. As such they do not purport to present a detached and heavily referenced historical account of the subject at hand. As a daily diarist, I have recorded my thoughts and experiences for more than thirty uninterrupted years. Reading Raja Shehadeh’s latest reconstructed diary compels me to reconstruct my diary of the civil war in Lebanon, and, like Shehadeh, use the occasion to tell a story of how I lived and perceived the war

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and was affected by it. I thus would categorize both works under review here as a genre of writing about memory and war, for Shehadeh and Oikonomides bear witness to the present conflict in Palestine as history. In this context, memory as Pierre Nora notes is a “perpetually actual phenomenon” that can capture the present eternally (“Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Memoire,” trans. by Marc Roudebush, *Representations* 26 [Spring 1989], p. 8).

Shehadeh and Oikonomides both chronicle the travails of life under occupation, particularly during the Israeli reinvasion of parts of the West Bank in 2002. Although the books complement one another, they are quite different. Shehadeh presents a Palestinian narrative of *sumud* (steadfastness) and endurance. In contrast, Oikonomides, a young French educated “international” (working with a London-based development organization), though sympathetic and perhaps in solidarity with Palestinians and their plight, is more distanced from what she witnesses (p. 15). In fact, she learns to be careful not to utter the dreaded nine-letter word—Palestine—to her Israeli interrogators at Ben-Gurion airport.

Shehadeh is no ordinary Palestinian, his name being synonymous with the struggle for Palestinian human rights. This is his third published diary, written almost ten years after he withdrew from public life to protest the incompetence of the Palestinian leadership. He writes as a humanist, but one who understands the politics of the situation. He warned against the serious shortcomings of Oslo, which he repeatedly refers to as a “false peace,” but rather than dwelling on the broad political issues, he chooses to chronicle the quotidian, which is filled with curfews and Israeli troops taking over his brother’s house. The absurdity of this illegal takeover is represented by his sister-in-law’s need to ask for “permission from an Israeli soldier to take her daughter to the toilet in her own house” (p. 16). Tala, the daughter, admires her father but is forced to see him “pushed around and humiliated” (p. 17). This vignette serves as a metaphor for the humiliation that all Palestinians experience daily in lives filled with constant “trauma, tragedy, catastrophe, violence, brutality, and stupidity” (p. 21).

The Israeli invasion of Ramallah is not just punitive in nature—curfews, arrests, destruction of property, and random arrests. The Israeli soldiers return with a vengeance “to remind me that a Palestinian does not

have the luxury of living quietly, creatively, in his own country. He will be chased, choked, and hounded” (p. 43). For example, Shehadeh records for 11 April 2002 that the destruction of property—of NGOs, including their libraries and computers, aims to destroy the institutional memory that Palestinians have built over the years (p. 85). When Israeli troops destroy the medical equipment and information in the offices of the Thalassaemia (lethal form of anemia) Patients’ Friends Society, he cries out: “How does the vandalism of such an office help protect Israelis?” (p. 88).

Shehadeh is exasperated with the role that Palestinians must perform in a script written by others. Arab leaders and the media portray the Palestinians as heroic victims. But he does not want to play this predetermined role and does not want to be either pitied or admired. Al-Jazeera portrays Palestinians as abstract heroic symbols. Thus, Palestinians serve as the providers of “inspiration and rhetoric to those who feel impotent in their restricted world. [The Palestinian] accentuates their [Arabs] feeling of helplessness and relieves it” (p. 56). In contrast, he is offended by Israeli utterances that depict all Palestinians through the prism of “terror” and as “terrorists.” He is most offended by the simultaneous Israeli claim that the Israeli army is among the most moral military forces in the world, an abuse of language he sees as verging on the pornographic (p. 95). Israeli propaganda reduces all Palestinians to terrorists; thus, the Israeli public becomes numb and unable to have empathy for other human beings, and in the process they become racists (pp. 95–96).

Shehadeh is equally intolerant of the stupidity, incompetence, and neglect of the Palestinian leadership and the oppositional forces that have nurtured an arms culture and militarized the Palestinian struggle (p. 5). He decries Palestinian leaders for placing young men in harm’s way, abandoning them to meet senseless deaths. “How much has this society suffered for the irresponsibility of its leaders?” (p. 132). He does not want Palestinian society to build new myths of heroism; instead, he seeks a society that is free of myths and heroism (p. 116). And that seems to be why suicide bombings trouble Shehadeh. For a moment, when Israelis are hit with an explosion, there is a reversal of roles, and they become victims. But this “victory” is “sour, embittering, sobering” (p. 78), as there are no winners here.

In December 2000, Shehadeh's mother, as a member of the Jerusalem choir's annual Christmas concert, summed up what he and all Palestinians want. Unable to go to Jerusalem, the choir sang at the Qalandia checkpoint, and his mother stood in the rain carrying a placard that stated simply: "End the occupation now. Israelis go home" (p. 152).

The book by Oikonomides shows us the poverty and deprivation of a segment of the Palestinian population that Shehadeh does not highlight. As a young woman with a Greek surname, she became actively engaged with the Palestine solidarity movement in France. She went to Palestine in October 2000, initially to work and live in the Qalandia refugee camp, a location that enabled her to observe the class divisions of Palestinian society. She notes that the director of a cooperative designed to help the poor does not live in the camp and displays the arrogance of a middle-class Palestinian who has disdain for refugees who have become dependent on assistance (p. 29). In contrast is Um Sleiman, a camp resident who cleans the cooperative, is religious and veiled, but a great cook and hospitable. She adopts Oikonomides, a European outsider who thus is in a better position to see the other Palestine. Oikonomides observes that Um Sleiman had not gone beyond elementary education, but she learned Hebrew and other things on her own. And she manages to work, care for eleven siblings, and keep a positive demeanor despite the hardships of occupation. More details about Um Sleiman and others like her would have enhanced the book. Missing, too, are details about the author's own work during her three years in Palestine.

Oikonomides displays a good sense of humor and irony, as she tries to explain what occupation entails. In "The Colors of Discrimination," she dazzles her reader with the various color-coded license plates and identity (ID) cards. The holders of blue cards can enter Jerusalem, but the holders of green cards are not allowed to leave the West Bank. The color game can become surreal. She describes a house in Qalandia, where the balcony is physically located in Jerusalem, and the bedrooms are in the West Bank. With much irony she says, "don't ask me the color of the identity cards of this houses' inhabitants" (p. 59). The rules are simple: Green and orange ID cards with green license plates mean "do not pass." Others with green IDs and work permits

mean "pass but on foot." Blue cards and yellow license plates mean "pass" (welcome to Israel), etc. The message is clear: the color of racism (p. 60).

