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Reviews: Politics, Islam and Culture

Between Islam and the State: The Politics of Engagement
Berna Turam

The explosion of studies that aim to understand the nature and the goals, as well as the inner workings of Islamist movements has created a welcome research program across different disciplines, including anthropology, sociology, and political science. A comprehensive and interdisciplinary analysis of the complex interplay between Islamist movements and their local, national, and international surroundings give a better account of what is at stake for the members of these movements and how they adapt their practices to changing circumstances while still pursuing their ideational goals. It is by way of both contextualizing and historicizing these Islamist movements can one avoid overly generalized, and thus reductionist conclusions about the role of Islam in Muslim societies, and the hotly debated issues such as the compatibility between Islam and democracy.

Berna Turam’s Between Islam and the State: The Politics of Engagement stands out as one of the best studies published in recent years that analyzes the complex interplay between the secular actors and Islamist actors in creating an environment conducive for political pluralism. By engaging in a highly commendable ethnographic research technique, Turam studies both the Islamic network of the Gulen movement and of the AKP [Justice and Development Party], and their interaction with the secular Republic actors. The end result is a fascinating, and a mostly objective story, of ‘a rising agreement, cooperation, and a growing sense of belonging between the secular state and Islamic actors (p. 7),’ which has inadvertently led to further liberalization of Turkish democracy.

The book is about ‘the contemporary everyday settings that allowed Islamic actors and the state to interact and reshape each other (p. 9).’ It shows the extent of the increasing tolerance, if not full acceptance, that both the secular actors and the Islamist actors show toward each other within a short period of time (1994–2002 and onwards). Turam cleverly problematizes both the commonly referred arguments about a clash between the secularists and the Islamists and the overly naïve views of political plurality and social and cultural diversity in Turkey. She analyzes ‘the demise of confrontation’ between the secular Republican actors and the Islamist actors in the Turkey context, which has ‘facilitated democratization not deliberately . . . but accidentally [emphases original] (p. 25).’ The unintended consequences of certain rationally calculated actions on the part of both the secular and the Islamist actors have paved the way for further democratization in Turkey. Although this reviewer is not convinced fully that the confrontation between the two sides came to an end as discussed below, Berna Turam has written a very important book that would provide a much needed accompaniment to other studies that have either too optimistically claimed the rise of ‘Muslim democracy’
(Yavuz 1998) and a new ‘Muslimhood’ (White 2002) or the ‘end of Islamism’ (White 2000) in Turkey.

*Between Islam and the State* is divided into eight parts. In addition to introduction and conclusion there are six chapters. Introduction discusses the importance of the subject matter and familiarizes the reader with the author’s major arguments. Chapters 1 and 2 clarify more in depth the major arguments of the book and contextualize the state-society relations in Turkey. Specifically, in Chapter 1, after providing a brief but to the point review of the literature on both Islamism and state-society relations, Berna Turam distinguishes civil society from (1) project-based undertakings, (2) public sphere, and finally from (3) social capital. Although the author distinguishes civil society from all these three things in order to narrow down its definition so that the nature of and the dynamics within the networks of the Gulen movement could be presented, it seems that the reason for these distinctions has more to do with the heuristic utility of a stricter definition of civil society that would be less problematic to analytically analyze the interplay between Islamist actors and the state in Turkey. However, the outcome is that the network of the Gulen movement is neither a part of civil society nor not a part of civil society. Turam also forcefully reiterates her major claim in Chapter 1: it is the ‘politics of engagement’ that ‘explains the emergence of *alternative vertical* [as opposed to horizontal] channels, which *link* rather than divide or antagonize Islamic actors and the state [*emphases in italics in original*]’ (pp. 30–31).

According to the author, this ‘politics of engagement’ became possible in Turkey because both the Gulen movement and AKP share the dominant nationalist discourse represented by the secular Republican actors. This is in direct contrast to what has been the case in many of the other Middle Eastern cases. Islamism usually arose in those societies directly as a response to the real or perceived failure of nationalistic ideologies. In this sense, especially the moderate secular actors do not feel threatened by either the Gulen movement or the AKP-led government. In addition, even in its internationalist undertakings, the Gulen movement is clearly committed to the ‘nation’, and intent to show to the world that “Turkish Islam” is peaceful and pro-democratic’ (p. 35). The fact, according to the author, that the leaders of both the Gulen movement and the AKP are not interested in confrontation, which this reviewer thinks is disputable especially with regard to AKP leader and Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan, has allowed for a reconciliation of some of the tensions between Islamist actors and the secular Republican actors.

In Chapter 2, which includes a captivating eleven-page discussion about the ‘conditions of “sharing” a public space’, Berna Turam discusses the tensions between the state and Islam in Turkey and the ways in which these tensions have been resolved, albeit partially. By alluding to her own experiences as a participant observer in different sites where the supporters of the Gulen movement interacted with others and with each other, Turam problematizes the assumed tolerance of the Gulen movement by way of demonstrating the contradictions movement supporters show in private and public spheres. The interesting thing is not that this was news to this author; rather, it is that the theorizing provided by the author for these contradictions is unique. According to Turam, these contradictions are reconciled within movement. In a way, supporters of the Gulen movement have accepted the fact that they have different roles they play. What is unclear is if they
have accepted these different roles because they *have to* or if they have really *internalized* them.

Chapters 3 through 5 provide the empirical studies of the ‘politics of engagement’. In Chapter 3, the reader learns (more) about the importance of education in both the Republican and the Islamist projects in Turkey, and there is almost a constant contestation over students. In a way, education sites become a venue to instil the ‘right’ way of life into students’ minds. What is interesting about the schools of the Gulen movement is that this instillation takes place not through what is taught in classes but through extra-curricular activities (p. 70). Gulen schools have the latest technology available to students and scientific teaching is of great importance. Despite the non-religious curriculum followed in these schools, hard-core seculars persistently rejects the utility of them in both Turkey and abroad. As Turam discusses in detail (pp. 71–76), under the umbrella of ‘United Civil Society Organizations’, these secularists made it their primary target to have these schools officially closed down for posing a major ‘Islamic threat’ to Turkey’s secular system. Despite the continuous, sporadic yet important contestations, the ‘symbolic negotiations’ that have taken place over the years between the movement’s supporters and the mostly moderate secularists, which interestingly include retired military officers, these schools have been maintained. This is due mostly to the presence of Ataturk corners in these schools as well as the non-religious curricular activity. More importantly, ‘the government and the military agreed on 27 March 1998 that “the Fethullahists” were sincere Muslims’ (p. 84).

