

Autobiography of a Wonderful Palestinian Liberator



albert macdonald

the bookworm

MY PEOPLE SHALL LIVE

by Leila Khaled as told to George Hajjar. 240pp., 9 ill. 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, \$4.00 paperback. \$10.00 cloth 1975 Toronto.

The first four books I will be reviewing this term will be some releases sent to me by the New Canada Press. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for these books. Unfortunately, however, I cannot summon up too much gratitude for their first offering.

MY PEOPLE SHALL LIVE, is the autobiography of a Pale-

stinian Liberation Organization member. The story is chronologically told beginning with her leaving Palestine at the age of four, and ending with her hijacking of a plane when she is captured and subsequently released. The purpose of her story appears to be to relate the tale of events which led to her becoming a revolutionary, her exploits and the rationale behind them. I only wish she had achieved her purpose. Instead we see Ms. Khaled paint a picture of herself as some sort of self-

appointed Joan of Arc.

In the early chapters we are subjected to stories of how Khaled as a four year old is charitably helping out three year olds. The plot thickens and four years later we find Khaled as an eight year old magnanimously helping out; seven year olds. The story goes on to tell of Khaled participating in her first riot and Khaled now knows she is to be a revolutionary. Unfortunately she has to tell everyone so we hear of countless incidents of her loudly proclaiming, I am a revolutionary.

The next major segment of this book deals with Khaled and her exploits in the P.L.O. She also attempts to give the rationale for and the aims of the P.L.O. This is not very well done though; for example, at one point she is proclaiming the aim of the P.L.O. is peaceful coexistence with the Jews in Palestine, while throughout the book she sets out to prove the Jews will be an eternal foe. Seeing the book interspersed with comments like, "I admired Hitler because I thought he was the enemy of the Jews;" add to that conception that Jews are the only people who commit war crimes, leads one to surmise that Khaled will never exactly pave the road to peace.

Khaled then begins her hijacking career when she and a fellow Palestinian guerilla hijack an Israeli plane to Syria. After being detained for this episode Leila is released quietly.

It is this section of the book I find most frustrating. Prior to her hijacking experience in the book and afterward Khaled expostulates the ideology of the P.L.O. What is sad about this is that her writing is such a mishmash of inconsistencies combined with a self-adulating over-emotionalism that any hope for intelligent thought is lost.

The point is that the P.L.O. has a point. They are more or less a displaced people; they have no true country and they are dominated by another race in their locality.

Traditionally the Israelis in supporting their cause have presented eloquent authors and speakers. The P.L.O. from some of the quotes in this book that Khaled uses do also buy why they are not used more often I'll never know.

Back to Khaled. To be fair there are parts in this which present logical and consistent insights. Her an-

alysis of the imperialist influences in the Middle East is extremely accurate and basic statement of Palestinians as a misplaced people rings true. However, there is so much offuscating emotionalism that any such insights are either clouded or completely submerged. One can realize that she has a right to be emotional but such phrases as "Oh Palestine I welcome you in an eternal embrace", "I am absolutely fearless" or "I am a living revolutionary" serves only to degrade the book and add to her self-adulation.

The book closes with Khaled hijacking a second plane in which her partner is killed and she is taken as a prisoner by the British. She subsequently traded for hostages and is presently back in the P.L.O.

To sum up, this book concerns itself with two main questions from Khaled, "Who is the most wonderful Palestinian liberator?" and "Why am I?"

H.O.P.E. Cont.

decision? What about structures of historical significance? Has there or will there be an inventory of such valuable heritage before implementation of the program? What effect will it have on our cultural landscape? It was decided to attempt to answer some of these questions and present them for public information by the end of January.

The "Save the Whale" campaign, which has been an international issue for several years now, was discussed and a decision was made to support and endorse the call for a ten year moratorium on whaling as well as the boycott of Japanese and Russian products. The Moratorium will allow whale species to replenish their stock and the boycott will bring pressure to bear on the two nations which are defying the moratorium and the conservation measures called for by the International Whaling Commission and the United Nations.

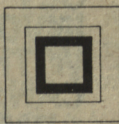
H.O.P.E. exits to provide a forum for individual citizens or groups to voice their concerns over environmental issues both on and off the Island and to offer constructive alternatives. The next general meeting will be on February 18, 1976 at 7:30pm. The place will be announced one week before the meeting. For more information contact Keith Cossey, 892-7411, Ext. 63, 675-3150 or Box 276 Cornwall.



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