

Review

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This is that rare work that walks the fine line between intellectual detachment and emotional empathy, recognizing that where the lives of Palestinians and Israelis intertwine there will always be room for both. Slapikoff has enriched the field of Middle Eastern studies with his first-hand account of the Intifada. The provenance of this testament is amply authenticated by the identities of the journal's main actors. In the end, the book will be valued for its insights, for its honesty, and for its moral and unusual tone.

IAN SKEET, *Oman: Politics and Development* (London: Macmillan, 1992). Pp. 212.

REVIEWED BY CALVIN H. ALLEN, JR., Department of History, College of the Ozarks, Point Lookout, Mo.

*Oman: Politics and Development* is a follow-up volume to Skeet's 1974 book *Muscat and Oman: The End of an Era*. In carrying his observations on Oman to the period between 1970 and 1990 Skeet was no longer able to rely on his experiences as an employee for Shell International, as he did for the original work, but has instead utilized Omani and other published official documents, a few published secondary sources, and interviews conducted in the sultanate during a visit in 1990 under the sponsorship of the Ministry of Information. Skeet's goals are to "see how a country starts from, as it were, nothing and becomes a respected member of the international community . . ." (p. xi) and to present an "analysis of how and why things happened" (p. 3). In Skeet's final analysis, Oman would not have been as fortunate "if there had been a managing director in charge other than Sultan Qaboos" (p. 163).

In part 1, "Scenes, Oman 1990," Skeet takes the reader on a tour of the sultanate beginning in the Capital District and then on to Masandam, Dhofar, and the interior. He describes museums, the university, hospitals, schools, a project to protect the Arabian oryx, the symphony orchestra, and a naval base all to show the reader "how Oman looks today." Part 2, "Behind the Scenes—The Creation of Oman, 1970–90," explains how Oman reached its 1990 level of development. Skeet begins by describing the coup that brought Qaboos to power, the winning of the Dhofar war, the formation of state structures, and the development of foreign relations. Skeet then focuses on the economic crisis of 1975–76, which led to an overhaul of the financial apparatus. This section concludes with descriptions of developments in foreign affairs, petroleum, finance, investment, education and health, telecommunications, political participation, law, environment and heritage, women and youth, and the welfare state. In part 3, "Towards 2000," Skeet anticipates problems and offers solutions in the economy, politics, external affairs, and internal unity.

Skeet's strengths are as an observer and commentator on contemporary affairs. This is a man who obviously has a knowledge of and appreciation for Oman and its culture but has not allowed his sympathy for the country to compel him to write an apologia or propaganda piece. He praises the cleanliness, orderliness, and technical sophistication of contemporary Oman, but at the same time makes it very clear that it is, in many ways, one huge façade, "theatre looking for an audience" (p. 8), manned by expatriates all the way from doctors, professors, environmentalists, and symphony directors to street sweepers. Similarly, when Skeet turns his attention to the problems facing Oman in the next decade he gives forthright and honest appraisals of the water crisis caused by the chimera of agricultural self-sufficiency, the difficulty of economic diversification, the pressures for democratization in an autocracy, and the future relationship between Oman and Dhofar.

Where Skeet fails is in his description and analysis of events between 1970 and 1990. Skeet's description of the first five years of the Qaboos regime offers little that has not been covered in John Townsend's *Oman: The Making of a Modern State* (New York, 1977),

although Skeet is much more willing to identify the individuals associated with the coup of 1970 and the "Muscat Mafia." In discussing the late 1970s Skeet does begin to break some new ground with valuable material and observations on the financial crisis of 1975–76 and the Morgan Grenfill study, which led to an overhaul of financial administration and lessening of the influence of the Muscat Mafia but was unable to eliminate the tension that still exists between the ministries and the palace for access to resources.

Once we get beyond the first years of the 1980s, however, the limitations of Skeet's sources become very apparent. Here the reader is presented with a catalogue of projects and statistics gleaned largely from statistical abstracts and five-year plans that attempt to show the successes in development, but there is neither the "how" nor "why" of this development that Skeet promised. What do expenditures of RO 589 million in defense, RO 105 million in education, and RO 61 million in health really mean to the Omani people? Several good scholarly studies have analyzed development in Oman; the Royal Geographic Society's Wahiba Sands Project and the Durham University Project reports come immediately to mind, and material from them would have added greatly to this section of Skeet's book. Furthermore, there are several gaps in this discussion, most notably there is no mention of the financial problems of 1986 that led to the firing of several ministers. Readers are advised to consult the relevant chapter in Liesl Graz, *The Turbulent Gulf* (London, 1990) as a supplement to Skeet's discussion.

Finally, while Skeet's assertion that Oman would have been quite a different place had not Qaboos been in charge is obviously a truism, he makes very clear the central role that the sultan has played in the development of Oman during the last twenty years. For the most part, Skeet is very positive, explaining that Qaboos "takes it for granted that he should have the best orchestra, palace, armaments, band, garden, hotel, or hospital . . . sometimes it may lead to waste, but more often it produces something unexpected and appealing" (p. 116). But, placed within the context of Skeet's description of Oman in 1990 and his concerns for the future, one realizes that producer/director Qaboos has thus far succeeded only in building an elaborate set.

PHILIPPA STRUM, *The Women Are Marching: The Second Sex and the Palestinian Revolution* (Brooklyn, N.Y.: Lawrence Hill Books, 1992). Pp. 356.

REVIEWED BY ARLENE ELOWE MACLEOD, Political Science Department, Bates College, Lewiston, Maine

Tensions and conflict seem inherent in the task of pursuing feminist goals while participating in a nationalist struggle, as women's experiences in diverse revolutionary struggles from China to Algeria easily illustrate. Palestinian women are now grappling with this difficult agenda. Therefore, the main purpose of Philippa Strum's book—to illuminate women's part within the larger Palestinian struggle—stresses an intriguing and important theme. Further, Strum seeks to portray the evolution of women's dual struggle over the duration of the Palestinian Intifada to date, and ultimately to evaluate the claim that "the women of Palestine will not be like the women of Algeria" (a quotation from Zahira Kamal that Strum uses to head her first chapter). Her book has another purpose as well: to present a diary, an impressionistic account of her experiences in the West Bank.

Arguing that media coverage and the scholarly literature on the Intifada have ignored the "centrality of women and of a feminist movement" (p. 1), Strum situates her study as an account of women "both before and during the intifada and of my own life in their society . . ." (p. 2). Identifying herself as a Jewish-American political scientist and civil-rights