sively from the Glubb Papers, but often results in useless repetition of statements in long quotes, particularly in Chapter 1 but elsewhere as well. He also personalizes matters, as when he faults Glubb for failing to “internalise” the Holocaust as he did the fate of the Palestinians in 1948 (p. 238), but does not explain why Glubb should have done so. One internalizes one’s experiences or what brethren experience. Glubb internalized his experiences, while recognizing, as Morris notes elsewhere, that Zionist motivation for independence and military aggressiveness was accentuated by knowledge of the Holocaust, which Jews would surely have absorbed and wished to avenge.

In the end, Morris concludes that Glubb was an anti-Semite, which would appear to have been his motive for writing the book. He does add to our historical knowledge to the degree that he traces Glubb’s actions in much, often speculative, detail with respect to battles and dispositions of forces, but his conclusions do not add significantly to the record.

A far more profitable course would have been to investigate Glubb’s relations with ‘Abdullah, and the question of Glubb’s loyalties, from ‘Abdullah’s vantage point, not just from the Israeli one. Did ‘Abdullah consider Glubb a family retainer or a British official in his employ whose ties to Whitehall were useful to him? Muhammad ‘Adnan al-Bakhit and colleagues have published ‘Abdullah’s papers in Amman, Volume 5 of which deals with 1948.2 Consulting such sources and measuring their information against that known from British and Israeli archives would have made this book a valuable resource for future scholarship and perhaps reduced the amount of speculation in which Morris indulges.

In this regard, a much more brisk, analytical study is the chapter, “Jordan and 1948: the persistence of an official history,” where Eugene Rogan compares Glubb’s account of events with that offered by ‘Abdullah al-Tall, an officer who fought in 1948 but who later fled Jordan and was accused of a role in King Abdullah’s assassination.3 Al-Tall’s history of 1948 charges that Glubb was a British agent, setting a scene where Glubb appears as a defender of ‘Abdullah. Al-Tall argues that ‘Abdullah, and Glubb acting on his behalf, betrayed the Palestinian and broader Arab nationalist cause; in contrast, Morris compares Glubb’s and al-Tall’s versions of battles and their accuracy as measured by contemporary Zionist sources. Morris offers us many trees, but the forest never appears.

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SAUDI ARABIA


Reviewed by Robert Looney

This book is a highly interesting, sophisticated, and outspoken study of Muslim beliefs and of the sectarian conflicts within that community. Stephen Schwartz, a Jewish historian, presents a sympathetic portrait of mainstream Islam and, in doing so, attempts to expose the origins of Usama bin Ladin’s extremism —


Wahhabism, an austere sect nurtured and supported by the Saudi Arabian government. Throughout the book, the author’s background as “a child of California” and “a typical San Francisco student of mysticism” (p. xiv) comes through to provide a highly readable, somewhat eclectic view of the world. To go with this, many of his views appear to be formed in the 1990s from time spent in Albania and the former Yugoslavia. Serb atrocities in Bosnia and Kosovo seem to have accentuated his natural disposition toward Islam, particularly the folk-Islam known as Sufism, much practiced in the Balkans.

The opening chapters are largely a discussion of tolerant Islam. In this regard, the author depicts the Prophet Muhammad as a thoughtful liberal. Pluralism among Muslims, Mr. Schwartz writes, and civility toward other faiths, characterized 1,000 years of Islam. From the author’s perspective, the Ottoman Empire was a model society; he credits Sufis for consolidating this last great Muslim power.

This idealization of Sufism is fine, but Schwartz tends to convey the impression that this is the extent of Islam outside of Wahhabism. Neglected are what many observers would call “mainstream Islam.” Neglected also are the more militant variants of Islam, whose fusion of religion and politics takes it down a somewhat different road than that traversed by the mystics: tribal violence, dynastic upheavals, religious intolerance as evidenced in the schism between Sunnis and Shi’i. By neglecting these strands of Islam, Schwartz undermines his later argument, in which he builds the case for Sufism and against Wahhabism. The attempt to wall off Wahhabism as the sole source of Islamic extremism simply goes too far.

