

rights discourse by examining these same youths' experiences visiting Palestine, where people are suffering under Israel's military occupation and dispossession policies and where the youths from her study rely on ideas of rights as a given protected status which is rooted in the capital of their own U.S. citizenship.

Using the Palestinian-American case as an example, Abu El-Haj summons educators to recognize and accommodate a new understanding of citizenship as lived experience. Her work powerfully illustrates how Palestinian-American youths' experience in transnational social fields is part of a broader Palestinian collective affinity for their homeland and struggle, but how it also leaves them incapable of fully belonging to the U.S. nation. Abu El-Haj highlights how the logics of everyday nationalism, as cultivated and celebrated through multicultural liberal democracy, both define citizenship and belonging along nation-state boundaries and facilitate access to them through notions of rights. As Maira asks us, "What frameworks can young people use when 'democracy' is the language of U.S. statecraft and expansionism, 'women's rights' and 'gay rights' are the alibis of imperial interventions and occupation, and cultural and religious difference are promoted by the neoliberal, multicultural state, particularly under Obama?" (p. 255).

Both Abu El-Haj and Maira's critiques of "rights-talk" leave us with infinite possibilities for reimagining politics and solidarity. Abu El-Haj's call for educators to reimagine the values of citizen-education and to consider the Palestinian-American youth experience as highlighting the importance and value of citizenship as life practices should inspire all of us to see the silver lining in the dismal tale of what U.S. nationalism signifies for Palestinian, Arab, and Muslim youth. While the task of tackling these questions may seem insurmountable amid rampant culture wars, political despair, and catastrophic devastation caused by war and occupation in the SWANA region, the voices, aspirations, organizing efforts, and experiences of these youth communities should be a constant reminder that the task is not only achievable, but that its pursuit is mandated. Thank you to Thea Renda Abu El-Haj and Sunaina Marr Maira for reminding us of that.

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Loubna Qutami is a PhD candidate in the Department of Ethnic Studies at the University of California, Riverside. She is a founder, member, and the former international general coordinator for the Palestinian Youth Movement (PYM) and the former executive director of the Arab Cultural and Community Center (ACCC) in San Francisco.

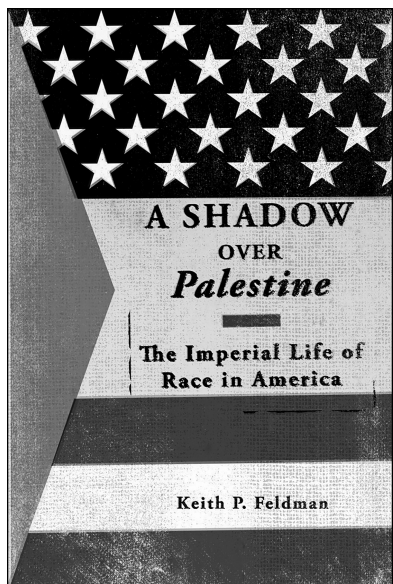
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*A Shadow over Palestine: The Imperial Life of Race in America*, by Keith P. Feldman. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015. 328 pages. \$24.95 cloth.

#### REVIEWED BY SOPHIA AZEB

On the first day of the National Women's Studies Association conference at Humboldt State University on 16 June 1982, ten days into Israel's invasion of Lebanon, the Third World Women's Caucus proposed a resolution decrying the Israeli bombardment. According to ethnic studies scholar Keith P. Feldman, disagreements among white feminists over whether a measure against

Israel was anti-Semitic led the resolution to fail. The only language that passed the assembly “moved to condemn genocide generally ‘within and outside the United States’” (p. 203). The resolution’s startling obscuring of the Israeli state, even as its actions in Lebanon necessitated the actions of



the Third World Women’s Caucus in the first place, is the typical place—or rather absence—of Palestine and Palestinians in Euro-American modernity.

In his cultural history of Israel and Palestine’s significance for U.S. imperial cultures from 1960 through 1985, Feldman aims to lift the “shadow” of “Palestine’s constitutive absence” within the entanglements of Israel, Palestine, and the racial liberalism of the United States by centering the perspectives of Arabs and Palestinians (p. 17). Feldman asserts that the United States’ “special relationship” with Israel is normalized through the framework of U.S. imperial culture, obfuscating Palestine even as it secures U.S. and Israeli “national exceptionalisms” (pp. 8, 14). Over the course of five chapters and an epilogue, Feldman’s archive of counternarratives to U.S. claims of new racial inclusion includes newspapers, letters, novels, poetry, and essays produced by a broad range of people and organizations. This archive is traced from the likes of James Baldwin, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating

Committee (SNCC), Edward Said, the Association of Arab American University Graduates, Norman Podhoretz, the Jewish Liberation Project, Cherrie Moraga, and numerous others.

