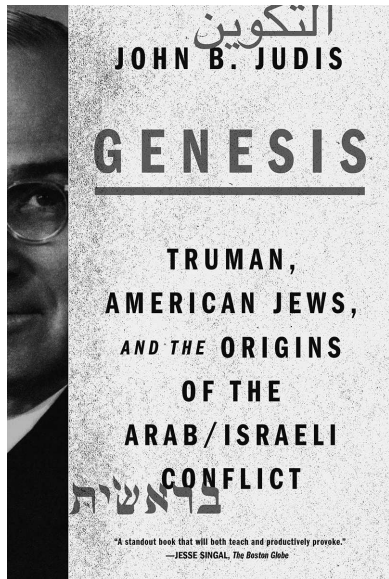


Recent Books



Genesis: Truman, American Jews, and the Origins of the Arab/Israeli Conflict, by John B. Judis. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2014. x + 373 pages. Notes to p. 409. Acknowledgements to p. 412. Index to p. 432. \$30.00 cloth, \$17.00 paper, \$14.99 e-book.

REVIEWED BY CHARLES D. SMITH

John Judis has written a major study of the circumstances surrounding the founding of Israel that goes far beyond the parameters suggested by the book's title. Part 1 deals with the origins of Zionism, World War I, the Balfour Declaration and its implications, and the origins of the British Mandate. Part 2 turns to "The Paradox of American Zionism," as it initially emerged under the auspices of Supreme Court justice Louis Brandeis and then confronted the more militant political Zionism embodied by Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver. Only then do we turn to the Truman administration as it

confronted the legacy of World War II, the Holocaust, and calls for a Jewish state in Palestine set against Palestinian resistance and initial British hopes of retaining possession of the area.

Judis identifies with binationalism, the Zionist movement associated with Judah Magnes, Martin Buber, and Henrietta Szold. Zionist binationalism, never a potent force, backed a Jewish presence in Palestine but called for recognizing Palestinian rights as well. When discussing the period 1947–48, Judis supports a revised partition plan that would have given Palestinians more territory than allotted by the 1947 United Nations (UN) plan. Although various Arab League countries and some Palestinian leaders were willing to entertain such ideas, Grand Mufti Haj Amin al-Husayni's influence still prevailed among Palestinians, and Arab leaders mistrusted each other's intentions, thus they rejected any compromise. In his analysis of the differences between liberal Zionism, as embodied by Brandeis and Rabbi Stephen Wise, and militant American Zionism, Judis evaluates them with respect to their approaches to the American public and politicians. Neither camp considered the Palestinians as having any rights; Palestinians were equivalent to American Indians, inferior peoples whose concerns were minimal when compared to those of whites.

Journal of Palestine Studies Vol. XLIV, No. 3 (Spring 2015), p. 52, ISSN: 0377-919X; electronic ISSN: 1533-8614. © 2015 by the Institute for Palestine Studies. All rights reserved. Please direct all requests for permission to photocopy or reproduce article content through the University of California Press's Rights and Permissions website, at <http://www.ucpressjournals.com/reprintInfo.asp>. DOI: 10.1525/jps.2015.44.3.52.

Judis indicts American liberal Zionists on this matter, accusing them of having a double standard where concern for the less fortunate could apply in Western countries but not to non-Westerners.

Judis's detailed treatment of American Zionist debates and factional disputes is itself a contribution to scholarship, especially for those who have concentrated more on American policies on Palestine and Zionism from the perspective of presidential declarations and State Department documents. He has mined archival sources, notably the Truman Library, the American Jewish Historical Society, private papers of many involved in these deliberations, and the Central Zionist Archives in Israel, along with the work of earlier scholars, occasionally with insights new to this reviewer. In discussing the 1948 wars before and after Israel's creation, Judis relies on Benny Morris's *1948: A History of the First Arab-Israeli War* (Yale University Press, 2008) where he notes (see p. 404n67) that many of the sources Morris used in the Israeli State Archives are no longer available to researchers.

This research also leads to a more trenchant and nuanced assessment of Pres. Harry S. Truman than that found in other studies of the period, including Michael J. Cohen's *Truman and Israel* (University of California Press, 1990) which Judis frequently cites. Truman, for Judis, did not accept the idea that an independent Jewish state should exist in part or all of Palestine. He considered this idea detrimental to American interests, which included but were not limited to oil, on the grounds of both regional stability and with respect to Cold War issues that were clearly emerging in 1947. Instead, he believed in a federated Palestine as proposed by the Morrison-Grady plan of 1946, a plan strongly opposed by Rabbi Silver and the Zionists. Statehood was everything to them, with David Ben-Gurion letting it be known that he would accept partition if necessary though he and most Zionists in Palestine preferred statehood in all of Palestine. Judis later presents Ben-Gurion in fall 1948 as proposing Israel take over the West Bank but being narrowly outvoted by his cabinet; Ben-Gurion would suggest the same idea to British and French officials on the eve of the Suez assaults on Egypt in October 1956.

Truman, however, invariably caved in to American Jewish lobbying, often inspired and directed by the Jewish Agency; Moshe Shertok (later to be Moshe Sharett, first foreign minister and second prime minister of Israel) was frequently in Washington consulting with American Zionists as to what steps should be taken to lobby Truman. Judis details how Truman's capitulations to such pressures were accompanied by bitter complaints about such lobbying. His sudden change of direction left State Department and military advisors stunned. Additionally, the British government felt a sense of betrayal, notably when Truman announced on Yom Kippur, 1946, that he approved the transfer of 100,000 Jewish refugees to Palestine without consulting London, thus endangering the very Morrison-Grady plan he supposedly favored. He did this because of upcoming congressional elections in November of that year. Judis argues that Truman's belated encouragement of American pressure to help pass the UN partition plan in November 1947 was taken on the recommendation of advisors such as David Niles and Clark Clifford with a view toward Truman's presidential prospects in the 1948 campaign. Judis skewers Clifford's later recollections of the period where he denied that politics played any role in Truman's decision-making on Palestine, as did Truman in his memoirs (see p. 403n37).