Chapter 4 discusses the most cooperative undertaking between the secular actors and the supporters of the Gulen movement to date. According to Berna Turam, ‘national loyalties and ethnic consciousness overshadowed [sic] the Islamic undertone of the movement in the international realm’ (p. 4), especially in Central Asia in the 1990s. This in turn created a synergy between these actors and the secular Republicans. Although this reviewer agrees with Turam that cooperation existed between the Gulen movement and the secular actors, the ‘politics of engagement’ in the context of Central Asia was not as organic as it was portrayed by the author. Simply the interests of both actors converged. Whereas the Gulen movement was trying to consolidate its network and expand its influence in *both* Muslim and Turkic societies, the military and other secular actors in Turkey wanted to curb a possible Iranian influence in the region. In fact, when it became clear that the idea to establish a regional Turkic community under the leadership of Turkey proved to be an elusive goal, the cooperation between the Gulen movement and the secular Republican actors ended as quickly as it was flourished in the first place. The already vulnerable positive relations came to an abrupt end when the movement’s leader Fethullah Gulen was claimed to have urged his followers, especially those who have assumed to have infiltrated the judiciary and public service to work patiently for the sake of the future Islam-based state.

Chapter 5 is about one of the most divisive issues in secularism versus Islamism debate: women. Both the Republican and the Islamist projects, Turam argues, have helped the elite women, whereas the women’s ‘liberation’ from old traditions and suppression has been on the fringes. Even the elite women, however, have been kept outside of the power circles. In a sense, women’s traditional roles have been emphasized although the secular actors and the supporters of the Gulen
movement support women’s education. For Republican male actors, women’s increasing role in public life in Turkey demonstrated the country’s Western and modern orientation. For the Islamists, educated women meant better mothers, better wives, and thus, better service to the movement. Although there is a convergence between the secular and Islamist males about the primary role of women in the private sphere, Turam correctly points to the fact that the secular female actors have ‘experimented within – and expanded – the tight boundaries of public and political realms that were granted to them by the Republican male actors’ (p. 113). The same thing cannot be said about the women of the Gulen movement. This does not necessarily mean that women associated with the Gulen movement cannot engage with the movement’s male leaders and ideologues as their secular counterparts have done with the Republican secular males. However, the seeming internalization of their primary role in the private sphere by these women may make it harder to get representation in public sphere, and among political power circles.

Berna Turam’s *Between Islam and the State* provides a much-needed theoretical perspective into character and inner dynamics of the Gulen movement. Her discussion on the ‘demise of confrontation’ between the Republican secular actors and the Islamist forces – the Gulen movement and the AKP – is interesting and, although at times problematic, mostly persuasive. The major strength of the book is the contextualization and histrocization of the ‘demise’ and the rise of the ‘politics of engagement’ between these actors. The book’s other significant asset is its objectivity, especially when compared to other works published in recent years. The author’s personal stories interspersed throughout the book show the necessary rapport she was able to establish between herself and the subjects of the study. Her analysis has led this reviewer to believe that she was able to remain an objective, if not neutral, participant-observer in meetings and private and public gatherings.

Although in general the book is an excellent example of a social scientific inquiry, it has a number of major and minor weaknesses. First of all, Turam’s analysis of the AKP is both theoretically and empirically weak. Although the author intends to show that the ‘politics of engagement’ takes place at both political and social levels, Turam provides little insight into the evolution of the Islamist discourse of the AKP. In fact, the chapter about AKP, especially considering the developments that took place after the book went to press, makes the nicely constructed arguments of the author less coherent. The book would have benefited greatly had there been more theorizing about the state, which is considered mostly monolithic by the author, and its different branches. Although the military might have been more interested in taking part in Turam’s ‘politics of engagement’ with the Islamist forces, the Turkish judiciary proved less willing to engage with the Islamists.

Although it is not a major weakness, the book would have also benefited from a deeper analysis of the influence of the negotiations with the European Union had on both Turkey’s secular and Islamist actors. Berna Turam recognizes this influence but doesn’t elaborate upon its ongoing influence on the cooperation, convergence, or tensions between these actors.

Despite these weaknesses, *Between Islam and the State* is an extremely important contribution to our understanding of the complicated relationship between the state and Islamic political actors in Turkey. Whereas many of the
book’s conclusions are difficult to transfer to other contexts, the research methodology and the major argument about the relationship between the secular and Islamist actors could be easily applied in other Muslim-majority cases. Finally, the decision by the Constitutional Court on July 30, 2008, not to close down the AKP or ban its politicians from politics makes the reading of Berna Turam’s *Between Islam and the State* more important than ever. AKP became the first Islamist-oriented party in Turkey to be shut off from politics despite being alleged to have undermined the secular structure of Turkey by allowing women to wear *hijabs* in the institutions of higher education of Turkey.

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Hamline University*

**Secularism Confronts Islam**
Oliver Roy

The central question in Secularism Confronts Islam is the compatibility between Islam and secularism as manifested in European, particularly French, society. Roy distinguishes between two versions of secularism, one which applies to Europe as a whole and occurs when ‘society emancipates itself from a sense of the sacred which it does not necessarily deny’ and *laicité* which is peculiar to French society where the state ‘actively expels religious life beyond a border that the state itself has defined by law’.

He further states that the policy adopted with regard to minorities in France is more ‘integrationist’, whereas the rest of Europe has opted for a multiculturalist approach. Both models, Roy contends, are undergoing reassessment and he seems to find faults with aspects of both.

He is of the view, rightly, that the acceptance of Muslim communities living in the West of the principle of separation between religion and the state is genuine and sincere and that it would be very far-fetched to entertain the idea that they have some design with regard to the political order. In fact they have accepted ‘the rules of the game’.

Further still he argues that the Muslim world in general, Muslim communities in the West included, is undergoing a profound process of secularization through ‘the two major vectors of religious renewal, the individualization of religiosity and the loss of cultural identity’. He adds that some of the militant aspects of *laicité* disturb this natural process and may produce undesired results.

