Book of the Month II

Gaza: The Dream and the Nightmare

By Julie M. Norman and Maia Carter Hallward

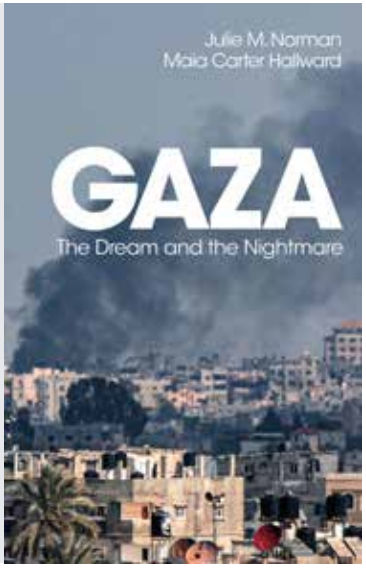
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Gaza: The Dream and the Nightmare







In this book, Julie M. Norman and Maia Carter Hallward offer a powerful new perspective on the history of Gaza. With rigor and nuance, the authors tell the story of the enclave from its colonial foundations, across the decades of occupation, to the devastation of the ongoing war. Rather than focusing on elites or abstract politics, at the book's heart are ordinary Gazans – students, aid workers, journalists, and teachers – whose firsthand testimonies vividly illuminate the realities behind the headlines.

What also sets this book apart is its refusal to sensationalize or oversimplify. The authors explain how Gaza's political, economic, and geographical isolation contributed to the crescendo of violence that feels both inevitable and intolerable to those living inside it. The result is a story not of villains and victims, but of human beings navigating an untenable reality.

The book furthermore reckons with the legal, moral, and humanitarian debates surrounding Gaza, from war crimes investigations to the contested meaning of resistance and the politicization of aid. It examines the failures of diplomacy and international law, the contested role of UN agencies, and the lasting impact of policies made far from Gaza's borders.

Gaza: The Dream and the Nightmare serves as a timely and necessary disruption of media clichés and political binaries, telling the story of Gaza with clarity, compassion, and from the perspective of its own people.

Alan Dowty, a professor at University of Notre Dame and the author of *Israel/Palestine*, states, "This book is a vivid narrative of the Gaza experience, explaining how Gaza became an isolated and unique front in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and how this led to its radicalization and a denouement of tragic proportions."

"This book provides a very readable account of the history of Gaza from the mandate period to the First Intifada and on until the present, coming into its own with a comprehensive account of the events following the 7 October attack by Hamas on Israel. It draws on press sources and informed commentary, illuminated by personal testimonies to draw out the contested terrain of interpretation regarding this beset and besieged strip of land," says Anthony Gorman, a senior lecturer in Islamic and Middle Eastern studies at University of Edinburgh.

Amahl Bishara, an associate professor at Tufts University, calls it "A brave and compelling book that brings together many voices from Gaza and beyond to help readers understand the region's history as well as the grave contemporary moment it faces."

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