This study also introduces themes and personalities who appear subsequently in American presidential politics. A key figure is Abraham Feinberg, a major Democratic Party fundraiser and

Zionist close to Ben-Gurion, to whom Truman was indebted. At a crucial point in the 1948 presidential race against New York governor Thomas Dewey, Feinberg raised \$100,000 in two days for Truman. And in the fall of 1948 when diplomats were proposing demilitarized zones between Israel and Arab states, Feinberg intervened with Truman at the request of Shertok to scuttle the idea (p. 338), and later had a major influence on Truman's actions regarding the 1949 Rhodes truce negotiations (p. 345). Feinberg later appears as a consultant to Pres. John F. Kennedy, advising him on how to approach Ben-Gurion on the question of Israel's nuclear program while at the same time, as Warren Bass has shown, Feinberg was advising Ben-Gurion on the best tactics to deflect American pressures.* Similarly, Feinberg appears to have been a major influence on President Lyndon B. Johnson's policies toward the Arab-Israeli conflict, especially, but not limited to, the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, as I have noted.†

Judis concludes with a brief afterword titled "Obama and the Truman Precedent," in which he describes how pro-Israeli lobbying and influence in Congress seek to trump American policy considerations today as they did for Truman. His analysis is particularly apt given that the day after Pres. Obama's 2015 State of the Union address, House Speaker John Boehner announced that he had personally invited Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu, without informing the White House, to address Congress on matters such as Iran. Though never mentioned, this afterword and recent events confirm many of the arguments presented by Mearsheimer and Walt in their book on the Israeli lobby and American foreign policy.‡

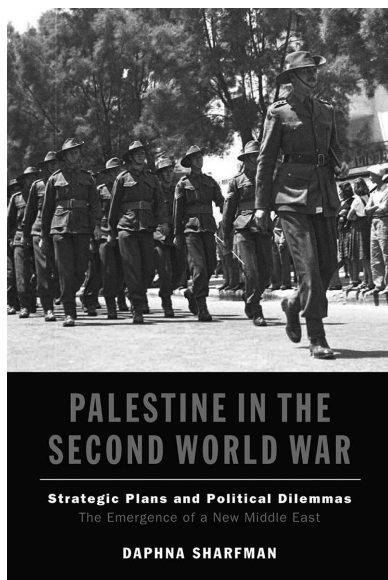
Based on deep research, this at times pugnacious book empathetically presents the Zionist and Palestinian positions from their respective viewpoints, while at the same time acknowledging the political realities behind American decision-making that often disregarded Palestinian needs. As Judis observes (p. 251), due to the Balfour Declaration, "The British and the Zionists had conspired to screw the Arabs out of a country that by the prevailing standards of self-determination should have been theirs." He is, however, detached enough to know that whatever the era, contemporary policy decisions override past events. This book is as good a contribution as we have to understanding both the periods Judis has studied, and their significance for the era in which we find ourselves today.

Charles D. Smith is the author of *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict: A History with Documents*, now in its eighth edition (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2013).

* Warren Bass, *Support Any Friend: Kennedy's Middle East and the Making of the U.S.-Israel Alliance*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

† Charles D. Smith, "The United States and the 1967 War," in William Roger Louis and Avi Shlaim, eds., *The 1967 Arab-Israeli War: Origins and Consequences* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012): pp. 165-92.

‡ John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 2007).



Palestine in the Second World War: Strategic Plans and Political Dilemmas; The Emergence of a New Middle East, by Daphna Sharfman. Eastbourne, UK: Sussex University Press, 2014. 224 pages. \$74.95 cloth, \$34.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY ABIGAIL JACOBSON

Dafna Sharfman's *Palestine in the Second World War* sheds light on a period that, as she describes in the introduction, is considered to be a relatively calm period in the history of Palestine, between the Arab Revolt and the final years of confrontation with the British Mandate. According to Sharfman, this period is in fact very important, mainly because it signals the emergence of what she calls a "new Middle East," with the growing influence of the United States and the Soviet Union as the Great Powers that replaced British influence in the country.

The book is divided chronologically into two parts. The first, longer part discusses the years 1939–42, a period in which Palestine was still experiencing the physical and psychological threat of Axis invasion. The second part focuses on the years 1943–45. It is during this period, she claims, with the removal of the immediate danger of invasion, and as the war ceased to directly influence the country, that political conflicts and dilemmas came to the fore, influencing the future of Palestine. Both parts discuss the strategic and political processes that were taking place, with a special emphasis on the dynamic relationship between the British, the Zionists, and the United States. In the second part Sharfman also addresses the influence of the Holocaust on the Zionist movement and the Yishuv [pre-1948 Jewish community in Palestine], and its impact on the relationship with Britain and the United States.

Sharfman's analysis indeed highlights the growing American influence but does not pay enough attention to the growing Soviet impact. In fact, the book fails to address the long history of communism in Palestine and other countries in the Middle East, which had a profound effect on both Soviet as well as American involvement. While discussing what she views as the growing influence and power of the United States in the country, she does not provide enough historical background nor mention the long history of U.S. involvement in the region and its different motivations. In general, the book suffers from lack of historical context. The reader is thrown directly into the stormy period of 1938–39, and the important influences of the Arab Revolt, the Peel Commission, and the 1939 White Paper are discussed later and in different contexts. One cannot understand Palestine during the World War II period without understanding the earlier years of British rule, and the changes in the dynamic between Jews, Arabs, and the British in the country in the preceding years.

Sharfman discusses some very important moments in the history of Palestine, but her discussion is often too descriptive rather than analytical. She relies heavily on other published works, including

many publications of Yoav Gelber (who also wrote the foreword of the book), and not enough on primary sources. Especially in the sections dealing with the effects of the war on the civilian population, Jews and Arabs alike, and on the economic and social influences of the war, more reliance on primary sources, such as diaries, memoirs, private papers, and other records, could have proven useful. One wishes that the sections dealing with the civil society (mainly pp. 43–48, as well as other parts in the book) were more developed and analytical, because this could have been an important contribution to the literature dealing with civil societies in wartime.

