



Keren Or Schlesinger, Gadi Algazi, and Yaron Ezrahi, eds., *Israel/Palestine: Scholarly Tributes to the Legacy of Baruch Kimmerling* [in Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2017), 525 pp. Paperback, \$39.00.

Baruch Kimmerling (1939–2007) was, without a doubt, one of the most influential public intellectuals of post-1967 Israel, impacting not only a number of academic disciplines dealing with Israeli society (particularly sociology, political science, and history), but also the overall political landscape of the country. Kimmerling saw himself primarily as a producer of ideas, a challenger of traditional Zionist thinking and policies even prior to the appearance of the so-called New Historians, and he is recognized as such by several contributors in this important volume (e.g., Shalev, Benvenisti, and Herzog). Moreover, unlike many others in academia, Kimmerling cherished the opportunity to debate all comers, particularly on inherently controversial topics such as Israeli-Palestinian relations and the future of the Occupation, the nature of Israel as an immigrant society and a democracy, and militarism in the Jewish state. Kimmerling's numerous writings deal with a variety of long-term Israeli dilemmas with relation to democracy, existential anxiety, messianism, colonialism, inclusion and exclusion, and militarism.

The long-term impact of Kimmerling's thought and his unique persona is reflected in the diversity of the 18 contributions to this essential volume. They include for the most part Israeli-Jewish writers, but also several Palestinian intellectuals; mostly men, but also several women; mostly sociologists, but a significant number of contributors from other disciplines (political science, geography, history, international relations). This gamut represents, at least partially, Kimmerling's perception of Israeli society as highly diverse and his conscious effort to resist attempts to homogenize it from above—attempts often supported by leading forces within academia that Kimmerling opposed throughout his career, sometimes incurring significant personal harm.

Following Michael Shalev's introduction—which focuses on Kimmerling as a man who saw himself, despite his many years in Israeli academia, as an immigrant and an outsider, a self-perception reflected throughout his writings—the volume is divided into six parts that introduce articles connected directly or indirectly to Kimmerling's thought. The titles of these parts reflect the impressive breadth of Kimmerling's intellectual reach, its diversity and its centrality for understanding Israeli politics, society, and culture, both today and historically: the frontier (dealing with the bounds of Israel's democracy); settlers (indigenous relations and existential anxiety in Israel); Zionism and boundaries; struggles within the Israeli settler-immigrant society; the social usage of militarism; and finally, and provocatively, 'marginal in the center' (*shuli ba'merkaz*), that is, reflections on the relationship between Baruch Kimmerling as a person and his always controversial socio-political thought.

A truly critical feature of Kimmerling's contribution to scholarship on Israel was his rejection of the approach that sees the country as *sui generis*, a case that cannot be compared to any others. The approach he opposed, I would argue, has had negative consequences for both creative scholarship and, more seriously, for public policy. Kimmerling, forever a comparativist, insisted on comparing the Zionist and Israeli settlement project to other cases, such as English settlement in North America, a viewpoint adopted by others represented in this volume and beyond (e.g., Lustick, Peled, Peleg, Smooha, and Yiftachel).

In the opening article in this volume, Lev Grinberg deals with the nature of Israeli democracy, emphasizing its limitations by quoting Kimmerling's writings on the Israeli control system, militarism, the delegitimation of multiculturalism, the rise of religious nationalism, and other phenomena. Grinberg notes, correctly, that Kimmerling emphasized Arab-Jewish relationships as key for the development of Jewish, and later Israeli, political institutions. The struggle with the Arab population in Palestine created an Israeli collectivist mentality and, according to Kimmerling, explains the

post-1967 weakening of the Labor movement against the rise of the National Religious ethos and the increased centrality of militarism due to the need to maintain the 1967 conquests through nationalist, collectivist effort.

One analyst influenced greatly by Kimmerling is political geographer Oren Yiftachel, an influence fully reflected in his article in this volume entitled “Colonialism and the Abrahamic Cities: Geography of Religious Fanaticism in Israel/Palestine” (with Batya Roded). The co-authors compare Be’ersheva, Jerusalem, and Hebron and note Kimmerling’s emphasis on two factors in particular: territorial control and religion as creating political identity. The essay represents a neo-Gramscian approach, emphasizing the link between material political control (i.e., territory) and cultural factors (i.e., identity). But in addition, this article emphasizes the involvement of the state in promoting the colonial project, an approach taken also in my own book, *Democratizing the Hegemonic State* (Peleg 2007).

A particularly interesting essay in this volume is Nira Yuval-Davis’s “Zionism, Anti-Semitism, and the Israeli Existential Anxiety,” which sheds light on the psychological factors impacting Israel. Following Kimmerling’s comparative approach, Yuval-Davis emphasizes that anxiety is also present in other societies, although she notes that it is especially powerful in contemporary Israel. This anxiety is intimately linked to questions of war and peace in Israel, as it has been in other settling societies. It has been particularly influential in the rise of Religious Zionism within Israel, as noted by Kimmerling. Looking at the psychological factors from the Arab side, Tamir Sorek’s article on Palestinian monuments in Israel is an important addition to our ability to compare the two nations struggling to rule Israel/Palestine.

Following an essay on Israel’s settlements in the West Bank by the late Michael Feige, a superb scholar killed in 2016 in a terrorist attack in Tel Aviv, Joel Migdal offers an interesting theoretical article distinguishing what he calls “distributive politics” and “redemptive politics,” once again reflecting Kimmerling’s insights. Ismail Nashif proposes an alternative reading of Zionism as continuing the ghetto in the modern world rather than negating it, a point that Kimmerling would probably endorse. Nashif notes, brilliantly, that while Zionist collectivity has created a boundary based on blood, it has not been able to determine its geopolitical borders—a condition that still exist in Israel today.

The fourth part of the book deals with what one might view as special identity groups within the modern Israeli experience. Dvora Bernstein analyzes the protest group Black Panthers in the context of Israel’s citizenship discourse, and Amal Jamal examines the role of Mizrahi Jews in the state’s response to the Arab minority, viewing them as part of the cultural control instruments established by the state in 1948.

Three articles in this volume are dedicated to militarism within Israel, an issue that is quite pervasive in Kimmerling's writings. Uri Ben-Eliezer begins his essay by identifying Kimmerling's theoretical contribution (e.g., coining the concepts of 'cultural militarism' and 'civilian militarism') and concludes that in the post-Oslo era militarism has remained a major force within Israeli society.

The last two essays deal with Baruch Kimmerling as a person. Meron Benvenisti sees Kimmerling as, primarily, a producer of ideas (*yatzran raionot*) and graciously admits that he has changed his views on a variety of crucial issues as a result of his long-term interaction with Kimmerling. Hannah Herzog discusses Kimmerling as a "public sociologist," a man who was often misunderstood by his critics but who cared deeply about Israel.

This collection of articles is an absolute must for anyone interested in Israel Studies.

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REFERENCES

Peleg, Ilan. 2007. *Democratizing the Hegemonic State: Political Transformation in the Age of Identity*. New York: Cambridge University Press.