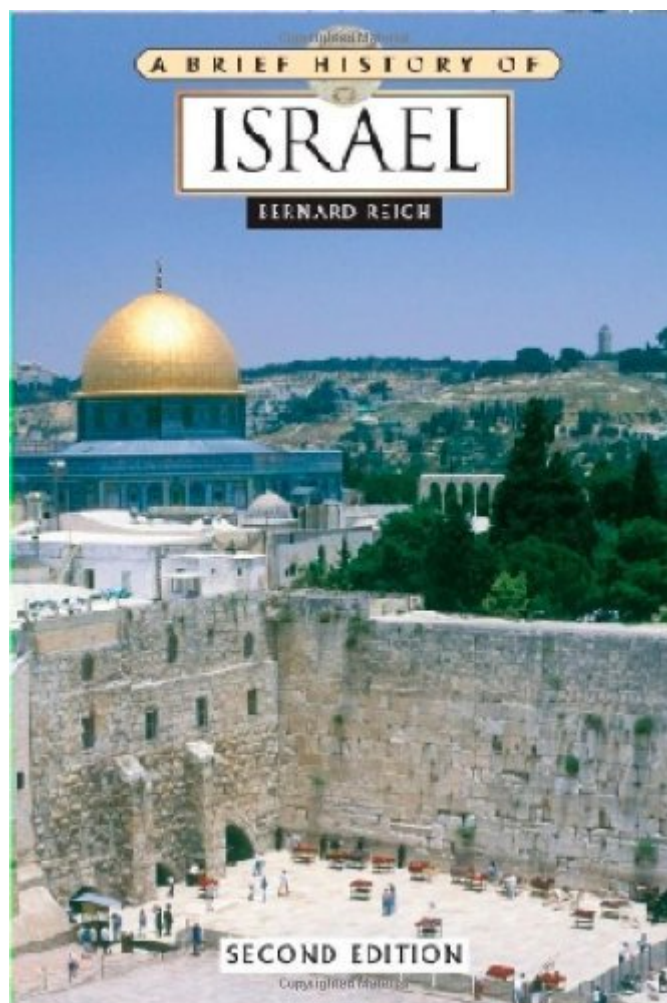


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A Brief History Of Israel



Synopsis

This is an updated look at Israel's tumultuous history. The complex tale of Israel's people and their modern state, established thousands of years after the destruction of the old one, is narrated against the backdrop of exile, anti-Semitism, Zionism, and the Holocaust. "A Brief History of Israel, Second Edition" explores Israel's history with an emphasis on the period since its independence in 1948. The chronological narration begins with the time of Abraham and the period of the Israelite kingdoms and continues to World War II and the United Nations Partition Plan. This comprehensive reference then examines the independent country of Israel, including the Arab - Israeli conflict, domestic politics, Knesset election results, the economy, and international relations. Completely up-to-date, this second edition features a new preface, a revised introduction, a revised glossary of political parties, a new final chapter, and updated appendixes. Coverage includes: the period since Israel's independence in 1948; the Middle East peace process; economic and political challenges; Israel's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip; the creation of the new Kadima Party and the election of 2006; and, Hamas' election victory and its effect on Israel.

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Customer Reviews

books were received as scheduled for delivery; the packaging was real nice; the books are a great addition to my hebrew library and spiritual improvement of the history of my people. I am seeking more understanding of the hebrew's history and spirituality.

A very good presentation of the political, economic and military activities in Israel..past & present. It is a wonderful history of Israel.

not a balanced view.Very biased pro Israeli account which says little about the very nuanced history and politics of the region

I've read longer historical studies on the establishment of the state of Israel. Yet in spite of Reich's brevity, I felt his choices on what to cover and how to deep to cover it was especially helpful. I found his historical sketch of the period from the Camp David Accords and onward was well paced and informative. I felt he was even handed and often too even handed from the Arab perspective. However, we must be honest that most individuals who form their opinion about Israel will do so from news sound bytes and from leftist news sources that are strongly supportive of the Palestinian position. I would gladly put Reich's book in the hand of those who have little sense of the long history of Israel and need to get with the program. Reich's chapter demonstrating the Jewish presence in the land of Israel throughout modern history after Christ was helpful and dispelled the Arab position that there were no Jews in Israel until the last century. I felt Reich should have gone deeper into the issue of Jewish purchase of the land from absentee Arab landlords to dispel the Arab myth that Jews stole the land from the Arabs. Also, his coverage of the Six Day War was a mere blip in the course of the book and he failed to do this crisis justice since it affects the issue of "occupied territory" today.