The book explores some interesting processes and questions in the history of the country during the war years. It centers on the different political maneuvers, dilemmas, and changes in the British policies toward Palestine and especially the political aspirations of the Zionist movement, and discusses at length Zionist reactions and actions vis-à-vis the changing circumstances, including internal tensions within the Yishuv between the Zionist leadership and the revisionist organizations, as well as between David Ben-Gurion, Moshe Sharett (at the time known as Moshe Shertok), and Chaim Weizmann. However, it fails to provide the other side of the coin, which is the Arab perspective on all issues that are discussed in the book. Here Sharfman discusses briefly the effects of the Arab Revolt on the Arab leadership and society, and touches upon the internal tensions and rivalries within the Arab leadership. The focus on the Zionist movement and the Jewish Yishuv is of course fully legitimate, but the expectation of the reader, based on the title and introduction, is to get a fuller picture and analysis of the history of Palestine at this time.

Reading the book, the reader is sometimes left with a desire for more information on some interesting historical episodes. For example, some of the issues discussed in chapter 3, including the story of the Germans who lived in Palestine during World War II and were forced to leave; the interesting episode of the Lehi trying to approach the Italians and the Yishuv's reactions; and more vivid evidence and documentation of the fear of an Axis invasion, including better use of archival material that would bring the inhabitants' voices into the analysis. Another issue that is missing in a later part of the book is the critical debate over Ben-Gurion's (and the Zionist movement's) late response to the news coming from Europe regarding the Holocaust. The debates over the ways to respond are mentioned quite briefly (p. 149) and are not thoroughly and critically discussed.

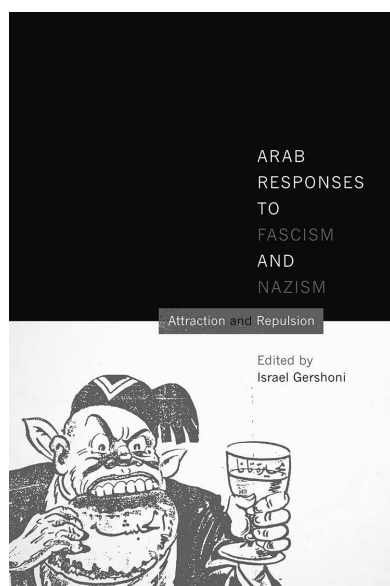
Abigail Jacobson teaches in the history department at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Her research focuses on intercommunal relations in mixed urban centers in late Ottoman and Mandatory Palestine.

Arab Responses to Fascism and Nazism: Attraction and Repulsion, edited by Israel Gershoni.

Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2014. 394 pages, including 10 pages of illustrations (photos and caricatures). Selected bibliography and index to p. 368. \$65.00 cloth.

REVIEWED BY GILBERT ACHCAR

Since the turn of the century, a number of scholarly books have appeared in English challenging a view that has been predominant in Western media and academia during the second half of the past century, a view according to which “the Arabs” were massively sympathetic to Italian Fascism and,



more so, to German Nazism when these movements were in power. With the obvious exception of Arab elites closely tied to Britain, such as the Hashemite dynasty or liberal politicians in Egypt, this common wisdom had it that the Arab “street” and all Arab nationalists were pro-Nazi. Thus, the Arabs were seen as belonging to the camp of the losers of World War II, the correlate of this view being naturally that the Zionist movement, and eventually the Israeli state that it founded soon after the war, were a deserving part of the victors.

This representation has been proven to be heavily biased politically, and inconsistent with the facts, by a string of recent scholarly publications that reexamine this dense historical chapter, one of which—an overarching assessment of the whole record—was authored by this reviewer. Other publications have been generally dedicated to particular Arab countries: Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Palestine, and Syria.

The authors of most of these works—historians from Germany, Israel, and the United States—were gathered with a few others for a workshop held in Tel Aviv in 2010. The workshop was convened by Tel Aviv University’s Middle Eastern and African history professor Israel Gershoni, who edited the resulting collection of papers. He has indeed been a prominent and leading contributor to the revisionist appraisal of Arab attitudes toward Fascism and Nazism, with a special focus on Egypt.* In his introduction to *Arab Responses to Fascism and Nazism*, Gershoni provides an excellent and most useful assessment of the “established narrative” on the subject, and points to its ongoing revision in preamble to a book that constitutes as a whole an important contribution to this same revision.†

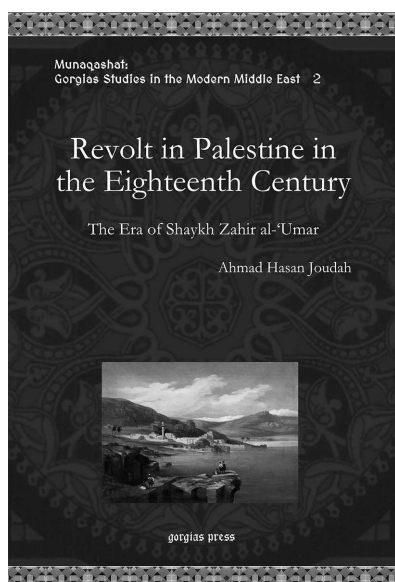
The collection includes eleven papers, grouped according to the countries they deal with—Syria and Lebanon: three papers, on press reactions to Nazism, the alliance between the Syrian National Bloc and Britain, and antifascism in Syrian politicians’ and intellectuals’ memoirs; Palestine: two papers, on Palestinian voices critical of Nazism and the Palestinian press coverage of the Spanish Civil War; Iraq: a paper on Iraqi antifascism; Egypt: four papers, on the assessment by the British Embassy in Cairo of Egyptian attitudes during World War II, the Egyptian communist movement’s antifascism, an assessment of Ahmad Hasan al-Zayyat’s anti-Nazism, and of the public discourse on the war and the Holocaust in 1945–47; and, finally, a transversal survey of reactions to the 1935 Italian invasion and subsequent occupation of Ethiopia.

* His latest book in English, coauthored with University of Colorado professor James Jankowski, is an efficient deconstruction of the myth of Egyptian enthusiasm for the European far right regimes in the 1930s. See *Confronting Fascism in Egypt: Dictatorship versus Democracy in the 1930s* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009).

† See also Gershoni’s survey of the narrative about Egyptian intellectual history at the beginning of his own paper “The Muslim Brothers Consider Fascism and Nazism,” pp. 217–19, in *Confronting Fascism*.

