

The background of the cover is a light yellow-green gradient. It is decorated with several stylized olive branches, each bearing two leaves, arranged diagonally from the top-left towards the bottom-right.

A NEVER-ENDING CONFLICT

A Guide to Israeli Military History

Mordechai Bar-On

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A NEVER-ENDING CONFLICT

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A NEVER-ENDING CONFLICT

A GUIDE TO ISRAELI MILITARY HISTORY

EDITED BY
MORDECHAI BAR-ON

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Foreword

Ever since the State of Israel saw the light of day in May 1948, it has faced constant attempts to eliminate it. In the process, it has had to engage in a series of conventional wars and ward off ongoing guerilla skirmishes and sheer acts of terrorism initiated by the Palestine Liberation Organization and its allies, such as Hamas. All this has exacted a heavy toll in terms of loss of life and economic and social dislocation.

This book serves to provide some perspective of the nature and impact of each of Israel's many military campaigns. Its editor, Mordechai Bar-On, is uniquely placed in being able to determine who among Israel's academic community is eminently suitable to analyze specific episodes in Israel's efforts to defend itself. Like Bar-On, all of the writers are essentially men of peace who bear no intrinsic malice against their country's adversaries. Their judgments are well balanced and insightful, affording the reader a rare opportunity to begin to understand the true complexities of the issues at hand. Furthermore, some of the obfuscations, deliberate and otherwise, relating to Israel's defense forces have effectively been dispelled.

Leslie Stein

*General Editor, Praeger Series
on Jewish and Israeli Studies*

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Introduction

Mordechai Bar-On

For three generations, a violent conflict has ensued between the indigenous Arab population of Palestine and the Jews, who sought to establish an independent state in the land they considered their ancient home and the cradle of their unique culture. Sporadic cases of violence began soon after the first Zionist colonies were established in the 1880s.¹ Rudimentary national consciousness appeared among the Palestinian Arabs at the beginning of the twentieth century.² However, Palestinian resistance to the Zionist endeavor assumed organized and concerted political and military measures only during the 1920s. Resistance arose in response to the pledge Great Britain gave to the Zionist movement to help the Jews to establish a “National Homeland” in Palestine. That pledge, which was manifested in the November 2, 1917 Balfour Declaration, was adopted in 1922 by the League of Nations and included in the charter of the British mandate for Palestine.³ The increased rate of Jewish immigration that soon followed alarmed the Arabs and galvanized them to start organizing their own national efforts to stem the Zionist tide.⁴

In 1920 and 1921 some nationally motivated Arab violence erupted in a few mixed communities and against a number of Zionist colonies but was quickly suppressed by the British garrison stationed in the country in the wake of the Great War. After eight years of quiet, larger-scale violence erupted for a few days in 1929 in which some 200 Jews were killed and some Jewish communities, notably in the town of Hebron, were totally destroyed. The fast-growing Jewish community of Palestine had in 1920 begun to establish its own paramilitary organization, the Haganah, which in 1929 was ill-equipped and poorly organized. It required some reinforcement of the British troops from neighboring countries to end this wave of violence. By 1936 the Palestinian leadership managed to launch a full-scale

“revolt” that lasted for three years and included many frontal military confrontations between Jews and Arabs and exacted hundreds of casualties from both sides.

Ever since then, with a few brief intermissions, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, with its political, economic, and cultural ramifications, assumed continuous and growing measures of military violence. In fact, there has barely been a year in which no cases of nationally motivated violent clashes have been recorded. The never-ending conflict has experienced ups and downs. During some years, one may have observed only low-level violence, yet during others, more intensive and occasionally highly dramatic conflagrations have taken place. Twelve such major eruptions may be cited, ranging from the first “Arab Revolt” in 1936–1939 to the current “*al Aqsa* Intifada” that began in the fall of 2000 and is still raging as these lines are being typed.

