

Book Reviews

Germany. Both married and suffered internment, but Walter and his wife managed to find work with the Warburg Institute as photographers. Helmut and his wife were shipped to Australia as enemy aliens. Released in 1944, Helmut and his wife, too, turned to photography. Gradually he managed to claim a legitimate identity. Berkowitz devotes several chapters to Helmut Gernsheim's research and collecting efforts. These eventually proved critical to the history of photography, as did his scholarship on that history. Near the end of his life, he pondered one of the themes of this book, namely, the outsize role of Jews in the history of photography. In some ways, Berkowitz picks up where Gernsheim left off, following the twists and turns of his career and the key roles played by Jews in securing Gernsheim's mammoth collection of photographs, now located at the Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas.

Almost all of the men and women who figure in this book stood outside of organized Jewish life, religious or cultural. Many of them maintained only marginal identification as Jews, some were raised Christian, but all of them worked within Jewish networks in the photographic field. Berkowitz contends that Jewish origins "helped to determine the content, limits, and possibilities of their social and socioeconomic opportunities" (9). Thus Jewishness significantly shaped their careers in photography. As a field nestled precariously between craft, art, and commerce, photography offered opportunities, not restrictions. Portable, flexible, easily mastered, with few barriers for entrance, it allowed for self-reinvention. For much of its history, the field welcomed Jews (though Berkowitz does discuss antisemitic exclusions).

Berkowitz's book is prodigiously researched. It is studded with footnotes, many offering insights that could spark future projects. Occasionally the wealth of detail overwhelms the text. Berkowitz largely shies away from analyzing specific images or styles of photographs. This is not a theory-driven book, nor a form of cultural studies, but rather a historical account of the production of photography in Britain, grounded in the richness of the archives. A sense of discovery animates its pages. Indeed, Berkowitz begins his book with a telling anecdote describing a forty-five minute audience with the Duke of Edinburgh in his library in Buckingham Palace. Who opened the doors of Buckingham Palace to Michael Berkowitz? A Jewish photographer named Baron.

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Hillel Cohen. *1929: Year Zero of the Arab-Israeli Conflict*. Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2015. 312 pp.
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Readers who have fixed opinions about the Arab-Israeli conflict might find Hillel Cohen's book hard to digest. The main reason for that is not what

is in the book, but rather what is omitted from it. There are no clear-cut good guys and bad guys, no unequivocal victims and perpetrators. Instead, the book explores the 1929 riots in Palestine through the eyes of both Jews and Arabs, concluding that they inaugurated a new era in the history of the Yishuv and the Arab-Israeli conflict. While the riots did not initiate the conflict, they left a deep and enduring impact on Jewish and Palestinian collective memories and on the way the two parties—especially the Jewish one—have imagined one another. The book explores, challenges, and confronts Jewish and Palestinian readings of the same events. That is the great strength of the book, but also part of its weakness.

Even though, as Cohen reminds us, neither the Yishuv nor Arab Palestinian society was homogenous, and while both communities produced more than one story about the massacres, a general and opposing picture of the riots was reached by each side. For most Jews, the riots were a monstrous slaughter of innocent people who sought refuge in their ancestral homeland. Accordingly, that violence has embedded in Jewish and Israeli collective memory the notion that Arabs are thirsty for Jewish blood and that savagery is emblematic of their culture. For most Arab Palestinians, the riots were important—though not as important as the Nakba in 1948—as part of their ongoing struggle against European and Zionist attempts to dispossess them of their land. The Palestinians, who saw themselves as victims of imperialism and colonialism, regarded the 1929 riots as a legitimate response to provocations and violence that had been directed against them for decades.

Besides calling attention to the substantial differences between the Arab and Jewish metanarratives, Cohen also points to the contradictions and unsubstantiated information that each account contains. The book convincingly demonstrates that the opposing metanarratives constructed by Jews and Arabs drew on similar phenomena. Both focused on their own dead, neglecting the victims on the other side; both ignored aspects that may have cast them in a dishonorable light; both created heroes despised by the enemy nation; and both insisted that their violence was self-defense. Moreover, Jews and Arabs were motivated by similar feelings, such as national pride and devotion to holy places.

Cohen is well aware of the criticism that some readers of the Hebrew edition of his book have expressed against his “side-by-side presentation of Jewish and Arab deeds in 1929” (xiv), but insists that his goal was to present a complex view of the past. In this respect, he definitely met the challenge he set for himself. The historical reality Cohen presents to his readership is versatile and polyphonic. That said, the book is not without flaws, especially since Cohen’s openness to the contradicting narratives diminishes his presence in the book, and casts him in the position of one who asks questions and raises doubts, but does not always provide answers.

