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a review of
Susie Linfield, *The Lions' Den.* Yale University Press, 2019, 400 pp.

In *The Lions' Den*, Linfield examines the relationship between 'Zionism' and the Left.' She asks how 'Zionist' became "the dirtiest word to the international Left?" (2) To answer these questions, she examines the views of eight prominent public intellectuals, before and after the creation of Israel in 1948. She argues that there are two reasons for the Left's changing attitudes towards Israel: the occupation, and a shift in the Left "defining itself as anti-fascist to anti-imperialist, and identification with the formerly colonized peoples of the Third World as the main agents of social justice." (4) The book is divided into three parts, Europeans, Socialists and Americans, consisting of eight chapters, not including the introduction and conclusion. Out of the eight intellectuals whose views Linfield explores, only one is not Jewish: Fred Halliday.

The book suffers from numerous drawbacks. First, Linfield does not appreciate the complex etymology of the term 'Zionism.' Al-

though Zionism in popular discourse today unanimously refers to advocacy for a Jewish state, not all segments of the historic Zionist political movement favored the creation of an exclusionary ethno-religious Jewish state. Second, in many instances, particularly in the case of Arendt and Chomsky, she takes quotes out of context and puts forward interpretations which do not align with the textual evidence she provides. Third, she systematically misrepresents the proposed United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolution of January 1976, claiming it "does not propose a two-state solution." (272)

Linfield convicts 'The Left' writ large for opposing a Jewish state, but neglects discussion of the Zionist movement's own rich history of opposing the demand for a Jewish state. Instead, Linfield simply takes as her point of departure that the term has become the "dirtiest word to the international Left." The group of intellectuals known as Brit Shalom, founded in 1925, vehemently opposed the creation of a Jewish state, calling instead for a binational Jewish-Palestinian state. In fact, the World Zionist Organization (WZO) did not explicitly call for a Jewish state until 1942, after the Biltmore conference. After the Biltmore program was adopted, members of Brit Shalom such as Judah Magnes and Martin Buber broke off from the WZO and created their own party, Ihud, calling for a binational settlement. While Ihud is the most familiar example of support for binationalism due to their elite membership, there was also substantial support on the ground. Hashomer Hatzair remained binationalist until the UN partition resolution, and the Kibbutz movement aspired to create the kind of Zionist movement which was inclusive of all ethnicities and religions. There were also smaller but still influential groups, like Haim Kalvarisky's League for Arab-Jewish Rapprochement, close to the influential U.S. group Avukah. But more to the point, even though Magnes and Buber broke with the WZO, they continued to position themselves as 'Zionists.' Indeed, they were in favor of the type of Zionism that rejected the demand for a Jewish state, calling instead for the formation of a

Schaar, S. (2015). Eqbal Ahmad—Critical Outsider in a Turbulent Age. New York: Columbia University Press.

ception of "anti-imperialism." With respect to Hannah Arendt and Noam Chomsky, readers will face a difficult time evaluating the accuracy of Linfield's allegations, since she takes many quotes out of context. Linfield fails to include the views of any non-Jewish Palestinian intellectuals in her analysis. Most importantly, Linfield grossly misrepresents the proposed UNSC resolution of January 1976, which Israel boycotted and the US vetoed. Contrary to Linfield, the resolution, backed by the PLO, the "confrontation states" (Egypt, Jordan, Syria) and the USSR, reaffirms UNSC resolution 242, and calls for a two-state settlement along the 1967 borders, and guarantees "the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of all states in the area and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries." (UNSC 1976, S/11940)

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multi-ethnic, pluralistic state. Linfield, however, remains indifferent to alternative conceptions of Zionism.