Mr. Schwartz is quite outspoken throughout the book, suggesting that Wahhabism in all respects exalts and promotes death (i.e., the suicide of its adherents and mass murder as a weapon against Western civilization) and, above all, suffocates the virtue of mercy embodied in Islam. The 4,000 members of the Saudi ruling family are, in his view, a vast mafia of princely parasites. Schwartz holds that Western oil companies (especially Saudi Arabia’s Aramco partners) and American political and media elites are responsible for the perpetuation of dishonesty and injustice in Arabia. Finally, Mr. Schwartz suggests, the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini of Iran is at the opposite end of the spectrum from Wahhabi extremism, representing the pluralist face of Islam!

While many readers will no doubt disagree with some of these sweeping generalizations, Schwartz provides a number of complex insights as to how the United States in particular and the West in general have failed to appreciate the threat posed by Wahhabism. With respect to Afghanistan, Schwartz contends that US officials failed to understand the true nature of Wahhabi fundamentalism: “narrow, rigid, tyrannical, separatist, supremacist and violent.” The Taliban, the products of Saudi-financed Wahhabi schools (madrasas) in Pakistan, clearly embodied these traits. Schwartz contends that much of the grief inflicted on that country could have been avoided altogether had American policymakers only understood the virulence of Wahhabism — its connection to the Taliban and impact on Afghanistan.

Schwartz also draws a number of very interesting historical parallels. For instance, in the first half of the 20th century, Schwartz observes, the Saudi-Wahhabi alliance came to power in Saudi Arabia by cleverly aligning itself with British imperialism; years later, in a similar fashion, the Saudis manipulated their unwitting American allies so as to install a Wahhabi faction in power in Afghanistan.

The Two Faces of Islam provides a big picture of sweeping forces across a vast stretch from Northern Africa to Southeast Asia. This is the book’s strength. However, the book’s major shortcoming is captured well by the expression “the devil is in the details.” While Islamic scholars and academics undoubtedly will find fault with points raised by Schwartz, this should not detract from the fact that
he provides a fresh, highly thought-provoking wake-up call. This book should be added to the shelf of anyone wanting a deeper understanding of forces driving major trends and events in an increasingly important part of the world.

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ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT


Reviewed by George Emile Irani

This is an important and timely book about a city — Jerusalem, Urashalim al-Quds, Yerushalaim — that is a spiritual symbol to millions of believers from Jakarta to Los Angeles. The author, who is a respected and published expert on the question of Jerusalem, had three reasons for writing this book. First, Dumper writes that the “imperfect implementation” of the Oslo Accords has made the study of the Old City his major focus. The author writes “Palestinian aspirations for the future of the city will be heavily circumscribed by Israel’s perceived security needs, which in turn are supported by the US government, the principal enforcer behind the Oslo process” (p. 6). Of course, this was before the advent of the second Bush administration and the forced death of the Oslo process brought upon by the current Israeli government. According to Dumper, the second reason for writing this book is the paucity of studies on the Old City itself. The third reason is that the Old City of Jerusalem “plays a distinctive role in the mythology and ideology of the parties involved in the Arab-Israeli conflict and is a unique enclave in the Israeli polity” (p. 8). The main actors examined in this book include the Israeli settlers and their attempt to extend their presence in the Old City, the Awqaf Administration (Islamic Trust that administers holy sites and properties in the city) and the Latin, Armenian, Melkite, and Greek Orthodox patriarchates.

The status of the Old City of Jerusalem has changed with the history of the Arab-Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In 1967, following the Israeli occupation and subsequent annexation of Jerusalem, a new situation emerged for the Holy Places: for the first time since 1948, Jewish, Christian, and Muslim shrines were under the control of one government. Moreover, for the followers of the Islamic faith, such an outcome could only result in grave consequences: their third most important place of worship was totally under Israeli control. In this context, it is important to underline that, unlike the Palestinians who remained in Palestine after the establishment of Israel in 1948 and who became Israeli citizens, Palestinians living in the Old City are provided with Israeli ID’s that are confiscated at the whim of the Israeli authorities. Finally, Dumper reminds us of the various powers that have controlled the Old City of Jerusalem from the Ottomans to the British to the Jordanians and now the Israelis.

The author then covers the expansion of the Jewish community in the Old City. His analysis of the settlers and their various illegal attempts to grab land and property in the City is accurate and disconcerting. The Israeli Jewish groups and their international Christian fundamentalist friends, in order to consolidate and justify the land grab in the Old City, are