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The Arab-Israeli conflict goes far beyond the wars waged in the Middle East. There is a war of narratives revolving around the two defining traumas of the conflict: the Holocaust and the Nakba. One side is charged with Holocaust denial, the other with exploiting a tragedy while denying the tragedies of others. In this path-breaking book, political scientist Gilbert Achcar explores these conflicting narratives and considers their role in today's Middle East dispute.

He analyzes the various Arab responses to the Holocaust, from the earliest intimations of the genocide, through the creation of Israel and the occupation of Palestine, and up to our own time, critically assessing the political and historical context for these responses.

Drawing on previously unseen sources in multiple languages, Achcar offers a unique ideological mapping of the Arab world, in the process defusing an international propaganda war that has become a major stumbling block in the path of Arab-Western understanding.

Gilbert Achar, who grew up in Beirut, is Professor at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. His many books include The Clash of Barbarisms: The Making of the New World Disorder (Saqi, 2006), published in thirteen languages, The 33-Day War: Israel's War on Hezbollah in Lebanon and its Aftermath (with Michael Warschawski, Saqi, 2007), and Perilous Power: The Middle East and U.S. Foreign Policy, co-authored with Noam Chomsky.

'Gilbert Achcar’s thoughtful, well researched, and very welcome assessment of one of the most explosive topics of Palestinian/Israeli historiography is a courageous undertaking. He succeeds in treating the subject of the relationship of Palestine and the Nazi Holocaust with original thinking, profound scholarship, and meticulous analysis.'

—Naseer Aruri, member of the Palestine National Council and author of Palestine and Palestinians: A Social and Political History

‘In a field fraught with bad faith and sheer propaganda, Gilbert Achcar’s book stands out as scholarly, even-handed, and decent.’

—Idith Zertal, author of Israel's Holocaust and the Politics of Nationhood

‘This is a work of breath-taking empathy, examining one of the most painful and emotion-laden topics in the modern world with dispassion, sensitivity and high erudition. Gilbert Achcar combines a historian’s profound understanding of the workings of Arab political discourse with a fine appreciation of the traumatic valance of every aspect of this topic. This magisterial study constitutes a welcome advance on the often meretricious and mediocre scholarship produced thus far on the important topic of the Arabs and the Holocaust.’

—Rashid Khalidi, Edward Said Professor of Arab Studies Department of History, Columbia University

‘A penetrating analysis of the multiplicity of attitudes and responses in the Arabic-speaking world toward Nazism, anti-Semitism, and the Holocaust. The book effectively disproves simplistic notions of a single, monolithic, Holocaust-denying Arabic-speaking world driven by racist and neo-Nazi hatred of all Jews, and effectively demonstrates that there never has been one ‘Arab’ narrative on the Holocaust.’

—Michael R. Marrus, author of The Holocaust in History

‘A sensitive and insightful exploration of an important dimension of the Middle East conflict - one that we usually only encounter in angry sound bites. Achcar’s book, which combines meticulous scholarship and an engaging style, is a significant contribution to the mutual understanding that is in such short supply.’

—Peter Novick, author of The Holocaust in American Life

‘In this study Gilbert Achcar exposes a great deal of spurious scholarship on the subject and places Arab attitudes towards the Holocaust and the Jews in their proper historical and intellectual context. It is an erudite, perceptive, and highly original study that shines much-needed light on a field which has tended to be dominated by partisanship and propaganda.’

—Avi Shlaim, author of The Iron Wall: Israel and the Arab World