The first chapter looks at Hannah Arendt, but fails to appreciate her contribution toward a viable bi-nationalist Zionism. Linfield claims Arendt "derided Jewish political sovereignty yet *argued fervently* for a *Jewish army* and *Jewish self-defense*, the *Jewish right to Palestine*, and *the creation of a specifically Jewish politics and a specifically Jewish world*." (18, emphasis added) Linfield is correct to point out, that in her essay "The Jewish Armies" (1941), Arendt wrote "The defense of Palestine is part of the struggle for the freedom of the Jewish people." (Arendt 1956, 137) Linfield is also correct that Arendt "insisted that Jewish settlement in Palestine was not remotely comparable to, much less synonymous with, colonialism or imperialism." (24) Indeed, for Arendt, "The building of a Jewish national home was not a colonial enterprise in which Europeans came to exploit foreign riches…at the expense of native labor." (Arendt 2007, 434-435) However, one scholar argues, "Arendt's staunch support for federalism was based on her analysis of the precariousness of minorities in an ethnic nation state dominated by a majority, an analysis that had been significantly shaped by her experience as a Jew in interwar Europe. Only a multi-ethnic federal political arrangement that would separate the concept of nationality from the state, Arendt argued, would successfully provide minorities with state protection." (Rubin, 394, emphasis added) Moreover, after the publication of her essay "To Save the Jewish Homeland" (1948), she repudiated her earlier stance of supporting a federal, multi-ethnic polity in Palestine and called instead for a binational state grounded in Arab-Jewish cooperation.

Drawing on Arendt's essay, The Jewish War that isn't Happening (1941-1942), Linfield offers the following quote as an indication of Arendt's support for a Jewish army: "The right to take up the sword …can be denied to no one who has put his hand to the plow or trowel." (28) However, when we follow up on Linfield's citation, in *The Jewish Writings* (2007), we find Arendt says the following:

"Blumenfeld demonstrated his legitimacy in this regard by pointing out, at the very start of his address, that he was a stranger here and 'not living among his people.' With that he made it clear that he spoke as a representative of the Jewish people in Palestine. *He derived the demand for a Jewish army from the right to take up the sword, which can be denied to no one who has put his hand to the plow or trowel.*" (Arendt, *The Jewish Writings* (2007), 145, emphasis added)

Here we can see that it is not Arendt herself who believes that a Jewish army is the "sine qua non of Jewish dignity," but rather Arendt believes Blumenfeld, head of the Zionist Federation of Germany, considers a Jewish army to be essential for the Jewish people. Linfield does acknowledge that Arendt opposed the Biltmore program, and worked together with Judah Magnes to lobby against Israeli statehood. However, a few sentences later, Linfield says, Contemporary leftist critics of Israel spend a lot of energy lauding these organizations, which they view with hazy wistfulness. Brit Shalom followers were genuine humanists. But they were not necessarily sharp political thinkers; a sympathetic biographer of Gershom Scholem describes them as 'dreamy academics whose knowledge of the Arab people was derived primarily from books and chats with their gardeners.' (32-33)

On the one hand it is remarkable that Linfield shows awareness of organizations like Brit Shalom, Ihud, as well as people like Judah Magnes and Martin Buber, yet it is puzzling that she does not feel the need to explicate their alternative conception of Zionism. Linfield simply ascribes political inexperience to such groups, reiterating the fact they were "miniscule." She fails to acknowledge that opposition to a Jewish state was a small but legitimate part of the Zionist movement, until the movement was overtaken by bourgeois nationalists seeking to establish an exclusionary ethno-religious Jewish state.

Martin Buber was close friends with Gustav Landauer (1870-1919), the German philosopher, anarchist and avowed pacifist

"There is no question as to whether a reaction is necessary or not. The question is only time and place. Blowing up a house is not enough. What is necessary is cruel and strong reactions. We need precision in time, place and casualties. *If we know the family—[we must] strike mercilessly, women and children included.* Otherwise the reaction is inefficient. At the place of action there is no need to distinguish between guilty and innocent. Where there was no attack—we should not strike. (Chomsky 1999, 182)

The title of this essay, "A Zionism opposed to a Jewish state," might sound odd to some readers. On the one hand, the existence of a Jewish state is opposed, on the other hand a Jewish state is supported in the context of a two-state solution. The contradiction, however, is illusory. In principle, I believe all states are illegitimate, I am an anarchist. Ethnic states certainly have no right to exist. However, states do exist, and in many respects their internal structure is hideous. Israel is no exception. However illegitimate their existence may be, it is perfectly reasonable to demand that states should conform to international legal norms and pursue a more humane foreign policy. Notwithstanding, we should be under no illusion that the creation of an independent Palestinian state will end the oppression of Palestinians. The late Eqbal Ahmad believed "if the Palestinians created a separate independent state alongside Israel, it would become another 'Zionist' state, exclusive and racist, with a large role for religion needed to help define its identity." (Schaar 2015, 118) I agree with these sentiments.

