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978-1-107-13873-5 — The International Diplomacy of Israel's Founders: Deception at the United Nations in the Quest for Palestine

John Quigley

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## THE INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMACY OF ISRAEL'S FOUNDERS

During the early to mid-twentieth century, the Zionist Organization secured a series of political victories on the international stage leading to the foundation of a Jewish state and to its ability to expand its territorial control within Palestine. *The International Diplomacy of Israel's Founders* provides a revisionist account of the founding of Israel by exposing the misrepresentations and false assurances of Zionist diplomats during this formative period of Israeli history. By comparing diplomatic statements at the United Nations and elsewhere against the historical record, it sheds new light on the legacies of leaders such as Chaim Weizmann, David Ben Gurion, Abba Eban, and Shabtai Rosenne. Including coverage of little-discussed moments in early Israeli history, this book offers an important new perspective for anyone interested in the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

John Quigley is Professor Emeritus at the Ohio State University Moritz College of Law and a leading expert on the Arab-Israeli conflict. His recent publications include *The Six-Day War and Israeli Self-Defense* (2013) and *The Statehood of Palestine: International Law in the Middle East Conflict* (2010).

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**John Quigley**

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## Preface

Lev Nikolaevich Tolstoy mastered the writing of fiction by portraying life events in a way that challenged the common perception of them. He would descend to great detail to explain situations that at first blush did not seem to require elaboration. Events that seemed simple became complex. Tolstoy's technique has acquired a description in literary analysis. Tolstoy is said to have "made strange." He took what appeared simple and mined the surface to show a more complex reality.

Tolstoy's technique can be applied in nonfiction as well. Events that have become part of history, events explained typically in a sentence or two, may hide a reality that sheds a different light. The Zionist movement has made a history for itself, a history remarkable in many respects. From ideas generated by a handful of individuals, it inserted itself onto the world stage. It functioned in the realm of international diplomacy. It arrived in that realm as Europe and the Middle East were tearing themselves apart in a world war. And a few years later it navigated through another conflagration that consumed even greater swaths of the planet in another world war.

Zionism achieved great feats in the realm of diplomacy, feats that have been depicted in heroic terms by its proponents and acknowledged with chagrin by its detractors. What has received less attention is the means by which Zionist diplomacy gained its successes. This book approaches Zionist diplomacy using Tolstoy's technique. A close reading will be given to key diplomatic forays that put Zionism in a position to succeed in its effort to gain territory for a Jewish state.

I must mention several technical matters. When an English language rendition is given from a source in another language, the translation is mine. Transliteration into the Latin alphabet from Arabic, Hebrew, and Russian is not uniform. As a result, a reader may find variances in the spelling of place names or other terms, particularly in quotations.

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The text at many points contains statements of persons who spoke at United Nations meetings. The UN records typically paraphrase, as recorded by a rapporteur. So even if quotation marks appear at the beginning and end of a statement, the words may not be exactly those of the speaker.

Names can be confusing for two diplomats who are referenced frequently in the text. Each made a name change mid-career. In the text I have given the name as it was at the particular time. Thus, Moshe Shertok is “Shertok” in early references to him but “Sharett” after he adopted that surname. Aubrey Eban is “Aubrey” in early references to him, but “Abba Eban” after he began referring to himself that way. For the names of member states of the United Nations, the more colloquial names are used in the text, even though in quotations from UN documents the reader will see the more formal name. Thus, “Britain” is used instead of “United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.” “Soviet Union” is used instead of “Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.” “Egypt” is used instead of “United Arab Republic,” which was the formal name of Egypt from 1958 to 1971 as result of a merger with Syria.

I had help from a number of sources in preparing this book. Dr. Anis F. Kassim provided helpful comments on an early draft. The Cambridge University Press readers pointed out avenues for additional research. Dr. Avi Raz provided direction on Israeli cabinet documents. John Vincent Quigley assisted on literary references. Jana Al-Akhras (JD 2017) and Michael Dewey (JD 2017) at the Moritz College of Law of The Ohio State University checked source references. Research librarians at the Law Library of the Moritz College of Law located materials in archives and libraries around the globe, allowing me to access critical primary sources. As always, I am grateful to the Moritz College of Law for providing an environment conducive to scholarly endeavors.