After four months in Qalandia, Oikonomides moved to Bayt Hanina, and a few months later, relocated to Ramallah, where she remained until October 2003. Oikonomides introduces her French readers to the meaning of checkpoints, the humiliation that Palestinians experience on a daily basis, and the absurdity of the Israeli regime of occupation. She provides hand-drawn illustrations of checkpoints, maps that identify settlements (colonies), and sketches of settler roads that Bantustanize the West Bank. She introduces simple and poor Palestinians and focuses on the young (*shebab*). And like Shehadeh, she does not shy away from criticizing the culture of arms that prevails among Palestinians.

REFUGEES' PREDICAMENT

The Palestinian Impasse in Lebanon: The Politics of Refugee Integration, by Simon Haddad. Foreword by Hilal Khashan. Brighton, UK and Portland, OR: Sussex Academic Press, 2003. x + 148 pages. Appendices to p. 161. Select Bibliography to p. 170. Index to p. 179. \$65.00 cloth.

Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon—Where to Belong? by Dorothee Klaus. Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 2003. 176 pages. Bibliography to p. 199. Index to p. 205. 25 euros paper.

Reviewed by Laleh Khalili

In the aftermath of the Lebanese civil war (1975-1991) and in reaction against refugee settlement schemes that first were fielded during the 1992 Madrid talks, the Lebanese government increasingly and drastically has curtailed Palestinian refugees' civil rights. The aim of the draconian limits on Palestinian employment, property ownership, and university education has been an open secret throughout: The Lebanese state wishes to "encourage" Palestinian refugees in Lebanon to emigrate, so as to reduce the numbers of

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possible refugees settling in Lebanon at a future date. Conventional wisdom holds that these policies have arisen because the great majority of the Lebanese do not want Palestinian refugees settled in their midst. The two volumes reviewed here support this view, although the authors use differing—though complementary—methods for arriving at their conclusions.

Haddad, an associate professor of political science at the Notre Dame University in Lebanon, utilizes survey questions to gauge the attitude of the Lebanese toward Palestinian refugees and their possible settlement in Lebanon. He also surveys Palestinian refugees about their opinions of possible Palestinian statehood and settlement in Lebanon or further afield. His pool of respondents includes 273 Palestinians who were “interviewed at and outside the camps” (p. 79) and 1,073 Lebanese citizens. The Lebanese respondents are mostly 18–35 years old (72 percent), male (64 percent), college educated (58 percent), and “people with professional and managerial occupations” (p. 77). Although Haddad has collected data on the respondents’ age, class, and gender, his primary basis of measurement and comparison is religious identity. However, even in this small sample, Christians are overrepresented: Whereas population estimates put the percentage of Lebanese Christians at or below 30 percent, nearly half of Haddad’s respondents (48 percent) are Christians. By contrast, the Shi’a, the Sunni, and the Druze comprise respectively 27, 18, and 7 percent of all respondents (p. 77). The author does not provide a similar breakdown by age, gender, class, or religion for the Palestinian respondents (although the questionnaires indicate that he collected this data), and nor do we know what percentage are camp residents.

Prior to the analysis of the survey results in chapters seven through eleven, Haddad outlines the historical and social background of Palestinian refugees’ presence in Lebanon. The first four chapters include a review of the strategies of regional parties to the Arab-Israeli conflict, a brief overview of the Palestinian exodus from Israel in 1948, an assessment of the Palestinians’ role in the Lebanese civil war (in chapter three, Haddad claims that the civil war was primarily between Palestinian guerrillas and local militias), and the obstacles to Palestinian integration and resettlement. Haddad also attempts to ground his analysis in theory by drawing comparisons with and

using conceptual tools from research on immigration to North America and Australia. The conclusions he draws from his survey results confirm his original hypothesis that most Lebanese do not want to see Palestinian refugees settled in their midst, blame the Palestinians for the civil war, and do not desire their integration or assimilation into the Lebanese society. (His Sunni and Druze respondents are far less adamant than other sectarian groups in their hostility toward and distrust of Palestinians.) While this conclusion in itself is unsurprising, Haddad also interestingly argues that this hostility is a result of low interaction between the Lebanese and Palestinian respondents, and that “the higher the respondents’ frequency of communication, the more they feel closer to Palestinians” (p. 122).

The second volume is based on the author’s doctoral thesis, and it uses ethnography to explore the attitudes of Lebanese and Palestinians toward one another. Klaus conducted 180 in-depth interviews and held even more informal conversations with Palestinian and Lebanese respondents belonging to different backgrounds. Although she does not provide an overall breakdown of her correspondents’ age, gender, class, or confessional belonging, when quoting them in the text—which she does extensively—she identifies them by all of those factors, while allowing them to remain anonymous. In her introduction, she states her aim as understanding “the sources of both continuous stalemate and coexistence” (p. 8), as well as focusing on Palestinians who live outside the camps (p. 6). However, the book seems to cover a vast and sometimes unwieldy range of anthropological themes (such as statelessness, kinship, the honor code, fear and trauma, and unsettled populations, among others), and most of the Palestinians quoted seem to be camp residents.

One of the strengths of Klaus’s book is the excellent range of “voices” recorded throughout. She liberally quotes her respondents in order to provide anecdotal support for her thematic arguments, and the range of opinions and attitudes she conveys through these direct quotes is illuminating and interesting. Klaus dedicates nearly half the book to an historical summary of the Palestinian predicament in Lebanon. Although the respondents’ anecdotes are colored by their present concerns and prejudices and may not represent their political positions in the 1970s and 1980s, nevertheless, these chapters are fascinating to read, and by providing

the Lebanese viewpoint of those years, complement Rosemary Sayigh's groundbreaking *From Peasants to Revolutionaries* (London: Zed Books, 1979) and *Too Many Enemies* (London: Zed Books, 1994). The latter half of chapter six and the whole of chapter seven, where the Palestinian respondents voice doubts about their future, their identity, and their relation with their hosts, are among the more poignant and interesting sections in the volume, as they show the complexity of attitudes present in a particular social group. Similarly, the direct quotations by Klaus's Lebanese respondents show that their opinions toward Palestinians are not monolithic and can range from sympathetic (p. 96) to vitriolic (pp. 94–95) to downright bigoted (p. 97).

