If the period between the 1967 Arab-Israeli war and the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon laid the "basic foundations of the current peace process" (p. 76), it was also the moment when the Palestinian question rose to international prominence and was first taken seriously in the United States. Elgindy's focus on this period in the middle chapters revolves around the influence of National Security Advisor and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, who sought to keep the PLO out of negotiations. By drawing attention to the internal factional rivalries within the PLO, and the complex process of moving away from violence and toward diplomacy, Elgindy ensures a sense of Palestinian agency in the story that he tells. At the moments when domestic political space seemed to be opening in the US on the Israeli-Palestinian front, however, there was an absence of a more accommodating policy. Even under President Jimmy Carter, when efforts at engagement with the PLO and an interest in the political fate of the Palestinians moved to the center of US policy, the legacy of the blind spot and the strictures of earlier policies (like Kissinger's 1975 ban on engagement with the PLO) remained dominant.

The irony of growing recognition of the Palestinians by the late 1980s was the exclusion of the PLO from the political process; a phenomenon Elgindy aptly calls "abnormal normalization" (p. 105). The consequences of this phenomenon reached their apogee with the Oslo Accords of 1993, a process that "helped to accelerate the decline of Palestinian institutional politics that began in the 1980s while reinforcing the exclusionary and authoritarian impulses of the PLO leadership" (p. 145). It is not surprising, therefore, that the peace process "often became a platform for reforming, and occasionally even re-engineering, Palestinian politics and governing institutions to align with American or Israeli preferences" (p. 5). Aside from the diplomatic maneuvers, however, there is also a need to account for the wider cultural and social forces that abetted this asymmetrical pattern of negotiations.

One strength of Elgindy's book is to highlight the mutually reinforcing interplay between US policy and internal Palestinian politics that yielded such damaging outcomes. Another is the use of the author's own notes for detailed coverage of events that he himself witnessed as an adviser to the Palestinian leadership in Ramallah during the early 2000s. Along with revealing interviews and extensive examination of relevant US government documents, especially the *Foreign Relations of the United States* records, Elgindy connects 20th century precedents with the collapse of the peace process in recent years. The result is an uncanny sense of déjà vu, as blind spots recur and more punitive measures take shape. Against this backdrop, the regressive policies of the Trump administration were not entirely new but the "culmination of the old approach" (p. 249).

Given these failures, a question hovers over Elgindy's epilogue, where he traces a shifting progressive political landscape in the US and waning support for a two-state solution among Palestinians. Why should the US "resume its preeminent role as a peace broker between Israelis and Palestinians" (p. 262)? While power may be seen to reside in Washington, the presumption of American centrality to resolving the conflict can also mask the possibility of real leverage in other corners, especially Europe. If the US cannot overcome its persistent blind spot, perhaps new paradigms can begin to fill the vacuum.

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Life Lived in Relief: Humanitarian Predicaments and Palestinian Refugee Politics, by Ilana Feldman. Oakland: University of California Press, 2018. 336 pages. $85.

Reviewed by Estella Carpi

In the attempt to draw the histories of refugee camps transregionally, Ilana Feldman's *Life Lives in Relief* proposes a historical reading of the politics of aid in the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) and the related Palestinian experience of aid provision and reception. Com-

bining the ethnographic strength of contemporaneity with historical depth throughout eight chapters, the book is based on six years of fieldwork (2008–14) conducted in the West Bank, Jordan, and Lebanon. Feldman fundamentally reflects further on her theory of humanitarianism as a "politics of living" vis-à-vis Didier Fassin's "politics of life."[1] In fact she shifts the gaze from the politics *of* humanitarianism to politics *in* humanitarianism, namely trying to capture how "people survive and strive in humanitarian spaces" (p. 8). You will find no systematic ethnographic chronology in the book, but Feldman premises this in the early pages, prioritizing theoretical consistency across the chapters. All of them powerfully resume Feldman's past key arguments on the humanitarian labelling system and the "politics of living."

In most chapters, rich ethnographic snapshots inform the theories proposed under the analytical guidance of the author. The introductory chapter is the key to understand Feldman's thought. After providing a concise yet dense flashback on the human geography and the built environment of humanitarian spaces in Jordan, Palestine, Lebanon, and Syria — which emphasize the ungraspable character of what we refer to as "camps" — the author draws out subtle distinctions between the "humanitarian situation" (Chapters 2–4) and the "humanitarian condition" (Chapters 5–8), which mark the binary structure of the book. Situation and condition both reveal the oscillations of what Feldman calls "punctuated humanitarianism": refugee lives that are intermittently inhabited by humanitarian aid. Like "waves crashing on a beach" (p. 16), stasis alternates with crisis; chronic need, inherent to prolonged displacement (the condition), alternates with pressing emergency, which more easily mobilizes the humanitarian machine (the situation). The punctuated rhythm that Feldman theorizes not only captures the discontinuous temporalities of services and displacement, but it also registers the "oscillating intensities" (p. 24) of humanitarian presence and withdrawal in the everyday lives of Palestinians.

