

Palestinians' failure to generate a visionary political leadership capable of steering Palestine towards statehood. Had the Palestinians generated as determined and skilled a leadership as the Zionist leadership would the Palestinians have their state today? Alas, counterfactuals are not grist for the historian's mill.

COEXISTENCE REIMAGINED

In Spite of Partition: Jews, Arabs, and the Limits of Separatist Imagination, by Gil Z. Hochberg. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2007. xiii + 141 pages. Notes to p. 165. Bibliography to p. 183. Index to p. 192. \$35.00 cloth.

Reviewed by Haim Bresheeth

Published at the height of the process of physical and political separation between Israel and Palestine, Gil Hochberg's *In Spite of Partition* joins a large and growing group of publications that address the 1947 partition of Palestine by UN Res. 181 and the permanent conflict that ensued. After six decades of armed conflict and four decades of the illegal occupation of diverse Arab territories (including the whole of Palestine), many are beginning to recognize the improbability of the two-state solution and are turning to other older and more enlightened *spaces of desire* to search for the potential for a lasting, just solution in Palestine. The number and variety of titles dealing with the one-state solution is dazzling, evidence of the bankruptcy of not just Israel's political elite, but also of the West's.

Hochberg's book is an especially welcome addition: it does not so much discuss the solution as it addresses the contours of the imaginative space in which a solution may grow. Further, it traces the history of a different discourse from the one that has dominated the politics of the Middle East for the last few decades. Taking her lead (and the title for her book) from Edward Said, Hochberg is trying to replace "the economy

of identity (I versus You, Arab versus Jew) with an economy of relation (I as You, Arab as Jew)" (p. 16). Rather than going back to historical points, such as the Brit Shalom period in the 1920s, Hochberg maps the terrain of the relationships between the disputed identities of Jew and Arab through the close analysis of a number of key literary works written by Jews and Arabs since the Nakba. This is done through chapters each discussing a different stage and aspect of the separation, as well as the relationship between Arab and Jew through the examination of a number of iconic novels by such writers as Albert Memmi and Edmond El Maleh (both North African Jews writing in French), Jacqueline Kahanoff and Ronit Matalon (Egyptian and Israeli Jews respectively), Anton Shammas (a Palestinian writing in Hebrew), and Albert Swissa (an Israeli Jew writing in Hebrew). The range of positions is broad but conceptually well-organized, referencing the important work of Daniel Boyarin, Elie Kedourie, Ella Shohat, Amnon Raz-Krakozkin, Gil Anidjar, Sami Chetrit, Judith Butler, and many others while adding significantly to the debate each of them has addressed.

The main issues addressed in the book emerge from each writer's positioning of the tension between the Arab and Jew (each term itself a fluid container of identity). Memmi and El Maleh both express a historical potentiality that they present as having been "missed"—the ability to exist as an Arab Jew in the Mahgrib. Hochberg notes the difference between Memmi's early writings on the nature of colonization and his later Zionist literary texts, in which the concept of colonization is missing, having been replaced by uncritical identity politics. In contrast, the later writings of El Maleh are seen as charting a double colonial process—that of Morocco by France, as well as that of the Moroccan Jews by the Ashkenazim in Israel. The rupture of a whole millennium of coexistence between Jews and Arabs in North Africa is mourned by El Maleh as a space that has been tragically lost. The nature of memory and its relation to the act of forgetting is framed in this discussion of the recent as well as the distant past, as they affect the present and delimit future options for conflict resolution in Palestine.

The discussion of the fear of and separation from the Orient is continued through the writings of Matalon and Kahanoff. It is also continued in the examination of the concepts of Levantinism and the centrality

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of Jewish life to the Levant as a space of communal imagination, of coming together rather than separation. The “danger of Levantinism” has been a stock phrase of those in Israel who have viewed the conflict from an Orientalizing perspective. Hochberg joins some of the authors under discussion in presenting Levantinism as one of the most interesting and promising options for the future—as it had been in the past. The discussion of Shamma and Swissa is especially fascinating, as both write in Hebrew, two “others” of the Israeli *polis* who subvert its Zionist inbuilt bias. The one, a Palestinian Arab, uses Hebrew to speak about the linked identities of the people involved in the conflict, employing the language of his “enemy” with such skill and sensitivity that his arguments are penetratingly painful to the separatist even as they outline the potentialities of the relationship. The other, an Arab Jew, represents the other “other” of Zionism: the historical Jew, an embarrassment to Zionism with its Westernizing project, a “mere Jew,” but also an Arab Jew—two problematic, censored identities, yet exactly the identities offering some potential for reconciliation in the future.

Hochberg joins a large group of scholars who have recently examined the conceptual foundation of the unitary definition of Judaism, used by Zionism as part of its arsenal, which supposedly justifies whatever is done by Israel. Such challenges of the accepted wisdom of Zionism were recently made by Shlomo Sand in his work on the invention of the Jewish people as a political and ethnic identity; by Israel Finkelstein and Neil Asher Silberman in their work reinterpreting the Bible as a source for historical data; and by Nur Masalha in his work on the Biblification of the conflict. Such work is resonant with the urgent need to deconstruct Zionist mythologies before any lasting solution to the conflict can be found. This new addition is a thoughtful, well-researched, and carefully constructed argument about the nature of the relationship between Arab and Jew, in its many apparitions and configurations. As such, it is an important addition to the progressive discourse around the future, as well as the past, of Palestine.

WALLS OF WAR

Blood and Religion: The Unmasking of the Jewish and Democratic State, by Jonathan Cook. London and Ann Arbor: Pluto Press, 2006. xiv + 179 pages. Ap-

pendix to p. 182. Notes to p. 208. Select Bibliography to p. 211. Index to p. 222. \$85.00 cloth; \$24.95 paper.

Reviewed by Gil Anidjar

A number of terminological pairs—Zionist fighting words—are deftly decoupled under the impeccably thorough journalistic gaze (and prose) of Jonathan Cook, a British freelancer based in Nazareth whose aim, in this book, is to document the “long, slow process of ethnic cleansing” of Palestinians on all sides of Israel’s walls and fences (p. xii). First among these pairs are the words “Jewish and democratic,” indexed in the book’s subtitle and still resilient in some circles. An illustration of Cook’s style in challenging them: a state in which over 25 percent of citizens are opposed to (rather than disillusioned with) democracy might consider rethinking its “democratic” educational system (p. 105).

Another pair that dominates the saturated air of Middle East commentaries is “left and right,” words intended to serve as relevant political markers. Cook quotes Arnon Sofer who candidly clarifies: “There is no right and left at the moment. It is Jews versus Arabs. The wide center is behind the idea of separation. When it comes to separation, I think only of the Jewish side” (p. 137). This is a reminder that “unilateral separation,” the enduring policy of recent right-wing Israeli governments, “was a policy born of the traditional Israeli left, particularly of the Labor party, not of the right” (p. 145), one that continues to influence the majority of the political spectrum. When it comes to “the state of the Jewish people,” in other words, disagreements are of the order of family quarrels: Israel concerns itself with the precise location of (self-unrecognized) borders—and of Palestinians (and other non-Jews)—but not with the possibility of equality. This is borne out, among other indicators, by the consistent fact that “there is no immigration policy in Israel apart from the privileges afforded solely to Jews under the Law of Return” (p. 125).

A third terminological pair is “religious and secular,” an opposition of ever decreasing significance as both “sides” come to the

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