

The Palestinian People: A History

Baruch Kimmerling

Joel S. Migdal

Harvard University Press (1 April 2003)

*To the Palestinians and Israelis
working and hoping for a
mutually acceptable negotiated settlement
to their century-long conflict*

Contents

Maps

Preface

Acknowledgments

Note on Transliteration

Introduction

Part One

FROM REVOLT TO REVOLT: THE ENCOUNTER WITH THE EUROPEAN WORLD AND ZIONISM

1. The Revolt of 1834 and the Making of Modern Palestine 3
2. The City: Between Nablus and Jaffa 38
3. Jerusalem: Notables and Nationalism 67
4. The Arab Revolt, 1936-1939 102

Part Two

DISPERSAL

5. The Meaning of Disaster 135

Part Three

RECONSTITUTING THE PALESTINIAN NATION

6. Odd Man Out: Arabs in Israel 169
7. Dispersal, 1948-1967 214
8. The Feday: Rebirth and Resistance 240
9. Steering a Path under Occupation 274

Part Four

ABORTIVE RECONCILIATION

10. The Oslo Process: What Went Right? 315
11. The Oslo Process: What Went Wrong? 355

Conclusion 398

Chronological List of Major Events 419

Notes 457

Index 547

MAPS

1. Palestine under Ottoman Rule 39
2. Two Partitions of Palestine (1921,1949) 148
3. United Nations Recommendation for Two-States Solution in Palestine (1947) 149
4. The Exodus of the Palestinians (1948) 159
5. A Refugee Camp Society (the Major Palestinian Refugee Camps, 1948-1991) 160
6. Israel and Occupied Territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip 242

Back cover

"This remarkable book recounts how the Palestinians came to be constituted as a people. The authors offer perceptive observations on the status of Palestinian citizens of Israel, the successes and failures of the Oslo process, and the prospects for both Palestinians and Israelis of achieving a peaceful future together. A dispassionate and balanced analysis that provides essential background for understanding the complexities of the Middle East." - Rashid Khalidi, University of Chicago

In a timely reminder of how the past informs the present, Baruch Kimmerling and Joel Migdal offer an authoritative account of the history of the Palestinian people from their modern origins to the Oslo peace process and beyond.

Palestinians struggled to create themselves as a people from the first revolt of the Arabs in Palestine in 1834 through the British Mandate to the impact of Zionism and the founding of Israel. Their relationship with the Jewish people and the State of Israel has been fundamental in shaping that identity, and today Palestinians find themselves again at "a critical juncture. In the 1990s cornerstones for peace were laid for eventual Palestinian-Israeli coexistence, including mutual acceptance, the renunciation of violence as a permanent strategy, and the establishment for the first time of Palestinian self-government. But the dawn of the twenty-first century saw a reversion to unmitigated hatred and mutual demonization. By mid-2002, the brutal violence of the Intifada had crippled Palestine's fledgling political institutions and threatened the fragile social cohesion painstakingly constructed after 1967. Kimmerling and Migdal unravel what went right - and what went wrong - in the Oslo peace process, and what lessons we can draw about the forces that help to shape a people. The authors -present a balanced, insightful, and sobering look at the realities of creating peace in the Middle East.

Baruch Kimmerling is George S. Wise Professor of Sociology at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Joel S. Migdal is Robert F. Philip Professor of International Studies, University of Washington. .

Review

A fine general history of the Palestinians now usefully updated with a history of the decade after Oslo. -- L. Carl Brown Foreign Affairs 20030901 This new history updates [Baruch Kimmerling's and Joel S. Migdal's] 1993 book, *Palestinians: The Making of a People*, with two new analyses, one judging the effect of the Oslo peace talks and another focusing on the difficult situation of the Palestinians in Israel. In their preface, the authors immediately reject both the common claim by Palestinians that their history as a "singular people" reaches back to ancient times and the Israeli denial of any such entity before it was created by Zionist successes. Instead a "self-identified Palestinian people" evolved only in the last two centuries, as a result of European economic and political pressures and of Jewish settlement. An excellent chronology and full notes enhance a book that deserves the widest possible readership. -- Frank Day Magill's Literary Annual 20040601

Product Description

In a timely reminder of how the past informs the present, Baruch Kimmerling and Joel Migdal offer an account of the history of the Palestinian people from their modern origins to the Oslo peace process and beyond. Palestinians struggled to create themselves as a people from the first revolt of the Arabs in Palestine in 1834 through the British mandate to the impact of Zionism and the founding of Israel. Their relationship with the Jewish people and the State of Israel has been fundamental in shaping that identity, and today Palestinians find themselves again at a critical juncture. In the 1990s cornerstones for peace were laid for eventual Palestinian-Israeli coexistence, including mutual acceptance, the renunciation of violence as a permanent strategy, and the establishment for the first time of Palestinian self-government. But the dawn on the 21st century saw a reversion to unmitigated hatred and mutual demonization. By mid-2002 the brutal violence of the Intifada had crippled Palestine's fledgling political institutions and threatened the fragile social cohesion painstakingly constructed after 1967. Kimmerling and Migdal unravel what went right - and what went wrong - in the Oslo peace process, and what lessons we can draw about the forces that help to shape a people. The authors present a balanced, insightful and sobering look at the realities of creating peace in the Middle East.