While there is no doubt that Muslims living in the West have accepted secularism in terms of separation between church and state and that this was, as Roy claims, a conscious political decision, it is questionable whether there is a process of secularization in terms of culture and values. That there is a renewal in the Muslim world, even manifestations of a burgeoning reformation, there is no doubt but this process is not akin to what had taken place in Europe in the period which followed the Renaissance. The reason for this goes to the heart of Islam’s problematic relationship with modernity. Though Islam, as Ernest Gellner contends, is more in agreement with modernity than the other two monotheistic...
religions because of its sense of universalism and adherence to the law or Sharia, it has thus far proved to be the most resistant to secularism. This supports the view that Muslims can modernize while remaining faithful to the basic tenets of their religion and lends credence to the discourse of multiple modernities. This dissonant relationship which Islam has with modernity seems to be responsible for an important issue which Roy deals with in his book which has to do with redrawing the boundaries between Left and Right, conservative and liberal. While the Left has traditionally supported the rights of minorities it now seems to differentiate between ethnic and religious minorities and adopts hard-line positions with regard to Islam, sometimes more radical than the extent to which Conservatives are willing to go. While the religious Right traditionally opted for a more cautious and exclusionary approach with regard to Muslims it now finds itself in a defacto alliance with Muslim fundamentalists against the liberals when it comes to voting about matters of moral and societal relevance. According to Roy this has ‘deeply disturbed the patterns according to which political and moral positions are adopted in Europe’. Roy attributes this phenomenon totally to the internal and ‘western sets of problems’. He does not seem to acknowledge the adequate weight which Islamism has brought to bear on this important subject, nor does he identify the aforementioned issue of Islam’s problematic relationship with modernity as being chiefly responsible for this.

Notwithstanding, this small book has some penetrating analysis about the challenges which Muslim communities living in Europe have to face and some of the responses which they are coming up with. It also goes a long way towards deconstructing the myths and fears about Muslim presence in the West. It is a qualitative and welcome addition to the literature on Muslims’ encounter with the west from a most astute observer of modern Islam.

Emad Bazzi © 2009
Leeds University

The Politicization of Islam: Reconstructing Identity, State, Faith, and Community in the Late Ottoman State (Studies in Middle Eastern History)
Kemal H. Karpat

Politicization of Islam in Turkey in the 1980s started to be remarkable by the rallies of veiled young women in front of the universities to protest the ban on the headscarf and to enjoy their constitutional right to education. Although the headscarf meant nothing but an ordinary religious obligation for any pious Muslim woman as Islamist women suggest, it symbolized a threat against the republican regime, which requires the regulation of the public sphere and the public institutions in line with modern secular principles rather than Islamic obligations. Since then the headscarf dispute turned out to be a hard case in Turkish politics, dividing people into two camps as secularists and Islamists. At a time when the new president Abdullah Gül, whose wife wears the headscarf, signed the bill easing the restriction on veiling in universities, politicization of Islam once again has become the hotly debated issue in the domestic as well as foreign setting.
begging many questions such as: Will Turkey be another Iran or Malaysia? Will the headscarf in universities as a Trojan horse obliterate secular establishments from within? Does Islam, which is politicized by the Justice and Development Party, constitute a threat against national unity and modern foundations of Turkey? In such a conjuncture, Kemal Karpat’s lengthy and multifaceted book on the Islamic revivalism and politicization in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century Ottoman Empire offers many significant political, cultural and religious facts setting aside its contribution to the Ottoman–Turkish and Islamic studies by rich archival analysis. The Politicization of Islam: Reconstructing Identity, State, Faith, and Community in the Late Ottoman State is a kind of lifetime project which captured author’s mind when he was at the beginning of his academic career and remained there despite he produced many distinguished books and articles. Declaring the basic message of the book as a kind of reconciliation between secularists who are invited to understand that Turkey is Muslim and that people are ‘free to practice their faith in full freedom’ and Islamists who in turn have to give consent to ‘modernism, Kemalism and republicanism’ (p. 422), Karpat foresaw the current political deadlock of the secularists and Islamists in Turkey where the bill easing the restriction on Islamic headscarf in university sparked off the everlasting dispute of the Islamists and secularists. Karpat tries to convince secularists and Islamists about their converged institutional and ideological interests by exposing certain historical details such the case of the abolishment of şeyhülislamate (the chief religious officialdom in the Ottoman Empire) and the establishment of the Directorate of Religious Affairs by the Kemalist regime: he underlines that very few people understand the Directorate of the Religious Affairs maintains the function of the şeyhülislamate (p. 409). All in all, however, he aims at showing compatibility of Islam with modern establishments. Despite the fact there are many scholarly works on the Ottoman state and the emergence of modern Turkey, Karpat detects a common ‘erroneous fashion’ especially in terms of the relationship between modernity and Islam, a relationship conceived as a ‘deadly struggle’ by many. Instead, Karpat in the Politicization of Islam shows the role of Islam for preserving cultural identity and resisting to the Western assaults in the making of a new state and nation. Claiming to offer a full-fledged narrative of the transformation of the Ottoman state and society, Karpat tries to include almost all factors, global and local alike that shape the transformation of the Ottoman state and society in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Starting from an economic premise that the Ottoman state, like the rest of the Muslim world, was exposed to capitalism and the threat of violent European occupation in the nineteenth century, he explores concomitant structural changes including primarily the emergence of a new Muslim middle classes who were able to assess ‘their own social position and Islamic culture in a critical and worldly manner’ (p. 3). In elaborating on the Islamism of the new middle classes as well as the lower classes, Karpat criticizes certain ‘self-evident’ assumptions such as Islamism, one of the main ideological currents in the late Ottoman times to save the state, was a simple instrument for bringing about ‘cohesion’ among the Ottoman subjects, or alternatively as a ‘militant international Muslim movement’ against the West and its Christian faith/civilization. Rather, Karpat believes, Islamism at that time was an ideology of regeneration, modernization and mobilization of the Muslim populations for both self-defense against the colonial Europe and self-renewal and progress (p. 18).
This lengthy and lucid book consists of 17 chapters apart from introduction and conclusion.

The first chapter explores the popular roots of Islamism in the last decades of the Ottoman Empire. Here the main argument is that one hardly understands the last decades of the Ottoman Empire without knowing the nature of revivalist movements in the Islamic world. It is convincingly clarified that the revivalist movement emerges as a response to the capitalism, European occupation as well as the reforms of the Ottoman state itself. It will be faulty, if one considers contemporary Islamist revivalism as the extension of the nineteenth-century revivalism. While the latter aimed at coping with structural transformation, the former react against the effects of change and the oppressive political regimes responsible for the economic poverty and moral deprivation of the Muslim lower classes (p. 46). The second chapter continuously deals with the precursors of pan-Islamism, by underlining that the idea of Islamic unity remained an alien concept to Muslim rulers until the nineteenth century, despite the pervasive feeling of religious communality and brotherhood among the mass of believers (p. 48).