Hundreds of books and thousands of articles have surveyed these conflicts. Moreover, the events have been subjected to bitter historiographical and ideological controversies, not only between Israeli and Palestinian supporters but no less among Israeli historians and publicists. Unfortunately, not every lay reader has access to this wealth of information. In response, some writers attempted to meet the need for a concise narrative, the most recent of which are the summaries presented by Benny Morris and Avi Shlaim.⁵ In this volume we adopt a different approach. Twelve Israeli historians, fully conversant with these conflicts,⁶ were asked to revisit them and present to the reader some of their reflections and an updated analysis, based on their own specific points of view and historical assessments.

It should be recognized from the outset that while not necessarily representing Israeli apologists, all of the chapters have been written from an Israeli perspective. Most reflect, in one measure or another, recent trends of critical approaches to Israeli history or at least try to deal with these trends and confront them honestly. The editor consciously refrained from interfering with the specific points of view of the contributors and of the content and method they chose to present. It is hoped that this method will enable the reader to obtain a richer and more interesting insight to the intricate and convoluted ways in which the Arab-Israeli conflict has evolved. It must, however, be admitted that the inevitable brevity of these articles could not enable the contributors to present a detailed and comprehensive narrative, nor deal with all associated analytical problems. Nonetheless, the salient features of the conflicts are clearly outlined.

This introduction is meant to help the reader understand the overall flow of events and the way each chapter follows from the previous act and leads to the next one, so that a sense of the entire narrative and its continuity and fullness is provided. The manner in which I have chosen to relate the story and the choice of interpretation are my own, and do not necessarily reflect the views of any contributor.

As already mentioned, the 1936 Arab Revolt was the first large-scale and somewhat centrally organized Palestinian act of resistance to the Zionist project and to its British sponsors. The Jewish paramilitary organization, the Haganah, although still rudimentary, was sufficiently strong and organized to foil all attempts by the Palestinian Arabs to destroy Jewish colonies, deter Jewish immigration, and disrupt the further development of Jewish rural and urban settlements. Even so, as Yigal Eyal’s narrative in Chapter One well reflects, the main task of suppressing the Arab Revolt fell to the British army and police. With the clouds of World War II looming on the horizon, the British Empire felt obliged to pacify the Arabs, who turned

their revolt not only against the Zionists but also against the British government. By 1939 the first Arab Revolt was effectively crushed and its military and political instruments totally destroyed.

Although that conflict ended with the total failure of the Palestinians to disrupt the growth of the Zionist endeavor, it gained for the Palestinians some important political achievements. In order to court the Arabs in the Middle East, the British, in 1938, published a “White Paper” that amounted to a virtual abnegation of their pledge to facilitate the building of a Jewish “National Homeland” in Palestine. Immigration after a five-year period was to become contingent on Arab consent and the acquisition of additional land by Jews was to be drastically curtailed.

The following six years (1939–1945) witnessed an almost total arrest of all intercommunal violence in Palestine. The massive concentration of British forces within Palestine and neighboring countries during the war, the deportation or flight of many Palestinian leaders, and the erroneous decision of their leader, Haj Amin al Husseini, to side with Germany stymied the ability of the Palestinians to regroup throughout the next decade. The decision of the Jews to support the British in their struggle against Hitler rendered their incipient struggle against what they considered the “British betrayal” mute.

During this lull in the conflict, the Zionist movement concentrated all its efforts in consolidating the Jewish demographic and economic base in the country and fortifying Jewish military capabilities. During thirty years of British rule in Palestine, the Jewish population grew from 50,000 in 1918 to 650,000 by the end of 1947. By joining the British armed forces fighting against the Germans, the Jews of Palestine gained military expertise and experience. Some 30,000 of them were enlisted within different British services, which included a “Jewish Brigade” that gained combat experience in Italy. With an excessive concentration of weapons and other war materiel being located in the Middle East, the Jews were able to illicitly enhance their clandestine stock of armaments.