While large segments of the scholarship have reclaimed the importance of political rights and the very "right to politics" (p. 23) for refugees, Feldman provides a particularly compelling account of how this happens.

In Chapter 2, Feldman revisits the historical fabric of the humanitarian labelling practices and policies, drawing a fluid ontology of refugee-hood by building on the theories of Giorgio Agamben, Hannah Arendt, and Jacques Rancière. She thereby paves the ground for what I believe is the most important argument of the book: "Palestinian refugee politics has mostly not entailed an exit from the refugee category, but rather has happened within it" (p. 37). Importantly, this statement marks the coalescence of humanitarianism with human rights.

In Chapter 3, Feldman explores the oscillating eligibility of refugees for food rations, the act of selling them, and how this economy of rations conveys the Palestinian desire for political restoration. Chapter 4 navigates humanitarianism as "a field of compromised action," made of tensions and suspicious relationships: the different ways in which people experience service provision give rise to an articulated refugee politics, where every subject places different weight on political responsibilities and service obligations. Here, Feldman incorporates into her analysis the generational perspective, which has often been neglected in the refugee literature. In Chapter 5, Feldman marks Palestinian refugee politics as a site for aspiration, persistence, and refusal, pinning down a fundamental point of contact between humanitarianism and the politics of rights, typically viewed as contradictory. Humanitarianism, therefore, emerges as a space where refugees also claim the right to humanitarian rights. In this sense, they neither only lead lives which at times go beyond politics, nor do they merely advance rights claims. Instead, they produce a politics of living where both recognition of loss and restoration are essential, and from which stems the politics of *sumud* ("steadfastness"): the value of which implies fighting the normalization

1. Didier Fassin, "Humanitarianism as a Politics of Life," *Public Culture* 19, no. 3 (Fall 2007): 499–520. https://doi.org/10.1215/08992363-2007-007.

of Palestinian displacement. This "anti-normalization" effort marks an inner hierarchy between "bad Palestinian" refugees who left Palestine, and natives/citizens who have, instead, remained.

Chapter 6 consolidates the key arguments raised in the previous chapters, relying on powerful examples of how people live with and oppose "undercare" (p. 161), and how the refugee eligibility status has oscillated during the history of UNRWA negotiations with the Egyptian and then Israeli rulers of Gaza. Here, again, the generational perspective sheds light on an overlooked taxonomy of rights in humanitarian policy: the elderly are expected to "prepare for dying" (p. 182); and 60 is the retirement age for UNRWA employees.

Chapter 7 identifies the roles of the "political" and the "humanitarian" in Palestinian refugee politics, highlighting people's historical effort toward non-humanitarian futures. Palestinian refugee politics actually reconcile the armed struggle of the Palestinian revolution with the humanitarian struggle. Historical examples like the Palestinian Red Crescent Society, which paired the political mission with impartial aid delivery, give rise to punctuated forms of "revolutionary humanitarianism." In my view, this is the most significative theoretical argument of the book, as it marks an important turning point in the longstanding debate on politics, neutrality, and humanitarianism. The way that Palestinian refugees in the Arab Levant politically live *with* and *in* humanitarianism points to a future-oriented vision of return, also discussed in Diana Allan's *Refugees of the Revolution: Experiences of Palestinian Exile* (Stanford University Press, 2013).

It is to the latter that the conclusive Chapter 8 seems to speak, by drawing a connection between the Palestinian and the global ground: the future, as much as the past, shapes the immense complexity of the politics that refugees enact within camps. Such a complexity entails a tension between the effort to live *outside of* and *beyond* humanitarianism on the one hand, and forms of loss on the other, such as the connection of later generations to Palestine: a concern that Feyrouz, one of Feldman's interlocutors, has.

After framing Palestinian refugee politics as an "anticolonial struggle" and offering a spatial and temporal sense of continuity between the Palestinian condition and other human displacements in the last pages (p. 235), Feldman leaves the reader with the desire to learn about more global moments of historical crossing. Even though much has been written by now on refugee camps and humanitarianism, *Life Lived in Relief* provides a dexterous synthesis of the most prominent academic scholarship of the Anglosphere, and an extremely needed historical and ethnographic analysis of political-humanitarian life in Palestinian camps across the Arab Levant.

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Black Power and Palestine: Transnational Countries of Color, by Michael R. Fischbach. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2019. 278 pages.

A Shadow over Palestine: The Imperial Life of Race in America, by Keith P. Feldman. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015. 314 pages.

Reviewed by Greg Thomas

> We didn't just say, "We want an end to police brutality" — you know, "Hands up, Don't Shoot." *Hmph*. We said, "Be armed for self-defense against the police forces of the United States of America."[1]

Thus spoke Elaine Brown, former chair of the Black Panther Party (BPP), during a recent television documentary segment on repression by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and her legendary political party. "Black Lives Matter has a plantation

1. Quoted in Jeanmarie Condon and Cyndee Readdean, dir., *1969*, Season 1, episode 4, "The FBI and the Panther." Aired May 14, 2019, on ABC.