The foreign affairs of the Ottoman Empire with Africa, Russia and Europe in general as well as the emergence of middle classes and affects of sects mainly Naksbandia—which is still the most important religious sect in modern Turkey—as well as the making of the Sultan Abdulhamid II as a Muslim modern ruler, changing composure of the dynasty, state and Islam were primary focuses of the following chapters on the era of Ottoman Empire. In the chapters from 13 to 17, Karpat looks into the formation of modern nationhood and the making of Turkishness as an identity replacing the religious one. Here Karpat detects the main shortcoming of the modern Turkish nation as the problem of self-definition and self-perception, which is defined by the state, and argues clearly that: ‘The elites [Kemalist], in the control of the real government, which is above the parliament, continue to see Turkey through the narrow ethno-ideological glasses of the generation of the 1930s and 1940s and, in the name of “national unity”, prevent others from expressing any different views’ (p. 407). What is to be done, however, is to compromise on the ground that secularists should acknowledge the Muslim identity of the nation whereas the Islamists should express their loyalty to Kemalism and the republican regime.

Put it briefly, based upon an intense knowledge of history, politics and religion in the Ottoman Empire and modern Turkey, The Politicization of Islam of Kemal Karpat has an appeal crossing disciplinary boundaries.

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Harvard University

Turkey: The Quest for Identity
Feroz Ahmad

At a time when the Justice and Development Party (AKP, Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi), the pro-American and pro-EU Islamists of Turkey has become the focus
of international attention as an exportable model for domesticating radical Islamist political movements in the Middle Eastern countries, the chief prosecutor in Turkey demanded from the Constitutional Court to ban the governing AKP because it threatens the secular basis of Kemalist Turkey. The obvious political action of the chief prosecutor soothed the anxieties of many Kemalist Turks who have occasionally chanted the slogan against the AKP in the streets: ‘Mullahs to Iran!’ Put it another way, Turkey would export its new brand Islamism, if its secular establishment does not throw it out from the Turkish political sphere. Yet, having the support of almost half of the electoral demos, the AKP has no intention to retreat the political sphere without fighting at all. In such a conjuncture, Feroz Ahmad’s chronological and lucid book on Turkey must be at hand for those who want to learn quickly about the historical and political realities of the country from the time of the Ottoman Empire to the modern Republic. Ahmad’s excellent scholarship on Turkey makes reading the book a very fruitful activity by offering many valuable details and illuminating interpretations about Turkish politics – the title chosen by Ahmad, for instance, gives his genuine knowledge on Turkey, whose recent political turmoil or general political malaise would be explained by this *Quest for Identity*.

The book consists of seven evenly divided chapters. The first three chapters focus on the Ottomans. The rise and fall of a great Empire was clearly elucidated in terms of economic, military and political aspects. The fourth chapter elaborates on the Kemalist era from 1919 to 1938. Beginning with a short biography of Mustafa Kemal, the founding father of the Turkish Republic, Ahmad provides his readers with the foundational reasons of the contemporary political turmoil by noting, for instance, that after 1923 the polity ‘moved aggressively away from traditionalism to modernity’, and that scientific knowledge came to be described as ‘the best guide to life’ (p. 84). Apart from the science which illuminates and guides Turkish people, the fundamental and ‘unchanging principles’ of modern Turkey to be followed were as follows: Republicanism (*Cumhuriyetçilik*), Nationalism/Patriotism (*Milliyetçilik*), Populism (*Halkçılık*), Statism (*Devletçilik*), Laicism/Secularism (*Laiklik*) and Revolutionism/Reformism (*İnkılapçılık*), which were integrated into the constitution in 1937. In fact, these principles were critical in understanding the general political problems of the country. And Ahmad gives the genealogy of everlasting conflict between Kemalists and Islamists whose rising power in the last decade as well as the affect of new global politics on the nation-states, proliferation of ethnic separatism (Kurdish question) and emergence of supra-national institutionalisation (EU) threaten the foundational principles of Turkey, which in turn experience identity problems and democratic deficits.

The fifth and sixth chapters elaborate on Turkey’s move towards multi-party system and democracy as well as several military interventions that halted democratization process. They also explain international factors that affected the country such as the cold war, NATO membership and Cyprus question. The last chapter starts with the 1980 coup, which was justified by generals as a necessary intervention to ‘save the state and its people from social division, economic breakdown, and the anarchy and violence’ (p. 149). A new constitution was prepared and 91.37% of the Turkish electors said ‘yes’ to the new constitution, which has been the leading obstacle before democracy; however, as Ahmad underlines, people recognized that this was the only way for restoring a civilian rule. Ahmad rightly observes that the military regime following the September 12,
1980, intervention radically transformed the political ‘architecture’ of the country: ‘The centre-left and centre-right had been fractured and non-systemic parties like the Islamists and the neo-fascists were able to play a critical role’ (p. 168). This observation is so accurate that the current composition of the Turkish parliament once again fortifies it in 2008.

I suggest Ahmad’s book for both academic and non-academic readers on the ground that it would be a good source for those who are beginners in the Middle East, Turkish politics and history studies. Apart from opening multiple doors into Turkish landscape, Ahmad enumerates valuable reading lists at the end of each chapter for readers who would already know which would be the true steps to deepen their knowledge. On the other hand, since the book is well-written, lucid and informative any reader who wants to get a perspective on a Muslim country, which is knocking the door of the European Union in the age of Islamophobia should have a look at it.

Fatma Tutuncu © 2009
Harvard University

Married to Another Man: Israel’s Dilemma in Palestine
Ghada Karmi

This academically challenging and thought provoking book mirrors the critical need for the author, British-Palestinian and Exeter University based academic, Dr Ghada Karmi to ‘lay’ out her vision for solving the Palestinian–Israeli conflict. The work under review can be seen as Ghada Karmi’s paean to the necessity of a ‘one-state’ solution for Palestine–Israel. In many ways, this book is a continuation of the author’s earlier and much acclaimed memoir, In search of Fatima: A Palestinian Story (London, Verso, 2002), which was a highly passionate and sensitive account of her early life and career in both British Mandatory Palestine as well as Great Britain, and her later social work focussing on ‘justice and peace’ issues for the Palestinian people. Her approach towards dealing with the Palestinian–Israeli conflict from a historical–political and quasi-narrative point of view has been highly engaging and unique as far as the ability to integrate newspaper and current media resources into her work is concerned. As the Author states in her introduction, the desire of the Zionists to set up a ‘patently’ Jewish state on what was essentially another people’s land was ‘patently’ unworkable (p. 1). And this is what the Author sets out to prove in her moderately ‘extensive’ work of 267 pages.

