
When in 2009 I offered a first-year seminar titled “The Arab Israeli Conflict,” 18 students opted to sign up for it. In a pre-course survey I conducted, none of the students had heard of Zionism, and most of them thought Palestinians were “terrorists” who target innocent civilians. Israel was perceived as the legitimate Jewish state, and all 18 students had a good knowledge of the Holocaust. The Palestinian Nakba of 1948 was unheard of, and the exodus of Palestinian refugees was unknown. *Reclaiming Judaism from Zionism* puts forward the process necessary to deconstruct the myth of equating Judaism with Zionism, as my students learned. Editor Carolyn Karcher brings together the personal narratives of 40 American Jews who narrate their journeys courageously and audaciously, to clarify the major difference between Judaism and Zionism, and to distance themselves from political Zionism that has usurped the Jewish faith.

The book is in five chapters, with an introduction and an afterword. While the introduction explains the rise and context of political Zionism in the late nineteenth century as a reaction to European anti-Semitism, the afterword sheds light on the aftereffects of the 1967 six-day war, the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, and the manipulation of the “peace process” by both Israel and the United States. Broadly speaking, the 40 Jewish voices insist on the basic values of love and peace of Judaism in the midst of a dark world where hatred, violence, and wars are enacted by Zionists against Palestinians.

As Karcher says, all the writers hope to generate a debate among Jews in a post-Zionist era. She also tells of the opposition to the idea of a Jewish state by nineteenth-century Jewish movements whereby prominent political and religious leaders and secular Jews insisted on Judaism being a progressive religious faith that recognizes both Christianity and Islam for being “daughter religions of Judaism” that “aid in the spreading of monotheistic moral truth” (xiii). Jewish dissenting organizations, however, could not compete with Zionism’s appealing colonial discourse, especially as the latter had guaranteed the support of Britain and the United States governments. The latter part of the twentieth century, however, has seen an increasing shift in attitudes towards Zionist ideology, according to Karcher. The Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, the declassification of Israeli archives of the ’48 war, which gave rise to the emergence of Israeli “new historians,” and the two Palestinian Intifadas have been instrumental in the increasing
Jewish voices of dissent among liberal American Jewry. Their assembled stories call for peace, justice, and human rights for all.

The underlying factor behind the assembled personal stories is the loss of faith in Zionism and its implications. Many of the writers had started out being keen Zionists and supporters of Israel, but their consciousness of the injustices Israel is committing against Palestinians arose after visiting Israel/Palestine and learning about the Occupation. For example, Rabbi Michael Davis explains how his doubts about the connection between politics and power, a career in Shin Bet, questions about the after-life, and witnessing the mistreatment of Ethiopian Jews by Ashkenazi Jews alerted him to the pitfalls of the militarization of Israeli life. He became disillusioned by the connections between Orthodox Zionism, the military, and the settler movement. Currently a member of Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP), he hopes to aid in the fight against Islamophobia. Similarly, young Jewish students write of their search for identity, which may have plunged them into supporting Israel early on, but on witnessing Israel’s mistreatment of Palestinians in the occupied territories they have had a change of heart. These liberal American Jews now insist that “Zionism is not Judaism.” They affirm their solidarity with Palestinian human rights.

Given the confusing conflation of anti-Israel criticism with anti-Semitism in many official circles, public opinion, and the media, this is a commended publication at this historical juncture. Reclaiming Judaism from Zionism is a must read for all Jews, and non-Jews, who have been coopted by Zionist propaganda that Israel is the representative of all Jews across the world.

**Napoli, Philip M. Social Media and the Public Interest: Media Regulation in the Disinformation Age.**


With news about the Russian and/or Ukraine’s role in the dissemination of false news during the 2016 American Presidential elections and the ongoing democratic primaries for the 2020 elections, Philip M. Napoli’s well-researched study couldn’t have been published at a more auspicious time. Although the book is focused on the US media market, the subject of false news and disinformation is relevant to the world at large, and Social Media and the Public Interest is recommended to readers of Arab Studies Quarterly.

Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, among others, have had unpredictable outcomes vis-à-vis news and the information ecosystem. Most notably, digital media systems have evolved to be the major sources of the creation, dissemination, and consumption of (dis)information. According to Napoli,