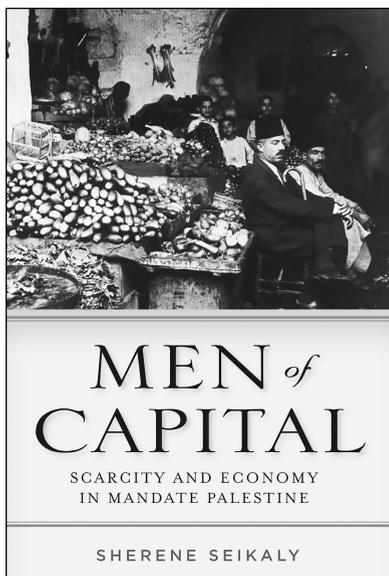


explaining the long history of U.S. support for Israel and the United States' ongoing muted critiques of Israel's policies toward Palestinians and its expansion into areas beyond its 1947 borders (p. 322). Such lenience was granted despite a 1949 U.S. National Security Council report that recognized the "intensely nationalistic" character of the Israeli regime and its "extremist elements" (p. 323).

As oil scholar David S. Painter argues, "Understanding how oil fueled the 'American Century' is fundamental to understanding the sources, dynamics, and consequences of U.S. global dominance."[†] Gendzier takes this argument even further—arguing that the importance of oil to U.S. policymakers also helped define American support for Israel to the detriment of Palestinian rights. Although focused on the period between 1947 and 1949, Gendzier's study also enlightens us to the development of the "special relationship" between the United States and Israel, one that continues to the present day. Recognizing the "intertwined histories" between Israel and the United States, Gendzier aptly notes, is "an essential step in reclaiming the history and responsibility that many have been dying to forget" (p. 323).

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Men of Capital: Scarcity and Economy in Mandate Palestine, by Sherene Seikaly. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2016. 258 pages. \$85.00 cloth, \$24.95 paper. E-book available.

REVIEWED BY RAJA KHALIDI

In her landmark contribution to modern Palestinian history, University of California professor Sherene Seikaly (also cofounder of the groundbreaking e-zine, *Jadaliyya*) has done a service to historians of nationalism as well as political economists who attempt to understand the patterns and material forces of the bonds between capital and nation in the contemporary Palestinian context. By exploring an elite of modernizing, patriotic Mandate Palestinian capitalists in the 1930s and 1940s, Seikaly forces scholars of Palestinian history and political economy to abandon simplistic categories. Instead, she invites us to view our own subjects of

study through the multicolored prism manifested by this nascent class and its nuanced function in the broader Palestinian struggle.

Seikaly sets the scene for her narrative by recalling Zionist stereotypes of Palestinians and their supposed lack of politically coherent or economically developed structures, the effendi and the fellah. She reminds us that the Zionist settlement enterprise was not only about ideology, land,

[†] David S. Painter, "Oil and the American Century," *Journal of American History* 99, no. 1 (2012): p. 24.

colonies, and economy, but also infrastructure, markets, and foreign investment. While Zionism was projected as a civilizing, modernizing influence on underdeveloped, feudal, agrarian “non-Jews,” the role of British Mandate collaboration and collusion in that enterprise is a constant theme throughout the story, through pro-Zionist tariff manipulation and monopoly concessions.

In Seikaly’s narrative, Palestine had already entered the capitalist world in the late Ottoman period with its own view of its future even before the clash with settler colonialism became primary. Nevertheless, many historical accounts have portrayed a Palestinian elite as unchanging and easily understood. Previous studies have examined the notable class, the nascent bourgeoisie or the new “middling class” of merchants and manufacturers in the coastal cities, linked to the landowning classes. In this construct, the nascent “national bourgeoisie” had economic interests that set them apart from, or at odds with the national movement, but in Palestine throughout the Mandate, politics became synonymous with patriotism. While nationalism was certainly one aspect of political self-identity it was not the only way to make politics.

Seikaly reframes the discussion about this class, affirming that nationalism is not a determinant of citizenship and political inclusion. Politics is also about money, how to manage it, basic needs and how to measure them and assure them, as experience under the British Mandate period shows. Hence Seikaly contends that this period is as much about the politics of calculation and measuring, between Arabs and Jews, between Arabs and the Mandate, and within Palestinian society itself. This is an innovative approach to tracing the features and determinants of Palestinian class and elite formation, though it takes a certain leap of faith to appreciate how these processes of modernization and colonial rule may relate to the rise (and fall) of the two social groups her research focuses on at the beginning of the book.

In the first two chapters, Seikaly introduces her “Men of Capital” and “Women of Thrift.” The former were urban, wealthy businessmen who tried to achieve some power in society and politics, “shaping new forms of social hierarchy just as rebels and radicals were dislodging them” (p. 14). They entertained visions of an ideal social body—the ideal social man and his ideal partner, the thrifty domestic manager. Their self-definition was not only through their confrontation with Zionism, but part of a broader Arabist revival, throwing off outdated traditions and ushering in modern, intellectual exchange and pluralism. Seikaly unearths impressive archival research that epitomizes this class’s self-expression: *al-Iqtisadiyyat al-‘arabiyya* (the *Arab Economic Journal*), published from 1935 and expressing the interests and visions of a group of “intellectuals, men of science, art, education, capital and works” (p. 26).

These men of capital combined commitment to free enterprise and private property with support for the armed struggle. Not all capitalists took this stance, some opposed the 1937 revolt, and even left Palestine. But *Iqtisadiyyat* emphasized economics as a distinct realm to be studied, understood and inculcated, a discrete area for investigation separate from politics. Aside from the natural Palestinian demand for independence, “the remaining aims of politics are economic. . . . Politics are a means, while economics are not just the goal, they are the ends” (p. 33). This ultimately entailed defining economics as social: a rational science in the service of social man defined by new concepts and parameters. In Seikaly’s retelling of this history, she seeks to show that “Palestinians did not always . . . play second fiddle to the European Jews’ main act” (p. 52).

