

LaRouche movement also came under vicious attack, and which measures, if enacted 15 years ago, would have prevented millions of deaths; to revive Classical culture, including restoring tuning of musical performances to the scientifically determined C=256. And so on.

One might wonder, where the source of inner strength to face years in prison came from. As is clear from *Reflections*, Billington is a personal example of LaRouche's thesis, that creativity in music, art, and science, must define polit-

ical life. LaRouche continually polemicalizes that one cannot "learn" important ideas, but that one must discover for oneself, one must re-create in one's own mind, the breakthrough that led to each new discovery. It's that commitment to truth, which Billington exposes the reader to through his own thought-process in tackling difficult concepts. For example, Billington lays out discoveries from his own original research on Chinese history and philosophy, including the similarities between the European Renaissance and

that of Confucian China, and the role of the evil Bertrand Russell in China, and Russell's influence within Maoism.

As one person commented after reading *Reflections*: "For nearly twenty years I have been a supporter and avid reader of . . . informative writings of Lyndon LaRouche, but this book by Mike Billington brought me a new perspective. . . . The book brings added clarity to the goals and objectives we are working to achieve."

—Ronald Kokinda

Seeing Peace in a Difficult Landscape

It was the design of those who crafted the Oslo Accord for peace between Israel and the Palestinians, to leave the most intractable matters to the end. Central to the agreement was that the first steps would be to reach compromises on trading "land for peace," and implementing a series of economic development projects which would provide material benefit to both the Israelis and the Palestinians. Achieving success in these two areas presumably would establish the trust required to resolve the more complex and emotional issues left for "Final Status" talks.

The two most problematic issues assigned to the "Final Status" talks were, those of reaching an agreement on the status of Jerusalem, and resolving the refugee problem. The outbreak of the presently ongoing Intifada II, triggered by the ill-advised effort of President Clinton to impose an agreement on Jerusalem on Barak and Arafat, demonstrates how explosive these remaining issues are. The second issue, the "Right of Return" of the Arabs who lost their land during the 1947-8 and 1967 wars, is the subject of the latest book by Meron Benvenisti, an Israeli author and historian who once served as the Vice-Mayor of Jerusalem.

A Personal Journey

It has been the policy of every Israeli government, since its founding in 1948, to reject any discussion of the return of Arabs to the towns and villages within the territory of British-controlled Palestine in which they lived, before the mass

exodus of the War of 1948. As a result, more than 380,000 Palestinians were turned into non-citizens, with many living in abject poverty in refugee camps, while their land was incorporated into the Jewish homeland. The defeated Arab population was humiliated, with the sense of loss engendering the bitterness one sees etched on the faces of the youth who today battle the Israeli security forces. Many of those who have died during the Intifada are third- and fourth-generation residents of these camps.

David Benvenisti, the author's father, was a leader of the team deployed by the government of Israel, shortly after the 1948 war, "to draw a Hebrew map of the land," to serve as "a renewed title deed" for Jews to take possession of Palestine. The stated goal of this effort, according to his son, was to inculcate "his children and countless other young Israelis with the Zionist ethos of 'moledet' (homeland): knowledge of its glorious Jewish past, intimate communion with its nature, and personal commitment to pioneering in collective agricultural settlements."

The technical part of this task involved giving Hebrew names to the towns and villages which had been inhabited by Arabs. The effect was to successfully erase the old landscape, which had been dotted by more than 200 Arab villages, eliminating the evidence that Arabs had once lived there. As Benvenisti points out, map-making was used by the British as a special weapon for imposing colonial domination, and this



**Sacred Landscape:
The Buried History of the
Holy Land Since 1948**
by Meron Benvenisti
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tactic was borrowed by the Israelis. The need to establish "facts on the ground," to demonstrate an unbroken continuity of Jewish settlement and, conversely, the lack of an historical Arab presence, made the creation of a Hebrew map a necessity. Reading present-day Israeli textbooks, writes Benvenisti, creates an awareness of just "how close we are to the point when the vanished Arab landscape will be considered just a piece of Arab propaganda, a fabrication aimed at the destruction of Israel through incitement of 'The Return.'"

Sharing Sacred Landscape

This subject is clearly one which troubles the author. His book is simultaneously an appeal for justice for the Palestinians, and an attempt to come to terms

with the role his father—and Israel’s Founding Fathers—played in creating obstacles to a just peace between Israel and the Palestinians.

