



**Radical Dissent in Contemporary Israeli Politics: Cracks in the Wall.**

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operation quoting the example of projects in television and telecommunications between Saudi Arabia, Tunisia and France.

Perhaps the most dissatisfying feature of the three parts of the book is the absence of analysis of the relevant politics; hence the artificiality of discussing such political economy problems in a political vacuum.

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**Radical Dissent in Contemporary Israeli Politics: Cracks in the Wall.** By David J. Schnall. *New York: Praeger, 1979. (Distrib. in UK by Holt-Saunders, Eastbourne.) 229 pp. £15.00.*

WHILE Israeli politics have usually been fiery and volatile and Israel's political culture has always been marked by intense partisanship, reflecting the multiplicity of views which various sections of the population hold on socio-economic, religious and foreign policy questions, the emergence of radical and militant ideological dissent on a significant scale is essentially a phenomenon of the last decade. During the 1970s, and especially since 1973, salient forms of protest have surfaced which are radical in the sense that they make demands for change of a fundamental nature, outside as well as through the normal parliamentary channels.

The ideologies of seven such dissenting groups, representing a fair cross-section of those who have lived on the fringe of Israeli politics, form the substance of the study under review. For the purpose of analysis, three conceptual categories are employed. Each ideology is first discussed in terms of its 'world view', then in terms of its set of 'values and goals' and, finally, in terms of the 'strategies for social change' by which these goals are to be realised. The study opens with two introductory chapters: in the first, Zionism, the central ideology of Israeli politics, is discussed while in the second, the major social and political institutions of the Israeli state are presented. Both chapters are brief and elementary, containing no new material or insight, but they help to set the stage for the analysis of the protest movements and their ideological positions.

The author distinguishes two major sources of radicalism in Israeli politics. The first is left-wing political ideology whose anti-Zionism is largely based on a Marxist-socialist perspective. Certainly this typifies the thought of *Rakab* (the New Communist List), *Matzpen* (the Israeli Socialist Organisation), *Moked* (the Focus) and, to a lesser extent, of Uri Avnery, the political maverick who set up a party in the early 1960s bearing the name of his sensationalist anti-establishment weekly—*Haolam Hazev*. Although these groups vary considerably in the strength of their rejection of classic Zionism, in their commitment to the Israeli state, and in the extremism they advocate, it is noteworthy that the first three owe their beginnings to *Maki*, the original Israel Communist Party.

The second major source of protest is rooted in religious and ethnic identification. In the case of Natore Karta, a strong sense of Jewish tradition and custom coupled with an apocalyptic religious vision, has led the movement to adopt a fiercely anti-Zionist stand. The opposite has been the result for Gush Emunim (the Bloc of the Faithful), though the source of its right-wing Zionist pioneering spirit and fanatical commitment to Jewish settlement on all parts of the biblical homeland is the same body of Jewish tradition. The major instance of purely ethnic political dissent, the Black Panthers, is presented, no doubt correctly, as springing from a sense of deprivation on the part of the underprivileged Orientals rather than from a cogent political philosophy.

David Schnall concludes his study with a compact chapter devoted to a comparative analysis of the seven protest movements which make up the body of the book and a

final chapter entitled '1977: The Year of the Earthquake'. Since most of the research and writing was done prior to the May 1977 elections, there was obviously a strong case for bringing the account up to date by examining the activities of the seven groups in 1977 and attempting an assessment of ideological dissent as reflected in the elections. But the chapter on 'the Earthquake' is bland and superficial, rarely rising above the level of sophistication of the *Jerusalem Post*—which was evidently used as the principal source of information. This is a great pity because the treatment of the radical movements up to 1977 is systematic, cogent and makes a valuable addition to the literature on Israeli politics. But the one persistent weakness of the book lies in the failure to relate effectively the developments on the fringe to developments at the heart of the Israeli political system—and particularly to the decline in the ability of the ruling parties to manage the country's internal and external problems which has become so conspicuous since the October War.

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**Iran's Revolutionary Upheaval: An Interpretive Essay.** By Sepehr Zabih. *San Francisco: Alchemy Books. 1979. 104 pp.*

SEPEHR ZABIH has a sound record as a commentator on Iranian political affairs and his essay on the Iranian revolution must be taken seriously. The present volume brings together a series of reviews of the Iranian political system as it existed under the Shah. It examines the nature of political participation in the political process, the political and religious role of the bazaar, and the political involvement of the major Shi'i clergy in so far as they contributed to the overthrow of the Shah. Very little of the material presented here is new though the evidence is handled intelligently and coherently to demonstrate the growth of political apathy and the conversion of this into active political dissent in the period from 1977. Unlike other recent publications on the matter, Zabih offers a convincing if brief explanation of why the revolution gathered way and overwhelmed the establishment. If he tends to emphasise the purely Iranian input to the revolution and ignores almost totally the problems arising from the ineptness of the United States in its handling of the Iranian situation, except Carter's declaration on human rights, he does a major service in correcting those deep and mainly Iranian beliefs that the revolution could only have been manipulated by the great powers.

In the second half of the volume Zabih traces the major events of the revolution and provides a useful chronology of the phases of challenge to the Shah's regime. The book ends with an assorted mixture of conclusions and postscripts which scarcely does justice to the central essay and would have been better omitted. Other vehicles exist for carrying immediate news of the progress of the revolution while the volatility of the political fabric in Iran would appear to make instant judgments on the current situation rather insecure.

The main argument presented by Zabih, that the mobilisation of the country—beginning with the intellectuals and the middle class and later spreading to the peasantry and the urban masses—was achieved through a set of sentiments and institutions peculiarly Iranian, has much to recommend it. The only weakness in the elaboration of the theme is on the economic side. A measure of confusion exists in this area. Zabih would like to reject the notion that economic forces were the main motivation behind the clamour for change. Yet he demonstrates clearly himself that the effects of the Shah's anti-profiteering campaign on the bazaar was a principal grudge of the bazaari group. Little mention is made of the importance of the strikes, especially in the oil industry. No specific recognition is given to the fact that the armed forces only lost their battle on the streets after they had found themselves unable to