The author is a self-confessed one-time cynic of the ‘one-state’ solution who was converted to this position over time. Her emotive quotations from the controversial Israeli ‘new’ historian Benny Morris at the beginning of this book, particularly with reference to the ‘very possible’ need (from a Zionist Israeli point of view) to ensure a further deportation and evacuation of the Palestinian residents of Israel–Palestine, should the ‘security’ of the Jewish state so necessitate, sets the tone for further concerned reading and critical analysis in this book. In the author’s eyes, it was the Zionist’s ‘stubborn’ refusal to give up their stubborn ‘dream’
of a Jewish state on the land of Palestine that was the main cause for the ongoing conflict in the Holy Land. Karmi pursues the ‘gradualist’ approach in this book, by dealing with various Palestinian–Israeli ‘hot’ issues in a systematic and exhaustive framework.

The book is divided into seven main chapters with many subdivisions. Chapter one deals with the impact of the formation of the state of Israel on the Arab people. Karmi rightly points out that it was the ‘security implications’ of the creation of the state of Israel that was responsible for gross over-spending on the part of the militaries of the various Arab states (p. 21). As she mentions, Arab military spending alone stood at 7.4% of GNP which was something like three times the world average of 2.4% in the late 1990s (p. 21). Karmi provides an exhaustive account of the various moves undertaken by the Israelis to destabilise and fractionalise the Arab world. She takes special pains to reveal Israel’s ‘colonialist’ tendencies towards the Arab world, and particularly towards non-Arab and non-Muslim minorities within the Arab world, such as the Druze and the Maronites of Lebanon. She traces how each Arab state was made to become a ‘dependency’ of the West, thereby reducing each to utter ‘impotency’ in their individual as well as collective interaction with the Westernised ‘Euro-American’ oriented state of Israel.

Karmi’s second chapter deals with the tendency among Jewish people worldwide to support the state of Israel. She refers to the Khazar legend whereby the ‘Khazarites’ as an early ‘Middle Ages’ kingdom in the Caspian–Volga region of Eurasia, were supposed to have converted almost ‘en-masse’ to Judaism and later formed the backbone of the Jews of the East European ‘shtetl’ (p. 66). She writes about the striking phenomenon by which Jews worldwide could profess both, so-called ‘dual loyalties’ to their own state of nationality as well as on a ‘transnational’ basis to the state of Israel. Karmi is probably well-versed to handle this issue as she spent most of her life in London in the immediate post-war period, with its large and diverse Jewish community, so instrumental in the establishment and development of the pre-state ‘Yishuv’ (Jewish community) in mandatory Palestine.

In chapter three, Karmi tries to analyse why the West supports Israel so blindly. She traces the evolution and development of Christian Zionism in the West, and especially in its initial powerhouse in the UK. The 1838 establishment of a British consulate in Jerusalem was itself the first step for many ‘dispensationalist’ oriented English men and women to re-establish the national home of the Jewish people. The author also traces the impact of the ‘Sunday School’ movement on Western Christians ‘conception’ of the state of Israel and the Jewish people. She narrates how her attempt to lobby British Labour politician Tony Benn on Palestine, during the 1970s backfired on the basis of his preconceived notions about Israel and the Jews, religious ideas which had been inculcated in him and countless other British and Western orientated Christian people as small children in Sunday school. As she writes, the West supports Israel for numerous reasons; one of the most important of which was the ‘natural’ tendency to see Israel and the ‘Europeised’ Jewish people of the state as ‘people like us,’ to quote Karmi’s expression (p. 116). She raises the question of who actually controls America, with the rise and growth of the so-called ‘neocons’ and the pro-Zionist ‘Christian’ and American Jewish lobby within the United States. What all this meant for the Arab people of the Middle East was that they were increasingly subjected to alienation
and discontent at the extent to which forces that were well beyond their own comprehension and control, sought to ‘control’ them based on Western definitions of self-interest and ‘real-politik’ (p. 120).

Dr Karmi dedicates an entire chapter four to the history of ‘failed’ peace processes in the Israel–Palestine imbroglio. She deals with all Arab–Israeli peace plans right from UNGA resolution 242 to the ‘present,’ but now defunct ‘road-map to peace’ that was launched by George Bush in 2003 and has since failed in all its essential parameters. Karmi includes a particularly detailed description of the so-called Hebron Agreement that partitioned the Old City between the Palestinians and the Israelis in a highly unequal agreement. Based on her own ‘real-life’ experience of the Hebron situation, the author describes the situation there as most ‘tragic’ based on the destruction of the vibrant Old City life for the Palestinian people, so that a few hundred militant, xenophobic and fundamentalist Jewish settlers might enjoy untrammeled access to their ‘rights’, whilst keeping literally hundreds of thousands of Palestinians in the area under almost perpetual ‘lock-down’.

Karmi blames the ‘gradualist’ approach of all Western-sponsored peace plans as the main ‘culprit’ responsible for the failure of Israeli–Palestinian peace-making in the post-Camp David I era. She does not believe that there is any place for gradualism in the ‘peace process’ which only encourages Israel to play with the terms of Israel–Palestine peacemaking by creating more ‘facts on the ground’. Karmi raises an important issue as regards the nature of the late Palestinian leader and former president of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), Yasser Arafat when she stated that it was Arafat’s firm belief in the so-called ‘piece-by-piece’ approach that made him accept any so-called Israeli ‘concessions’ to the peace process (p. 145). She details how Arafat sought to defeat Israel at its own game which was to simultaneously create ‘facts on the ground’, while engaging in negotiations with the Palestinians as well as other Arabs and the West over the so-called ‘peace process’. He sincerely followed what has been called the ‘foot-in-the-door’ approach, whereby he personally felt that any little concession from the Israelis could be used in an incremental process towards ‘independence’ and ‘recognition’ as a Palestinian nation ‘with rights’ (p. 144). To quote Karmi here, Arafat’s basic premise here was that Israel was too powerful to be directly challenged. The only way to achieve Palestinian aims was to hoodwink it into entering a process, which, despite itself, would ultimately end in a Palestinian state. (p. 144)

Chapter five deals with the Israel’s desire to ultimately eliminate the Palestinians as a ‘perceived’ threat to the Jewishness of the state of Israel. She describes Israel’s and Ariel Sharon’s ‘ultimate’ complicity in the destruction and ultimate ‘death’ of former Palestinian president Yasser Arafat. The author provides a critical analysis of Sharon’s policy of ‘slow death’ for the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. In her view,

