

and lasting peace cannot be achieved without addressing the injustices done to Palestinian refugees. Second, reparations to refugees for their material losses and suffering will be among the key issues that the parties will need to address.

*Reparations to Palestinian Refugees: A Comparative Perspective* offers an analysis of the difficulties of securing Israeli-Palestinian agreement on reparations, as well as ways in which the prospects for achieving agreement might be enhanced. This is done, in part, through a comparative approach that highlights the technical characteristics and political dynamics of other compensation regimes. Thus, after a chapter devoted to the magnitude, legal basis, and negotiating history of Palestinian claims, and a second that explores the international law, politics, and terminology of reparations more broadly, the book moves on to an examination first of the German-Jewish Reparations Agreement of 1952 and then the various proposed reparation schemes in the Cyprus conflict (including, in particular, the failed Annan Plans of 2002/5).

Based on this, the author then concludes her study by making a number of recommendations for enhancing the prospect of future agreement on Palestinian refugee claims. In particular, Samy argues that greater effort needs to be devoted to common agreement on the harm done by Israel to refugees, as well as its primary responsibility for redressing this. She is rightly worried about the risk of refugee rights being traded off against other issues in future negotiations. She also calls for preparing the ground by more effectively legitimizing Palestinian claims in the broader international arena.

A central challenge with regard to these recommendations rests in Israeli attitudes to the refugee issue, and the extent to which the dominant Zionist narrative fails to appreciate both the scope of forced displacement in 1948 and Israeli responsibility for this. How to actually change this—and in a practical way that engages the Israeli-Jewish mainstream, not simply the sympathetic margins—is little explored in this volume, or indeed elsewhere. There also remains the immense challenge of

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**Reparations to Palestinian Refugees: A Comparative Perspective**, by Shahira Samy. London: Routledge, 2010. ix + 154 pages. Notes to p. 162. Bibliography to p. 174. Index to p. 181. \$128.00 cloth.

### *Reviewed by Rex Brynen*

While there appears to be no prospect for meaningful Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations any time soon, when and if permanent status talks are ever rejoined two things seem certain. First, a just

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reconciling Palestinian valuations of property and other losses (\$300 billion in 2012 dollars) with what might be considered politically and economically affordable by Israel (in past negotiations, only one percent or so of that amount). While Israeli officials have sometimes assumed that the international community would step in to provide large amounts of additional resources for refugee compensation, this has always been a highly dubious assumption—even more so now in the current era of fiscal compression in major donor countries. Finally, the modalities of any future compensation regime would involve immense technical, as well as political complexities, a challenge that is certainly indicated in Samy's discussion of the German-Jewish and Cyprus cases.

Together with other recent work on refugee reparations by BADIL, Michael Fischbach, the International Organization of Migration, and others, *Reparations to Palestinian Refugees: A Comparative Perspective* is a valuable contribution to a complex and important topic. Unfortunately, Shahira is no longer with us to share further insights, having passed away in March 2012 after a long illness. Her energy, dedication, and good humor are all very much missed by her friends and colleagues.