In the cases of Hebron and Safed, for example, Cohen does make an unequivocal argument that “Jews were the obvious victims of the riots” (258). But when he raises the question as to what caused the Arab assailants to murder their Jewish neighbors—a fundamental question that stands at the heart of the conflicting narratives—he does not answer the question, but rather, presents an array

of conflicting answers. First, Cohen argues that the behavior of the Arab murderers cannot be explained. This neutral conclusion seems to be an argument, though an indirect one, since it stands in contradiction to the Jewish narrative that ascribes to the Arabs a murderous character. Yet, a central point that Cohen seeks to make is that the primary reason for the massacre of Jews was the Arabs' belief that every Jew desired to deprive Arabs of their land. From their point of view, the murder of Jews was therefore a legitimate act of a people fighting for its country. Cohen then provides an additional explanation for massacres in general, and the 1929 murders in particular. He asserts that "[S]tudies of mass psychology show that there are deeds that we ... may well commit when we become part of a collective action" (17, cf. 133). Since the book does not include citations for such studies, it is unclear what Cohen has in mind here. Ultimately, then, the reader is left confused as to Cohen's explanation of the main motive for the massacre. The answer may be the Jewish narrative, the Arab narrative, theories from the world of mass psychology, or simply the acknowledgment that the riots "can't be explained" (132).

An additional conclusion that Cohen draws from the 1929 riots touches on the nexus between history and memory—a critical issue for a book that focuses on a memory-forging event and its disparate historical representations. To explore the riots Cohen relies on an impressive scope of primary and secondary sources, Hebrew and Arabic alike, which he masters skillfully. Especially for this reason it is surprising to see that he tries neither to evaluate the role these sources have played in forging the memories that stand at the heart of the book, nor does he necessarily try to explore alternative agents of memory that might have created them. On the one hand, Cohen ultimately suggests that Jews and Arabs tended to read and remember the history of Palestine in general, and the riots in particular, through their own national lens. According to Cohen, "people's fundamental, overarching view of the world determines how they perceive historical details" (128). This notion may create the impression that national memory is the result of a reflexive process, in which each nation intuitively tends to rally around its own flag. On the other hand, Cohen argues that massacres "do not get imprinted on the national memory automatically" (126). This begs the question, what or who imprinted the memories of the riots per se—as opposed to the clashing images of the two nations in the period that preceded the events—on Israeli and Palestinian memories? The question seems to be self-evident, especially since Cohen mentions already in the introduction that "astonishingly, the events of 1929 ... have not been the subject of a book by an Israeli author since 1930" (xii). Historiography was therefore not a major instrument in shaping Israeli memory. Interestingly, the book does not seek to consciously and deliberately explore what did forge this memory, which in this respect is left in the abstract.

Cohen's book is written in a clear and sweeping style. Certain lacunae do not change this overall impression. As a study that sets out to understand contradicting narratives, as opposed to justifying them, this book is an outstanding exercise in the close reading of historical sources. The inconsistency and inner contradiction

that characterize the book are the result of the complex reality it brilliantly describes and analyzes.

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Libby Garland. *After They Closed the Gates: Jewish Illegal Immigration to the United States, 1921–1965*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014. 275 pp. doi:10.1017/S0364009416000702

Libby Garland's study of Jewish migration to the United States during the era of immigration quotas based on national origins, and her particular interest in those migrants who entered the United States outside official or proper procedure, is timely. The American immigration regime continues to be a political issue of great concern to the administration, to Congress, and to voters, not to speak of its vital importance to undocumented immigrants already living in America and those wishing to join them.

Indeed, the timeliness of the book is embodied in its mission, since the study is nothing if not engagé: Garland sets out to explore historical issues that, she contends, highlight both the difficulty (at the very least) and the unfairness of strictly policed immigration controls. "There is a profound clash between unilateral state efforts to control borders and the forces of global migration," she states, "for however much states seek to regulate the movement of people in and out of nations, there are always those who continue to move transnationally and who elude state control" (216). Hence, "Illegal immigration points to the impossibility of defining citizens and borders, insiders and outsiders, as cleanly as states would like" (216).

Garland correctly notes that although there was never a "Jewish quota" within the 1920s' national origins immigration program, Jews were nonetheless considered to be one among a number of "suspect" groups, whether they were judged on the basis of their purported racial-stock attributes or on the grounds of their radical-leftist political affinities. The issue of controlling the volume of Jewish immigration, along with other eastern and southern European migration, thus turned on the undesirability, and perhaps, downright dangers accompanying the influx of such people into American society. With this explanation in place, Garland is set to demonstrate how Jewish immigrants (legal and illegal) fared then and how this story might resonate with present-day dilemmas surrounding post-2001 US migration controls, policing of immigrants, and deportations.

The book opens with a welcome and carefully parsed review of US immigration practices from the early years of the nation until the end of the nineteenth century. Here, Garland reminds us not only that immigration was hardly ever free of policy controls of some sort, but also that the apparatus of land-border demarcation, federal bureaucracy, population control, documentation of individuals and