One of the many interests of the collection is to bring to the readers who cannot read German a glimpse of René Wildangel's remarkable research on reactions to Nazism in Palestine, which unfortunately and revealingly has not yet been translated into English[‡]—unlike every single German anti-Arab or Islamophobic book, however vulgar it might be. And although all other authors are published in English, their contributions to the volume include new findings and insights that enrich what has already become a solid body of scholarly antidote to a flawed historiography that contributes to the industry of “Nazifying” the Arabs in defense of Zionism.

Gilbert Achcar is professor of development studies and international relations at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) at the University of London and chair of the SOAS Center for Palestine Studies. He is the author of *The Arabs and the Holocaust: The Arab-Israeli War of Narratives* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2010), *The People Want: A Radical Exploration of the Arab Uprising* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013), and numerous other titles.



***Revolt in Palestine in the Eighteenth Century: The Era of Shaykh Zahir al-Umar*, by Ahmad Hasan Joudah.**

Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2013. 2nd ed. xi + 154 pages. Maps, appendices, and images to p. 204. Index to p. 230. \$177.97 cloth.

REVIEWED BY DANA SAJDI

This book, about the life and times of al-Zahir al-Umar al-Zaydani, is a welcome second edition of a work originally published almost thirty years ago and it comes at a time of renewed interest in the man outside the English-speaking academe.* The book is a Rankean narrative of the ascent, machinations, exploits, achievements, and tragic end of al-Umar in 1775. Various known as Zahir al-Umar, al-Dahir Umar, and Dahir al-Umar, he was a local petty *multazim* (tax-farmer) of tribal background, who managed to garner unprecedented power and prestige in eighteenth-

century Palestine. Through a shrewd policy of alternating cooperation with and rebellion against the Ottoman authorities, and through several strategic holy and unholy alliances with forces near and far (ranging from the local Shi'i Mitwalis, to the Egyptian Mamluk rebels, Ali Bey al-Kabir and Abu al-Dhahab, to Russia's Catherine the Great), al-Umar managed to carve out a semi-autonomous state centered in Acre.

Unless the reader is a history buff who enjoys a well-written narrative about the intrigues of people long dead or is a scholar of the eighteenth-century Levant, she will not get an indication of this monograph's contemporary relevance. In his preface to this edition, author Ahmad Hasan

[‡] See in particular René Wildangel, *Zwischen Achse und Mandatsmacht: Palästina und der Nationalsozialismus* (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz, 2007). Wildangel is presently director of the German Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung office in Ramallah.

* The first edition was published in Princeton, NJ, by Kingston Press, 1987.

Joudah attempts to draw out the significance of the work by pointing to two details: al-‘Umar was a “local Arab ruler who worked outside, rather than within, the channels of the establishment . . . [and] was the first Arab ruler in the modern history of the Middle East to bring a new dimension into the political arena of the Fertile Crescent—foreign intervention” (p. 1). These descriptive statements are neither propositions nor attempts at revision, since they are not elaborated into paradigmatic or analytical frameworks.

Joudah cites only a handful of studies written since the book’s first edition and completely ignores both new and revisionist studies in the wider Ottoman historiographical context. Conspicuously absent in the footnotes (but not the bibliography) are the works of Thomas Philipp, who has devoted almost his entire career to many of the topics that Joudah tackles.[†] In the epilogue, where Joudah departs from the political narrative and discusses institutional, demographic, urban, and military aspects of al-‘Umar’s rule in Acre, the author sadly misses scores of opportunities to cite Philipp’s many relevant works.

My grumblings have to do less with the quality of the book and more with the dated nature of the scholarship. Completed in the late 1970s as a PhD dissertation at the University of Michigan, the study’s method and deployment of primary sources (which, to the author’s credit, include an impressive range) reflect the state of the field at the time.

So, what justifies a second edition of the book? And why should we, in the English-speaking academe, care about this unexpected revisitation by al-‘Umar? In response, Joudah points to “a symposium organized by Palestinian academics [in 2012] on the history of al-‘Umar. This effort is a genuine sign of growing interest, awareness, and reawakening of the history of Palestine in the 18th century, and perhaps more importantly, attention from Palestinians living in historic Palestine” (p. x). Indeed, in the Arab world, and especially among Palestinians in Israel and Jordan, al-‘Umar is making not what we, professional historians of the Bilad al-Sham, see as a comeback. Rather, this is a debut, a very first appearance of al-‘Umar not as a local strongman and petty tax-farmer (read, the pejorative Arabic term *iqṭaʿī*), but as a heroic political figure.

Both Joudah (p. 131) and Philipp mention the appropriation of al-‘Umar as a Palestinian nationalist hero.[‡] Their claim notwithstanding, al-‘Umar’s life and times have figured neither in the Palestinian collective imaginary nor in school curricula. That might change very soon. The widely read and acclaimed 2011 novel *Qanadil malik al-Jalil* (*The Lanterns of the King of Galilee*)[§] by the Jordanian-born Palestinian author Ibrahim Nasrallah has launched al-‘Umar as a symbol of Palestinian heroism and resistance, a “lantern” of light in the darkness of Ottoman rule. Having chanced upon a history of al-‘Umar, Nasrallah realized that the man represented “the first attempt at the creation of an independent Arab homeland in the Arab East.” Motivated by the fact that “the figure [was] almost unknown,” the novelist wrote *Qanadil* as a part of his ongoing mission to

[†] Notably, *Acre: the Rise and Fall of a Palestinian City, 1730–1831* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).

[‡] Philipp, *Acre*, p. 49.