Feldman’s approach to unearthing Palestine’s “absent presence” in the production of racial knowledge at the heart of U.S. imperial culture draws from a number of related interdisciplinary fields and historical moments (p. 17). The lens of comparative ethnic studies offers the circulation of race across and through “U.S. post-civil rights modalities of racial liberal inclusion and Israeli post-occupation modalities of permanently temporary exclusion” (p. 222). For instance, chapter 2 analyzes the SNCC and the Black Panther Party’s embrace of the Palestinian struggle for self-determination as a method to assert the reality and entanglement of local and global colonialisms. The book also situates itself in both Arab American studies and Palestine studies and positions the very genealogies of these fields as a counter-archive. In chapter 4, for example, Feldman describes Edward Said’s “The Arab Portrayed,” a 1968 essay commissioned by Ibrahim Abu-Lughod for the Arab League’s *Arab World* magazine, as informed by the young field of Arab American studies and its call to attend to the shifting racialization of Arabs in the United States (p. 149). This method enables Feldman to effectively reorient the role of race in the relationship between Israel and the United States beyond previous studies of the assimilation of American Jews into U.S. society or the contests of Black-Jewish relations. The book instead pivots toward the centering of Arabs and Palestinians as racialized subjects in these configurations.

Feldman is also in conversation with recent literature in the field of transnational American studies, particularly on the potential of an Afro-Arab terrain (as in Alex Lubin’s *Geographies of Liberation: The Making of an Afro-Arab Political Imaginary*, University of North Carolina Press,

2014). This work surpasses the intellectual shadowing of a Black/Arab historiography in order to assert Black alterity to U.S. racial logics and Palestinian alterity to Israeli settler colonialism as integral, often overlapping, epistemic frames. Chapter 5 examines Arab, African-American, Latinx,\* and Jewish feminists' responses to Israel's invasion of Lebanon as exemplary of the tensions between Jewish and women of color feminists' disparate struggles for social justice, offering an alternative political and literary insight into these conjunctions. Such insights are especially potent in Feldman's account of the poetry of June Jordan, whose 1985 poetry collection *Living Room* was dedicated to African-American and Arab children—primarily Palestinian and Lebanese—to highlight “the conjoined proximity of Black and Palestinian life to the devastation of state and state-sanctioned violence” (p. 209).

Feldman establishes a translational landscape to dispel the shadows over Palestine and Palestinians across the complex anti-colonial, Cold War timeline of the text, making *A Shadow over Palestine* relevant to scholars beyond Palestine studies. The book mobilizes juridical, literary, geographical, and political translations to reframe the state- and race-making (and unmaking) practices Feldman covers. This reframing reveals the relationality of transnational Black, Jewish, and Palestinian articulations and critiques of U.S. liberalism, Israeli settler colonialism, and political Zionism. Feldman's conceptual deployment of translation addresses these multiple functions in U.S., Israeli, and some Arab contexts without flattening either the vulnerabilities or productive imaginaries of these various processes and identities. As the self-fashioned pluralism of post-civil rights American society is celebrated by the state, Israel's efforts to manage difference and space through the invocation of protecting an island of democracy in a hostile Middle East is represented by various U.S. politicians, academics, and writers as necessary for national security in the midst of the global Cold War. Simultaneously, Palestinian, African-American, and broader Third Worldist efforts to make legible Palestine and Palestinians through the articulation of race, decolonization, and emancipation are forged through cultural work evoking the relationality between Palestinian liberation and U.S. racial justice movements. In the heterogeneous narratives of this history, it is through such culture work that the constitutive absence of Palestine comes to stand as integral to Euro-American modernity and liberationist, counterhegemonic distinctions alike and in turn.

Feldman's retrieval of historical conjunctures of Palestine, Israel, and the United States are at times difficult to discern without a close eye to the many details of each intricate chapter. This is a product of the immensity of the topic and the author's archive more so than of the writing itself. Regardless of its density, however, the intellectual and cultural theory at the center of *A Shadow over Palestine* is extraordinarily well developed and effectively layers the multifaceted relations that structure the race and politics, and the politics of race, that take hold in the post-civil rights United States by way of Israel and Palestine.

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Sophia Azeb is a postdoctoral and faculty fellow at New York University, in the Gallatin School of Individualized Study.

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\* A gender-neutral term used in place of Latino or Latina. —Ed.