

drawing on extensive analysis of documents produced by donor bureaucracies and interviews with dozens of American, European, UN, and other officials who ran them, albeit with their confidentiality protected.

A recurring theme in current polemical and academic discourses is that the Palestinians themselves—and to a much lesser extent Israel (“the parties”)—are to blame for the failure of Palestinian state-building, with external actors posing as well-intentioned but largely powerless bystanders. Claims that the United States is an “honest broker” are more transparent given that country’s massive military and economic subsidies to Israel. But for many years, the EU states, Canada, and Norway—the main donors to the Palestinians—posed as counterweights, even allies, of the Palestinians. One conclusion we may draw from Le More’s important study is that by effectively enabling Israeli colonization, so-called development aid proved over the long term no less destructive to the Palestinians than the weapons sent to Israel by the United States.

HAMAS IN CONTEXT

Hamas in Politics: Democracy, Religion, Violence, by Jeroen Gunning. New York: Columbia University Press, 2008. vi +274 pages. References to p. 305. Index to p. 310. \$34.50 paper.

Reviewed by Ghada Al-Madboub

Hamas in Politics: Democracy, Religion, Violence is a daring attempt to analyze the thinking of Hamas as a social movement and not simply as a terrorist organization. Using a combination of political theory and empirical research, Jeroen Gunning, a lecturer in international politics at the University of Wales (and deputy director of the university’s Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Contemporary Political Violence), contextualizes issues of democracy, religion, and violence as they relate to Hamas. Methodologically, Gunning offers an extensive discussion of his interpretive

ethnographic fieldwork in the Gaza Strip (conducted 1997–2004), taking his analysis beyond the straightforward causality or correlation of mainstream political science. The main merit of the book, however, rests in Gunning’s attempt to wed the study of Hamas’s discourse to the study of its actual practices regarding religion, democracy, and violence.

Although Hamas has not advanced a political theory as such, the book offers an account and interpretation of Hamas’s political “theory” and “philosophy.” Gunning innovatively shows in the second chapter that Hamas borrows political and philosophical ideas from Western philosophy—taking, for instance, the ideas of the “law of nature” and “social contract” from Locke, and the concept of the socialization of citizens into willing God’s will from Hegel (p. 71)—and mixes them with elements from the Islamic tradition (Gunning refers to this as Hamas’s “dialogic approach”). Indeed, Hamas consciously and selectively borrows some elements from Islamist reformers, such as Hasan al-Banna, Sayyid Qutb, and Abu al-‘Ala al-Mawdudi (who themselves selectively embraced some elements of liberal Western thought). However, this book does not claim to offer sufficient knowledge of how Hamas was affected by Islamist reformers in the first place. Readers interested in the previous subject should consult other books.

Gunning interprets and explains his conception of Hamas’s political theory well enough with regard to religion and democracy, though less effectively with respect to violence. This is an area where more theorizing into the thinking of the movement is needed: in terms of its deployment of violence (mainly interfactional violence) and how it legitimizes internal violence (particularly after the 2006 election and the takeover of Gaza in 2007).

The book’s other main task is to clarify the intersection of Hamas’s political thought and its actual practice with regard to the movement itself, on several levels: internally (chapter 4), in relation to its domestic environment (especially within the context of the elections of 2004–2006, in chapter 5), and with regard to the peace process (chapter 6). Gunning uncovers, using his extensive fieldwork and primary sources, the interplay between democracy and religion in Hamas’s practice and explains that despite the substantial overlap between the movement’s thought and its practices, there are tensions, too—for example, in the way

Ghada Al-Madboub is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Government and Politics at the University of Maryland. She is currently completing her dissertation on inclusion, interfactional violence, and colonization in Palestine.

Hamas has reconciled the authority of God (divine law) with the authority of the people (popular will). Hamas seemed to resolve this tension, according to Gunning, by claiming that representative authority overrides religious authority without disregarding religion. Yet such representative authority is not entirely efficient and can be undermined (intentionally and unintentionally) with the consent of followers within the movement and the Palestinian domestic arena. To show this, Gunning makes use of Pierre Bourdieu's work on the "mystery of ministry" and "symbolic violence" in addition to the role of the informal authority of religion. Gunning's demonstration of tensions within the movement is innovative and helps to uncover the dynamics of power and authority within and of social movements. One can even argue that Gunning offers a somewhat extensive road map into studying the internal dynamics and the organizational structure of Hamas as a clandestine group.

In addition to the above, Gunning seeks to demonstrate that Hamas is not a total spoiler—that it can be considered a partner in the peace process and that its practices are not coincidentally democratic but are to be expected if considered in the wider socioeconomic environment. While the book is in no sense apologetic, it understands the movement from the point of view of and in comparison with liberal democratic discourse. This is understandable, given that the book is addressing Western academics and policy makers. At times, however, this approach makes Gunning's argument less probing than it could be. For example, in chapter 7, Gunning tries to apply theories of democracy to understanding and locating Hamas's practice within its socioeconomic environment. The chapter is somewhat disconnected from the previous ones and does not engage effectively in a critique of democratic liberal theorization. Future attempts might have to further situate the practice of the movement beyond the liberal discourse of democracy.

The book also engages social movement theory, but it also goes beyond the limits of social movement theory and its traditional Western approach, and is a good example of how to study the complexity of social movements in colonial and postcolonial settings.

Gunning is a politically committed scholar who demonstrates an in-depth understanding of Hamas and presents a challenging attempt to formulate the theory of

the movement. Scholars and students of political theory and social sciences, mainly of state-building, social movements, civil society, and democratization, are encouraged to read this book. It is especially useful for those interested in social and resistance movements and in the theoretical and empirical debate of the secular-religious nexus.

EVANGELICAL EXCEPTIONS

Zion's Christian Soldiers: The Bible, Israel, and the Church, by Stephen Sizer. Nottingham, U.K.: Inter-Varsity Press, 2007. 172 pages. Glossary to p. 175. Notes to p. 188. Recommended reading to p. 190. Index of Biblical references to p. 199. \$18.00 paper.

Reviewed by Mark Chmiel

Jewish Zionists like David Ben-Gurion have propagated a selective reading of the Hebrew Bible that provided the Zionist project with ideological reinforcement. But in the last thirty years, with the rise to political and cultural power of Christian fundamentalists, Christian Zionists, particularly in the United States, have produced and disseminated their own reading of the Old Testament and New Testament to similar ends.

For example, in 1996, the Third International Christian Zionist Congress stated, "According to God's distribution of nations, the Land of Israel has been given to the Jewish People by God as an everlasting possession by an eternal covenant. The Jewish People have the absolute right to possess and dwell in the Land, including Judea, Samaria, Gaza and the Golan" (p. 76).

It is this interpretation of scripture that Rev. Stephen Sizer that seeks to subvert in *Zion's Christian Soldiers*, which is an appeal to his fellow evangelicals to resolutely oppose Christian Zionism on theological grounds. Sizer writes as a proud evangelical who believes that the Christian Zionists have misread the Bible in fundamental ways.

How scripture is interpreted, Sizer contends, is extremely important given the harmful effects of such interpretation in the political world: "In its worst forms,

Mark Chmiel is an adjunct professor of theological studies at St. Louis University, St. Louis, MO.