[§] Nasrallah, Ibrahim, *Qanadil malik al-Jalil* (Beirut: al-Dar al-Arabiyya lil-Ulum, 2011). Translated by Nancy Roberts as *The Lanterns of the King of Galilee* (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2014).

document Palestinian history, the seventh in a series of novels under the general title of *The Palestinian Comedy/Satires (Al-malhat al-Filastiniyya)*.**

Coincidentally, the life of al-‘Umar was the subject of a documentary, released in the spring of 2013†† and featuring a number of Palestinian academics and historians including Adel Manna and Mahmoud Yazbak, two participants in the symposium mentioned by Joudah. One of the interviewees, a Nazarene restaurant owner, a highly articulate descendant of al-‘Umar and his namesake, rejects the proposition that al-‘Umar’s state-building activities had any nationalist dimensions. He, however, is puzzled that the figure of al-‘Umar has not been deployed as a “Palestinian answer” to Zionist claims regarding an absence of a history of Arab statehood in Palestine. Further, he rightly points to an old and special interest in the figure of al-‘Umar by Zionist scholars of credentials no less official and illustrious than the second president of Israel, Yitzhak Ben-Zvi, and diplomat Uriel Heyd, whose works some interviews insist deny Palestinians of a historical national consciousness. In the same film, the historian Adel Manna affirms the necessity for the revival of al-‘Umar. Critical of Arab nationalist historiography that focuses on the Nahda project of the late nineteenth century and its generalizing representations of Ottoman rule, Manna finds Palestinians culpable for the elision of al-‘Umar’s political achievement, stating, “We have participated in the process of making ourselves absent from history.”‡‡

Thus, the revival of al-‘Umar, whether fictionalized or real, by Palestinians in Israel and in Jordan reveals a desire by these dispersed communities to find a shared history in historic Palestine, one that might fall outside the confines of Arab nationalist historiography and periodization. Viewed in this context, the reissue of Joudah’s book is entirely understandable. After all, his was one of the first studies of al-‘Umar written in English and Joudah deserves to take his rightful place in this resuscitation enterprise, which aims to reinstate Palestinians in history.

Dana Sajdi is associate professor of Middle Eastern history at Boston College, and author of *The Barber of Damascus: Nouveau Literacy in the Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Levant* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2013).

Refugees of the Revolution: Experiences of Palestinian Exile, by Diana Allan. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2014. vii + 228 pages. Notes to p. 268. References to p. 292. Index to p. 308. \$85.00 cloth, \$24.95 paper, \$24.95 e-book.

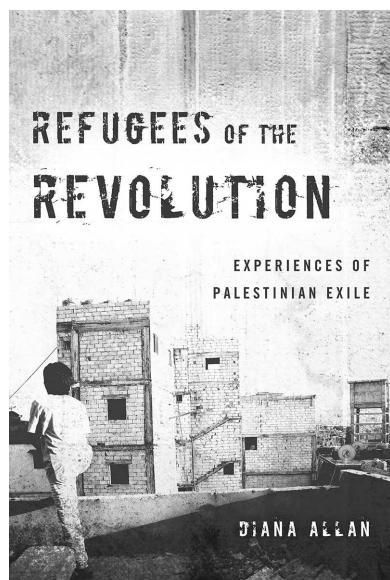
REVIEWED BY MONIKA HALKORT

“The world is lost between the mouths of the people,” says one of Diana Allan’s protagonists toward the end of her study. This humble assessment of the Palestinian predicament runs as an invisible red thread throughout *Refugees of the Revolution*. The book provides a compelling testimony of the day-to-day struggles in Shatila, one of twelve Palestinian refugee camps in

** Review and interview by Muhammad al-Samhuri, *Al Arabiya*, 4 December 2011, <http://www.alarabiya.net/articles/2011/12/24/184231.html>.

†† *Zahir al-Umar al-Zaydani, 1689–1775*, directed by Ramez Qazmuz, *Al Jazeera al-Watha’iqiyya*, 2012, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TXIFrP8flc>.

‡‡ *Zahir al-Umar*, *Al Jazeera al-Watha’iqiyya*, 2012.



Lebanon. Allan's carefully crafted ethnography avoids reducing the camp to the prevailing sense of hopelessness and despair that has been constitutive for the Palestinian experience and instead delivers a thought-provoking, self-critical reflection on the paradoxes and limits of camp research. Allan is well aware that she is an integral part of the rhetorical machine that all too easily silences or simply overwrites the voices of refugees in the attempt to show solidarity with the Palestinian struggle. Addressing the violence and dispossession underpinning political activism and research has been a major motivation for her book.

The empirical thrust of Allen's study is built around first-person accounts on the everyday challenges of survival in Shatila. Highlighting the material dimension of the national struggle rather than its historical and geopolitical relevance not only makes room for the refugees to articulate senses of self and belonging on their own terms; it also shows how the enduring nature of struggle has become a central

reference point for refugee identities in and of itself. Allan's ethnography takes the reader across a wide spectrum of local routines and practices, revealing intimate details of friend and family relations as well as intense, hard-felt struggles against the deeply divided leadership of the camp. Foregrounding the more immediate concerns of corruption, poverty, and marginalization over the wider question of the Palestinian political project and its future, she challenges convenient assumptions that root the refugees' sense of home, identity, and belonging within the national *doxa* of resistance and longing for return. By dismantling the ideological facade of national attachment, she reveals how personal fears, doubts, and uncertainties have turned hope itself into a much-longed-for destination.

Unlike other anthropological accounts that insist on linking the micropolitics of Shatila to the wider political struggle,* Allan unpacks the complex assemblage of local attachments, which are grounded in the infrastructures of day-to-day interactions and exchanges that invest the camp with a life and intrinsic value far beyond the national cause. In so doing, she illustrates how social relations and solidarities are maintained by a people with nowhere to go and no alternative beyond the broken promise of return.

Chapter 1 traces the gradual shift in the culture of memory in the refugee imagination to show how, following the forced departure of the Palestine Liberation Organization from Lebanon in 1982, the growing presence of international nongovernmental organizations both intensified and eroded the symbolic resonance of the Nakba among refugees. Shatila residents

* See Laleh Khalili, *Heroes and Martyrs of Palestine: The Politics of National Commemoration* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Julie Peteet, *Landscape of Hope and Despair: Palestinian Refugee Camps* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005); Rosemary Sayigh, *Palestinians: From Peasants to Revolutionaries: A People's History* (London: Zed Books, 1979).

redirected commemoration events of the national trauma toward international audiences, turning these events into a strategic asset to secure funding rather than a signifier of the national cause. Yet this strategic shift in their relation to the past locked the refugees into “an economy of victimhood” (p. 65) that demanded to uphold the idea of “return” as the ultimate vector to justice at the expense of more immediate pressures such as political disenfranchisement and social exclusion in Lebanon.

