

world' in which 'power will be even more widely dispersed and hierarchy weaker, so that no single state or realm can expect to be dominant'. Given the growing world hegemony and superpower status displayed by the United States, this last statement is questionable, although it remains to be seen whether a newly empowered Islamic Middle East, or an enlarged European Union will provide new forms of global and geopolitical balance.

This book is an excellent text for students of political geography or international relations desiring to learn about the 'geo' dimensions of world politics and how these factors are undergoing constant dynamic change. It is written clearly and lucidly and displays a common analytical structure in its discussion of each world region. The bibliography is wide ranging, drawing in relevant material from across the disciplinary divide, enabling the interested student to follow up with in-depth readings of the topics and regions discussed in the book. It is descriptive, rather than analytical or critical, in its approach, but given the general lack of global or geopolitical knowledge on the part of the average student, this text provides a wealth of material which should enable students to have a better grasp of the rapidly changing, and interrelated, dimensions of the world political map.

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POLLUTION IN A PROMISED LAND. AN ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORY OF ISRAEL by Alon Tal. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002.

Love for the land of Israel is a central value found in all forms of Zionism. Yet, this love has not prevented the Israelis from wreaking all sorts of environmental damage and havoc on the land. In this well-written and lively book Tal, a founding director and later chairman of *Adam Teva V-din* (Israel Union for Environmental Defense), describes and traces the origins of the numerous forms of pollution and environmental disruption that have plagued Israel since the 1950s when air and water were reasonably clean.

Tal starts his narrative with an incident that marred the 1997 Maccabiah games. During the opening parade on July 14th, a new bridge over the Yarkon River collapsed, sending the 56 members of the Australian team into the water. The resulting illnesses and deaths forced Israelis to go beyond disbelief and denial of environmental wrongdoing and confront not just how much the environment had been abused but also how little was known about the precise nature of the abuse.

The book is divided into five main sections. Section One includes two chapters devoted to the history of modern Jewish settlement of the land of Israel. Section Two contains five topical chapters that deal with the unintended negative consequences of seemingly beneficial schemes, such as water development, urbanization, the opening of nature reserves, the early stages of the Israeli environmental movement, and

the Jewish National Fund's reforestation programs. Section Three presents the history of the Ministry of the Environment. Section Four outlines the impact of Israeli policies on the Israeli and Palestinian Arab sectors within an environmental justice framework. As such Tal juxtaposes Arab environmental concerns, including lack of sewerage and water facilities in Arab towns and villages, the intrusive nature of JNF tree planting, the actions of the notorious Green Patrol, the location of hazardous facilities in minority areas, and a general impaired access to natural resources with what is assumed to be a traditional Arab pro-environment attitude. The fifth and concluding section deals with more recent, unresolved environmental conflicts and Tal's conclusions regarding the environmental future of Israel.

A similar methodological approach is used in every chapter. Although he does not indicate it until Chapter 9, Tal subscribes to the Great Man (and Woman) theory of (environmental) history. As such, in each chapter we are presented with a major environmental problem and then introduced to the villains and heroes responsible for its origins, continuation or solution. It may be that Tal adopted this approach because he is not a professional historian. Be that as it may, he has made the environmental history of Israel accessible, digestible, and fun to read. At the same time, the volume has a degree of precision that will please even the most demanding scholars. This is achieved by Tal's including detailed and copious footnotes. He similarly avoids both the debunking rhetoric of post-Zionist revisionists and hagiography when dealing with those he credits with helping Israel confront its environmental problems. While not aiming to create a complete or balanced book, Tal nevertheless manages to include a number of environmental successes (such as the campaign to save wild flowers) and failures (including the lack of recycling, avoidance of hazardous waste processing, abandonment of composting, and the persistence of dirty, littered streets). Tal also succeeds in his desire to show how Israeli environmental actions, attitudes and policies are based on a complex and rich amalgam of romantic, ruralistic, Western, and Jewish beliefs. The only time that Tal's methodology fails to convince and inform is when he rather loosely equates pollution with increases in mortality, and especially cancer deaths. The other methodological weakness of Tal's approach is found in the inadequate map found between the Preface and Chapter 1. Although the map clearly indicates the location of major Israeli cities and towns, it includes few of sites of environmental damage that Tal discusses. The reader thus is required to consult an atlas if a link between place and problem is desired.

In the concluding section of the book, Tal actually presents the reader with two sets of prognoses and conclusions. At the end of the penultimate chapter dealing with the history of environmental movements in Israel, Tal reviews the conditions under which a more viable natural environment can be sustained. He correctly argues that just because a weak administrative and legal framework was responsible for past environmental mishaps, it does not follow that a stronger legal framework based on the principle that the polluter pays and enforced by a well-funded and staffed Ministry of the Environment, will eliminate all future forms of pollution, since industrialists may

continue to refuse to cooperate and withhold data necessary to hold them accountable. Furthermore, planning unto itself is neither a cause of pollution or, necessarily, the most efficient way to eliminate it. What is needed is flexible approaches to planning. Similarly, the increase in the number of environmental movements in Israel does not guarantee the public's acceptance of environmentally sound behavior patterns. Rather, what will be needed will be tough laws, tough enforcement, and sophistication in seeking compliance. After all, Israel is no longer a poor country, and its educated population can be made aware of the negative consequences associated world-wide with consumerism, reliance on the automobile as the backbone of a transportation system, and the growing preference for detached, single-family dwellings. In this regard, Tal notes with dismay that the more benign Arab environmental ethos has been significantly eroded as increases in per capita income have spread from the Jewish to Arab sectors of the economy.

In the final chapter, he identifies what he sees as the main culprits that have permitted the destruction and deterioration of environment and landscape. At the top of the list is a Zionist ideology that favors self-reliance and continuous population and economic growth. In critiquing both forms of growth Tal adopts the now discredited Catastrophist notion that there is a direct relationship between population growth, resource use, and pollution. It follows for Tal that curbing population growth by reducing immigration (such as that from the former Soviet Union) and advocating more effective means of family planning and birth control will go a long way towards reducing or even eliminating pollution and resource waste by diminishing demand for housing, roads, and open space.

While realizing the complexity and difficulty in implementing radically new demographic, economic, and social strategies in order to preserve the environment and prevent future harm to it, Tal is nevertheless optimistic that Israelis will find a way to meet the environmental challenge. This optimism derives as much from Tal's past experience with negotiations between protagonists advocating Zionist and environmentalist viewpoints as from the great store of existing technical innovations in electric generation and water supply and use that can be exploited. Tal thus envisions a new environmental ethos taking hold, one that is publicized in the media in the manner in which *The Jerusalem Post* and *Ha-Aretz* newspapers have informed their readers in the past.

This volume belongs on the bookshelf of all those concerned with *Eretz Yisrael*. In addition to providing insights into past problems, it suggests avenues for future research on topics such as radiation hazards, noise pollution, cellular phone and antenna technology, and regional environmental cooperation.

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