

Review
Palestine

Joe Sacco

Fantagraphics Books: Seattle, WA USA, 1993/2001

Reviewed by Michael Jaffarian
Coordinator of Research for CBIInternational, Richmond, Virginia

Published in Global Missiology, Review & Preview, October 2004, www.globalmissiology.net

This follows Sacco's earlier, and similar, book, *Safe Area: Gorazde*, about the war in Bosnia, which received much positive acclaim. The genre is comics journalism. *Palestine* looks like a big comic book, but instead of being about a superhero or the like, it is a very serious work about Palestine, Israel, and the first intifada of 1987-1992.

Sacco visited Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza for two months in the winter of 1991-1992. He interviewed many people, mainly Palestinians who had suffered violence, injustice, torture, imprisonment, or economic attack at the hands of the Israelis. Through this book he takes us along on his experiences and those of his interviewees. We read their words and also, through the drawings, see their faces, homes, prison cells, wounds, roads, and settings as the stories unfold. This adds a dynamic punch and sense of reality that text alone cannot deliver. Sacco gives enough historical and political information to set the context, but the heart of it is this series of eye-witness accounts. He also shows himself in the pictures and with stark honesty reveals his own reactions and emotions through the process.

This is a powerful book. It is impossible to come away from it without a much deeper understanding of this conflict, and maybe of human injustice and conflict in general. Sacco gives no deep analysis and offers no real solutions, but here presents the opportunity to reflect on larger questions of the nature of war, inter-ethnic strife, oppression, and bigotry in the human experience. Most American Evangelicals are strongly pro-Israel and anti-Palestinian. They would do well to add to their understanding by reading this book. There are two sides to this story, and wise people are grateful for such opportunities.