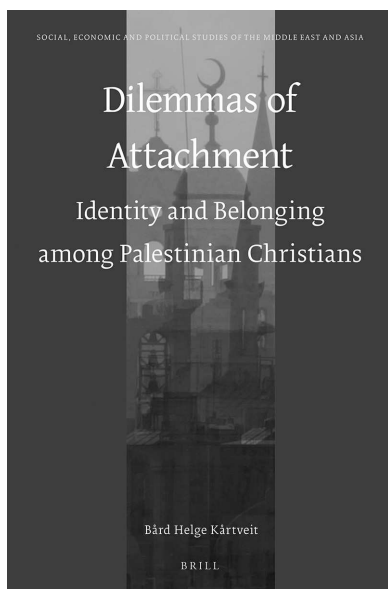
The steady decline in social and political resources, as Allan shows in subsequent chapters, eventually gave way to new forms of individual and collective support. It enabled the refugees to resituate their lives and futures in everyday practices of survival. Social support structures such as informal credit associations or the “illegal” tapping into water and electricity grids not only reinstated a sense of fairness, predictability, and trust among camp dwellers, but also created new forms of solidarity and attachment that gradually replaced old inherited structures of kinship or political affiliations along factional lines (p. 98). These locally embedded architectures of hope and reassurance replaced the idea of Palestinians as “returning people” (p. 224)[†] and made room for a “social somatics of attachment”—a sense of place and belonging that is more grounded in embodied practices of survival than the historical signifier of the homeland itself (p. 216).

“The refugees no longer represent a community of memory in the sense of being connected to Palestine and each other,” she concludes. The tendency of seeing refugees as historical and ideological subjects rather than as agents of their immediate socioeconomic circumstance ignores the dispositional forms of agency Allan witnessed during her four years in Shatila. One of her major contributions is illustrating how the “felt intensities” of everyday struggle have developed new “vernaculars of hope and survival” in which uncertainty and doubt provide as much a source of hopelessness as they open up new horizons to reclaim a sense of purpose and self-pride (p. 224).

Allan’s book does not suggest that the national struggle has become irrelevant or meaningless for the “Refugees of the Revolution.” Rather, her account demonstrates how the conceptual potency and moral appeal of national claim-making have been overemphasized to a point where they imprison the refugees in a stalemate of the wider political project, preventing them from gaining visibility and recognition as a political community in its own right. Allan’s sharp but unsentimental analysis of mundane, everyday encounters enables these emerging subjectivities to articulate themselves in their own language, redirecting the vector of hope, dreams, and anticipation to the future rather than memories of the past.

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[†] Dan Rabinowitz, “Israel and the Palestinian Refugees,” in *Waging War, Making Peace: Reparations and Human Rights*, ed. Barbara Rose Johnston and Susan Slyomovics, (Walnut Creek, CA?: Left Coast Press, 2008), pp. 225–40.



Dilemmas of Attachment: Identity and Belonging among Palestinian Christians, by Bård Helge Kårtveit. Leiden: Brill, 2014. xvii + 213 pages. Appendices to p. 223. Bibliography to p. 239. \$128.00 cloth, \$128.00 e-book.

REVIEWED BY GLENN BOWMAN

Based upon eleven months of field research, Bård Kårtveit's *Dilemmas of Attachment* investigates identity, migration, and transnational networks within West Bank Christian communities. Using the Bethlehem region as a case study, his ethnography serves as a detailed illustration of the way the "politics of immiseration" functions throughout the occupied territories in generating "a stream of migrants—a sort of slow-moving ethnic cleansing."^{*} The book focuses on Christians in Bayt Sahur, a Christian majority town with a population approaching fifteen thousand (of which approximately 35 percent is Muslim), who make up a community that is certainly better off

economically than most of the West Bank population. That positioning and the diasporic networks it has generated allows Sahuri Christians access to sites of emigration for the most part unavailable to Muslim Palestinians; while many Christians are able to emigrate to Latin America, the United States, and Europe, their Muslim neighbors tend, when able to move abroad, to go to Jordan, Dubai, or Saudi Arabia.

Nonetheless, as Kårtveit illustrates through a thorough ethnography grounded in historical analysis, Christians and Muslims alike are increasingly driven to believe that there is no life for them in Palestine, not so much by the military measures of the occupation than as a consequence of "the structural, bureaucratic aspects of the Israeli occupation" (p. ix). Kårtveit's detailed examination of the "structural paralysis" (p. 126) Israel has imposed on Palestinian society extends not only to its inducement to emigration but to its impact on the "tribalization" of governance under Arafat and the Palestinian National Authority, the increasing displacement of secularism by sectarianism and the intercommunal antagonisms that generates, and the shattering—both literally and perceptually—of the West Bank into a number of "separate socio-economic entities" (p. 141). It is refreshing to read a book on the topic of Christian Palestinians, or Christian Arabs more generally, that is not a sectarian lament for the future of Christianity in the Middle East. *Dilemmas of Attachment* certainly puts into question the continued survival of viable Christian communities in Palestine, but that query is framed by the larger issue of the continued survival of Palestinian communities per se under Israeli sovereignty.

Bayt Sahur was an obvious choice for a field site not only because of its significant Christian population but also because of a history of Sahuri emigration to Latin America, particularly Chile,

^{*} Julie Peteet, "Stealing Time," *Middle East Report* 248 (2008): p. 15.

stretching back to the mid-1800s. In focusing on Bayt Sahur, and to a lesser extent Bethlehem and Bayt Jala, rather than on Chile and other diasporic destinations,[†] Kårtveit reverses the usual approach to diaspora wherein “essentialist projections of ‘the homeland’ [serve] as a central source of identity construction in diaspora communities,” showing instead that Sahuri Christians “project qualities such as creativity and industriousness onto their diaspora” in order to assert that those inherent qualities are “aborted within the context of occupation” (p. 32). The sense of identity denied by occupation is convincingly displayed through a series of vignettes, offering access to a wide spectrum of individuals in their encounters with both the direct (movement restrictions, confiscation of residency rights, impediments to marriages, destruction of tourism industry, and so forth) and indirect (land theft, increased sectarianism, lack of coherent legal structures, increased power of clans) consequences of Israeli rule. Its consequence is an idealization of emigration, bolstered by the enthusiastic circulation of stories of émigré triumphs and successes, generating family pressure on younger members to emigrate. Stories of failure tend generally to be disavowed, although there is concern that the easy life outside, particularly in Sweden and the United States, erodes morale and the work ethic.

