



**Oded Haklai, Neophytos Loizides, eds.** *Settlers in Contested Lands: Territorial Disputes and Ethnic Conflicts*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015. Illustrations. 256 pp. \$90.00, cloth, ISBN 978-0-8047-9559-3.



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In this volume, editors Oded Haklai and Neophytos Loizides seek to fill both an analytical and theoretical lacuna in the study of protracted territorial conflicts, that of the politics of settlers and settlements. Differentiating themselves from immigration and "son-of-the-soil" studies, the authors in this volume seek to emphasize settlements as "a distinct phenomenon whereby demographic engineering is put into play in order to consolidate territorial control, and where identity questions often play a primary role." To do so, they create an analytical framework that defines settlement "as a political action involving the organized movement of a population belonging to one national group into a territory in order to create a permanent presence and influence patterns of sovereignty in the settled territory" (p. 3). This "political action" involves three actors: the sending state, the settlers, and the natives of the territory identified for settlement.

In testing this framework, they provide seven case studies from the Middle East, North Africa, Europe, South Asia, and southeastern Asia. The

earliest is the Italian efforts to settle Libya and South Tyrol during the 1930s, with the others addressing current conflicts. The volume closes with a conclusion written by Ian S. Lutsick in which he examines each chapter through the lens of Vladimir Lenin's "*Kto Kogo ... who does what to whom—who is the subject; who is the object?*" (p. 192).

The two most relevant chapters for me and for H-Africa readers are the two that touch on Africa: chapter 3, Jacob Mundy and Stephen Zunes's evaluation of Moroccan settlers in Western Sahara, and chapter 4, Roberta Pergher's study of Fascist Italy's settlement policies. In their chapter, Mundy and Zunes look at Moroccan settlers' massive movement into Western Sahara following Morocco assuming control of the Spanish Sahara in 1975. This population movement was a direct effort to counter the independence efforts of the Algerian-backed Sahrawis ethnic group by strengthening Rabat's claims of regional sovereignty and complicating existing international decolonization procedures. As the authors note, "the inclusion of Moroccan settlers in the electorate

was considered politically necessary to win Moroccan support for a referendum that offered the option of independence, though it flew in the face of traditional UN decolonization practice" (p. 42).

In her chapter, Pergher examines how Fascist Italy pursued a settlement policy to incorporate contested territories in both Europe and Africa, "one that extended across Italy's colonial and national domains" (p. 77). This fusion of the colonial and national signified a departure from the standard forms of colonial domination during the time. This policy was further complicated due to the outcome of World War II and the stripping of Italy's colonial territories.

The remaining chapters are thought provoking and provide enough information for nonspecialists to understand the particulars that make the situations unique and do an excellent job in emphasizing the volume's overall theme. Although space limitations in each chapter narrow the author's focus, the arguments and framework presented address the identified lacuna of understanding settlers in territorial disputes, often placing the struggle between international, humanitarian, and pragmatic issues surrounding ethnic conflicts.

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