Sharon, like the early Zionist leader Vladimir Jabotinsky before him, believed that that the solution to the Arab–Israeli conflict would only be possible when the Arabs accepted Zionism and recognised the ‘Jewish right to a homeland,’ established as a Jewish state in the Land of Israel (including the West Bank, ‘the cradle of the Jewish people’). Only brute force and maintaining superior military strength would bring this about. To counter the Arab ‘demographic threat,’ it was necessary to build the separation wall, which would shut out Arab population centres, and settle more Jews on the land. Sharon intended
Karmi writes about the one-state solution in detail given the fact that the necessity of this ‘solution’ forms the core of this book’s argument. Her only solution to solving the Palestine–Israel problem is the ‘one-state’ solution, especially given the fact that the ‘two-state’ solution is increasingly viewed as ‘utterly’ unviable ‘on the ground’ today. As she writes, ‘Israel’s policy of ‘creating facts’ on the ground was the single most effective foil to these plans,’ to ensure that a two-state solution would become unworkable (p. 222).

In her chapter seven on the ‘one-state’ solution, Dr. Karmi seeks to trace the evolution and development of the ‘one-state’ solution to the Israel–Palestine conflict through its different forms and manifestations over the years. Karmi’s chapter on the ‘one-state’ solution in this book is perhaps her best researched with quite detailed description of the many different proposals that have been brought forward over the years in support of this kind of a ‘solution’ to the problem. She traces the evolution of the concept from the so-called ‘binational’ state as it was evolved during the Mandate era to the so-called model for a ‘democratic non-sectarian’ state as this developed in the post-Nakba scenario and mainly after the 1990s. Karmi refers to the work of organisations based in North America and Europe such as Al-Awda (the Right of return coalition) as well as the One-State Group, based in Toronto and London, respectively (pp. 246–247).

Many of these organisations came into being as a result of the outbreak of the second Intifada, popularly known as the Al-Aqsa Intifada. The author was familiar with the inner workings of many of these groups, being a member of some of them herself. She deals very sensitively with the ‘crisis in consciousness’ among many ‘liberal’ Israelis as well as Palestinians as they sought to dialogue as well as argue about the relative merits of the ‘one-state’ or ‘two-state’ solutions. She even raises a comparison between the situation in formerly ‘apartheid’ South Africa and present day Israel–Palestine to argue about the ultimate necessity to pursue the ‘one-state’ solution as was brought to fruition after the fall of apartheid in South Africa (p. 256). In the end, Karmi ends her chapter with the shrewd analytical thought that when compared to the creation of the state of Israel as a logical consequence of the entire Zionist project (under what seemed like insuperable odds in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries), the present-day demand for a ‘one-state’ solution to the conflict did not seem so ‘far-fetched’ after all, given the current worldwide sympathies for the socio-political conditions of the Palestinian people. All that was required was the political will on both sides to carry this idea through (p. 259).

Having dealt with all the ‘options’ for peace in Israel–Palestine, Karmi is quite clear in the end that only the ‘one-state’ option has any chance of success given the ‘facts on the ground’ in the region. This book forms part of her attempt at reaching an audience of like-minded people with this message, thereby seeking to prepare the ground should such a policy be adopted by both opposing factions in the conflict. Again as she states in her brilliantly crafted and written epilogue to this book,

The reunification of Palestine’s shattered remains in a unitary state for all its inhabitants, old and new, is the only realistic, humane and durable route out of the morass. It is the only
way for the Israeli Jewish community (as opposed to the Israeli state) to survive in the Middle East. (p. 266)

One hopes that all will soon realise this undeniable truth in the Israel–Palestine scenario for the mutual benefit of all concerned people.

Samuel J Kuruvilla © 2009
University of Exeter

Warring Souls: Youth, Media, and Martyrdom in Post-Revolutionary Iran
Roxanne Varzi

Since 1980, the commencement of 2,920 days of ‘imposed war’ (jang-e-tahmili) visited on Iran by Iraq, this devastating human disaster has still been ignored by the world as a whole. This war began with Iraq’s attack on Iran on September 22, 1980, and ended eight years later on August 20, 1988, leaving at least 300,000 martyrs and injuring more than 500,000 of a total population which, by the war’s end, numbered approximately 60 million.

Both during and after the war, Iran devoted serious efforts to the production, representation and preservation of the culture of war (farhang-e jang) and the culture of the front (farhang-e jebheh). When images of war form shocking reminders of what had actually occurred they become references for future generations. Carefully preserved in folklore and enthroned as tradition, these images can be invoked for political purposes that transcend party and class factionalism, and serve to unite the nation in a supreme sacrifice in the national interest.

The first serious documentary films to address these subjects were made shortly after the war by Seyed Morteza Avini and his crew. They first began their work in (jahād-e sāzandegi), and subsequently transferred to Iranian national television (IRIB – Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting) and created the War Group (gruh-e jang). Not long after this period they selected a common name for their office, their group and their film series: ‘The Narration of Triumph’ (revāyat-e fath). The films created by Seyed Morteza Avini and his crew are the only genuine eyewitness testimonies to the war, its warriors and their innocent souls on the war fronts.

Each night the main Iranian national television channel screened one part of these direct reports from the war fronts together with live interviews with soldiers. No Iranian living in Iran during that period can claim not to remember this series. Many Iranians still consider that production of the Narration of Triumph (revāyat-e fath) film series was financed by the government with the aim of attracting the young generation and non-urban Iranians to the subject in order that they would subsequently volunteer to go to the war fronts to become martyrs. It is impossible to understand the real aim of this series without first gaining an understanding of the religious and philosophical world and ideology of its creator, Seyed Morteza Avini.
All Iranians who lived through and experienced the Iran-Iraq war are very well acquainted with the meaning of the symbolic phrase \(\text{W\^{u}}\text{z\^{o}}\) \(\text{v\^{o}}\text{zu}\) \(\text{W\^{u}}\text{z\^{o}}\) \(\text{v\^{o}}\text{zu}\) \(\text{vozu}\)' first coined in the history of the war after the liberation of Khorramshahr, known as the bleeding city \(\text{khunin\_shahr}\)\(^2\). It signifies that this city is comprised of sacred land, and that those who are neither pure nor clean, nor good believers, are denied permission to enter it. Those wishing to enter are first required to perform ablutions \(\text{vozu}\)' to cleanse the body and, in particular, the soul. The reason for this is that hundreds of Iranian soldiers sacrificed their lives here to secure the liberty of the women, children and men of this city at the beginning of the war.