The author is commendably attentive to the nuances of individual stories and deftly links these to the wider context of a society subject to hostile occupation as well as to internal tensions between social change and the assertion of tradition as a defense against that change and the occupation. There are, of course, real differences between the lives of the Christians of Bayt Sahur and those in the diverse, and increasingly separated, communities of the rest of Palestine, but the mechanisms Kårtveit describes forcing Palestinians to imagine that a life anywhere but in Palestine must be a better life are weapons Israel employs throughout the West Bank and Gaza (as well as within Israel itself). *Dilemmas of Attachment* offers a view of that strategy of “slow-motion ethnic cleansing” and deserves to be widely read. It’s just a shame that a book that is so overpriced is so badly copyedited.

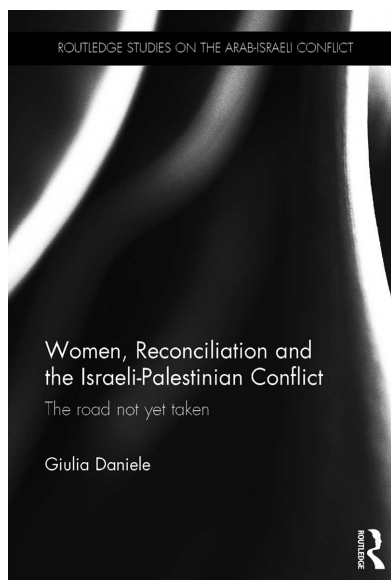
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Women, Reconciliation and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: The Road Not Yet Taken, by Giulia Daniele, London and New York: Routledge, 2014. xiv + 179 pages. \$145.00 cloth.

REVIEWED BY NAHLA ABDO

Women, Reconciliation and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict provides a detailed discussion of Palestinian and Israeli women’s collaborative political projects aimed at building mutual understanding between the Israelis and Palestinians, and working toward “recognition, reconciliation, and conflict resolution.” Using the Jerusalem Link as her primary case study of formal collaboration between Palestinian women from East Jerusalem and Israeli women from West Jerusalem, Giulia Daniele tracks the initiative from its development, discussing the processes of change and

[†] Compare Nancie L. Gonzalez, *Dollar, Dove, and Eagle: One Hundred Years of Palestinian Migration to Honduras* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1992).



development it undertook, and up to its conclusion. In the process, the author analyzes the project from two theoretical perspectives: ethno-nationalist narratives and settler colonialism.

The book is divided into two parts. In the first part of the book, Daniele discusses Palestinian and Israeli women's joint projects within the framework of ethno-nationalist narratives and examines the challenges and difficulties faced by each group. This framework enables Daniele to properly depict the voices and stories of her interviewees, both Palestinians and Israeli Jews. It also provides a space to account for the historical differences not only between the two main conflicting nationalist groups, but also delineates the differences between Jewish Israeli women, focusing on Ashkenazi and Mizrahi women and the oppression of the latter by the former.

In the second part, Daniele discusses the challenges of ethno-nationalist narratives through a critique, which involves a rather detailed analysis of the conflicts and contradictions embedded in both Zionism (or the Jewish national movement) and its interests in Palestine and Palestinian nationalism and its fulfilment of its rights to Palestine including the right of return. This discussion leads Daniele to the conclusion that both "co-existence" and the "two-state solution" conflict with and stand against the interests of both nationalisms, and therefore cannot provide a viable solution to the conflict. After rejecting the two-state solution, Daniele goes beyond the nationalist narratives and proposes the emerging academic and practical perspectives of a one-state society based on the notions of democracy, equality, and civic citizenship. Within the context of the one-state solution, Daniele succeeds in replacing the hegemonic nationalist narrative of each side with notions like civic citizenship and equality for both peoples. However, the author makes it clear that such a possible solution was never on the table of discussion between Israeli Jewish and Palestinian women and definitely not on the table by the Jerusalem Link. In fact, the realization by most Palestinians for the need of such a solution has brought the demise of the Jerusalem Link and the various Israeli-Palestinian collaborative projects.

Daniele's conceptual methodology which allows her to move from the ethno-nationalist paradigm to that of settler colonialism has undoubtedly enriched this book. This move enables the author to challenge mainstream feminist perspectives on conflict resolution which are largely devoid of race and class, adopting instead a feminist framework of intersectionality. Feminist intersectionality which, among other things, draws on gender, race, and class, becomes particularly clear through Daniele's highlighting of the "original sin"—the historic basis of the creation of the state of Israel. This historic perspective has made it possible for the author to declare that Israel was built on the demise of the Palestinian socioeconomic and cultural existence and the exploitation and oppression of Mizrahi and

other non-Ashkenazi Jewish ethnicities. This historic narrative of the establishment of the state of Israel on the ruins of Palestinian society helps clarify the settler-colonial nature of Zionism. It also suggests the need to go beyond the Jewish national narrative, addressing Palestinian women's history, memory, and lost socioeconomic base. It is thus the intersectionality of all such factors which are deemed necessary in understanding and attempting to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In this respect the book is nicely laid out and the arguments well presented.

Still, I find the book to suffer from misuse of concepts, more specifically, concepts which lack a clear definition. For example, during her discussion of ethno-nationalist narratives and the relationship between Palestinian and Israeli women, the author falls into an equalitarian paradigm, using concepts such as "reciprocal victimization," "foundation myth/'mytho-histories'" (pp. 20 and 24), and "imagined community" (p. 59). Such notions I find to be politically and theoretically problematic, and in some cases also inaccurate. To start, I am not clear what the author means by "reciprocal victimization." Yes, the Jews were victimized by the West through the Holocaust; however, the Palestinians are not responsible for this victimization. The fact remains that within the Israeli/Palestinian conflict there is one major victim and these are the colonized Palestinians and one victimizer, the Israeli colonizer. Furthermore, Palestinian nationalism is not imagined in the Israeli sense of a totally constructed nationalism. The author here could have used Shlomo Sand's book, *The Invention of the Land of Israel* (Verso, 2012), to deconstruct the Jewish national construction. As for Palestinians, their history and memory remain alive and are still narrated by actual living people.

