



On the Border

Michael Warschawski

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On the Border chronicles a radical political education in a time and place charged with idealism and danger. One of the most renowned figures of the Israeli left, Warschawski is known commonly by his *nom de guerre* Mikado. A Polish Frenchman and a rabbi's son, he went to Jerusalem as a young man to study Talmud. Warschawski recounts how he became radicalized, and muses on the vibrancy of border cultures that welcome and engage with strangers—where languages exchange phrases and people trade foods.

Warschawski's involvement in radical politics led to inspiring alliances with Jews, Muslims, Christians and atheists. Yet as the border lines hardened and Mikado became a movement leader, he became targeted by the Shin Bet, Israel's notorious intelligence agents, who eventually arrested him. Incarcerated and interrogated for 20 days, Mikado gives his readers an insider's view of the psychological and political pressures that Shin Bet brought to bear, even on Jews, and never lets you forget the severity of treatment that his Palestinian colleagues faced.

Throughout his story, Warschawski remains something of a scholar, a philosopher schooled in Talmudic reasoning, ready to argue, always searching for the larger meaning of justice and decency. The lessons he draws from his experience on the border between Israel and Palestine should be instructive for all the places where cultures rub against each other for better and worse. Warschawski's perspective offers hope for the rich cultural and political exchange that these places offer their inhabitants, and hope indeed for his adopted land.

Winner of Le Prix des Amis du Monde Diplomatique (2002).

Michel Warschawski founded the Alternative Information Centre in Jerusalem, a Palestinian-Israeli organization that disseminates information, research, and political analysis on Palestinian and Israeli societies as well as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, while promoting cooperation between Palestinians and Israelis.

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