In Chapter 4, Khan puts forward an original argument, which is at once provocative and illuminating. According to the received wisdom in Urdu studies, the most important development during the first half of the 20th century is the establishment of the anticolonial, left-leaning All-India Progressive Writers Association. While it is true that the Progressives have had an enormous impact on Urdu literature, scholarly attention to their work comes at the expense of low brow, but immensely popular and influential, fictions of writers like Rashid ul-Khairi, Nasim Hijazi, and Razia Butt. Khan challenges this orthodox view that dismisses the works of these writers as "non-literary," and writes them out of the canon of Urdu literature (p. 167). This exclusionary gesture, Khan argues, shows that scholars of Urdu "have invented a canon in accordance with Western literary and political teleologies" (p. 130). If the Progressive literature is considered a "rupture" from the colonially patronized reformist works of Ahmad and Hali, Khan shows that the works of Khairi, Hijazi, and Butt are "continuous" with the reformist fictions (pp. 126–127). Khan's insertion of these low brow novels into Urdu canon overturns Mufti's repeated assertion that the novel is not a dominant or canonical literary form in the history of Urdu literature. Khan's analysis of the kind of Muslim nation that gets imagined in and through the novels of Khairi, Hijazi, and Butt is particularly deft and discerning. The discussion about how Hijazi projects the Muslim nation back in historical time could have benefited further from an engagement with Anderson's *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1991).

The last chapter looks at the contemporary Pakistani Urdu novel, which, Khan argues, is the latest iteration of the colonially inflected and infected version of Islam. Bestselling writers like Umera Ahmad, Farhat Ishtiaq, and Nimra Ahmad whose popular, low brow novels are serialized in digests and frequently adapted for television are "immediate heirs" of writers like Hijazi and Butt (p. 166). Khan asserts that her reading of the female agency in these contemporary fictions confronts Saba Mahmood's well-known argument that the notion of agency should include Muslim women's acts of religious submission. Mahmood's argument, Khan writes, "is premised on assumption of a fixed [Islamic] past," which is an orientalist construction (p. 15). How formidable a challenge Khan poses to Mahmood is for scholars versed in the latter's argument to decide; however, her argument that the agency of these popular novelists and their female characters endorses a version of Islam that is anxious of Western modernity and intolerant of religious minorities is compelling. Khan ends the book with a ruminative but hopeful epilogue in which through a reading of Fehmida Riaz's genre-defying work she shows what an alternative and "secular history or experience of Urdu, Muslimness, and even national identity might look like" (p. 210).

Written in a clear and accessible language and organized chronologically, this is a thoroughly researched book that makes an original contribution to the field of Urdu studies. It will be a useful resource for courses on the English oriental tale (Chapters 1 and 2), Muslim nationalism in colonial India (Chapter 3), and Pakistani Urdu literature (Chapters 4 and 5).

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Partitioning Palestine: British Policymaking at the End of Empire.
Penny Sinanoglou (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019). Pp. 256. $40.00 cloth. ISBN: 9780226665788

Reviewed by Charles W. Anderson, Department of History, Western Washington University, Bellingham, WA, USA (charles.anderson@wwu.edu)

Partition is central to the history of modern Palestine, the rise of Israel, and the interminable conflict that has plagued the region since the 1948 war. Taken together, the Trump administration's 2020 "Deal of the Century" and the Democrats' fading hopes for an Oslo Accords-like Palestinian statelet (recently reaffirmed in a 2019 House of Representatives measure) illustrate the enduring conceptual hegemony of

partition, despite its disastrous historical career. Penny Sinanoglou takes us back to the genesis of the partition concept in her new book, which is the most significant study to date of British policy on partition under the Palestine Mandate.

Much of the book is understandably trained on the Peel Commission as the *locus classicus* for partition. One of the distinctive aspects of Sinanoglou's study is its exploration of the genealogy of partition as a tool of British imperial policymaking. Its discussion locates two previous episodes with notably discrepant results: the partition of Ireland in 1922 was widely viewed in Britain as bringing a successful close to the empire's long tussle with Irish nationalism, whereas that in Bengal in 1905 stimulated (rather than weakening) local political opposition and was subsequently reversed in 1911. It is thus significant that Reginald Coupland, the renowned historian of British empire who became the leading force for partition on the Peel Commission, saw Ireland as a strong analogy for the situation in Palestine in the latter 1930s and believed that, as in the Irish case, partition represented a compromise that would allow "home rule" for the native majority without betraying the imperial commitment to the settler minority (p. 33). Seen in its empire-wide context, Sinanoglou stresses, partition was not primarily intended to devolve control over colonized territories, but was rather conceived as "selective decolonization" that could serve to conserve and redefine British influence (p. 15).

Reprising the findings of her notable article in *The Historical Journal* (2009), Sinanoglou shows that key components later assembled in the Peel Commission's partition recommendation originated elsewhere. As an idea for resolving the conflict over the land, partition was quietly mooted in 1933 by both Chaim Weizmann (who raised it in a meeting with Mussolini) and Ahmad Samih al-Khalidi, the head of the Arab College in Jerusalem. Two subsequent cantonization plans by Britons in 1935, one by a "pro-Arab" publicist in London and the other by a former long-serving Palestine official and aide to two high commissioners, put forward ideas that directly anticipated those of the Peel Commission. The former motioned for the exemption of several cities (including Jerusalem and Haifa) from territorial division and, pivotally, both suggested the attachment of the areas of Palestine that were free of Jewish colonies to the Transjordanian crown, thereby averting the creation of a Palestinian Arab state. Both of these were features of the Peel plan two years later.