How is it possible for someone who did not experience this human disaster to talk about the war of Iran? How is it possible for someone not living in the country to comment on the media, society and young generation of post-revolutionary Iran? On the back cover of \textit{Warring Souls}, M.Taussing, H.Naficy and M.Fischer have written some lines about this book and its relation to war, media, society and the post-revolutionary youth of Iran.

In the eight chapters of this book one may discover the personal experiences of the author in the form of her daily diary. Through limiting her research to the young elite of Tehran she condemns herself to remain a prisoner of her superficial analysis; on page 11, regarding her research topics in the book, she writes: ‘I studied the war, interviewed veterans and family members of martyrs, analyzed memories, and watched documentaries, and yet I continued to focus on secular Tehran youths who struggle with life on the margins of the Islamization project that hinged on the war . . . I have had access to these youth, and many are members of my family . . .’ As she admits, her book is restricted to a very specific class of youth in Tehran, rather than the more representative youth who know what it means to be a martyr and what it is to live in Tehran as the family member of a martyr.

On page 17, she writes: ‘The vignette is based on war memories and vasiyat-namehs (last wills and testaments), on films from the point of view of Basiji . . .’ Which memoirs and testaments did she use in her research and analysis? One is not furnished with any names, documents or references in this regard. Did she actually go to the governmental institutions dealing with martyrs’ affairs and work directly on unpublished testimonies, or did she merely work on and satisfy herself with the limited published testimony of revolutionary soldiers? On which films from the perspective of ‘Basiji’ and ‘Basiji’ did she base her research? She could not have had access to the documentary films that underwent mass production by Iranian television during the eight-year war for her research; therefore she is presumably referring to the documentaries produced by Seyed Morteza Avini and his crew from the war fronts during the Iran–Iraq war, and was fortunate that during the course of her research she had the opportunity to interview Mr M. Avini, the brother of Seyed Morteza. Nonetheless, when on page 6 of her book she writes: ‘. . .after months of a bloody revolution that raged on the streets of Tehran . . . Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini returned to his homeland of Iran . . .’, it is clear that she has adopted a completely different position to that evident in the ideology of Seyed Morteza Avini and everything that he said, wrote or produced in the medium of film.

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1. ‘Please enter with “\text{vozu}\”’. ‘\text{vozu}\’ literally means the ablution preceding prayer.
2. ‘\text{khumin}\’ literally means bleeding and ‘\text{shahr}\’ means city.
Although Iranian by origin, R. Varzi can be counted among foreign travellers and visitors to Iran who present the country to non-Iranians, especially non-academic Americans, and in her book one discovers a misguided and hasty writer attempting to reconcile herself with her motherland, Iran. On one hand through her passion for Iranian Sufism and poetry, and on the other hand by means of her sound methodology in social science and hermeneutics – a gift of the West – she wishes to present Iran as it is today to non-Iranians from her personal perspective and through modern analysis.

Warring Souls is a good work which provides general knowledge, but will not serve as an academic reference book for those wishing to study topics such as martyrdom, war, youth and the media in post-war Iran. Although this book is very well organised and contains a classified index and bibliography, R. Varzi has not included academic references concerning the war and Iranian soldiers written by others outside Iran.3

Pedram Khosronejad © 2009
St. Andrews University

Seeking Mandela, Peacemaking between Israelis and Palestinians
Heribert Adam and Kogila Moodley
Philadelphia, PA, Temple University Press, 2005

Comparison of Apartheid in South Africa with the current Israeli–Palestinian issue has been one of the most discussed issues in recent years. South African optimism and a possible way of drawing lessons from South African case occupied the center of the comparison. As many opinion pieces flows around, there was a scarce interest to investigate the both case and explain the similarities and differences in a more coherent and sophisticated way rather than using it as a rhetorical tool. From this perspective, Heribert Adam and Kogila Moodley’s Seeking Mandela: Peacemaking Between Israelis and Palestinians is a fine welcome and deserves special attention. It consists of three main sections and nine subsections that investigate the both cases, South Africa and Israeli–Palestinian issue. Authors are ‘interested in the lesson one can glean from South Africa’s negotiated settlement that can be applied to a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict’ (p. ix).

First section that tries to locate the comparison on theoretical and historical context occupies much of the book. The authors introduce us a short history of both conflicts while explaining the terms that are employed to analyze the conflicts: nationalism, multiculturalism, patriotism, extremism.

In the beginning of the book authors elucidate that there are discernible differences that might hinder the comparison. Especially historical and geographical factors come into play here. However, they argue that ‘probing the Israel-South Africa analogy does furnish insights into conflict resolution…at the same time revealing the limits of such comparison’ (p. 27). In subsection four, the problematic analogy, in their words, is explained in details. First, they explain the difference of economic interdependence of the blacks and Palestinians

in South African and Israeli cases, independent and dependent consequently (pp. 59–63). While religion plays a unifying role in South Africa, it is a divisive factor in Israeli–Palestinian case (p. 69). Existing of a centralized/sacred city, Jerusalem, and the non-existence of such a city in South Africa does also make a difference (p. 65). Adam and Moodley also argue that the nature of third party intervention is different in South Africa and Israeli cases, as both have a different rate of militarized political culture too.

The second section looks at how democracies deal with the crime of the previous regimes historically and locates the South African experience of Truth and Reconciliation Commission within this. Adam and Moodley’s inquiry for a possible Israel–Palestinian Truth Commission (TC) concludes that the TC’s role will be different in Palestine–Israeli conflict than earlier experiences. Keeping in mind that Truth Commissions are normally established after violence ceased, in the Middle East it ‘could pave the way toward the end of violence’ (p. 162). For them, two separate TCs should be established initially and merged at later stages. Most importantly TCs should avoid singling out individual perpetrators (p. 162).

The last part of the book focuses on the solutions and lessons drawn from South African case. ‘South Africa, arguably, constitutes merely a multiethnic society’ while ‘a truly divided society exists’ in Israel/Palestine. According to Adam and Moodley, ‘only a Mandela solution promises a long-term stability’ emphasizing the role of credible and reconsolidating leadership of South Africa. They went to say that probably after further polarization and more failed attempts, Mandela solution may emerge, even singling out a possible candidate for such a role: Marwan Barghouti (p. 171). However this only can be tested if a chance given to Barghouti to play a role in Palestinian politics as he is currently being kept in Israeli prison.