A concise but informative history of Israel with a strong emphasis on recent decades.It essentially serves as a refresher cause to those who have studied Israel's history and covered recent events, and a beginners guide to Israel history for those who have not.It mentions the the 2000 years of longing of Jews to return to their ancient land after the expulsion of most of Israel's Jews by the Romans.The first chapter on the history of Israel from the biblical times to the Ottoman Period could have been more detailed since it covers the roots of the Jews in the Land of Israel.Two vital things I really liked in the chapter was the map of David's Kingdom in 970 BCE of which the current border of Israel cover less than a quarter.The author does, to his credit explain the derivative of the word

'Jew' from the Hebrew word Yehudi meaning 'man of Judah'. How ironic and unjust therefore that it is judged by the world community as 'illegal' or even 'a war crime' for Jews to live in their own ancient cradle of origin. The Second Chapter the Prehistory of the State of Israel' covers the return of Jews to their ancient land, from 1880 (known as the 'modern Zionist movement') until the re-establishment of statehood of the Jewish state in 1948, including the Balfour Declaration of 1917, and how as a result of Arab pogroms against Jewish communities in the 1920's and 30's led to the British turning their backs on the promises to the Jewish people and trying to stop Jewish immigration into the Holy Land and the attack by five Arab armies on the fledgling state of Israel, after the United Nations voted for partition in 1948, and the war that was long and costly for Israel. While the author does date the fact that in the first four months of independence in May, 1948, 50 000 immigrants, almost all Holocaust survivors settled in Israel (only to find themselves attacked by people who were determined to destroy them) and that by 1951, over 300 000 Jews had arrived from Arab states, he deflates their numbers (the Jewish refugees from Arab countries were closer to 700 000) and does not cover the fact that they were refugees expelled, amidst pogroms and genocide, from the Arab lands they had lived in for many centuries. In the third chapter 'Political, Economic and Military Consolidation' the author outlines the achievements of building up a sustainable economic infrastructure, absorbing hundreds of thousands of Jews, building up an excitingly vibrant multi-party democracy (much of the book covers Israel's interesting party political developments and the elections to Israel Knesset (Parliament) from 1948 to 2006. An interesting side box discusses Israel's programme of aid and training to newly independent developing states in Africa, Asia and Latin America from the 1950's, 60's and early 70's until, under Arab pressure, most African countries, under Arab pressure, cut ties with Israel in the wake of the 1973 Yom Kippur War. This chapter covers the Suez War of how incessant terrorist Fedayeen raids on Israel from Egypt, organized by Nasser, and the closing of the Straits of Tiran against international law lead to Israel's participation with Britain and France against Nasser. Chapter 4 describes how Arab threats of Israel's destruction and the genocide of its people, the surrounding of Israel's borders of Arab armies ready for war from Syria, Lebanon, Iraq and Egypt, ready to act, and the final spark, Nasser's blocking of the Straits of Tiran, constituting an act of war led to Israel reacting to the Arab's warlike activities and preemptive striking in the Six Day War. The book goes on to cover Arab terrorist activity, the Egyptian War of Attrition against Israel (1969-1970) and the cowardly Arab attack of the Yom Kippur War by several Arab armies against Israel in 1973, the political earthquake that swept Menachem Begin and his Likud Party to power in the 1977 election after 30 years of Labour domination and the 1982 Lebanon War, when Israel struck at the PLO in Lebanon after