A fundamental premise in both books is that the confessional identities of the actors is their primary categorical identity and that it determines their attitudes and opinions, although Klaus's research—implicitly—shows that class is a significant factor in delineating attitudes. Both authors assume sectarian allegiances as monolithic, internally coherent, and the primary motivator of politics. In some ways, the readers of both books are expected to know the internal politics of Lebanon and to understand the euphemisms that are intended to describe someone's politics through naming his or her religion. Thus, Klaus's identification of a respondent as "Maronite technician, Mount Lebanon area" (p. 97) is supposed to evoke in the reader historical knowledge of the role of Mount Lebanon's Maronites in the civil war and it replaces a discussion of the *politics* in which this person is engaged. Haddad's similarly unproblematic use of confessional categories as euphemisms for political positions transforms all Maronites into implacable foes of Palestinians, and all Sunnis as stalwart supporters. That the voices of individual Sunnis recorded in Klaus's volume may show antipathy toward the Palestinians or that more than a few Maronites in her book voice their sympathy toward Palestinians undermines the authors' unquestioned privileging of confessional belonging. Their prioritization of sectarian allegiances ignores *political relations within* and across sectarian groups.

Aside from this serious problem, both volumes could have benefited from a firmer editorial hand. Klaus works with such fascinating material that she sometimes loses sight of her central argument and covers ground that is only tangential to her orig-

inal focus. For example, her discussion of pre-1948 life in Palestine (pp. 135–42) has little bearing on her argument. In Haddad's volume, more attention should have been paid to fact checking, to prevent glaring errors such as describing Hamas as "a splinter group of Osbat al-Ansar" (p. 81 n. 5) or stating that Lebanon "has some of the fewest resources and wealth [*sic*]" in the Middle East (p. 45). Haddad's inconsistent and incorrect spelling of names and confusing use of honorific titles in both the text and the bibliography are also problematic. For example, Rosemary Sayigh's last name is rendered as "Sayyigh" in the text and the bibliography, and political scientist Farid al-Khazen's name is preceded with the use of the honorific "Sheikh" (p. 32), which can bemuse the unfamiliar reader. More significantly, Haddad uses quoted material ahistorically; for example, describing a present-day situation by using a quote from a 1984 article by Rashid Khalidi (p. 42 and p. 48 n. 7), or utilizing a Kata'ib party document from 1999 to explain Maronite attitudes circa the 1970s (p. 38 n. 16 and p. 32). The absence of details and the proliferation of euphemized discussion lead Haddad either to make sweeping generalizations without further explanation—"Any [demographic] imbalance would have a major political, social, economic and security impact" (p. 47)—or to assert facts without documentary support. For example, in a footnote, he reports that the number of refugees registered with UNRWA is nearly 400,000, half residing in the camps, but "the researcher was told [by whom?] that the real number [of camp residents or all refugees?] did not exceed 130,000" (p. 80). More mundanely, the English used in both volumes is sometimes awkward and occasionally grammatically incorrect.

Despite these shortcomings, some of which are more than minor, these books provide rare empirical snapshots of Lebanese-Palestinian relationships at the beginning of the twenty-first century. These can be valuable to policymakers and researchers discussing the predicament of Palestinian refugees and trying to understand the social attitudes of their Lebanese hosts.

CONVENTIONAL ZIONISM

The Invention of a Nation: Zionist Thought and the Making of Modern Israel, by Alain Dieckhoff. New York: Columbia University Press, 2003.

xi + 289 pages. Index to p. 297. \$30.00 cloth.

Reviewed by Gabriel Piterberg

Alain Dieckhoff is a political scientist interested in political theory and the history of ideas. He is a senior researcher in France's Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique and works at the Centre d'Études et de Recherches Internationales. The present book can be seen as an interpretive culmination of several publications on theories of the state, nationalism, territoriality, and Israel.

The Invention of a Nation is a narrative of the ideational genealogy of Zionist thought, and to some extent its articulation in politics, according to the authoritatively conventional pantheon that has been canonized in numerous texts, from Israeli school textbooks to scholarly works by, notably, Arthur Herzberg, Walter Laqueur, and Shlomo Avineri. This book, furthermore, is at once a study of Zionist ideology and a contribution to its sustenance and justification, though the author manages to keep a certain critical distance as the title (*Invention*) implies. According to the well-rehearsed rules of this "genre," Dieckhoff first presents the "forerunners" of Zionism (Moses Hess and Rabbis Yehuda Alkalai and Tzevi Kalischer), as well as Leo Pinsker's call for auto-emancipation, all of which leads to Theodore Herzl (chapter one). He continues with a chapter on the ideology of Socialist—for which Labor would have been more accurate and less misleading—Zionism (chapter two), and on the triumph of the Hebrew language and culture (chapter three).

Dedicating considerably more space than usually is allotted to Jewish Orthodoxy as well as to National Religious Zionism (chapter four) and, especially, to the Zionist Right (chapter five), Dieckhoff celebrates the remarkable success of Zionism, which in a way achieved its purpose with the foundation of the state in 1948. (This is also the cut-off point of the book, which conveniently excludes the 1948 war.) The celebration (chapter six and postscript) emphasizes the correctness of so-called classical Zionism

(basically Herzl, Chaim Weizmann, David Ben-Gurion, and the Labor movement) and its superiority over neo-Zionism and post-Zionism. This sustains the main argument that classical Zionism was a most successful project of attaining political modernity through building a democratic, but realistic, Jewish nation-state, a project whose leaders' understanding of the world within which they operated has been vindicated.

The Invention of a Nation, as the author explicitly states (pp. 9–11), is underlain by an Idealist view of history, which accords ideas and ideology autonomy from the material world and primacy in shaping it. Dieckhoff's content analysis of the ideological texts he reads is on the whole competent and thorough. He emphasizes more than usual the European ideational contexts to which some of the Zionist writers related and referred, occasionally finding fresh connections. Thus Dieckhoff interestingly uncovers the possible influence of the French conservative thinker, Joseph de Maistre, upon one of the founding ideologues of the Labor movement, A. D. Gordon (pp. 71–72). One of the problems in doing a serious history of ideas of nationalism (I shall shortly comment on the flaw of understanding Zionism as just nationalism) is the intellectual poverty of the thinkers. This problem is apparent in the present work, and it might have used as a grain of salt one of the three paradoxes Benedict Anderson identifies in nationalism, such as the third: "The 'political' power of nationalisms vs. their philosophical poverty and even incoherence. In other words, unlike most other isms, nationalism has never produced its own grand thinkers: no Hobbesses, Tocquevilles, Marxes, or Webers." (Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, revised edition, [London: Verso, 1991], p. 5.)

Dieckhoff's study neither uncovers new source material nor offers a novel overall interpretation of Zionist ideology. The author also heroically resists meaningful interaction with the not insubstantial scholarly literature on Zionism and Israel that has appeared over the past two decades; instead, he just lists some items that are part of this scholarship in a series of footnotes in the postscript, thereby structurally making sure that they do not inconveniently interfere with the topics to which they concretely pertain. This strange decision has a twofold consequence: It makes it possible for the author to avoid less than comfortable arguments vis-à-vis his own; and it makes the reading of his book

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less engaging and compelling than it could have been.

