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The Palestinian-Israeli Conflict: A Very Short Introduction (Very Short Introductions)



Synopsis

The conflict between Palestine and Israel is one of the most highly publicized and bitter struggles of modern times, a dangerous tinderbox always poised to set the Middle East aflame--and to draw the United States into the fire. In this accessible and stimulating Very Short Introduction, Martin Bunton illuminates the history of the problem, reducing it to its very essence. Adopting a fresh and original approach, Bunton explores the Palestinian-Israeli dispute in twenty-year segments, to highlight the historical complexity of the conflict throughout successive decades. Each chapter starts with an examination of the relationships among people and events that marked particular years as historical stepping stones in the evolution of the conflict, including the 1897 Basle Congress, the 1917 Balfour Declaration and British occupation of Palestine, and the 1947 UN Partition Plan and the war for Palestine. Providing a clear and fair exploration of the main issues, Bunton explores not only the historical basis of the conflict, but also looks at how and why partition has been so difficult and how efforts to restore peace continue today.

About the Series: Oxford's Very Short Introductions series offers concise and original introductions to a wide range of subjects--from Islam to Sociology, Politics to Classics, Literary Theory to History, and Archaeology to the Bible. Not simply a textbook of definitions, each volume in this series provides trenchant and provocative--yet always balanced and complete--discussions of the central issues in a given discipline or field. Every Very Short Introduction gives a readable evolution of the subject in question, demonstrating how the subject has developed and how it has influenced society. Eventually, the series will encompass every major academic discipline, offering all students an accessible and abundant reference library. Whatever the area of study that one deems important or appealing, whatever the topic that fascinates the general reader, the Very Short Introductions series has a handy and affordable guide that will likely prove indispensable.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"[Bunton] demolishes various myths, starting with the "ahistorical" idea that this is an "ancient and religious" conflict, showing rather that it is one between two peoples claiming the same land...The inclusion of key documents and useful maps helps make this perhaps the best volume to recommend to nonspecialists at all levels, including advanced scholars in other fields." --CHOICE

Martin Bunton is Assistant Professor at the University of Victoria, Canada, where he teaches modern Middle Eastern history and the history of the region in its global context. He is the author of several books, including *A History of the Modern Middle East*, 4th Edition.

A well-written and very readable overview of the history of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. I don't know enough about the conflict to state whether the author leaves anything important out of the book, although he does appear to be slightly biased toward the Palestinian side of the conflict and against the Israelis. I can say that his writing style is very clear, and the organization of each chapter, with an introduction stating what he was going to talk about in the chapter and a conclusion that recapped what was said in the chapter and laid the groundwork for the following chapter, made it very easy to follow and remember the various historical events that gave rise to and are a part of the conflict.

I bought this book as a better way to understand the origins of the conflict between Israel and Palestine. Since most online sources seem to be very bias one way or the other, I was hoping this would be more objective. As someone who doesn't favor one side or the other, the bias against Israel was fairly apparent. Often times, the author would describe Israel's actions as excessive and brutal, but would seem to completely ignore or only mention in passing equally brutal tactics and acts by the PLO and Hamas. In times where the IDF took military action against Arab states, the text almost portrays IDF victories as unfair because the IDF was better trained and armed whereas Arab aggressors couldn't effectively coordinate between one another. He also mentions things like

the mass expulsion of Palestinians after the 1948 war, but (unless I missed it) didn't really mention the expulsion of Jews from Arab states following that same war. Just a few examples. Often times I would pause when reading and look up events on things like Wikipedia only to find that Wikipedia contained more facts and dialogue that would balance the argument between the Israelis and Palestinians, whereas this book would seem to lean more towards a pro-Palestinian narrative. I've noticed other reviews of this book, even highly rated reviews, call out this pro-Palestinian bias. With all that said, I suppose I met my objective in that I certainly better understand both pro-Palestinian and pro-Israel arguments in this conflict. I found the writing itself to be a bit clunky and difficult to follow in certain spots. While the chapters themselves were written in chronological order, the text within the chapters seemed to jump around a bit. I also felt like there were certain areas that probably warranted at least a little more discussion, like the 1948 war between the IDF and Arab states. Rather, the author very quickly glosses over the motivations behind the war, and the war itself, and jumps to discussing the impact on Palestinians post-war. Also, despite a 2013 copyright, there is effectively no discussion of some of the more recent conflicts and issues. Regardless of the criticisms, the book did present a number of facts, important dates, policies, and individuals that help people better understand the history of the conflict. Also, as the book's title indicates, this is a short introduction and, at best, is a basis to help with reading other more in-depth books about the subject. While I'm still searching for the "unicorn" that's an unbiased view of this conflict, the best thing might be to pick a book from each end of the spectrum and formulate your own opinion after reading both. I'm thinking there isn't anything out there that discusses this subject in a completely objective manner.

Used as a supplement for our huge textbook in my (Ivy League) college class on the conflict. After slogging through dozens of pages of minutiae, this was a joy to read. A simple, clear account of the conflict that identifies disagreement where it exists and attempts (insofar as possible with such a controversial subject) to avoid bias.

A very comprehensive presentation of the historical conflict between Palestine and Israel. The foreign influences and changes over time are documented without judgement. I'm still confused about about the cultural influences but this helps to make some sense of what is going on there

This book gave a decent history of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, and for the most part it stuck to the facts without arguing for one side or the other. I recommend it to anyone who wants to better

understand current events.

Not much else to say. This is exactly what a Very Short Introduction should be like.

Excellent short summary of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict.

Brief but informative. Covers the major incidents and balanced

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