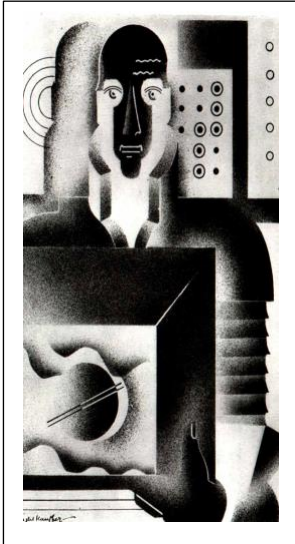


British Committee for the Universities of Palestine

Palestine: Memory, Identity, Resistance

BRICUP Seminar Series 2023-4

All seminars are on-line events, and take place at 18.00-19.30 London time. They consist of a presentation by the guest lecturer, an exchange with a discussant, and then questions and contributions.



SEMINAR 9

Memoirs of an Arab Jew

Professor Avi Shlaim

University of Oxford

THIS Thursday 25th April 2024

18.00-19.30 (GMT)

Amidst Israel's genocidal assault on the Gaza Strip, and the murderous terror now unleashed by settlers and troops on Palestinian towns and villages in the West Bank, the rhetoric of Israeli national ideology intensifies, and is echoed by Israel's political and media supporters in Western capitals: Israel is the home and the sanctuary for world Jewry; and it is a democratic bastion in a sea of reactionary and fundamentalist autocracies, and military and plutocratic dictatorships.

In his Verso-published memoir of 2023, *Three Worlds: Memoirs of an Arab Jew*, Avi Shlaim punctures these myths with his recollections of his childhood as a refugee from Iraq.

The context for Shlaim's memoir is the accelerating European colonisation of Palestine in the 1930s, Nazi-inspired antisemitism amongst a minority of Iraqi nationalists, Zionist propaganda and false-flag terrorism in Iraq, and the defence of the Jewish community, its persons and its property, by its Muslim neighbours during the antisemitic *pogrom* of 1941 in Iraq.

Expelled from Iraq in 1951, the members of the centuries-old, 110k-strong Jewish community departed Baghdad to find themselves treated as second-class citizens (Sephardim (Spanish descendants) or Mizrahim (North African or Middle Eastern) Jews) in Israel by the dominant European settlers or Ashkenazim. Thus developed over time a new social pecking order in Israel – the Ashkenazim over the Mizrahim, and at the bottom the Palestinians with Israeli citizenship enjoying restricted rights, rights denied to Palestinians in the occupied territories and to those expelled to refugee camps.

At a time when the possibility of a two-state solution has entirely evaporated, and any version of a single-state solution is disparaged as utopian idealism, Shlaim's memoir constitutes an invaluable corrective to the claim that Arab and Jew cannot cohabit a common territory, and to the claim that Israel is a solution to antisemitism.

[REGISTER FOR THIS SEMINAR HERE](https://bit.ly/BRICUP24-9)

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Avi Shlaim is a Fellow of St Antony's College, and a Professor of International Relations at the University of Oxford. He was the Alastair Buchan Reader in International Relations from 1987 to 1996. He was the Director of Graduate Studies in International Relations in 1993-1995 and 1998-2001. In 1995-97 he held a British Academy Research Readership, and in 2003-6 a Research Professorship. In 2006 he was elected Fellow of the British Academy.

In addition to *Three Worlds*, Professor Shlaim is the author of numerous books, including: *Israel and Palestine: Reappraisals, Revisions, Refutations* (Verso, 2009), *The Iron Wall: Israel and the Arab World* (Norton, 1999), and *War and Peace in the Middle East: A Concise History* (Penguin, 1995).