Examples abound, and it is worth noting at least two. Studies by Baruch Kimmerling (*Zionism and Territory*, University of California Press, 1983) and Gershon Shafir (*Land, Labor, and the Origins of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, 1882-1914*, Cambridge University Press, 1989 and reprint ed., University of California Press, 1996), which Dieckhoff mentions in the postscript but does not contend with in the text itself, would have forced him to discuss Zionism as settlers', that is, colonial nationalism, not merely nationalism. Shafir's work further would have forced the author to grapple with the argument that Labor ideology and its cooperative settlements were the product of not just a self-contained chain of ideational transmission but also of the colonial conflict between settlers and natives and the need to exclude the latter from the land and labor markets. In his celebration of the triumph of the Hebrew language and culture, Dieckhoff conveniently ignores books by Yonathan Shapiro and Yitzhak Laor. Shapiro (*An Elite without Successors*, Tel Aviv: Sifriat Poalim, 1984) points out the adverse effect of this triumph on the first generation of native Hebrew speakers: The zealous monolingualism severely narrowed their world and was one of the main reasons for their political limitations as a generational group. Laor (*Narratives with No Natives*, Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuhad, 1995) brilliantly demonstrates how the material and discursive institution called Hebrew literature was complicit in the erasure of Palestine as an Arab place.

The bottom line of all this is that what could have been an interesting debate between a reasonably moderate Zionist and the critics of Zionism, a debate in which the history of the idea of transfer in Zionist thought is discussed rather than ignored, ends up being a familiar parade of Zionist and Israeli ideology from an intrinsic perspective.

POST-ZIONIST ANALYSES

Traditions and Transitions in Israel Studies, Books on Israel, vol. 6, edited by Laura Zittrain Eisenberg, Neil Caplan, Naomi B. Sokoloff, and Mohammed Abu-Nimer. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002. ix + 340 pages. Notes to p. 342. \$27.95 paper.

Reviewed by Nur Masalha

On the face of it, this is an impressive collection: fifteen review articles written by eighteen contributors while two of the four editors, Neil Caplan and Laura Zittrain Eisenberg, are well-known reputable authors and key figures in the series Books on Israel. Although the contributors include an Italian, a German, a Chinese, and four Arabs, it is (Zionist) Israeli and North American Jewish scholars who dominate this interdisciplinary compilation. Nevertheless, it probably is one of the best in the Israeli studies series to date, going far beyond the standard reviews of books on Israel by offering critical examinations of wide-ranging scholarship about Israel within such disciplines as history and memory, politics, economics, literature, sociology, and anthropology. The sheer number of contributors and the range of essays and topics discussed make this volume a rich source of information on Israeli society, politics, economics, and culture. Its coverage is broad, with essays on reassessing Israel's road to the Suez War; the Holocaust and commemoration; the control of territory and spatial dimensions in Israel; the social, economic, and educational conditions of the Palestinians in Israel; post-Zionism; the dynamics of the Oslo "peace process"; and books on Israel published in Italy, Germany, and even China.

Although the collection has many excellent essays providing fresh analysis and cogent criticism, reading through some of them creates the impression that until recently the "new historians" and "post-Zionists" were running Israel, only to be betrayed by the Palestinians and undermined by the second intifada. In "Does Post-Zionism Have a Future?" (pp. 159-80), which reviews books by Avi Shlaim, Benny Morris, Zeev Sternhell, and others, Deborah Wheeler argues that post-Zionism "has grown into an all-encompassing cultural, political, and ideological movement. Post-Zionism has changed Israeli society in significant ways, from the revision of public school curricula to the transformation of Palestinian-Israeli relations," and

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the essay reviews some textual examples of the entrenchment of the post-Zionist mentality: "Together these texts reveal aspects of the post-Zionist efforts to clear space for new discourses, and thus new power relations in Israel" (p. 160). But is Wheeler talking about the same country that since September 2000 has introduced openly racist laws against its Arab citizens and is building an apartheid wall at the heart of Palestine with devastating effects on hundreds of thousands of Palestinians (and is backed not just by the Zionist Left but also by some Israeli contributors to this collection)?

Although one heard much about post-Zionism throughout the 1990s, this intellectual trend has vanished almost entirely from Israel in the post-September 2000 period. Furthermore, most "textual examples" reviewed by Wheeler are written by committed Zionists (and even by some critics of post-Zionism). For example, the works of Benny Morris always have been deeply anchored in Zionist ideological moorings, and Morris himself recently joined the cause of the Israeli right wing, threatening Palestinians with another catastrophe like the one in 1948. Those courageous Israelis who continue to speak out against Israel's brutal war against the Palestinians, such as Ilan Pappé, are being threatened with expulsion from Israeli academia. Therefore, a realistic assessment of the impact of the post-Zionism discourse of the 1990s on a settler colonial society must take into account that the right-wing Likud has dominated Israel (and continues to do so) for twenty-two of the last twenty-six years. How, one might ask, can a country pursuing its settler colonial project throughout the Oslo period—by doubling its settler population in the occupied territories and consolidating its Bantustans—simultaneously be described as a society "transformed" by post-Zionism? Clearly some essays in this collection provide rosy, almost Alice-in-wonderland-like assessments of contemporary trends in Israeli society.

Traditions and Transitions in Israel Studies also contains some spurious scholarship. An example is the essay by Xu Xin, a professor of the History of Jewish culture and the director of the Center for Jewish Studies in Nanjing. Xin reviews several books on Israel published in China, including one entitled *The Third Temple: The Rise of Israel* (1994). According to Xin, *The Third Temple* is the first Chinese book ever to provide a detailed, balanced description of the histor-

ical, religious, and political background of the rise of the Zionist movement and its developments and accomplishments in various stages. It allows Chinese readers as well as Chinese academics to understand the historical links between Jews and the land of Israel. Describing Zionism as a national liberation movement of the Jewish people, the book claims that "China was an active supporter of the Balfour Declaration" (p. 327). Being completely unaware of the implications of the idea of building the "Third Temple" (and possibly setting off a third world war in the process), Xin, following in the footsteps of many Zionist writers, confuses Zionism with Judaism and extols the virtues of early Zionism, which allegedly inspired Sun Yat-sen (1866-1925), the founding father of modern Chinese nationalism. Xin also draws satisfaction from the close cooperation between China and Israel since 1992 and its impact on the growth of Israeli studies in China. (At least one of the books reviewed was prefaced by the Israeli ambassador to China.) He concludes that, thanks to the growth of this new scholarship in China, and Chinese translations of *A History of Zionism* by Walter Laqueur and *A Hundred Years of Settlement* by Chaim Givati [a former Israeli minister], Chinese academics and the public now have the opportunity for a deeper understanding of Zionism and Eretz-Israel. Nobody can say anymore that Zionism's only purpose was to steal Palestine from its rightful owners (p. 328). Unfortunately, this essay shows that the writer is completely out of touch with history, reality, and morality.