The end of World War II coincided with the traumatic exposure of the Zionists to the horrors of the Holocaust, a fact that enhanced their resolve to establish a Jewish State in Palestine. Their main military engagements in 1946 and 1947 were directed against Britain, which still refused to alter its “White Paper” policy. Attacks on British targets, acts of terror against British personnel, and large-scale illegal immigration compelled the British to maintain a large military and police force in Palestine, which soon became prohibitively expensive.⁷ When the British decided in 1947 to relinquish their responsibilities in Palestine and cede their mandate to the United Nations (UN), the discredited Arab leadership found it difficult to regroup and reorganize their national movement. In anticipation of an armed conflict, the Haganah was well organized, if inadequately equipped, while the Arabs, by contrast, were in total disarray.

The next chapter in the unfolding conflict, which spanned eighteen months, was bloody and decisive. The 1948 war, which the Jews call their “War of Independence” and the Arabs call their “Disaster” (*Al Naqba*), erupted immediately after the adoption of the UN General Assembly Resolution 181, on November 29, 1947. That resolution called for the partition of Palestine into a Jewish State in 60 percent of the land and an Arab state in the remaining 40 percent, with an international enclave around Jerusalem to be controlled by the UN. Quite understandably, the Palestinian Arabs, who despite the impressive growth of the Jewish community

still comprised an overwhelming majority of the country's population (1,250,000), rejected the UN resolution. With the help of neighboring Arab states, they opted to oppose the creation of a Jewish state, by force if need be.⁸

As Professor Gelber indicates in Chapter Two, the Arabs misjudged the real and potential balance of power between the contending forces. Despite some setbacks during the early months of the war and an initial Arab advantage in the possession of advanced weapons, the smaller Jewish community managed to mobilize its manpower and eventually redress the armaments imbalance. This ultimately enabled it to deploy field forces superior to those that the Arabs were able to muster. As Gelber notes, both sides were novices in warfare and committed many blunders leading to needless casualties, yet it seems that the Arabs erred more and were less animated in the struggle in comparison with the Israelis, who felt that they were fighting with their backs to the wall.

The outcome of the war was disastrous for the Palestinians. Not only did they fail to abort the establishment of the Jewish State, but Israel managed to expand its hold on territories beyond the area allotted to it by the UN resolution. Some 60 percent of the Palestinian population were uprooted and became refugees. The territories in western Palestine that remained in Arab hands fell under the control of Abdulla, the king of Transjordan who was to become the sovereign of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. By incorporating into his dominion the Arab parts of the West Bank of the Jordan River and of Jerusalem,⁹ he denied the Palestinians national independence and political sovereignty. For an entire decade, they totally disappeared as a political entity.¹⁰

The human cost of the war was horrendous. The exact number of Arabs killed has not been ascertained but is estimated as being over 20,000. The Jews lost 6,000, which amounted to 1 percent of their population at the time. However, by their victory, they secured their sovereignty, which enabled them to enhance the pace of Jewish immigration and intensively populate the land that was largely emptied of its indigenous Arab population.

The 1948 war did not end in peace. The armistice agreements signed by Israel with the four neighboring Arab states (Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan, and Syria) demarcated the lines that Israel wanted to hold as de-facto permanent borders but that the Arabs regarded as temporary cease-fire lines. Based on a group of observers that the UN had sent to Palestine during the war, the United Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO), a fragile mechanism, was set up to monitor compliance with the armistice agreements and to mediate disputes regarding the exact interpretation of the armistice agreements.

Neither Israel nor the Arab states were ready to conclude permanent peace treaties. A conference convened by the UN Palestine Reconciliation Committee (PRC) during the winter of 1949 in Lausanne, Switzerland, ended in failure.¹¹ Even for the most moderate of Arabs, withdrawal from the excess territories Israel had gained during the war and the return of hundreds of thousands of refugees to their homes inside Israel was a minimal requirement. From Israel's point of view such demands were totally unacceptable. On their part, the Arabs were unable to countenance the existence of the Zionist State and retained the hope that sooner or later they would be able to undo what they considered as Zionist aggression.