In addition, Daniele asserts that "Palestinian Israeli women organized protests during 'al-Ard' movement" (p. 71). However, she provides no evidence of Palestinian women organizing during al-Ard movement, nor, to my knowledge, has there been any evidence suggesting such a role. Additionally, she describes Mizrahi people (especially women) as a mere ethnic community discriminated against by Ashkenazi women, making no reference to the fact that at the very beginning of their "forced immigration," Mizrahim were racialized and isolated from the hegemonic Ashkenazi Israelis.

Finally, I found Daniele's attempt at following Sheila Katz's narrative of collaborative experiences between Palestinian and Israeli women (pp. 97–98) problematic and out of context. Zionist settler colonialism and its consequent destruction of the Palestinian national economy through its exclusivist and exclusionary nature were totally missing from Katz's account, making her argument flawed. In *Women in Israel: Race, Gender and Citizenship* (Zed Books, 2011), I provide a scathing critique of Katz's methodology and the sources of evidence used in her book, especially the author's reference to "solidarity" between Palestinian and Jewish women under colonialism. The description of a women's demonstration in a British factory found in Katz's book as an example of such solidarity was borrowed by Daniele to demonstrate collaborative work between Palestinians and Jews. Yet, this is no proof of mutual Jewish-Palestinian solidarity. In fact, Palestinian workers were excluded on an ethnic basis from all Jewish work established during the Zionist settler-colonial project.

Despite the above criticisms, I still find Daniele's analysis a welcome contribution to feminist debate on the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. Her method of feminist intersectionality which

recognizes the importance of race, class, and history in the making of gender politics is particularly interesting. Finally, I find the author's positionality—sympathetic to oppressed and racialized women, namely Palestinian victims of the state of Israel and Mizrahi women—especially necessary in the face of current Israeli aggression and international silence around the repeated violations of Palestinian human and political rights.

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Wrapped in the Flag of Israel: Mizrahi Single Mothers and Bureaucratic Torture, by Smadar Lavie. New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2014. v + 214 pages. Index to p. 202. \$39.95 cloth.

REVIEWED BY SIMONA SHARONI

The experiences of Israeli Jews whose families originated from the Arab and Muslim world, including the Middle East, North Africa, and the margins of Ottoman Europe, have been written out of dominant accounts of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Commonly referred to as Sephardim, Mizrahim, or Arab Jews, this population has suffered systemic discrimination and disenfranchisement. Sexism and gender inequalities experienced by women within these communities have added a layer of oppression to the social and economic hardship experienced by everyone. In her book, Smadar Lavie, Mizrahi activist and author, details the daily

struggles of Mizrahi single mothers with multiple bureaucratic institutions in Israel, filling an important void in the literature.

Defying conventional academic styles, *Wrapped in the Flag of Israel* comprises fragments of memoir and auto-ethnography fused with political analysis and cultural critique. Informed by critical race feminist theorizing, Lavie skillfully weaves her moving personal story as a single mother fighting to regain legal custody of her son with a thought-provoking analysis of social protest movements in Israel. Covering mobilizations focused primarily on gender and race inequalities within Israel, the book begins with an insider's perspective on the 2003 Single Mothers' March and ends with the Israeli mass protests in Tel Aviv in summer 2011, often referred to in the media as "Tahrir is Here."

In analyzing the Single Mothers' March as the culmination of the multiple struggles of poor Mizrahi women in Israel, Lavie uses the term GendeRace to call attention to "bureaucratic logic's main classificatory criterion . . . a calcified amalgamation of gender and race." She concludes that

Israel's bureaucracy is an "inflictor of pain" on welfare mothers (p. 80). Lavie examines the social protest of 2003 and its aftermath by detailing how, following media coverage of the march, which was led by forty-three-year-old mother of three Vicky Knafo, "dozens of poverty-stricken single mothers from Israel's Mizrahi ghettos and barrios started their own marches on Jerusalem" (p. 5).

One of the more provocative arguments in the book is about agency. Lavie's analysis of "how Israel's bureaucracy denies Mizrahi single mothers their agency," serves as the basis for her conclusion that "there are situations where agency is impossible" (p. 80). The book documents how the Israeli state's failure to address the plight of Mizrahi single mothers gave rise to several nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), like Ahoti (Hebrew for "my sister"), that work to support, represent, and advocate for this underserved community. Far from romanticizing the grassroots campaigns led by NGOs, the book examines critically the politics of funding as well as conflicts of power and privilege between academics and activists, as well as within the feminist movement in Israel. Throughout the book, Lavie also provides original discussions of such questions as why Mizrahim support the right wing in Israel. Most insightful is Lavie's analysis of the dilemmas facing Mizrahi feminists, who are discriminated against both as women and as a racial minority but often feel alienated in the Israeli feminist movement and academy where racism is overlooked.

Wrapped in the Flag of Israel underscores the dynamic interplay between Israel's socioeconomic divisions and the politics of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Both examples of social protests described in the book end abruptly as the political conflict escalates and the Israeli-Palestinian divide returns to dominate the news. In the aftermath of a suicide bombing in Jerusalem in August 2003, "the plight of the single mothers was completely off the public agenda in favor of the Palestine-Israel conflict. Most mothers left the encampment within a few days of the bombing" (p. 146). An almost identical phenomenon ensued in the summer of 2011. Inspired by the Tahrir Square demonstrations in Cairo, Egypt, "tens of thousands of young Israelis, priced out of their rental leases or foreclosed upon, protested the state's slashing of public services, echoing the Single Mothers' Protest of 2003, but on a larger scale" (p. 148). A suicide attack on an Israeli bus near Eilat, which provided an excuse for a "retaliatory" Israeli military operation, once again shifted the media and public attention in Israel away from socioeconomic disparities.

Lavie's book ends with a rhetorical question: "How long can the regime depend on Mizrahi docile loyalty to the Jewish state?" (p. 153). Like the other poignant questions raised in the book, this question has no easy answer. However, Lavie illustrates how asking difficult, troubling questions that disturb taken-for-granted silences can be an important strategy of resistance. In doing so, *Wrapped in the Flag of Israel* offers theoretical and political insights that extend beyond Israel's undeclared borders.

Simona Sharoni is professor of gender and women's studies at the State University of New York in Plattsburgh. She is the author of *Gender and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: The Politics of Women's Resistance* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1995). Her new book, *Gender and Resistance in Israel and Palestine*, will be published by Syracuse University Press.