Some other essays in the book are out of date, such as the one by Maen Nsour, "Economics as a Security Tool in an Era of 'Peace' in the Middle East." But there are some good essays, the best ones by relatively unknown authors. For example, Ilham Nasser and Khawla Abu Bakr have written on the Palestinians in Israel. Also on the positive side, although overall the volume's agenda is liberal Zionist, the actual boundaries between Israel and Palestine are not rigidly drawn, and the essays on the Palestinians in Israel in particular are a good example of a highly welcome openness. Indeed, the collection contains two fascinating essays by three lecturers (Abu Bakr, Ruth Amir, and Leah Rosen) from an obscure Israeli college, Emeq Yezreel; they expose the hollowness and fragility of the emerging multicultural discourse of the 1990s and the lack of commitment to it on the part of the Israeli Jewish public even at the height of the "peace

process." Their essays provide insights into why the Palestinian citizens of Israel now find themselves at best outcast in their own homeland and at worse threatened with ethnic cleansing and another *nakba*.

CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS

Refusenik! Israel's Soldiers of Conscience, edited by Peretz Kidron. Foreword by Susan Sontag. London: Zed Books, 2004. xvii + 118 pages. \$19.95 paper.

Reviewed by Amnon Kapeliuk

Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip has lasted thirty-seven years; of almost equal duration has been the campaign against it by Israeli peace activists. Their dedicated efforts, replete with ups and downs and repeated disappointments, hitherto have failed to sway Israeli public opinion against the occupation and its attendant tribulations for both peoples. But while yet to bear the hoped-for fruit, the campaign, persistent and impassioned, has spurred activists to seek novel ways of making their voices heard. To take one instance, the Women in Black anti-occupation vigils, launched initially in Jerusalem, have generated a powerful symbol that has been taken up by protesters worldwide.

But the most startling innovation of the Israeli Left has been the refusenik movement. It was instigated by young activists who, on being summoned to their annual month of military reserve duty, found themselves in the difficult situation of being assigned to enforce the very occupation against which they had campaigned all year as civilians. "Selective refusal" of duty in the occupied territories, or in Lebanon during the war launched in 1982, was an audacious extension of nonviolent civil disobedience to that least "civil" of all hierarchies—the military. The first instances of selective refusal were greeted with disbelief and outrage in a state where military service enjoyed semisacred status. But when the Lebanon invasion of June 1982 prompted the formation of the first refusenik movement, *Yesh Gvul* ("There's a Limit!") selective refusal became a familiar feature of radical protest. Further

waves of refuseniks reacted to the first intifada of 1987, and the renewed Palestinian uprising of recent years has produced a new and enlarged response, with over 1,200 Israelis of military age committed by formal declarations of refusal to take part in the repression of the Palestinian population.

The refusenik movement is of significant proportions. Over the years, the Israeli army has had to deal with an estimated 4,000 acts of political refusal. About 1,000 refuseniks have served prison sentences, some repeatedly. Over 300 refuseniks have been jailed since February 2001. Refuseniks include officers and soldiers, middle-aged reservists and conscripts performing their three-year obligatory service (two for women) and, in growing numbers, eighteen-year-old youths summoned to induction centers. Indeed, the rapid growth of the refusenik movement among high school seniors ("*shministim*") prompted the army in January 2004 to court-martial five draft resisters, who received one-year sentences on top of a year or more in pretrial detention.

What motivates a refusenik? What prompts a normally law-abiding citizen to throw off the habits of a lifetime and defy his/her legally appointed superiors? What induces a young Israeli to take a stand that, above and beyond the immediate legal penalty and long-term damage to career prospects, often entails censure and ostracism by family and friends?

The refusenik movement can be characterized as a unique blend of Mahatma Gandhi and Jewish *chutzpah*. Gandhi's legacy comes through in the refusal to bow down to flagrant injustice or collaborate with an occupation regime destructive of the most basic human and democratic values. The *chutzpah* lies in the stubborn refusal of a soldier or junior officer to concede superior wisdom to those superior in formal military rank. In 1982, when the politicians and generals found fit to order the army into Lebanon, their judgment was challenged by soldiers way down in the hierarchy and far inferior in military experience. After much blood and time had been spent in a destructive and futile campaign, it turned out that the refuseniks had been right all along, and the generals and politicians belatedly came around to their point of view. *Chutzpah* indeed!

While it may be possible to characterize the refusenik movement in broad lines, each refusenik is a world unto him/herself, with a private biography and personal values

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that sustain his/her defiance. Editor Peretz Kidron very wisely offers little more than a minimal overview of the movement's philosophy, opting instead to present dozens of declarations and court statements whereby refuseniks have defended their position. A refusenik himself, Kidron has assembled the declarations of philosophers and factory workers, bank clerks and students, teenagers and fathers, radicals and the politically neutral, Zionists and non-Zionists. The fifty refuseniks represented offer an amazing variety of views, arguments, and personal experience. Academics and scholars may find this too subjective an approach. But in depicting a movement consisting of individuals, each one responding—with courage and determination—to the absolute imperative of his/her private conscience, Kidron's "salad" anthology offers a profoundly challenging and moving portrayal.

STATE TERRORISM

Frontiers and Ghettos: State Violence in Serbia and Israel, by James Ron. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003. xxiv + 202 pages. Notes to p. 251. Index to p. 262. \$19.95 paper.

Reviewed by Darius Rejali

States use violence to defend borders, enforce laws, and defend their internal social order. But actual patterns of state violence change dramatically over time and space. Why do states use some methods of violence (i.e., mass expulsion or torture or bombs) in one place and at one time and change at other times? To answer this question, James Ron, a sociologist at McGill University, examines changing patterns of violence in Serbia and Israel. He is not concerned with the legitimacy of these state projects or the causes of the violence. He asks rather what accounts for variations in the kind of violence these states used? For example, why did Israel use different methods of repression in Palestine and Lebanon in the same period? Or what explains historical variations in Israel's treatment of Palestinians? And likewise, what

explains variations in Serbian nationalist violence within Serbia as opposed to in its Bosnian frontier?