Can this problem ever be resolved, when there is so much emotion and passion on each side? Benvenisti believes that Israelis must recognize that their actions in the war, which precipitated the refugee crisis, were not all justified, and he tackles some of the most difficult questions underlying this issue. For example, he devotes a chapter to the question of whether the Arabs left their homes willingly, or were driven out by Israeli aggression. Were the Israelis guilty of “ethnic cleansing”?

Was it conscious policy of the Israeli leadership, and of Ben Gurion, for instance, to drive Arabs from the land? On this point, he admits, the evidence is not conclusive. The statements of Ben Gurion that he cites indicate “contradictory positions.” But, “[o]ne way or the other,” he writes, “the Jewish state was emptied of the overwhelming majority of its Arab inhabitants, who, according

to the terms of the Partition Plan, were supposed to be full citizens of this state, with equal rights.”

A Just Solution

This is not an abstract, impersonal history, although at times the sheer density of “objective” material can be overwhelming. Instead, Benvenisti offers the American reader an inside look at the wrenching emotional issues which confront people in Israel today, as they attempt to reconcile the contradictory nature of Zionism: That it was a movement to offer Jews an opportunity to escape the anti-Semitism in Europe, and to live, free, in a “homeland,” that would allow Jews to establish a nation in which they could fulfill the Biblical injunction to “be a blessing unto mankind”; while, at the same time, that “homeland” was already a home to people who did not greet Jewish refugees with open arms.

In the Introduction, Benvenisti bares his anguish, which stems from this contradiction, to his readers: “Have we transformed a struggle for survival into an ethnic cleansing operation, sending another

people to exile because we wanted to plunder their land?” And finally, he asks, “How much compassion and guilt can I allow myself to express in order to pacify my troubled conscience, thereby exposing myself to accusations of betrayal on one side and hypocrisy on the other?”

Benvenisti understands that recognition of the Palestinians as victims is not in itself the basis for peace. What is necessary, he writes, is to provide economic justice, in the form of providing water and electricity, schools, health care, and housing. In addition, he advocates that the government set aside funds from the lucrative sale of agricultural land to developers, to establish a fund to compensate the original Arab owners.

This is a bold, provocative book, written by an Israeli who is serious about achieving a lasting peace with the Palestinians. It is only through such an approach, by questioning the assumptions and shibboleths of one’s upbringing, that the “Right of Return/refugee problem” of the Final Status talks in the Oslo Accord will be resolved.

—Harley Schlanger

Colonialist Hauntings

Right off the bat, I’ll tell those not familiar with the history of the Congo (now called the Democratic Republic of the Congo-D.R.C.), and even those involved with Africa like myself, that you will find it worthwhile to read this book.

King Leopold’s Ghost is divided into two parts, telling two distinct stories, which overlap. Part I, “Walking Into Fire,” tells the story of the hideously brutal imperialist butchery of the Congo by the degenerate Belgian King Leopold II (1835-1909). Unfortunately, Part II, “A King at Bay,” is less satisfying, as it suffers from a severe fallacy of composition.

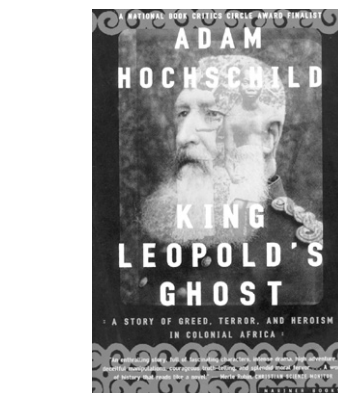
Part I, however, is necessary reading, if one wishes to know sensuously the horrible level of oppressive exploitation of the Congo that began at the end of the last quarter of the Nineteenth century. It is not possible to understand the condition of the D.R.C., and Africa in

general, today, without being aware of this ugly, but all too real chapter of African history.

King Leopold II was a first cousin to Queen Victoria, thus a member of the extended House of Hanover/Windsor. It is hard to find a more brutish, egotistical, immoral monarch than Leopold, not only in his treatment of the Congo, but also in the insanity of his immediate family relations, which Hochschild discusses. His personal obsession to control and exploit a colony in Africa, was clearly only the flip side of his degenerate personal life—or, is it the other way around?

Pre-Nazi Slave Labor

In 1878, Leopold hired the explorer Henry Morton Stanley to secretly claim as much of the Congo as possible. H.M. Stanley himself, whose parentless childhood turned him into a social misfit with a streak of sadism, was a perfect



King Leopold’s Ghost
by Adam Hochschild
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Mifflin, 1999
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co-conspirator, to brutalize and swindle the Congolese out of their land. By 1884, Leopold was organizing internationally to establish personal control over this vast area of central Africa. He realized his imperialist desire on May 29, 1885, when the Congo Free State was official-