Linfield investigates the relationship between the Left and Zionism, but does not appreciate the complex history of Zionism. The question, "Is 'Zionism' compatible with 'The Left'?" depends crucially on how one defines 'Zionism' and 'The Left.' By starting from the premise that 'Zionism' is essentially the same thing as support for a Jewish ethno-state, Linfield denies legitimacy to alternative conceptions opposed to the existence of such states.

Although Linfield is correct that the occupation changed the way leftists view Israel, her second hypothesis rests on an odd con-

added) Chomsky (1979, 270) correctly points out that in 1977, "the Israeli Knesset approved a resolution by a vote of 92 to 4 that rejected the PLO as 'a discussion partner for the State of Israel in any Middle East peace negotiations,' thus rejecting in the clearest terms the right of self-determination."

Many of Linfield's peripheral claims about Chomsky are also unfounded. She accuses Chomsky of showing selective concern for "human suffering and injustice" with respect to the Balkan conflicts, accusing him of being inattentive to Serb atrocities. (265-66) Linfield claims Chomsky denies Palestinian terrorism, and thinks "Israel has no security concerns and never did." (289) In one instance, Linfield accuses Chomsky of claiming that Saddam Hussein had "peaceful intentions toward Israel"; however, if one checks Linfield's citation, they will find that she 1) cites the wrong book, *Middle East Illusions* (1974) instead of *The Fateful Triangle* (1983) and 2) cites the incorrect page number. Chomsky makes no positive or sympathetic remarks about Saddam Hussein on page "x" from Middle East Illusions, or on page "x" in *The Fateful Triangle*. In fact, in an interview with *Z Magazine* ("Will the US Invade Iraq? Noam Chomsky Interviewed by Michael Albert"), when asked "Has Saddam Hussein been as evil as mainstream media says?" Chomsky explicitly denounces Saddam: "He is as evil as they come, ranking with Suharto and other monsters of the modern era." Linfield simply continues onward, writing, "This was the same Saddam who funded the most murderous Palestinian terrorists, such as Abu Nidal, and who would attack Tel Aviv with Scud missiles." (269)

Linfield also incorrectly accuses Chomsky of "citing himself." (277) If readers follow up on her note 47, and check page 525 of *The Fateful Triangle*, we find Chomsky's note refers to page 182, which has an asterisked note quoting Ben Gurion, from Yediot Ahronot. Indeed, as Chomsky writes, "The military doctrine of attacking defenseless civilians derives from David Ben-Gurion, who was quite explicit about it, though not in public of course." In a January 1, 1948, entry in his Independence War Diary, Ben-Gurion writes:

who was violently beaten to death by proto-fascists (possibly Freikorps), after the dissolution of the Bavarian Soviet Republic during the German Revolution of 1918-1919. Buber and Landauer were members of an anarcho-communist literary group called Neue Gemeinschaft (New Community). After Landauer's murder in 1919, Buber translated and published many of Landauer's writings to keep his legacy alive. Landauer's philosophy influenced Bruderhof, an Anabaptist Christian movement which practices non-violence, as well as the Jewish Kibbutz movement.

In the case of Arthur Koestler, it is important to keep in mind that Koestler was initially a Stalinist, but left the Communist Party of Germany in 1938. By the time the state of Israel had constituted itself in 1948, Koestler had already become an outspoken anti-communist. Thus, his embrace of the reactionary Revisionist Zionism of Vladimir Jabotinsky and his support for hideous militias like Irgun is not surprising at all. The more important question to ask is why Linfield considers the shifting views of an ex-Stalinist, like Koestler, to be important for her thesis? Linfield appears to be suggesting that Koestler's embrace of the Jewish state was a function of his recent conversion to liberalism. It is also striking that Linfield doesn't find it problematic that anti-Semitic stereotypes were accepted by many Zionists.