Ron argues that states will prefer to police harshly rather than expel unwanted groups in areas of concentrated state power, whereas on the peripheries of the state, nationalist violence is likely to be most intense. Moreover, wherever human rights monitoring is most intense, violence itself will be craftier—links to paramilitaries will be disavowed and torturers will try to leave few marks. In the late twentieth century, even states with strong national projects such as Serbia and Israel know the cost of appearing to violate international human rights norms as they exercise violence.

Ron's argument turns on the spatial metaphor of "frontier" (where violence is likely to be most vicious) and ghetto (dense populations near the core of the state). Ghetto populations are more likely to be harshly policed than forcefully deported. If patterns of state violence vary with geographic zone, then borders matter. Borders, however, are not real but rather perceived. Thus, changes in how borders are perceived also change the kind of violence. During the 1990s, for example, Ron argues that the West Bank gradually changed its status from an internal ghetto of Israel to its frontier with Palestinian autonomous zones, and with this transformation came a change in the repertoire of violence. Palestinians were accustomed to Israelis using harsh police-style methods; after September 2000, however, Palestinians were facing missiles, armored vehicles, and shoot-to-kill ambushes.

Political scientists often focus on why violence is done rather than how it is done. Although the latter subject generally has been left to the military historians to address, Ron argues persuasively that understanding how violence is done has major theoretical payoffs. His study of the practice shows that international norms are far more robust than political scientists normally imagine. Perpetrators of violence are keenly aware of institutional norms and environmental settings as they go about doing their work, and they exercise considerable creativity within those limits. From his own experience witnessing the application of violence, Ron understood firsthand that methods allowed in frontier zones were unacceptable in ghettos and vice versa. (He was in an Israeli infantry unit from 1985 to 1988, serving in southern Lebanon and the Palestinian territories. He then worked as a member of Human

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Rights Watch in eastern Turkey, during the Turkish war against Kurdish insurgents.)

Ron's study also allows him to reject typical answers political scientists give for why violence is done. By focusing on how violence is done, Ron shows that these answers are too feeble to withstand empirical scrutiny. Israeli or Serbian violence did not vary with the level of objective threat these states faced. Likewise, the kind of regime ("democracy" or "dictatorship") did not matter, as both drew on the same repertoire of violence and the way they did so changed dramatically over time. Regime type is too static to explain these changes. Likewise, changes in political culture or nationalist ideology do not adequately account for changing patterns of violence.

Ron's comparative approach may be unfamiliar to those who believe that the only valid comparative method is to compare countries that are identical ("don't compare apples and oranges"). Social scientists know that there are several methods of comparison, one of which is the method of concomitant variation. In this approach, two cases may be entirely different, except both have variables A and B, and these two variables change in the same way. For example, if paper is scarce, the price will go up—whether the country is China or the United States. The relationship holds regardless of whether it's an apple or an orange. Likewise, Ron argues there is a distinct relationship between the kind of geographic zone and the specific pattern of state violence—whether the country is Serbia or Israel.

MOON OVER PALESTINE

500 Dunam on the Moon, directed by Rachel Leah Jones. RLJ Productions and Memento! Paris, 2002. 48 minutes. Distributed by Arab Film Distribution (order online at www.500dunam.com). \$24.99 VHS.

Reviewed by Sherene Seikaly

With a refreshing attention to the politics of aesthetics, Rachel Leah Jones's directorial debut discloses a different sort of violence that marks the history and daily life of the Palestinian people. Stock images of militarization are absent in this narration of

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Palestinian displacement and Zionism. The film is instead a portrayal of colonialism's various iterations in material condition and construction of space, art, and culture.

500 Dunam on the Moon begins with Muhammad Abu al-Hayja and his young daughter Lena pondering territoriality and land ownership. Muhammad has bought Lena five hundred dunam on the moon. This intimate conversation frames the careful unfolding of the story of three villages: 'Ayn Hawd, Ein Hod, and 'Ayn Hawd al-Jadida. The Israeli Jewish artist colony now called Ein Hod, located nine miles south of Haifa, was originally 'Ayn Hawd, a 700-year-old Palestinian Arab village whose inhabitants were expelled by Israeli forces in 1948 and dispersed in refugee camps in the West Bank and Jordan. Muhammad Abu al-Hayja and his immediate family were the only ones remaining in the village vicinity. In 1948, his grandfather, Abu Hilmi, decided to build a small village on what had been his pastures, less than a mile from the original village, setting up New 'Ayn Hawd, or 'Ayn Hawd al-Jadida.

In 1953 Romanian Jewish refugee Marcel Janco, a founder of the Dadaist movement, decided to "preserve" the old village as an artist colony and repopulate it with Israeli artists. He renamed the village Ein Hod and converted the mosque to a bar/café. A series of shots treats the viewer to Janco's sumptuous *grande fêtes*, complete with colorful paintings ironically juxtaposed to the backdrop of Anouer Brahem's sad Arabesques. These journeys to carefree celebrations and artistic glory are coupled with the wrecking ball destroying Palestinian homes. It is in this marriage and in Ein Hod that the Dadaist return to a "primitive," indigenous art found one of its most paradoxical articulations. The very "naturalness" of Ein Hod was only possible through the uprooting of olive trees and their replacement with what Abu al-Hayja calls the "Jewish cypress." Jones incorporates archival footage of young Jewish pioneers carrying away the corpses of uprooted olive trees with stern determination.

'Ayn Hawd, unlike several hundred Palestinian villages, was not completely destroyed. It became instead a found object for Israel's finest painters, sculptors, and potters. Jones enlists the viewer in one of the frequent tours of Ein Hod that many Israelis experience. The eccentric tour guide combines *joie de vivre* and nostalgia as she explains how this "abandoned" village was "found" and "preserved." For these artists, 'Ayn Hawd's beautiful stone houses were an

“authentic” refuge from the perceived sterility of modern Israeli architecture. The nostalgia for an imagined national past lives on, for as our tour guide explains, “Take notice how everyone makes sure to be very authentic” and uses stone “like we used to build.”

As fashionably dressed young men and women meander through Ein Hod’s famed art exhibits in what had been ‘Ayn Hawd’s olive press, the mundane practices of daily life become iterations of past and present violence. Sculptures in beautiful shapes and forms adorn the artist colony’s gardens, while a car travels an unpaved road to deliver a trunk full of bread to the residents of ‘Ayn Hawd al-Jadida, where the displacement of the Abu al-Hayja family continues long after their initial expulsion. Abu al-Hayja explains his family’s ongoing struggle as “present absentees.” ‘Ayn Hawd al-Jadida along with hundreds of other Arab villages was until recently an “unrecognized village,” its residents subject to the constant threat of house demolitions and eviction and lacking access to governmental services such as water, electricity, sewage, a health clinic, or an access road.

