

Being based in Dearborn gives the author easy access to a wealth of information on Arab Americana and she does well taking advantage of it. While much has been written on Arab American activism, including in this period, Pennock does an impressive job of bringing a wide range of resources to bear in telling her unique story. Along with the extensive collection of archives and papers on Arab American groups that she taps, she also conducts a number of interviews. These conversations with key figures, including Ismael Ahmed, Barbara Aswad, Abdeen Jabara, George Khoury, and more, support her narrative throughout.

Along with the primacy of the impact of the 1967 war on Arab American life and activism, one of the key themes covered in the book is the persistent choice by Arab American activists and organizers to form coalitions with partners across various issues because “they understood that a coalition strategy in America, even if limited and halting, was important to advancing their causes” (p. 232).

Throughout the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, Palestine was as unifying to Arab American organizing as other Arab world issues—from Egypt, to Yemen, to Iraq, to Lebanon, and beyond—were divisive. Even as the politics of the key groups she surveys over time tempers from the so-called radical Organization of Arab Students in the 1960s, to the leftist and Third World–focused Association of Arab American University Graduates in the 1970s, to the even more moderate groups that formed in the 1980s, division around the internal politics of the Middle East continued to be a challenge for Arab American activists. Nevertheless, Pennock argues, “the activist seeds planted in the 1960s and 1970s have begun to bear fruit, especially in pursuing coalitions with American peace and civil rights groups that were set in motion a generation earlier” (p. 236), pointing to the growing, if still incomplete, acceptance of Palestine among progressives today and the continued cross-movement organizing being undertaken in the present.

Pennock set out to fill a void in the understanding of Arab American activism in the historiography of this period. Her focus on the Left and Arab American organizing during the 1960s and ’70s is a fitting complement to the Salim Yaqub’s recent *Imperfect Strangers* (Cornell University Press, 2016), which looks at macro-political events, as well as Hani Bawardi’s *The Making of Arab Americans* (University of Texas Press, 2014), which looks at previous decades of organizing. *The Rise of the Arab American Left* offers valuable lessons not only for students of history but for current practitioners of intersectional organizing and coalition building who seek to build upon the work of those who came before them.

---

Yousef Munayyer is the executive director of the U.S. Campaign for Palestinian Rights and a member of the *JPS* editorial committee.

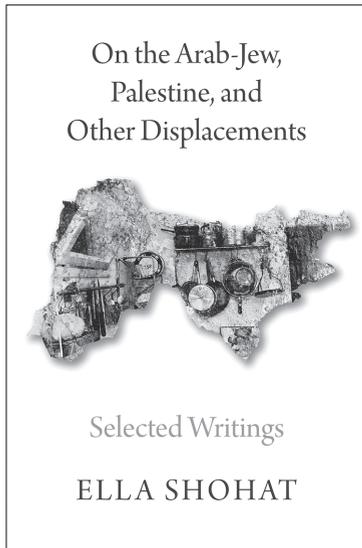
---

***On the Arab-Jew, Palestine, and Other Displacements: Selected Writings***, by Ella Shohat. London: Pluto Press, 2017. 480 pages. \$115.00 cloth, \$28.00 paper, \$28.00 e-book.

#### REVIEWED BY TILDE ROSMER

Ella Shohat dedicated this volume of her selected writings to Tikva Amal Levi and Naeim Khaschi Giladi, two Iraqi Jewish activists and citizens of Israel. The dedication underscores the

connection between Shohat's Iraqi Jewish background and the activist origins of her relationship to academic work. In writing about the dispersal of Jews from Arab and Middle Eastern countries, Shohat's original motivation may be personal, but her approach is rigorously academic. Perhaps



most notably, Shohat is scrupulous about ensuring that a plurality of marginalized voices belonging to the displaced are re-accommodated in her writings.

Shohat established her critical, inclusive perspective in the pioneering article "Sephardim in Israel: Zionism from the Standpoint of Its Jewish Victims" in 1988 (pp. 37–76), which appears as the first chapter in this book. Here she introduces the main points of criticism of Zionist Orientalist attitudes and policies toward Jews from Middle Eastern and North African countries, in particular the denial of self-representation by Sephardi/Mizrahi/Middle Eastern Jews in the Zionist narrative. Shohat calls attention to how conflating Zionist with Jewish obscures other national and cultural belongings among Jews; problematizes the Zionist narrative that insists Zionists rescued oppressed Jews from Arab countries; throws into sharp relief the direct and indirect discrimination that non-

European Jews continue to face in the state of Israel; and disputes the lazy misrepresentation of Mizrahi Jews as "Arab-haters," who were too often blamed for preventing peace with the Palestinians. Each of these points, some of which were first articulated by Shohat in academia, remain the topic of fraught discussion among academics and activists today in relation to Mizrahi identity and sociopolitical activism.