The other side of social man was the economic “woman of thrift” (chapter 2): a skilled and efficient mother and wife, whose domestic knowledge and authority raised and sheltered the future of the social body. Economy meant effective management of money, a culture of saving and spending, a new body of cultural and social knowledge, and an emerging national space that was parallel and linked to the home. Referring to the texts of Salwa Said’s national radio broadcast program, the social responsibility of the housewife is emphasized: modern cooking techniques, scientific organization, hygiene, keeping accounts, and making herself and the household calculable. “Cultured, rational consumption was the distinguishing feature of a particular class or rank” (p. 76): based on scientific appreciation of needs it would deliver sound civilization to the Palestinian masses.

While both these categories provide fascinating and fresh characterizations of important elements of the emerging Palestinian bourgeoisie of the Mandate period, the reader is left wondering about the extent to which the sources mainly relied upon (*Iqtisadiyyat* and the Salwa Said radio programs) are adequate evidence of a broader social class identity or whether perhaps these subjects existed in something of a bubble. Furthermore, the historical *process* of formation, which implies a preceding and subsequent manifestation of this class, is not fully drawn out in Seikaly’s account, and the significance of these progressive economic actors (as compared, for example, to that of the more conservative political notable and commercial bourgeois classes) risks being overstated in the broader picture of Palestinian class and political formation.

In the three subsequent chapters, perhaps more accessible to economists and Palestine and World War II historians than the general reader, Seikaly sheds fresh light on aspects of the Mandate economic control regime and the manner in which it advanced the interests of Zionist colonization and economy. No less significantly, this regime dashed many of the more lofty aspirations and naïve expectations of the men of capital, whose patriotic affiliations and material position dictated their closer alliance with the Palestinian nationalist movement. In chapter 3 on the “Nutritional Economy,” Seikaly explores the relation between the calorie, development, and war, whereby forging an economy that was calculable and legible became essential to maintaining colonial rule, especially during wartime. Mandate institutions such as the Middle East Supply Centre and the Office of Food Control, and indicators such as the cost of living and the calorie, all acquired an authoritative role in defining “economy” in the 1940s. Development became a new societal goal used by the British to postpone decolonization: poverty was endemic and the poor, the native, the Oriental, were to blame for their state. Nutrition and new universal standards worked to maintain colonial power. Even nationalists used development to contest and overthrow colonial rule, but without transforming its fundamental equation: improving the quality of life to maintain political and social hierarchies.

Seikaly’s presentation of the Palestinian Chambers of Commerce in chapter 4 as “nascent institutional spaces in the 1940s” (p. 125), bringing together men of capital from different political backgrounds, adds to the picture of class formation that she tracks. The Chambers had a common interest in capital accumulation, free trade, and components of a healthy economy, “guarding the nation’s public good” (p. 126). But under wartime austerity, men of capital were no longer the “vanguard of a profitable productive future,” but the “managers of a crisis of scarcity,” calling for

patience and demanding government respect the integrity of its colonial promises and Allied principles” (p. 126). While Mandate authorities put in place a complex and burdensome system to safeguard consumers from the racketeer, the lone profiteer, in fact it was the large Jewish economic concerns such as Tnuva cooperative that determined both regulated and unregulated prices of vegetables. The system was based on the idea that the developed and regulated markets are the answer to underdevelopment and unorganized markets. However, Seikaly shows that it was not the unorganized Palestinian farmer and trader who controlled the vegetable racket addressed in chapter 5, rather it was the highly rationalized Zionist food enterprise Tnuva.

Seikaly’s work has reminded us of the breaks and continuities in Palestinian economic thought and structures. Her careful examination of the Mandate period reveals a more colorful, changing, and dynamic economic landscape of people, classes, and institutions than usually assumed in history or in our consciousness. She has also amply illustrated how crafty and resourceful colonial rule can be in maintaining itself, bureaucratic and efficient: the banality of evil of counting calories (recalling Israeli controls on Gaza a few years ago).

Seikaly’s treatment furthermore highlights how important capital accumulation, class formation, and even conflict are to the development of a “normal” society and economy, how just as the fellah and the freedom fighter have their place in Palestinian patriotic history, so do the businessman, and the landowner, and the modernizing men and women of capital play their role. Seikaly encourages us to imagine from the vantage point of the 1930s how Palestine’s economy might have developed, had it become independent in 1948 even as a reduced version of what the people had been expecting and preparing for. In doing so, she masterfully draws out how the links between settler colonialism, British colonial rule, and the ultimate victory of the Zionist project were reflected in economic growth and challenges of the time, and increasingly diverted Palestine from its own, self-defined trajectory in the Arab world.

Raja Khalidi is a development economist who has researched and published widely on Palestinian economic development, working with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) until 2013 and currently as research coordinator at the Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute (MAS).

Uncivil Rites: Palestine and the Limits of Academic Freedom, by Steven Salaita.

Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2015. 264 pages. \$22.95 cloth, \$11.99 e-book.

REVIEWED BY MAGID SHIHADÉ

Steven Salaita, Edward W. Said Chair of American Studies at the American University of Beirut, is a scholar of Native American studies, with a solid record of publications in comparative indigenous studies and settler colonialism, commentaries on U.S. culture, and support for the U.S. Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel. In 2014, he became known outside the academy when he was fired from a tenured position at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) due to his critical tweets of Israel during its military assault on Gaza that summer. As Salaita argues in his book *Uncivil Rites: Palestine and the Limits of Academic Freedom*, “writing for public consumption and organizing around Palestine” are the basis for his