years of being attacked from Lebanon, and the political fallout from this war. But most of the book covers events in the 90s and first decade of the 21st century from the Oslo Peace Accords, to Arafat's launching of the Five Year Palestinian Terror War of Israel's civilian population and Israel's reaction (the author wrongly gives the terror war legitimacy by referring it incorrectly as the 'Al Aqsa Intifada', the word used by the terrorists and their supporters and propagandists. In an attempt to be neutral the author underplays Arab aggression and how Israel has sacrificed its own rights and security for 62 years in order to try to bring about peace with the Arabs who (with the exception of Sadat in 1978 and King Hussein of Jordan in 1994 as well as the more moderate Gulf states and Morocco) have been completely uninterested. He certainly underplays the horror of the Arab terror on Israel civilian population in the 2000-2005 Palestinian Terror War. He does however stick to the facts and it is a factual and concise history of the period, helpful to recapping the events of the conflict. It goes on to cover the 2005 Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and forced expulsion of Gaza's Jewish inhabitants, the 2006 Second Lebanon War in which Israel reacted to Hezbollah terror and aggression and subsequent political development up to early 2008, including Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah's February 2008 threats against Israel and President George W Bush's commitment to US support for Israel in early 2008, thrown into doubt by the 5 November 2008 election of the pro-Arab Barack Obama, and his subsequent attempts to appease the Arab/Islamic world's most radical elements, while increasingly showing coldness bordering on hostility to Israel, and making demands on Israel which would endanger the Jewish state, for nothing in return.

This book could be considerably better. But it gives me a chance to show that I can be generous, and give five stars to any book that makes a serious effort to inform its readers. This book does that. Sure, it made me gulp when it claimed that both the Jews and Arabs believed that they "had the right to the entire territory." Um, really? Anyone can see that the Jews saw it as their right to buy land and live on it, not to expel Arabs, while many Arabs appear to have fought for the right to ban, expel, rob, slander, oppress, and murder the Jews. There is a big asymmetry here! And that asymmetry is even greater when one considers the fact that Jews were indeed banned from Saudi Arabia and even Jordan (actually the bulk of the original Mandate!) but still did not consider returning the favor by banning Arabs from their fifth of the Mandate. The book often misses a chance to show just how greedy many of the Arabs were being in demanding rights to all Jewish land. But it does report on the bulk of Israel's history in a reasonably accurate manner. One problem one has in discussing the history of Israel is that there are a great many highly dubious Arab complaints about Israel. These complaints are manifested in absurd UN resolutions and in statements to the media.

What does one do about it? If one dismisses the most ridiculous accusations, one appears to be taking sides. If one does not dismiss them, one is being misleading, and making it appear that the more outrageous UN resolutions against Israel reflect badly not on the UN but on Israel. I think the book could have been much better in addressing all this, but it did report the reaction of both sides as soberly as it could, and it did let us readers draw our own conclusions. One last comment. I know it is a tiny point, far less important than any other, but I simply have to make it. Israel is the only Jewish state. Were the Temple of Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva still in Aelia Capitolina (Jerusalem), I would have been surprised to see it adorn the cover of this book. If there is a book about France, I expect to see something French on the cover. If it is about Hungary, I expect to see something Hungarian. This book is about Israel, and the Dome of the Rock is not really the most Israeli thing, and certainly not the most Jewish thing that I can think of. Quite the contrary. I can imagine the reaction that I would have were a book about my country to show some edifice that was not merely of a different people but of a people that were at war with my nation and were bullying my nation. I'd feel provoked. I'd be asking myself if it might be a good idea to tear that edifice down, so I wouldn't be seeing my country pictured this way. And that's a really bad idea. If I were an Arab, I would still feel provoked. But now, I'd be wondering why, instead of showing that Israel is sovereign over something Jewish, it implied that Israel was sovereign over an Arab edifice! And I'd be asking myself if it might be a good idea to get total sovereignty over the place, so nobody would show it as part of Israel any more. And that is a really bad idea too. I think this book (and a few others) ought to be faulted not so much for showing this picture, but for showing only this picture on its cover.

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