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Armenians from Anatolia to Syria, of Assyrians to Iraq, and Jews to Palestine was the natural continuation of the population exchange schemas devised during the Balkan Wars that effectively unmixed Muslims and Christians, a kind of internationally backed ethnic cleansing. The transfer of refugees was inextricable from the establishment of the League of Nations mandate system, which was supposed to cultivate coherent, self-governing states but often served ulterior, imperialist ends. Robson contends that Britain and France implanted Assyrians, Armenians, and Jews into the region to serve as local proxies, counterweights to burgeoning Arab nationalism. She shows how administration of humanitarian relief exacerbated tensions between these communities and their Arab Muslim neighbors and fostered a distinct "nationalization" of minority identity. Although some community members preferred to return to their former homes or to accommodate (or even assimilate within) their newly created states, the imperial powers and their local allies contrived to keep them isolated, a thorn in the side of governments bent on political centralization and national homogenization.

There are, however, limitations to this top-down approach. For one, Robson correctly emphasizes the outside influence that led to enactment of "minority identity" but does not consider endogenous processes of self-nationalization. Despite apparent fluency in Apollonians' cultures, Assyrians, Armenians, and Jews were often keenly aware of their own distinctiveness—different churches, different languages, and ascribed to different homelands, however historically distant. Recent experiences of persecution were a reminder of communal precariousness. Armenian nationalist movements emerged at least in the 1870s and consolidated through repeated rounds of repression. Zionist, Marxist, and liberal Jews discussed the possibilities of Jewish nationhood in the shadow of pogroms decades before Balfour pledged Palestine as a Jewish national home. Thus, Robson grants little agency to the communities themselves in making their own plays for power. For instance, while Robson discusses Assyrian dissatisfaction with their treatment at the hands of the British and Iraqi governments, she cannot explain why Assyrian leaders adopted such starkly nationalist positions after Iraqi independence, demanding territorial autonomy and instigated a disastrous confrontation with the Iraqi state. Similarly, Robson details Zionist schemes for Jewish emigration to South America or Africa, but hardly notes why they failed. Most Jews, it seemed, believed that if they were indigenous anywhere, it must be in Palestine.

Finally and most importantly, Robson struggles to account for the differential outcomes of these ventures in population transfer and territorial partition. If all were pawns in a postwar imperial design, why did Britain and France abandon Assyrians and Armenians to the mercies of more-or-less hostile Arab nationalist governments in the 1930s? And why did Britain tarry in its commitment to enact Jewish statehood until 1948? In the book's final pages, Robson suggests that the British and French faced "impossible practical and logistical" hurdles in the Assyrian and Armenian projects while the Jews could be helped "at relatively low cost" (p. 167). It is not clear why this is so. A more complete answer would have to look more closely at the internal organization and politics of each of these communities.

SHIRA ROBINSON, *Citizen Strangers: Palestinians and the Birth of Israel's Liberal Settler State* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2013). Pp. 352. $24.95 paper. ISBN: 9780804788007

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In liberal circles in the United States, it has become a shibboleth to assume that the Palestine–Israel conflict is fundamentally about the occupation and the settlements, and, as former president

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Jimmy Carter put it, that Israel within its own borders is "a wonderful democracy with equal treatment of all citizens, whether Arab or Jew." Shira Robinson's deployment of Carter's statement, coming at the end of her recent book *Citizen Strangers,* rings with irony. In her reading, the project of statehood in Israel—quite apart from the question of the occupied territories—was from its inception fundamentally imbued with the language, tactics, and structures of a highly racialized settler colonialism.

Citizen Strangers traces the early years of Israel's dealings with the Palestinian Arabs remaining within its borders, who could be neither finally expelled nor absorbed into an explicitly Jewish (and Ashkenazi-dominated) state-building project. Robinson coins the phrase "liberal settler state" to describe the particularity of this early Israeli regime, which faced the fundamental quandary of meeting increasingly explicit international standards for political inclusion and democratic representation while simultaneously appropriating Palestinian territory and ensuring the ethnocommunal character of the Jewish state. "Above all," Robinson writes, "Israel's dilemma stemmed from the unprecedented colonial bargain that its government believed it had to strike in order to gain international recognition in 1989—to grant Palestinians the right to vote in the midst of its ongoing quest for their land" (p. 55). In five detailed, compact chapters, Robinson outlines the messy and often contradictory philosophies and practices that emerged in these early years of statehood, as Israeli officials tried to decide how to deal with the Palestinian "minority" remaining within their new borders.

