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A Palestine State for Israel's Sake

The Palestinian State: The Implications for Israel. by Mark Heller

Review by: Sheila Ryan

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to rally "a realistic Palestinian strategy and with it a dialectical relationship between the 'inside' and the 'outside' to implement it." In addition he states it is not impossible to close ranks "across the ethnic barriers to join with Jewish democratic forces in Israel."

In conclusion, Dakkak explains that the result of such a marriage of forces "may reveal that the long bloody conflict was merely a labor in the process of anchoring the problem on its appropriate base of class interests" (p. 93).

This analysis may appeal to those who labor under the illusion that a post-holocaust Jewish population cares more about the condition of the proletariat than they do Zionism. But to the knowledgeable reader who understands reality, it is nothing more than a pipe dream. Dakkak's own analysis of inter-Arab and inter-Palestinian relations is adequately convincing to any reader that the failure of Palestinians and Arabs to unite and pursue one plan of peace for the resolution of the Palestine problem is evidence enough to refute his point. The suggestion that class consciousness among the Arabs and Jews is more powerful than ethnic nationalism on either side ignores too much history to be convincing.

Those who persist in advocating fantasy as reality in suggesting solutions to the Palestine problem cannot be ignored and should not be. They should be taken seriously and the ideas they promote addressed in a straightforward rational manner. The competitive exchange of ideas which tolerates diversity not only clarifies issues, it serves to build a consensus of reasonable opinion which is based on rigorous thinking and tested knowledge.

This volume deserves close scrutiny because it contains insightful inquiry and many misguided notions.

A Palestine State for Israel's Sake

Mark Heller, *The Palestinian State: The Implications for Israel*. Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1983. 154 pages. Notes to p. 179. Bibl. to p. 185. Index to p. 190. \$16.00; \$6.95 paper.

Reviewed by Sheila Ryan

Mark Heller argues that "an independent Palestinian state which meets certain minimal conditions actually constitutes a recommended strategic choice for Israel." Heller's model is a state in the West Bank and Gaza, with Jerusalem physically and administratively undivided, its citizens free to opt for Israeli or Palestinian citizenship. There is, in Heller's scheme, to be "minor border rectification," including allotment to Israel of the Latrun salient and a ten kilometer chunk along the northeast border of the West Bank, giving Israel control of the settlement of Meholah, offset to some extent by including in the new state some Palestinian villages now on the Israeli side of the Green Line.

Heller's "minimal conditions" range from major matters—the Palestinians, by renouncing all property and repatriation claims, are to accept "liquidation of the whole refugee problem"—to the relatively petty—the projected state may have only a single airport, and that stipulated to be Qalandiya. The limitations placed on armament for the Palestinian state—sufficient for symbolism of sovereignty and for internal security only—are asymmetrical, similar limits not to be imposed on Israel. Such proposals are certain to offend the potential Palestinian citizens of Heller's projected state, and indeed, to rankle the sensibilities of anyone

with a sympathy for the concept of self-determination.

The specification of these "minimal conditions," is not, however, the book's principal flaw. After all, the context in which Heller worked must be considered: he is a Senior Research Associate at the Center for Strategic Studies, Tel Aviv University. Major General (res.) Aharon Yariv is the head of the Center (Heller acknowledges that he has given the book "every encouragement in word and deed"); Yariv was for many years the head of Israeli military intelligence and then a special advisor to the Prime Minister. Certainly the scholar-strategists of such an institute could be devoting their energies to far more pernicious endeavors than Heller's study. It would be absurdly myopic to pillory Heller for insufficient concern for the Palestinian perspective without fully acknowledging the importance of voices from within centrist Israeli institutions propounding the merits of negotiation with the Palestinians rather than continuation of the occupation—whatever their political limitations, national bias or moral numbness.

The disappointing aspect of the book is Heller's failure to accomplish the task he set for himself: evaluating the implications for Israel of a negotiated settlement leading to a Palestinian state.

