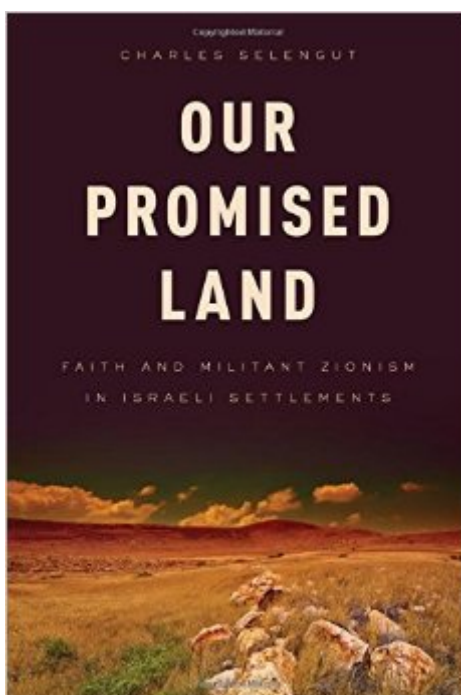


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Our Promised Land: Faith And Militant Zionism In Israeli Settlements



Synopsis

Our Promised Land takes readers inside radical Israeli settlements to explore how they were formed, what the people in them believe, and their role in the Middle East today. Charles Selengut analyzes the emergence of the radical Israeli Messianic Zionist movement, which advocates Jewish settlement and sovereignty over the whole of biblical Israel as a religious obligation and as the means of world transformation. The movement has established scores of controversial settlements throughout the contested West Bank, bringing more than 300,000 Jews to the area. Messianic Zionism is a fundamentalist movement but wields considerable political power. Our Promised Land, which draws on years of research and interviews in these settlements, offers an intimate and nuanced look at Messianic Zionism, life in the settlements, connections with the worldwide Christian community, and the impact on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Selengut offers an in-depth exploration of a topic that is often mentioned in the headlines but little understood.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is a clear, thoughtful and very readable discussion of one of the most complicated and controversial stews that we have in the world today - the conflict that has arisen from the settlement of the West Bank. Selengut does several things remarkably well. He explains the underpinnings of the settler movement in religious texts and Jewish thought, and traces its history from a fringe to a mainstream movement. He discusses how the settlements are viewed today by various segments of Israeli society, as well as by Jews in the Diaspora, and explores their political, social and religious

ramifications for Israelis. He also speculates about the future of the settlements, and to what extent the Israeli-Palstinian conflict surrounding them is capable of resolution. Selengut brings life to his discussion by generously quoting local civic and religious figures, as well as ordinary settlers from across the political and religious spectra. The book is even-handed; if the author has a personal view, he is careful not to convey it to us. "Our Promised Land" is free of academic jargon, accessible to the general reader, and always interesting.

Dr. Selengut's well-written book clearly lays out the history of how militant Zionism grew, and what it is today. The narrative presents a compelling, historical context, giving the reader a broad perspective and deep understanding of the roots, growth and importance of the religious Zionist settlement movement. The book is hard to put down, does not read like a dry textbook, but rather puts the reader right there with Professor Selengut in the outposts, fields, roads and towns that are the source of so much controversy as well as danger. He presents a very human and psychological perspective as well, getting into the psyche and religious underpinnings of the leaders and builders of this phenomenon. I highly recommend this work for all readers interested in getting a deep and balanced understanding of this subject matter, whether in a college setting, Government think tank, or at home, simply to expand one's personal horizons. Selengut's writing style is superbly smooth, balanced, fair and objective, as he paints a comprehensive picture of the entire region on his well-researched canvas.

A very interesting and unique insight into the history of the West Bank and the people who live there. Through the interviews and the clear and concise way that Dr. Selengut presents the ideas and historical and religious foundations for the beliefs of the inhabitants, one comes away with a much more nuanced and complex understanding of the issues and politics of the people involved. You also begin to understand that there is not one monolithic idea that unites them, but rather that there is a complex amalgam of different beliefs and politics that both bind them as well as cause them to have inter-generational, religious and political conflicts. If you really want to understand the politics of the Middle East as well some of the intractable causes of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, this is a must read.

"Our Promised Land" is a rare blend of scholarship that is accessible and understandable. Charles Selengut brings together the religious, sociological and historical threads of the settler movement in a totally unbiased and honest way. This is a must read for all who have an interest in Israel and in

the Middle East. Susan Joffe, Hofstra University School of Law

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