THE ISRAEL-PALESTINE CONFLICT

Now in its third edition, James L. Gelvin’s award-winning account of the conflict between Israelis and their forebears, on the one hand, and Palestinians and theirs, on the other, offers a compelling, accessible, and up-to-date introduction for students and general readers. Newly revised to take into account the effects of the 2010–11 Arab uprisings on the conflict and the recognition of Palestine as a “non-member observer state” by the United Nations, the book traces the struggle from the emergence of nationalism among the Jews of Europe and the Arab inhabitants of Ottoman Palestine through the present, exploring the external pressures and internal logic that have propelled it. Placing events in Palestine within the framework of global history, The Israel-Palestine Conflict: One Hundred Years of War skillfully interweaves biographical sketches, eyewitness accounts, poetry, fiction, and official documentation into its narrative.

James L. Gelvin is Professor of Modern Middle Eastern History at the University of California, Los Angeles. A specialist in the modern social and cultural history of the Arab East, he is author of Divided Loyalties: Nationalism and Mass Politics in Syria at the Close of Empire (1998), The Modern Middle East: A History (2004), and The Arab Uprisings: What Everyone Needs to Know (2012). He is also co-editor of Global Muslims in the Age of Print and Steam, 1850–1930 (2013).
THE ISRAEL-PALESTINE CONFLICT

One Hundred Years of War

Third Edition

JAMES L. GELVIN

University of California, Los Angeles
# CONTENTS

- *List of Illustrations and Maps*  
  page vii
- *Author’s Note*  
  ix

1. The Land and Its Lure  
   1
2. Cultures of Nationalism  
   14
3. Zionism and the Colonization of Palestine  
   46
4. World War I and the Palestine Mandate  
   76
5. From Nationalism in Palestine to Palestinian Nationalism  
   92
6. From the Great Revolt through the 1948 War  
   117
   145
8. The Arab-Israeli Conflict  
   166
9. The Palestinian National Movement Comes of Age  
   198
10. Coming Full Circle: Oslo and Its Aftermath  
    231

- *Glossary*  
  269
- *Time Line of Events*  
  283
- *Biographical Sketches*  
  289
- *Index*  
  293
# List of Illustrations and Maps

## Illustrations

1. Topographic map of the “Holy Land”  
2. Ceremony at Masada  
3. Jaffa market in the nineteenth century  
4. Olive harvest  
5. Jewish shtetl  
6. The steamship *T.S.S. Polonia*  
7. Theodor Herzl as Zionist icon  
8. Kibbutz photographs  
9. Betar members  
10. Arrival of British troops in Jerusalem  
11. Jewish immigrants at Port of Jaffa  
12. Tel Aviv, 1937  
13. British-held rebel prisoners during Great Revolt  
14. Palestinian refugees, 1948  
15. Palestinian Authority stamps, 1995  
16. The Jewish Palestine Pavilion at the 1939–40 New York World’s Fair  
17. Jewish quarter, Fez, Morocco  
18. Suburban-style West Bank settlement  
19. Hilltop settlement  
20. Yasir Arafat  
21. Children of the intifada  
22. Separation barrier

---

© in this web service Cambridge University Press  
www.cambridge.org
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS AND MAPS

MAPS

1. Palestine and the Middle East 2
2. Israel and the Palestinian territories 5
3. Ottoman Empire, circa 1850 19
4. The Jewish Pale of Settlement 39
5a. Jewish settlements in Palestine, 1881–1914 61
5b. The Yishuv on the eve of the 1948 war 61
6a. United Nations partition plan, 1947 135
6b. Armistice lines, 1949 135
7. UNRWA-operated refugee camps, 2005 141
8. Israel and the occupied territories after the 1967 war 176
9. Israeli settlements in the West Bank, 2011 189
10. West Bank zones of control according to Oslo 2 239
11. The separation barrier as planned in 2002 249
This is a book about the creation, evolution, interaction, and mutual definition of two national communities. It is about the struggle between those two communities, the inner logic that has propelled that struggle, and the historical conditions that have delimited its course. If for no other reason than its persistence and its never-ending demand for attention, the Israeli-Palestinian struggle has earned its claim to uniqueness. By most other standards, however, it might be regarded as the quintessential struggle of the modern age. Either way, it is a story worth recounting.

Sometimes the struggle between the two national communities in Palestine has been submerged in wider struggles that embroiled outside powers. There was a time when it seemingly dropped off the radar screen altogether. For the forty-five years between 1948 and 1993, most of the world chose to regard the struggle for Palestine as an Arab-Israeli conflict, as if the claims of one of the principals in the struggle could be addressed by outside powers or simply written off. With the hindsight of history, we now know better. The Arab-Israeli conflict was but a phase in a struggle that has come full circle, and no peace between Israel and its sovereign neighbors will bring the struggle to an end. Only the principals can do that.

I have written this book for students and general readers who wish to understand the broad sweep of the history of the Israeli-Palestinian struggle and situate it in its global context. The book is not, nor was it intended to be, encyclopedic. It is interpretive. It is also concise and, hopefully, engaging. If I have neglected or been too cavalier with your favorite hero, event, or peace plan, I apologize in advance. You might want to take consolation from the fact that I have honed the narrative
AUTHOR'S NOTE

you are about to read with care. You might also want to take consolation from the fact that, in return for the sacrifice of a few details, you are getting the occasional pearl. Where else are you going to find Michel Foucault’s theory of governmentality slimmed down to a couple of paragraphs and written as if it were meant to be understood?

True believers on both sides of the struggle are, of course, beyond consolation. As you will soon see, I regard Zionism as a – perhaps the – prototypical nineteenth-century nationalist movement. I do not regard it as the fulfillment of Jewish history (as many of its adherents maintain), nor do I regard it as a “particularly virulent form of racism” (as its opponents have written). As a national movement, it is, to paraphrase Henry Fielding, no better than it should be. And yes, the word “Palestinian” does refer to a real nation, albeit one whose ancient lineage is as spurious as the ancient lineage of any other nation, and the word “Palestinian” can be used as a noun, not just as an adjective modifying the word “terrorist.” While it is the role of the true believer to believe, it is the role of the historian to treat the self-aggrandizing claims of any and all nationalist movements with skepticism. The same goes for the claims of their opponents. I only hope I have done so evenly and effectively.

Skeptics, like pioneers, get all the arrows. Thus, it is with a certain amount of trepidation that I list those who have contributed to my efforts. First off, there is Marigold Acland, my original editor at Cambridge University Press, who suggested I write this book even though I had stiffed her on another one. This is my penance. I also wish to thank others on the editorial side of this book: Eric Crahan, Isabelle Dambri-court, William M. Hammell, Pauline Ireland, Sarika Narula, and Sue Nicholas. Then there are those friends and colleagues who have read this or earlier versions of the book, made suggestions, or contributed in other ways: Carol Bakhos, David Dean Commins, Michael Cooperson, Kristen Hillaire Glasgow, Roya Kladman, Ussama Makdisi, David N. Myers, A. Rantin Polemick, Manal Quota, and Jihad Turk. Finally, to this list I would like to add those undergraduates who read this book in its preliminary stages and graciously called my attention to every typo and misplaced comma, as well as those who raised questions that forced me to rewrite or rethink what I was trying to say. Once again, I wish to dedicate this book to them.