
Choice, October 2003

The history of no people in the Middle East has been more controversial than that of the Palestinians. Both Palestinian and Israeli historiographies are often self-serving, inwardly biased, and lacking in objectivity. The first edition of this book (Palestinians: The Making of a People, CH, Jul'93) has served as a more successful corrective to those controversial narratives. The new edition discusses the ambiguous status of Palestinian citizens of Israel and the Oslo Accords. Kimmerling (sociology, Hebrew Univ.) and Migdal (international studies, Univ. of Washington) reject both Israeli historians' claim that Palestinians lack a continuous history and a well-defined identity and the Palestinians' view of their identity as a historical entity. The authors view identity as an ongoing, socially constructed, and fluid process. Palestinian identity, and nationalism by extension, was affected by political and economic factors and emerged in response to three revolts against foreign forces: the 1834 revolt against Ibrahim Pasha of Egypt; the 1936-9 revolt against British policies on Jewish immigration; and the 1987 intifida against Israeli occupation and settlement policies. The authors' discussion of the Oslo process, and what went right and wrong, is extremely enlightening. This is a well-researched, balanced, and readable account of Palestinian history. Recommended. All public and academic collections. -- A. Mahdi, Ohio Wesleyan University