The third chapter of the story, which Dr. David Tal aptly describes as the Armistice Wars,¹² mostly involved a low level of violence lasting seven years

(1949–1956). Small and local clashes took place daily along all armistice lines. Occasionally they developed into larger-scale encounters, triggered mostly by Israel's retaliation policy. The basic cause of this prolonged, low-intensity warfare was the two sides' underlying difference in the interpretation of the meaning of the armistice agreements. While Israel saw the agreements as finitely terminating the state of war and forbidding all belligerent acts, the Arabs interpreted them as a temporary truce that did not deny them the right of belligerents, as traditionally specified by international law, as long as peace treaties were not in force.¹³ This controversy was reflected in a number of specific disagreements. For example, Israel considered the Arab economic boycott imposed by the Arab League and the closure of waterways under Arab control to Israeli navigation as violations of the agreements.

There were also some controversies with regard to specific clauses of the armistice agreements. Both Jordan and Israel did not comply with the article that was supposed to provide for free passage though some territories held by the other side. This included Israeli access to Jerusalem via Latroun and the Arab rights of passage to Bethlehem via some Israeli-held suburbs of Jerusalem, as well as access of Jews to the Western Wall in the old city of Jerusalem. Syria considered the demilitarized zones scattered along its border with Israel as falling under the jurisdiction of the UN and sought to prevent Israel from altering the situation in these areas. For its part, Israel demanded full sovereignty, barring a military presence, over these strips.

As Tal informs us in Chapter Three, the most pervasive daily phenomenon that became widespread along all armistice lines was the numerous and occasionally violent infiltrations of uprooted Palestinians across the lines. These infiltrations were motivated by different factors, mostly economic (harvesting, retrieval of left-behind property, theft, etc.), but they also were based on a desire to murder Jews as a means of avenging the dispossession of many Palestinians. Some of these violent excursions were organized and utilized for political reasons by different unofficial parties and, later, also by Arab governments. Israel's defensive measures could not stem the rising tide of lethal infiltrations and it soon reverted to reprisal raids in an attempt to coerce Arab governments to adopt more stringent measures to stop the marauders.

In Chapter Three, Tal argues that Israel's retaliatory raids achieved, at best, only a temporary respite, and in the case of the Gaza Strip caused a further escalation of violence. In the spring of 1955, Ben-Gurion and General Moshe Dayan, the key players in the formulation of Israel's security policy, concluded that the armistice agreements ceased to serve Israel's interests. This occurred after the conclusion of a massive arms deal between Egypt and the Soviet Union, announced by President Abdul Nasser on September 27, 1955.¹⁴ That deal, which signified a far-reaching diminution of Israel's deterrence capability, persuaded Israel to seriously consider a military showdown with Egypt that might improve its demarcation lines and lead to a more acceptable cease-fire arrangement. However, Ben-Gurion hesitated. He preferred to redress the adverse balance of power by a dramatic arms deal with France towards the end of June 1956. That deal constituted part of a multiple intelligence and operational collaborative counter to fight Nasser's ambitions in the region.

The 1956 Suez War was seen by Israel as a continuation of its struggle against Arab belligerency. It could not have occurred in the absence of the international crisis triggered by Gamal Abdul Nasser on July 26, 1956, when he nationalized the Suez Canal Company. That act provoked the French and the British to collude

with Israel and make the strangest and most unexpected coalition feasible—a coalition of nations who went to war with Egypt and failed to attain their objectives, without ever admitting their coordination and priorly agreed-upon joint goals.

In Chapter Four, Dr. Motti Golani, who is the author of a detailed, two-volume account of the Sinai War,¹⁵ dwells on an interesting but somewhat secondary aspect of this event. He describes the convoluted relations between the three partners of the coalition that had set out to destroy Nasser and reinternationalize the Suez Canal. From the point of view of the French and British, it was from the outset a foolhardy attempt that reflected a total misunderstanding of the new international norms in a post-World War II era. The two European powers were prevented from completing their military campaign and were forced to withdraw. It was patently clear that France and Great Britain lost their standing as “Great Powers.” The world became distinctly bipolar.