Reviews

A very good introduction to Palestinian history, 17 July 2009

By PygmyTwilyte (Citizen of the world) - See all my reviews

This is the best one-volume history of the Palestinians I'm aware of. It was written by an American and an Israeli, and it is refreshingly objective and accurate, rare qualities in a field dominated by distortion, emotion and propaganda.

The book starts in the 19th century, with a Palestinian uprising against the Ottoman Empire and its subsequent defeat. The main theme of the book is that Palestinian self-awareness and nationalism has emerged through more or less forced encounters with the outside world-the anti-Ottoman uprising, the First World War, the 1936-39 revolt, the Second World War, "The Catastrophe" (as the Palestinians refer to the founding of Israel and the expulsion of many of the Palestinians from Mandate Palestine) and on into the modern era-the 1967 war, the first and second intifadas, the rise and fall of the PLO and Fatah.

Over all of this is the confrontation between Zionist settlement, both before and after 1948, and Palestinian society. The authors make it clear that in many ways, Palestinian nationalism came about as a reaction to Zionism, it was very fuzzy and ill-defined prior to this. Even more ironic, just as Zionism emerged from the experience of Jewish exile, so Palestinian nationalism is a product of exile since 1948.

The last chapter tries to focus on Oslo and after (1993-2004) and how and why the fabled peace process and the second intifada interacted with each other to produce deadlock, even though a majority of both Israelis and Palestinians, at least according to opinion polls) would prefer a negotiated settlement.

Great book. I read the original edition, I don't know if there's been a revised or updated edition.

Peace loving people should read this book, 13 Dec 2003

By DAVID-LEONARD WILLIS (Thessaloniki Greece) - See all my reviews (TOP 500 REVIEWER)

Rejecting standard Palestinian and Israeli historiographies, this book puts forth an explanation of why we are in the present situation by relying heavily on published material and undisputed facts but viewed from the author's particular perspective and interpretation. Stephen Covey, in his book 'The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People' illustrates the fact that we can all see the same world completely differently by the picture of a woman. To some who have been conditioned beforehand she is an old hag while to others, conditioned differently, she is a real cutie. No where does this point have greater validity than when we view the history of the relationship between the Palestinian and Israeli peoples. To put it crudely, the Israelis have been conditioned to view the Palestinians as the old hag, while the Palestinians, quite naturally, see themselves as the real cutie. For the neutral outsider who is concerned that the Third World War might arise in this area, it is very difficult to get past the passions and prejudices, to get to facts and solutions that are acceptable to everyone. It seems that we have two broad alternatives - let the contestants fight it out until one is the victor or both are so exhausted that they are prepared to negotiate. During their centuries of immaturity, humans have used this method. I like to think that humans have grown beyond that stage and can act in a more mature manner and this is basically what this book sets out to do. They have tried to gather the facts of history in an unbiased way and work on the solution in a mature manner.

Their 1993 book 'Palestinians: The Making of a People', was the first full account of Palestinian society and politics from their origins to the present and was published as the Oslo peace process was starting. It generated considerable interest from neutral people, Palestinian acclaim and vitriolic debate in Israel. When Rabin took Arafat's hand on the White House lawn in September 1993, it was acknowledged that the Oslo agreement demanded a new way of thinking about old issues and stubborn problems. The prime issue was whether or not there was a unified Palestinian people prior to Zionism - an assertion that the authors reaffirm in this book, recognizing that it is extremely unpopular in Israel as it undermines the Zionist story. However, since 1993 there has been a growing acceptance of the authors' points and in an August 2002 poll 78% of Israeli Jews accepted that Palestinians have a legitimate right to a state. After Barak's 1999 election, 75% of Palestinians on the West Bank and Gaza Strip voted for negotiations, knowing that this meant acceptance of Israel's legitimate existence and Israel's occupation of 80% of historic Palestine.

The Oslo process induced Palestinians and Israelis to reconsider their shared history - a painful undertaking for both sides. Building the future requires an ability to deal maturely and honestly with the past and it is the hope of the authors that this book will contribute to that process. Tracing events from the 1834 Revolt and the making of the modern Palestine in the first three parts of the book, the final part examines what went right and what went wrong in the Oslo process. If we accept the fact that the authors have made an effort to present the facts in a neutral way - recognizing that the hag and cutie prejudice will not be easily overcome - the important thing is to study the final part, stop the bloodshed and move forward.

It is a responsibility of all peace loving people to read this book and lend their support to finding and implementing the solution which comes closest to being fair for all. I am reminded of Edmund Burke's statement: "For the triumph of evil it is only necessary that good men do nothing."