In addition to picking apart the Zionist master narrative, in this chapter Shohat also critiques Edward Said for ignoring Jewish "Orientals" in his work, thereby introducing her criticism of the binary dichotomies of Eastern versus Western, and Jew versus Arab—a binary that obscures and negates the identity and existence of groups such as Arab Jews. Further, it was in this early article that Shohat first connects the tragedies of the Palestinian Nakba to the displacement of Jews from Arab and Middle Eastern countries. In her subsequent work she has emphasized how this connection may be used and abused, both in terms of understanding the past and when making claims for the future: "I in no way mean to equate Palestinian and Sephardi suffering—obviously Palestinians are those who [were] most egregiously wronged by Zionism—or to compare the long lists of crimes against both. The point is one of affinity and analogy rather than perfect identity of interests or experience" (p. 75).

Shohat's work rejects a simplified and singular representation of the history of Arab Jews, thus challenging both Zionist and Arab nationalist narratives as well as the predominating monolithic approach to "Jewish history," with its tendency toward Eurocentrism and Orientalism. Shohat also introduces a discussion of the new divergences created by colonialism and nationalism. As such, her work makes both specific contributions to postcolonial studies, by including the history of Arab Jews, and a more general contribution to cultural studies, by promoting an "intellectual

paradigm where culture and politics are mutually constitutive, shaped in and through each other” (pp. 18–19).

Methodologically, Shohat inspires an interdisciplinary approach and encourages her readers and fellow academics to continue seeing the connections and drawing parallels across countries, continents, and languages, not with the aim of arriving at grand narratives, but precisely the opposite: to highlight the symbiosis between politics and cultural expression and to recognize the play of power relations. Her aim seems to be to better understand the application of racist, Orientalist, nationalist, and imperial bias beyond state and group boundaries. By introducing Columbus as one of the first Orientalists she offers innovative perspectives on comparative studies of the journeys of ideas and of colonial experience (p. 324).

Perhaps Shohat’s most urgent warning today concerns the limitations and possibilities of area studies. In light of the ubiquity of social media and a resurgence of western military adventurism, Shohat’s insistence that Middle Eastern studies should not be conducted only “there”—in the East—but must also include the study of the ideas of and interaction with this region “here” in Europe or the United States, is especially timely (p. 22).

This collection of Shohat’s writings offers readers an excellent introduction to her original ideas and to their development. All students of Israel-Palestine, the Middle East, and Jewish histories would benefit from reading this volume. Beyond her academic contribution, Shohat’s inspirational work demonstrates to readers that an alternative vision of the future is possible. It is a vision inspired by her own story and the stories of other Mizrahi activists who broke out of a narrow nationalist, exclusionist framework to embrace solidarity with all those who have been displaced, and who live under dominance and oppression. Given the scale and challenges of forced migration today, especially in the Middle East and North Africa, Shohat’s work could not be more necessary or instructive.

---

Tilde Rosmer is an assistant professor in humanities and social sciences at Zayed University and a senior researcher in Middle Eastern studies at the University of Oslo.

---

***The Crime of Nationalism: Britain, Palestine, and Nation-Building on the Fringe of Empire***, by Matthew Kraig Kelly. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2017. 264 pages. \$85.00 cloth, \$29.95 paper, \$29.95 e-book.

#### REVIEW BY IHAB SHALBAK

At the beginning of his book, Matthew Kraig Kelly presents us with a telling anecdote of an encounter between two Palestinian peasants and British Mandate authorities. The two men were traveling, carrying their customary arms, when they were attacked without warning by British forces. The pair sought refuge in a cave. The British soldiers besieged the cave and kept firing at them. Eventually, the Palestinians fired back in self-defense, fatally injuring a British officer. The Mandate court acknowledged the facts of the event but still condemned the two men to death. As Kelly puts it, “the court seemed to suggest that the British, by virtue of constituting a state in Palestine, behaved legally by definition, and that those resisting them were therefore criminals by definition” (p. 2). This anecdote and the logic underpinning British conduct in Palestine provides