The story just related was quite different from the point of view of Israel. Israel managed to complete its military undertaking by conquering the entire Sinai peninsula. But under heavy international pressure and after three months of futile diplomatic maneuvering, the Israelis, too, had to relinquish all the territory they occupied. They did, however, manage to change the rules of the game, which prevailed for the next ten years in Israel’s relations with Egypt and gained a new sense of security and prosperity. The deployment of the UN Emergency Force along its southwestern borders provided Israel freedom of navigation in the Strait of Tiran and ended the vicious cycle of violence and counterviolence in the area.

The main winner of this war was doubtlessly the Egyptian president, Gamal Abdul Nasser. He was able to explain away the defeat of his troops in the Sinai as a preplanned retreat initiated in order to concentrate his forces against the invading French and British troops from the north. With some justification, he could claim that on the whole he emerged from the crisis with flying colors. During the next few years Nasser became the unchallenged leader of the Arab world. Within the entire Third World, his prestige soared. Displaying some caution, for the next ten years he meticulously refrained from provoking Israel into another confrontation.

The relaxation of Israel’s security concerns was incomplete. More radical nationalist elements in the Arab world, especially the Palestinians, resurfaced in the middle of the 1960s under the banner of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and later under the leadership of Yasser Arafat. Young Palestinians, who grew up in refugee camps, understood full well that with every year Israel enjoyed a de-facto peace, Zionism would become more entrenched. Israel’s Jewish population was able to expand and its economic and social conditions were constantly improving. The diversion of the river Jordan’s water from its source in the Lake of Galilee to Israel’s arid south, completed in 1964, symbolized for the Arabs Israel’s successes. Syria, after the failure of its union with Egypt in 1961, took the lead. It intensified its resistance to Israel’s attempts to impose its unilateral interpretation on the demilitarized zones. It sponsored raids of Palestinian guerrillas and tried to divert the headwaters of the Jordan that originated from sources located in areas under its control.

This was the background of “The War on the Jordan’s Water,” which Ami Gluska discusses in Chapter Five.¹⁶ Israel succeeded in foiling all attempts at diverting the headwaters of the river, but was unable to stop Syria from assisting the Palestinian guerrillas and avoid continuous flare-ups of violence along its borders.

A reading of the narrative of this conflict is therefore necessary for understanding the mounting tension between Israel and the new radical nationalist, socialist, and pro-Soviet regime in Syria, which eventually brought about the Six-Day War in June 1967. In Chapter Six, Michael Oren, who recently provided the most updated and comprehensive account of this war, summarizes the intricate chain of events that led to the outbreak of hostilities, the stunning victory of the Israeli forces, and the dramatic change in the political and military realities of the Middle East. As Oren mentions, this was a war that initially nobody desired or expected and was wrought with an amazing chain of misconception, disinformation, and miscalculation.¹⁷

The Six-Day War had many intriguing outcomes. It changed entirely the landscape of Israel's internal politics; it caused the eventual demise of a significant segment of Egypt's elite; it changed irreversibly the fortunes of Jordan, while catapulting the Palestinians back into the center of the conflict. To this day, the role played by the Soviet Union remains in some degree an enigma. The Soviet Union was probably genuinely concerned for the future of the Ba'ath regime in Damascus, and was eager to deter the Israelis from any adventure along the Syrian border. But the Soviet Union's concocted information about massive concentrations of Israel Defence Force (IDF) reserve units in the north could easily have been seen through. Why, then, did Nasser swallow the bait? Was it a ploy aimed at extricating his army from the quagmire in Yemen? Or was it just an excuse to gain the long-cherished land connection with the Arabs in Asia, via the Israeli Negev? Oren addresses some of these questions in Chapter Six, yet others must remain unanswered as long as the relevant Arab archives are still closed.

The ease with which the Israeli air force decimated the Arab air forces within six hours and the destruction within six days of Arab ground forces confronting Israel in the Sinai, the West Bank of Jordan, and the Syrian Golan Heights brought many Arab leaders to the conclusion that Israel could not be defeated militarily and that it ought to be recognized as a permanent entity. It was clear, however, that this could be agreed upon only if Israel would give up all of the territories it had just recently acquired. Moreover, not all Arab leaders were able to come to such sober conclusions. The Palestinian young guerrilla leaders, who in 1969 managed to take control over the PLO, were not ready to relinquish their hope that sooner or later the Zionists would be defeated and a Palestinian state would emerge within the entire historic territory of Palestine. Palestinian groups, such as Arafat's Fatah, were created long before the Israeli conquest of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Defining their aim as "destroying the Zionist entity," they found it difficult to mitigate their radical postures. It took many more years to bring them to a more realistic appreciation of the general situation.