The second part of the book looks at the socialist thinkers Maxime Rodinson, Isaac Deutscher, Albert Memmi and Fred Halliday. It is unfortunate that Linfield does not include non-Jewish Palestinian voices in her analysis. Nor does she include the voice of Bundists, secular Jewish socialists opposed to the existence of a Jewish ethno-state. Linfield finds it odd that "the revanchism of the Israeli Right [is] viewed, correctly, as reactionary, but the revanchist demand of the 'right of return' viewed as progressive." (224) But not once does Linfield differentiate between its affirmation as a principle guaranteed under international law, vs. the demand that it be fully implemented, which one could argue is objectionable on the grounds that it is not realistic. It

is important to note, however, the international consensus on a peaceful two-state settlement rejects a maximalist implementation of the 'right of return,' and only seeks a partial, symbolic return of refugees.

Linfield's main thesis, that the current socialists' anti-Zionist consensus has gone hand-in-hand with an unfortunate 20th-century switch of emphasis from anti-fascism to anti-imperialism, is much more an indication of the bankrupt campist vision of "anti-imperialism" embraced by certain segments of the left (Leninists, Stalinists), than of an "angry repudiation" of 'Zionism' *per se*. Of course, ethnic states are wholly illegitimate and have no right to exist. Linfield's argument hinges on a narrow conception of "anti-imperialism" which eschews solidarity with the global proletariat and legitimates non-western imperialism as a force of social change. This 'dualistic' conception of anti-imperialism, what Moishe Postone describes as "the anti-imperialism of fools," divides the world into two antagonistic camps, in which criticism of one 'camp' serves to legitimate the ideology of the other 'camp.' As Postone (2006, 99) writes, "As a fetishized form of oppositional consciousness, it is particularly dangerous because it appears to be anti-hegemonic, the expression of a movement of the little people against an intangible, global form of domination." Indeed, "the result is a populist anti-hegemonic movement that is profoundly reactionary and dangerous, not least of all for any hope for progressive politics in the Arab/Muslim world." (Postone 2006, 102)

Moving on to the U.S. Left, the seventh chapter looks at I.F. Stone. Linfield describes his book *This is Israel* (1949) as "one of the most pro-Zionist books ever written." (243) She describes Stone as a supporter of Israel during both the 1956 invasion of Egypt and the Six-Day War. But Stone's views are much more complex. Stone famously penned a critique of Israel's role in the 1967 war for the *London Review of Books* titled "Holy War" (1967). Linfield, however, thinks Stone deserves criticism, since "many Palestinians, and

their allies in the Arab world, did not want peace—though he accused Israeli leaders of precisely that." (254) According to Linfield, Stone "failed to engage, or even notice, the irredentist strain of the Palestinian movement and the larger Arab world." (260) Linfield's remarks are quite striking, in that, she does not even attempt to make an argument that the Palestinians and the Arab World "did not want peace." Instead, she takes it for granted that virtually all of the concessions have been made by the Israeli side.

Chapter eight, on Noam Chomsky, is highly problematic. The main issue is Linfield's depiction of the proposed UNSC resolution of January 1976 on "The Middle East problem including the Palestinian question." Linfield falsely claims "the resolution does not propose a two-state solution" (272). The resolution explicitly calls for Israel to "withdraw from all the Arab territories occupied since June 1967," for there to be established an independent Palestinian state, and for "appropriate arrangements…to guarantee…the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of all states in the area and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries." (UNSC 1976, S/11940, emphasis added)

Furthermore, Linfield's claim that Chomsky "habitually describes the resolution as having been 'proposed by the PLO and the Arab states"' is also not true. In *The Fateful Triangle* (1999), Chomsky writes, "the resolution was backed by the 'confrontation states' (Egypt, Syria, Jordan), the PLO and the USSR." (Chomsky 1999, 67) Chomsky further cites Chaim Herzog, Israel's UN ambassador at the time, who claimed, without evidence, that the PLO not only backed this peace plan but 'prepared' it. Chomsky correctly writes the PLO condemned "the tyranny of the veto," referring to Washington's role in blocking the resolution. Explicit quotes can also be found in Chomsky's Towards a New Cold War (1979), in his "Afterword (1981)" where he writes "The Israeli objection was based primarily on the fact that this resolution specified that 'all the parties' to the conflict, including the PLO, should participate in preparations for the conference." (Chomsky 1979, 267, emphasis