500 Dunam on the Moon is a multilayered representation that challenges conventional wisdom on the geography of Palestine. Several million Palestinians continue to live under an illegal occupation, and a “separation fence” is rapidly relegating Palestine to ever-shrinking boundaries. With shots back and forth of the al-Hayja clan in Jenin and in ‘Ayn Hawd al-Jadida, Jones reminds us that those borders are as arbitrarily set as Lena’s village on the moon.

Jones also casts a critical eye on the nationalism that fuels any struggle for self-determination. When Muhammad says that “all that we knew was that we were here, that this was our village, this was the country we lived in, as if its borders ran around these hills,” he expands limited ideas of the pre-ordained nation. It is not nationalism as such but rather the daily articulation of life—in those memories and in that longing for home, childhood, and dreams—that fuel the Palestinian experience.

500 Dunam on the Moon presents the specific experience of the Abu al-Hayja family, some of whom know the people who occupy their family’s homes and work for them as construction workers, drivers, and house cleaners. It also provides a visual reminder of what Rosemary Sayigh has described as the Palestinian endurance of a “continuous nakba.” The shots of the Abu al-Hayja clan in

the squalor of the Jenin refugee camp—not far from where their beautiful homes still stand—before the siege of 2002 are a painful reminder of the Israeli occupation’s capacity to continue and escalate. At the same time, the film moves beyond exceptionalism by portraying the methods of constructing the “authentic” and the “modern” so integral to making the nation state anywhere.

Many might say that Jones gives the Palestinians full voice while the Israeli artists and Ein Hod inhabitants are two-dimensional. Yet the Ein Hod inhabitants are far from transparent individuals as evidenced by the young couple who discuss their “renovated” house. For the woman, aesthetics is an Israeli domain. The young man, on the other hand, expresses admiration for Palestinian culture as a bastion of authenticity, concedes the created and recent nature of Israeli culture, and ponders his own location on another’s land. While none of these musings are grounds to be hopeful for impending political change, they nevertheless complicate how some Israelis may reconcile Zionism’s history of constructing a culture on the ruins of what it shattered.

For teachers, organizers, and activists, this film is a great tool to discuss Palestine as a struggle over gentrification, dispossession, and cultural co-optation. They might have to explain in screening it that Palestinian life is not as male dominated as it appears but will also find a wealth of material to make the Palestine issue accessible and to bridge its history with its present struggle. The story of ‘Ayn Hawd will resonate for all people who have been pushed off their land and had to witness the ruins of their homes becoming the cultural artifacts of the dispossessor.

SHORTER NOTICES

Palestine and Egypt under the Ottomans: Paintings, Books, Photographs, Maps and Manuscripts, by Hisham Khatib. London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2003. 260 pages. Annexes to p. 268. Index to p. 272. \$85.00 cloth.

This beautifully produced book reminds us once again why Palestine, the land, is both a blessing and a curse for the Palestinians, the people. Its strategic significance as a land bridge between Asia and Africa made it figure prominently in the maps, atlases, geographical explorations, and intelligence reports of imperial powers; and its densely concentrated religious and symbolic

significance attracted visitors of all kinds. Their travel accounts, watercolors, engraved plates, lithographs, etchings, photographs, archaeological digs, and ethnographic studies appropriated Palestine by transforming it into the "Holy Land." This is similar to what Napoleon did in Egypt (albeit over a period of decades instead of a few years) with his legions of soldiers and experts who, simultaneously, conquered and recorded Egypt. In this frenzy of discovery, the indigenous population was little noticed, and little did this population appreciate then that the very gaze that took their land away would detail, at the same time, "the way it was."

Hisham Khatib, born in Acre, Palestine, has reappropriated many of these artifacts and put them to use as witnesses to the patrimony of a people long denied their land and history. A brief Part I reflects on his collection strategy over the past thirty years and how it has reconnected him to his roots, then presents short chapters on the Ottoman period, on the development of Jerusalem (the main object of the collection), and on travelers and painters whose works are interspersed throughout. These framing devices illustrate the double-edged-sword nature of the book, for they reinforce many of the assumptions that led to the productions of these artifacts in the first place, even though the author is using them for opposite purposes than for what they were intended. The bulk of the book, Part II, details the impressive catalogue in a clear, concise manner bound to satisfy the curiosity of the lay reader as well as the technical thirst of the expert. Here, the various stages of Khatib's career as a collector are organized into separate sections: paintings, plate books, travel books, atlases and maps, photographs, and engravings. Each section consists of a two-page introductory note followed by an alphabetical list of artists and authors with one- or two-paragraph biographical sketches along with a list of owned works. Panoramic views of Jerusalem dominate the collection, as do nineteenth-century works. The author laments the absence of locally produced artifacts and hopes that this book will heighten interest in his collection and contribute to greater understanding of Palestine and neighboring regions during the Ottoman centuries.

BD

Britain, the Hashemites and Arab Rule 1920–1925: The Sherifian Solution, by Timothy J. Paris. Foreword by Sir Roger

Tomkys. Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 2003. xvi + 369 pp. Bibliography to p. 383. Index to p. 391. Illustrated. \$114.95 cloth.

Timothy Paris, a lawyer in the United States who holds a doctorate in history from Cambridge University, traces the development of what Britain called the "Sherifian Solution" to the challenges raised by British and French control of the post-Ottoman Middle East in the early 1920s. Sympathetic to this "solution" in light of the postwar environment in the region, Paris relies mostly on published and archival British diplomatic correspondence, private British papers, and English-language secondary sources in his detailed study of the development and execution of British policy in Iraq, Transjordan, and the Hijaz from 1920 to 1925.

Following an introduction on overall British policy toward the Hashemites, Paris devotes parts and chapters to each of three case studies: Iraq, Transjordan, and the Hijaz. In each, he notes the machinations and calculations that went into installing Faysal, Abdullah, and Husayn bin Ali as the Hashemite rulers, respectively, of those three regions. Throughout this lengthy and detailed study, he notes that the Sherifian Solution was "largely a product of the efforts of two individuals, [Winston] Churchill and [T. E.] Lawrence" (p. 4). Paris especially credits Lawrence, attributing to him the Sherifian Solution's ultimate successes in Iraq and Transjordan, while exonerating him of its failure in the Hijaz. Overall, he argues that the Sherifian Solution represented "sound" (p. 4) solutions for the problems Britain faced in the region after World War I.

The overall subject of Britain and the Hashemites is a familiar and well-studied one. While specialists might not find any groundbreaking material in Paris's book, it provides a convenient, overall study of an important period of time in modern Middle Eastern history.