Many Israelis, conversely, were prone to a strong sense of hubris. Moreover, the areas recently conquered by Israel included locations that were considered the holiest in the eyes of Jews for two thousand years, notably the old city of Jerusalem and the Temple Mount in its center. It became very hard for most Israelis to acquiesce to the adamant demand, even of the more moderate Arabs, to relinquish sites that they regarded as the cradle of Judaism. Whether for strategic reasons or out of sentimental motivations, Israel unilaterally annexed East Jerusalem and started to settle some of the newly acquired lands.

Soon after they overcame their initial shock of defeat, the Palestinians resumed their guerrilla and terrorist activities. Meanwhile, the Egyptians, and to a much

lesser extent the Syrians, initiated what was later referred to by President Nasser as “A War of Attrition” against the Israeli forces that were now deployed along the Suez Canal and on the new cease-fire lines on the Golan Heights. After a brief, futile attempt to instigate an armed uprising within the West Bank, the various Palestinian “popular struggle” organizations based themselves on the eastern banks of the Jordan River. From there they attempted to make recurrent incursions across the river in order to mine roads, ambush traffic, or attack Jewish installations in the occupied territories. However, geographic and topographic circumstances did not enable the Palestinians to mount a significant challenge to the Israelis. By a combination of defensive devices, including rapid airborne responses and retaliatory raids deep inside the eastern bank of Jordan, the IDF frustrated Palestinian attempts to undermine its hold on the territories occupied in 1967. On the other hand, a Palestinian terror campaign reaching Israeli towns and Israeli and Jewish targets outside the country was more telling.

In Chapter Nine, Benny Michelsohn gives a detailed account of Palestinian insurgency operations around the world and inside Israel’s heartland. These operations included attacks on Israeli diplomats in Europe and Asia, airline highjacking, and suicidal incursions of guerrilla squads into Israel. Such actions exacted a high price in blood from the Israelis and kept the Palestinian issue alive before the world at large.¹⁸ During the late 1960s and early 1970s, Israel found it hard to eradicate the guerrillas or even counter them effectively. This was so even after King Hussein suppressed the guerrilla movement in his kingdom and expelled their cadres from his realm in September 1970.

The War of Attrition along the Suez Canal, as Dan Schueftan makes clear in Chapter Seven, took a different course: The IDF succeeded in stabilizing its lines along the Suez Canal by means of a chain of heavily fortified bastions, which were named, after the chief of general staff at the time, the “Bar-Lev Line.” This minimized the level of casualties inflicted by the artillery and mortar shelling, ambushes, and mining that the Egyptian army initiated. Israel failed, however, to deter the Egyptians by means of retaliatory raids and air strikes ever-deeper inside the Egyptian heartland. The penetration of Egyptian air space persuaded the Soviet Union to provide Egypt with a variety of ground-to-air missiles. It also increased dramatically the involvement of Soviet military personnel in Egypt, which climaxed in a “dog fight” between Israeli and Russian pilots that led to the downing of five Soviet planes. The virtual stalemate exhausted both sides. By August 1970, it gave rise to a U.S.- and UN-sponsored temporary truce. After 1,000 days of incessant fighting, the end of the “War of Attrition” between Israel and Egypt was reached. Territorially, this war concluded on the same lines in which it began, but during the last hours, taking advantage of the end of hostilities, the Egyptians managed to bring forward many of the Soviet anti-air missiles, which soon proved to be fatal for the Israeli air force. Also, the hope for a diplomatic breakthrough was not realized. No progress was made during the next three years towards conciliation.¹⁹