Heller focuses anachronistically on the matter of "security," the ostensible criterion of the Labor era for decision-making on the occupation. Even in its day, of course, the "security" factor was essentially a fiction, and obscured a multiplicity of other interests. But it invoked a perspective of an Israeli society free to decide to withdraw, if such withdrawal were consonant with national safety from external threats. The seventeen years of occupation, however, have rendered security obsolete as a criterion

accepted by consensus; structural changes in Israeli society now severely complicate the internal process of decision to withdraw—and will continue to be problematic factors even if Labor becomes ascendant. These structural changes mean that the relations of sectors of Israeli society to each other, and not simply the relation of Israeli society to Palestinian, will be major explicit or implicit factors in decision-making about Israeli policies toward the West Bank and Gaza. Israeli society is increasingly unfree to come to a rational decision about its future role in the West Bank and Gaza Strip based on an assessment of the security and well-being of the Israeli totality: the occupation has been a hothouse for accelerated growth of territorial zealotry and militarism, each with its ideological and economic dimension, which now intrude themselves into the decision-making process.

The Palestinian-Israeli political calculus since the mid-seventies has been such that as the Palestinian mainstream becomes more willing to consider a "two-state" model (at least as an interim solution) the Israeli political leadership has become less willing to consider any alternative to annexation (at least of the *de facto* variety). Heller all but ignores the factors in Israeli society which have contributed to this pattern.

Heller devotes a mere five or so pages to the issue of Israeli settlement, the concretization of territorial zealotry. He acknowledges that the settlements function as a "reinforcement of Israel's ultimate claim to the West Bank, primarily by reducing the ability of any Israeli government—for domestic political reasons—to renounce that claim" (p. 113). He suggests somewhat blithely that the domestic problems can be minimized by offering the settlers compensation for moving or "residence in the Palestinian state under conditions

similar to those of Arabs living in Israel." It is unrealistic to expect, however, that the wrath of the Gush Emunim would be appeased by the prospect of second-class citizenship in what it construes to be God-given Jewish territory. They clearly did not wrest away the land from Palestinian farmers and build Kiryat Arba only to see the Palestinian flag waving above it.

A second serious structural obstacle to peace is the extraordinary militarization of Israeli society, a process which has increased geometrically during the years of occupation. A quarter of the Israeli prime male labor force is now involved in military pursuits; the Israeli weapons industry has spilled over the internal market to make Israel a major weapons exporter, with weapons now accounting for about 20 percent of its input to international trade. Heller maintains quite correctly that the military burden on the Israeli economy has been destructive; he points to the practical cessation of per capita economic growth in real terms since 1974; one could add that annual inflation—which now approaches 1,000 percent, and which is principally ascribable to military expenditures—has laid a heavy onus on Israelis, particularly those on the bottom and middle echelons. However, a sector of Israeli society, engorged on massive infusions of American military aid, now has a personal stake in a politics and economy of war. For the Israeli military-industrial complex, peace would create a bad business climate, a downswing in demand for their products and services.

Heller's book is an interesting attempt to apply reason to Israel's security issues; its limitation is its failure to deal with the elements in Israeli society which create the major barriers to any sort of rational and secure peace with the Palestinians.

The Faces of Israel/Palestine —

In the Land of Israel, Amos Oz. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1983. 244 pages. Glossary to p. 257. \$12.95.

Reviewed by **Akiva Orr**

The author of this book can be described as the official conscience of the Zionist Labor establishment in Israel. It was this Labor establishment which created Israel, shaped it, and ruled it, for thirty years. During its rule it conducted the wars of 1948, 1956, 1967, 1973 and with each war became more and more nationalistic, arrogant, and blinded by its successes, and ignored all signs of external and internal change. Its first shock came in the 1973 war when the entire Israeli establishment (including the army) was caught unprepared by the Egyptian and Syrian attack. Its second shock came in the 1977 elections which it lost for the first time to Menahem Begin's extremist nationalistic party. For a while the Labor movement consoled itself with the hope that those elections constituted an "aberration" that will be put right in the next elections (i.e. in 1981). Then came the 1981 elections and Labor Zionism suffered an even greater shock, not because of the results but because of the vehement and violent attacks on them by mobs of Begin's supporters. The 1981 elections were the most violent ever in Israel, and their hallmark was the eruption of racist prejudices of unprecedented violence. Labor Zionism supported mostly, but not exclusively, by Jews of European origin found itself clobbered (often physically) by deeply resentful crowds of Oriental Jews, most of whom supported Begin's simplistic and extremist nationalism. The shock which Labor leaders and supporters