## A Note on United Nations Committees

During the early years of the United Nations, a number of UN committees dealt with issues covered in this book. Some were permanent, part of the UN structure. Others were temporary, set up for a defined task. With names that sound similar one to another, these committees can easily be confused. This Note provides a brief guide.

***Ad Hoc Committee on the Palestinian Question:*** set up by the UN General Assembly in September 1947 to consider the recommendations of the Special Committee on Palestine. Composed of all member states of the United Nations, it met during October–November 1947. It made a recommendation to the General Assembly in November 1947, after which it ceased to function. Its documents begin with the designation UN Document A/AC.14/SR.

***Ad Hoc Political Committee:*** a standing committee of the UN General Assembly composed of all member states of the United Nations. As a committee that handles a variety of issues, it was tasked in May 1949 with dealing with Israel's application for membership in the United Nations. It made a favorable recommendation in that month. Over the next several years, it discussed a variety of matters relating to Palestine and Israel. Its documents begin with the designation UN Document A/AC.

***Conciliation Commission for Palestine:*** established by the UN General Assembly in December 1948 to promote a negotiated settlement. Composed of three member states (Turkey, France, United States), it actively pursued a settlement for four years but thereafter focused on more limited issues. Its documents begin with the designation A/AC.25.

***First Committee:*** a standing committee of the UN General Assembly that deals with issues of international security. Composed of all member states of the United Nations, it held much of the discussion at the United



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Nations 1947 to 1949 relating to the status of Palestine. Its documents begin with the designation UN Document A/C.1.

***Palestine Commission:*** created by UN General Assembly Resolution 181 in November 1947 to oversee the implementation of the partition of Palestine. Composed of representatives of five member states (Bolivia, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Panama, Philippines), it was disbanded by the General Assembly in May 1948 when it became clear that partition would not be implemented. Its documents begin with the designation UN Document A/AC.21.

***Special Committee on Palestine:*** set up by the UN General Assembly in April 1947, when the United Nations took up the Palestine Question. Composed of representatives of eleven states (Australia, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Guatemala, India, Iran, Netherlands, Peru, Sweden, Uruguay, Yugoslavia), its task was to make recommendations for Palestine's status. It made a final report and ceased to function in September 1947. Its meetings begin with the designation UN Document A/AC.13 but are cited from the Special Committee's report to the General Assembly, which is UN Document A/364.

Abbreviations

A/	Document of the UN General Assembly or of an entity subordinate to it
AC.	An ad hoc committee of the UN General Assembly (will be followed by a number to designate a record of a particular committee during a particular session)
A/PV.	Provisional Verbatim Record of a meeting of the UN General Assembly (will be followed by a meeting number)
C.1	First Committee of the UN General Assembly
CAB	Cabinet (UK National Archives, document of the British Cabinet)
Cmd.	Command Paper (UK, Parliamentary Paper)
ES-	Emergency Special Session (of the UN General Assembly) (will be followed by a session number)
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office (UK)
FO	Foreign Office (UK)
FRUS	<i>Foreign Relations of the United States</i> , a publication of the Department of State of the United States. In citations in this book, the year indicated is the year of the documents included in the particular volume, not the year of publication of the volume
GA	General Assembly (UN)
IDF	Israel Defense Force
S/	Document of the UN Security Council or of an entity subordinate to it
S-	Special Session (of the UN General Assembly) (will be followed by a session number)

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S/PV.	Provisional verbatim record of a meeting of the UN Security Council (will be followed by a meeting number)
SR.	Summary record of a meeting of a permanent or ad hoc committee of the UN General Assembly
UK	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
UN	United Nations
UNEF	UN Emergency Force
UNTSO	UN Truce Supervision Organization