One of the main lessons drawn in the book from South African case, among others, is authors’ emphasis clearly on two points throughout the book. First, ‘trust is the outcome, not a precondition of negotiations’, second ‘enemies, not friends, need to negotiate’. Therefore, ‘negotiations do not depend on a ceasefire’, as Israel always argued, ‘but have to be unconditional’ (p. 181).

The main weakness of the book is that it focuses, rightly, on the role of leadership, non-violent strategy too much, but not the role of international transformation. The key international conflicts cannot be solved unless there is a transformation or re-construction of international system. Apartheid did not only end with the help of great leaderships both Mandela and de Klerk shown, but also (perhaps mainly) with the change in the international system that took place by the collapse of bi-polar system.

After arguing that Apartheid analogy has been ‘an easy target for analysis and condemnation’ (p. 193), Adam and Moodley finds the difficulty and difference in the nature of outside support which ‘sustains intransigence’ (p. 193). Unless outside support becomes balanced, Israel will not really consider peace as an option, although Palestinian mainstream has, but ‘lacks capacity’ (p. 193).

Overall, Seeking Mandela is a convincingly conclusive book on a debate that around for a long time. This extensively researched, clearly argued and fairly well-written book is a pioneering work in comparing two conflicts from different regions and context, but offers a valuable insight in conflict resolution.
Elie Kedourie’s widow Sylvia has edited six chapters including her own reflections on her late husband’s work that deal with his personality, choice in research topics, methodology, the relationship of history to current events and politics. Other chapters analyse Kedourie’s place in historiography, in particular of the Middle East and place him on the opposite end to Edward Said’s scholarship. The book also includes one chapter by Elie Kedourie on the Cyprus Problem and its Solution written in 1973. A list of his collected works including the translations into several languages concludes the book. The contributors are Paschalis M. Kitromilides (Elie Kedourie’s Contribution to the Study of Nationalism), M.E. Yapp (Elie Kedourie and the History of the Middle East), Noé O’Sullivan (Philosophy, Politics and Conservatism in the Thought of Elie Kedourie), Michael Sutton (Elie Kedourie and Henrie de Lubac: Anglo-French Musings on the Progeny of Joachim de Fiore) and Peter Roberts (History: Puzzle and People or Prescription and Prophecy?)

The contributors seem to agree that extensive and time-consuming archival research rather than theories were the features of Kedourie’s research who hoped to ‘restore, for whoever cares to read them, in all their singularity, the meaning of thoughts and actions now dead and gone which once upon a time were the designs and choices of living men’ (pp. 41–42). For Peter Roberts Kedourie’s ‘originality lies in the method he developed of describing and explaining what happened. He particularly took biography forward as a tool of diplomatic history’ but he also wanted to ‘rescue history from prescription and prophecy’. For Kedourie ‘accounts of the past shaped by the desire to prescribe policy or to forecast the future, according to some vision or prearranged pattern, “failed as history”’ (p. 102). A traditional Gelehrte such as Kedourie was also fluent in Arabic, French and English, essential tools for his research and together with his upbringing in Baghdad ‘gave him a scope and a dimension different from that of his colleagues at the School who mostly came from a purely Western and English-speaking background’ (p. 1).

Apart from his research on Conservatism and nationalism Kedourie also dealt with Jewish history. His approach was path-breaking as he did not focus on persecution and anti-Semitism but placed Jewish history within the wider framework of human experience as ‘Jews provide in their history a conspectus or summary of what has been a central human pre-occupation’ (p. 11). Furthermore Jewish history sets an example of the ‘model of the coming world society’ as Jews managed to maintain an autonomous social organization without territorial base or military power (p. 12). As the founder of Middle Eastern Studies in the 1950s, Kedourie according to his widow changed completely the approach to the subject. The reader would have liked some elaboration on his revolutionary ideas. Peter Roberts, for example, mentions later the ‘archival-based study which finally made it possible to rescue contemporary diplomatic history of the Middle East from dismissal as journalism or apologetics’ (p. 104).
Kedourie’s own work in the collection deals with the Cyprus Problem and its solution and is relevant for other conflicts, in particular with regard to Israel/Palestine or the former Yugoslavia where like in the case of Cyprus segregation is the dominant feature of conflict resolution. The brilliance of Kedourie’s insight – aside from the gendered language – deserves to be quoted here:

A large number of young Greek and Turkish Cypriots have already grown up and reached maturity in a situation where there is no daily contact between the two communities, where estrangement has grown deeper, and where the readiness to engage in conflict is not restrained by the mutual private interests which usually serve to bind men who live in one society, or by the ties of friendship and familiarity which are their natural concomitant. As the experience of other conflict-ridden societies shows, the effects of this estrangement are cumulative and highly damaging: on both sides of the barrier men are more and more given to suspect those on the other side and to think ill of them; and they are correspondingly less able to withstand political indoctrination which, uncompromising and clear-cut as it has to be, must in the end further increase the estrangement. (p. 19)

Regardless of the fact that these ties can easily be destroyed by ‘political indoctrination’ as various genocides from the Holocaust to Rwanda demonstrate, much can be learned about Kedourie’s analysis as Cyprus and Israel/Palestine have a lot in common including the economic gap between the two communities. Therefore his ideas about conflict resolution could serve as a blueprint for Israel/Palestine.

Some of the contributions refer to Kedourie’s view on the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian Empires where he held the view that ‘in considering the societies which the Ottomans and Austro-Hungarians ruled, they did not do a bad job of it’ (p. 113). Here again one could refer to the fate of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire which Kedourie seems to have ignored. But maybe it is not the task of a book dedicated to the memory of a scholar to deal too critically with his (or her) work.

Kedourie’s collected works could have been more carefully edited, as there are several spelling mistakes, in particular in non-English languages. The author would have also liked to know more about Kedourie’s attitudes towards Zionism and the State of Israel, two important issues for a scholar of nationalism that are mentioned by various contributors but not analysed in any great lengths or details and one might gain the impression that when it came to the State of Israel Kedourie’s critical thinking was not as sharp as in other cases of nationalism. Kedourie writing in the 1970s could use gendered language but it is not acceptable in the case of current scholars to speak of historians as he.

The contributions bring to life the ideas and methods of an important scholar and the reviewer hopes that it would encourage students and academics and maybe the wider public to read (or read again) Elie Kedourie’s works. Reflections on what is history and what role the knowledge of the past can play in current decision-making of the major power players in the field are ongoing debates and expertise in the field – such as that of Elie Kedourie who also lectured Margaret Thatcher on history – is of great importance, provided of course that policy makers take into account the advice of experts. So far this seems to be wishful thinking.

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