MRF

A Century of Palestinian Immigration into Central America: A Study of Their Economic and Cultural Contributions, by Roberto Marín-Guzmán. San José: Editorial de la Universidad de Costa Rica, 2000. 93 pages. Appendices to p. 109. Bibliography to p. 172. n.p. paper.

Roberto Marín-Guzmán, a professor at the University of Costa Rica, provides the first systematic study of Palestinian

immigration to Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Costa Rica, and Belize since the turn of the twentieth century. Based on approximately forty interviews and evidence from primary and secondary sources, the author surveys the immigration patterns and the economic and cultural activities in each of these countries, inserting case studies of families and individuals whenever they are available. The unsurprising trends are that second- and third-generation immigrants have become completely assimilated and hence indifferent to the current peace process, while recent immigrants maintain strong ties to Palestine and engage in political activities.

NS

All That's Left to You: A Novella and Short Stories, by Ghassan Kanafani. Translated by May Jayyusi and Jeremy Reed with an introduction by Roger Allen. xxi + 128 pages. Northampton, MA: Interlink, 2004. \$12.95 paper.

The English translation of the late Ghassan Kanafani's (1936–1972) short novel, *All That's Left to You*, demonstrates that author's leading position in modern Palestinian literature. This story presents the thoughts and emotions of Hamid, a Palestinian refugee in the Gaza Strip of the early 1960s, as he struggles to find meaning in a life that has lacked stability since he and his older sister were separated from their mother in the 1948 flight from their home in what became Israel. Hamid's emotional state reaches a crisis when he is forced to agree to the marriage of his sister Maryam to Zakaria, a Palestinian who had betrayed his friend to the Israelis during the 1956–57 Israeli occupation of Gaza. Hamid resolves to relieve his anxieties by crossing the Negev Desert clandestinely to reach Jordan where his mother lives. In the desert he encounters an Israeli soldier whom he believes killed his friend. Narrated alternatively by Hamid, Maryam, and the desert, *All That's Left to You*, together with ten more short stories in this collection, demonstrates Kanafani's readiness to experiment with literary styles as he probes the Palestinian experience.

NS

In Hope and Despair: Life in the Palestinian Refugee Camps, by Mia Gröndahl. Foreword by Hanan Ashrawi. Introduction by Peter Hansen, UNRWA. New York: American University in Cairo Press,

2003. xxii + 144 pages. Illustrated. \$34.50 paper.

Between 1999 and 2002, Cairo-based Swedish photojournalist Mia Gröndahl visited most of the Palestinian refugee camps in Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, the West Bank, and Gaza. The over one hundred color photographs in this book represent the result of her many photographs and interviews that portray everyday life in the various camps. The book originally was conceived as a photo exhibition to illustrate UNRWA's work in the camps and was exhibited at the UN secretariat in New York in 2000.

The various photos provide a graphic portrayal of the everyday life of Palestinian refugees, from the ebullience of youth to the steadfastness of the elderly who still recall their original homes in Palestine. Gröndahl's photos are particularly valuable in providing glimpses into the lives of residents in some of the less well-known refugee camps, such as the al-Husn, Suf, and Madaba camps in Jordan, the Wavell camp in Lebanon, and the Khan al-Shaykh camp in Syria. The book also provides an instructive look into the lives of camp women and children and overall comes as a welcome addition to the genre of illustrated views of refugee camp life.

MRF

Israelis and Palestinians: Why Do They Fight? Can They Stop? by Bernard Wasserstein. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003. x + 178 pages. Chronology to p. 192. Notes to p. 207. Select Bibliography to p. 214. Index to p. 226. \$25.00 cloth.

In this published version of his 2002 Leonard Stein lecture series at Balliol College, Oxford University, historian Wasserstein examines the forces underlying the Palestinian-Israeli conflict: demographic, socioeconomic, environmental, and territorial. The author excels in demonstrating the interconnectedness of Palestinians and Israelis over the past one hundred years; in the process, he answers the first question in the subtitle of this study. While he recognizes the unresolved issues regarding borders, settlements, refugees, and Jerusalem, Wasserstein provides little concrete evidence for his assertion that the four factors responsible for the conflict also necessitate its resolution. His long-term view of Palestinian-Israeli peace is one of a historical process, an approach that delivers insightful analysis into root causes of conflicts but lacks the tools

necessary for their resolution. Considering the historical and political developments since the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza commenced in 1967, putting the current phase of Palestinian-Israeli conflict into the context of de-colonialization would have provided possible tools for understanding its resolution.

NS

History in Dispute, vol. 14, The Middle East since 1945: First Series, edited by David W. Lesch. Farmington Hills, MI: The Gale Group, 2004. xxix + 292 pages. References to p. 296. Contributors to p. 299. Index to p. 369. \$135.00 cloth.

History in Dispute, vol. 15, The Middle East since 1945: Second Series, edited by David W. Lesch. Farmington Hills, MI: The Gale Group, 2004. xxxi + 277 pages. Appendix to p. 309. References to p. 317. Contributors to p. 320. Index to p. 394. \$135.00 cloth.

This series is intended to introduce primarily high school students to contentious Middle East issues by utilizing a format that first poses a question pertinent to the issue and then provides brief "yes" and "no" essays (called here "viewpoints") for each question. For example, on the topic of the first Palestinian intifada against Israeli occupation, the question posed is: "Was the Palestinian intifada of 1987-1993 a spontaneous uprising in the occupied territories?" (vol. 15, p. 89). The "yes" viewpoint, by Jim Ross-Nazzal of Montgomery College, argues that the intifada "was the result of Palestinian frustration with the failed leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization" (ibid., p. 90); the "no" viewpoint, by Glenn Robinson of the Naval Post-Graduate Col-

lege, argues that the intifada resulted from "a long-simmering intensification of existing animosity toward Israeli policies in the occupied territories" (ibid., p. 93).

Volume 14 includes a total of thirty-four issues, ranging alphabetically from the "Afghan Mujahideen" to "Women" in the Arab world. These issues are presented in the format of entry titles, each one of which is followed by a relevant question and one sentence summaries of the yes and no viewpoints. A brief introduction of one to two pages provides an overview of the disputed topic and in some cases includes excerpts from documents; the viewpoints begin after each introduction, and brief lists of references follow at the end of the viewpoints. Volume 15 has the same format, but its thirty-three entry titles are different, beginning with the "Algerian Elections of 1992" and concluding with "United Arab Republic." In general, the issues in volume 14 tend to be more current events orientated (e.g., "al-Aqsa intifada," "11 September," "Israeli settlements," "Saddam Hussein," etc.), while those presented in volume 15 tend to have a more historical focus (e.g., "Arab-Israeli War of 1967," "Birth of Israel," "Suez War," etc.).

EH

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