



# Current Flow: The Electrification of Palestine

*Ronen Shamir*

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## **Current Flow: The Electrification of Palestine** Ronen Shamir

Whether buried underfoot or strung overhead, electrical lines are omnipresent. Not only are most societies dependent on electrical infrastructure, but this infrastructure actively shapes electrified society. From the wires, poles, and generators themselves to the entrepreneurs, engineers, politicians, and advisors who determine the process of electrification, our electrical grids can create power—and politics—just as they transmit it.

*Current Flow* examines the history of electrification of British-ruled Palestine in the 1920s, as it marked, affirmed, and produced social, political, and economic difference between Arabs and Jews. Considering the interplay of British colonial interests, the Jewish-Zionist leanings of a commissioned electric company, and Arab opposition within the case of the Jaffa Power House, Ronen Shamir reveals how electrification was central in assembling a material infrastructure of ethno-national separation in Palestine long before "political partition plans" had ever been envisioned. Ultimately, *Current Flow* sheds new light on the history of Jewish-Arab relations and offers broader sociological insights into what happens when people are transformed from users into elements of networks.

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