The result is a dramatic new rendering of the Peel Commission's famous recommendations as largely prefigured. At the same time, Sinanoglou's account of the setting in which these prior schemes arose overstates British desires to speak to Palestinian national desiderata, claiming that in the period after the 1929 violence in Palestine, "British policy was evolving in the direction of placating the Arab population by curtailing and eventually suspending Jewish immigration, land purchase, and settlement" (p. 39). Yet British reforms in these arenas, and that of representative government, were abortive, with land control initiatives blocked in 1930 and 1936, the (second) legislative council scheme stymied by pro-Zionist opposition in Parliament in 1936, and immigration untrammeled during the massive fifth aliyah (1932–36) that almost doubled the size of the Yishuv, much to the consternation of increasingly alarmed Palestinians. Some of the confusion on these matters in *Partitioning Palestine* comes from its agreement with recent scholarship that spotlights the League of Nations as an active element constraining and shaping Palestine policy (e.g., Susan Pedersen's *The Guardians*). Arguments in this vein tend to exaggerate the importance of international processes like the League's oversight function and debates at Geneva and to underrate (and to fail to substantively examine) developments transpiring inside Palestine itself.

The book's close reading of the Peel Commission's investigation and deliberations sheds important new light on the subject. Unlike other examinations which have unduly praised Peel as authoritative, *Partitioning Palestine* notes lacunae in the commission's undertakings, such as its frustration with the absence of definitive records on state lands in Palestine. In an understated passage, Sinanoglou relates that Zionists testifying before the commission assailed the British for not doing more to advance Jewish colonization, while in turn British officials stated that everything they did, from draining swamps to roadbuilding, was for precisely that purpose (p. 89). The book also highlights that the retention of British assets in Palestine (Christian holy sites; the deep-water port at Haifa; the oil pipeline from Iraq; military installations) was part and parcel of the Peel scheme, and that the new Mandate envisioned for managing this grab bag of micro-locations was to be permanent, with local populations made perpetual trustees of the British empire (p. 67).

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Perhaps the most remarkable section on the Peel Commission concerns its deliberations after concluding the collection of evidence and testimony. Revisiting the root of Britain's mission in Palestine, Lord Peel and Horace Rumbold, another commissioner, faulted the fundamental ambiguity of the Jewish National Home policy, going so far as to suggest that the government had originally only promised a cultural center for Jewish settlers, not a haven for millions of oppressed European refugees. Dispensing with this criticism, Coupland advocated partition, which was outside the scope of the commission's terms of reference. When his fellows remonstrated that the commission had not collected evidence regarding the prospects for partition, Coupland protested that this didn't really matter (p. 110). Reassured by support for the idea from Douglas Harris and Lewis Andrews, two senior Palestine officials, and against a background of Peel's ailing health, Coupland was able to get partition "tacked onto the report at the last minute" and with comparatively little elaboration (pp. 103, 133)—with everlasting results. Far from resolving the situation, partition set off howls of protest from Labour leader Clement Attlee and former PM Lloyd George in Britain, divided the Zionist movement, and triggered the second, deadlier phase of the Palestinian insurrection in the latter 1930s that ultimately forestalled it for a decade.

The book's last chapter tracks partition's resurrection in the 1940s, when it continued to divide British policymakers. The clearest through-line in this era is the role of the heretofore unknown Harris—dubbed "the uncrowned ruler" of Palestine by a top official of the Jewish Agency (pp. 159–60) —who emerges as a key proponent of partition inside the Mandatory regime and later served as secretary to the Cabinet committee on Palestine after World War II. An air of surrealism surrounded the idea of partition by this point: while the UN commission that recommended partition in 1947 spoke farcically about protecting human rights and preventing forcible population relocation, partition, far from being an act of "selective decolonization," in fact liquidated the British position in Palestine.

The account offered in *Partitioning Palestine* is illuminating and draws worthy attention to the haphazard qualities of Britain's overall management of Palestine. Still, some aspects of the partition story are left out of the frame. The Palestinians barely appear in the narrative, but they were more vocal about the threat partition posed, not least via their political activism, than the book would lead one to conclude. Similarly, the book stops short of recognizing that partition was, at least in the Mandate era, a recipe for war. Its first act in 1937 set off two years of hostilities and its second act ushered in the 1948 war. Responsible parties knew that this would be the outcome, yet the British in much of the 1940s, the Truman administration (whose own CIA told him partition meant war), and the UN, not to mention the Zionist movement, continued to advocate it. Sinanoglou's book is a timely reminder that, just as the Peel Commission's call for a "surgical operation" to remedy "the disease from which Palestine is suffering" came to naught, the promise of territorial separation in Palestine/Israel has proved to be a dangerous illusion.

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Inventing the Berbers: History and Ideology in the Maghrib. Ramzi Rouighi (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019). Pp. 261. $79.96 cloth. ISBN: 9780812251302

Reviewed by Peter Webb, Leiden Institute for Area Studies, Leiden University, The Netherlands (p.a.webb@hum.leidenuniv.nl)

A wide-ranging, critical reappraisal of the fundamental underpinnings of Berber identity, Ramzi Rouighi's *Inventing the Berbers* sets its sights on deconstructing a staple of the Middle East's ethnic makeup. Joining a now growing body of scholarship questioning long-held notions about pre-modern Middle Eastern ethnic categories, Rouighi's book underlines the importance of this work in the round: these are efforts to understand how identities were constructed and how they acquired meaning. And