The first chapter, "From Settlers to Sovereigns," outlines in brief the passage from early Zionist settlement to British imperial sponsorship to the expulsion of the Palestinians and the founding of the Israeli state in the 1948 Arab–Israeli war, emphasizing the racialized language of empire that inhered in Zionist settler philosophies and practices, particularly after the British declaration of support for the Zionist project in 1917 and its incorporation into the terms of the Mandate. In Chapter 2, "The Liberal Settler State," Robinson settles into a discussion of the simultaneous development of a government rhetoric of democracy and liberalism alongside a military regime intended to entrap, silence, and dispossess Palestinians. She carefully traces the development of a legal apparatus around the appropriation of Palestinian land (including the infamous "absentee property" laws of the immediate postwar period), the ghettoization and cantonization of Palestinian communities and their recategorization as legal "minorities," and the establishment of military rule (continued even after the armistice agreements) to control Palestinian movement and activity. She also discusses the public reactions to such policies from both sides: on the one hand, the clear Israeli "public complicity" in this strategy of appropriation and imprisonment on the grounds of state security and an unspoken but clearly understood hierarchy of ethnicity (p. 47); on the other, disputes over the most effective forms of activism within the demoralized and fractured Palestinian communities. The role of MAKI (the post-1948 Communist party, counting both Arabs and Jews as members) is particularly interesting in this context, as its members struck a delicate balance of exposing some of the more egregious crimes of Israeli military rule even while coming to some political accommodation with the state.

The third chapter in many ways represents the core of the book. Titled "Citizenship as a Category of Exclusion," it traces the military and legal measures Israeli officials took both to keep out Palestinians intent on returning to their land and to restrict Palestinian rights and land claims where expulsion and deportation were impossible. The so-called "sweep" operations—formally named the "War on Return" and the "War on Infiltration"—that began in early 1949 sought simultaneously to count and to expel as many Arabs as possible. These were followed by a new system of regulation known as the "Temporary Residence Permit," a highly contested plan intended, as Joshua Palmon put it, to "achieve the concealment of the War on Infiltration" and make possible the deportation of any Palestinian who possessed neither a TRP or state papers (p. 87). The question of citizenship for Palestinian Arabs in Israel was finally settled in 1952 by construing

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Palestinians as a separate and lesser category of citizen, governed not by the Law of Return (1950) but by the 1952 "Nationality Law."

Robinson's final two chapters tell the story of Palestinian incorporation, under duress, into public celebrations of Israeli statehood and—offering greater resistance—into the public accounting and reconciliation measures that followed the massacre at Kafr Qasim in 1956. Such moments came to represent a test of priorities for both Jewish and Arab members of MAKI, which increasingly faced the question of whether and how to align with the global decolonization movements of the 1950s and 1960s that claimed kinship with the Palestinian cause. The struggles over the Kafr Qasim massacre eventually, Robinson suggests, led Palestinian activists to make the strategic decision to "narrow the scope of their broad demands for equality . . . and focus on a more limited campaign to end the most visible expressions of segregation in order to enlist the support of Jewish liberals"—a decision that finally ended martial law in Israel, but allowed for the permanent institutionalization of many forms of Jewish settler privilege.

The idea of analyzing the Zionist movement and the state of Israel through the lens of settler colonialism is not new; it produced some compelling work as long ago as the 1980s, and has moved into new prominence in the past twenty years despite considerable ongoing resistance. But it has been regrettably rare that serious scholars of Palestine/Israel have made use of this approach in conjunction with specific, detailed, documented accounts of precisely how settler domination operated in this context—its rhetoric, its practice, its use of both coercion and violence—and what sorts of resistance and/or accommodation were available to its opponents. Robinson's book represents a remarkable accomplishment for its empirical accounting of a settler society, and opens new possibilities for thinking about Palestine/Israel in terms that are both locally specific and globally conscious.

SHAHRAM KHOSRAVI, *Precarious Lives: Waiting and Hope in Iran*, Contemporary Ethnography (Philadelphia, Pa.: University of Philadelphia Press, 2017). Pp. 275. $51.95 cloth. ISBN: 9780812248876

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In May 2017, BBC Persian posted a short video message on its Instagram feed that was submitted by a young Iranian viewer. This was Milad, a postsecondary student and resident of Qom, Iran. He outlines his "expectations of the presidential candidate" that he voted for, and calls upon this candidate to advance social and cultural opportunities "for people like me." He complains that recreational activities (*sargarmī*) in Qom—a "religious city," he points out—are limited for youth. The video ends on a rather despondent note as he suggests that actually realizing these expectations will probably prove costly for the candidate.

Shahram Khosravi's *Precarious Lives* is an anthropological exploration of the circumstances and lived experiences that underpin such appeals. The voices of its interlocutors strike many of the same chords that Milad does. In this regard, *Precarious Lives* may be read as an extension of Khosravi's earlier monograph on middle-class Iranian youth in Tehran (*Young and Defiant in Tehran* [Philadelphia, Pa.: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008]). This time around, however, we are presented with a wider analytic lens: describing forms of precarity among, for example, the working class and urban poor, while also placing these experiences beyond Tehran. As a result, the chapters read more like progressive variations on this theme, precarity, rather than a sustained study of a particular locale or set of social practices.

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