Although no respite could be enjoyed by Israel from Palestinian terror, the relative calm that prevailed along all its frontiers during 1971–1973 gave birth to a dangerous illusion and spawned a sense of complacency. A widespread conception prevailed among the Israeli public, and the military establishment in particular, that because Israel consolidated its hold on the territories occupied in 1967, no military option remained in the hands of the neighboring Arab states to coerce it

into making unwanted concessions. In this light, various proposals suggested by UN and other mediators, and even by some Israeli leaders, were not taken up. The principle enunciated by General Moshe Dayan, the powerful minister of defense, that "Sharm al Sheikh without peace is better the peace without Sharm al Sheikh," well reflected the prevailing mood. Israel also continued to settle Jews in the recently occupied areas. Dozens of new settlements were established on the Golan Heights, along the Jordan Valley, and even inside the Sinai, where a new town, Yamit, arose on the Mediterranean coast west of the Gaza Strip. As for East Jerusalem, it was officially, though unilaterally, annexed by an act of the Knesset.

It seems that Anwar Sadat, who in September 1970 succeeded the late Nasser as the president of the Republic, well understood that over the passage of time, Israel would further entrench itself in the occupied territories and that world opinion would adjust to the changing situation. Despite his assessment that his army was unable to defeat the Israelis or even to reoccupy the entire Sinai peninsula, he came to the conclusion that he had to order his forces to cross the canal to the east. He must have believed that Egypt stood some chance in regaining a foothold east of the waterway or at least upsetting the political status quo and compelling the international community to press Israel into making the concession it was thus far unwilling to make. A simultaneous offensive of the Syrian armor brigade on the Golan frontier was necessary to limit the capacity of the Israelis to concentrate most of their forces on its southern front.²⁰

The eighteen-days-long war in October 1973 that the Israelis call the Yom Kippur War, of which Shimon Golan presents a summary in Chapter Eight, came to the Israelis as a traumatic surprise and totally upset their hitherto prevailing complacency. Much has been said and written on the failure of the intelligence services to give Israel a proper warning.²¹ Less attention was given to the much greater surprise that awaited the Israeli troops within the first few days of the Suez Canal crossing. That surprise had to do with the dramatic changes in the character of the battlefield which took place during the six years that elapsed since 1967. The Israeli war planners assumed that the Egyptians would one day try to cross the canal, but they also were confident that they would not find it too difficult to frustrate such an attempt, after having mobilized their reserve armored units and rushed them to the front. Indeed, with amazing speed, two Israeli armor divisions were deployed along the main approaches to the Canal Zone and within thirty-six hours began their pre-planned counteroffensive. However, a combination of massive artillery barrages and the use of highly effective and intensive antitank missiles (the Sagars) enabled the Egyptians to hold their newly gained positions along the canal on its eastern side. The Israeli air force could not, as expected, give ground support to the armor division since the Egyptians had managed to deploy their missiles in the vicinity of the canal in the final stages of the War of Attrition. This enabled them to build a massive umbrella composed of the most modern Soviet ground-to-air missiles, covering a full array of altitudes over the battle zone. In short, they had prepared an effective defense for their ground forces against Israeli planes.

Only after the repulsion of the Syrians from the Golan, in the wake of a failed attempt of the Egyptian armor division to advance deeper into the Sinai and after the costly destruction of most of Egypt's ground-to-air missiles sites, was the IDF ready to show its mettle. Three armor divisions managed to cross the canal westwards, threatening to encircle the two Egyptian armies deployed along the eastern

bank. Strong international pressure saved an entire Egyptian army from total encirclement. When cease-fire negotiations brought the fighting to a close, the Israeli's armor division reached points sixty miles from Cairo and almost thirty miles from Damascus.²²

Considering the enormous difficulties that the IDF faced at the outbreak of fighting, these were impressive achievements. But the initial setbacks, the heavy toll of blood (over 3,000 Israeli killed and three times more injured), and the fact that two Egyptian armies were still deployed east of the canal at the end of the war made most Israelis regard the war as a debacle. The Hebrew word *mehdal* (which means "an omission" or "an oversight") was attached to the initial complacency that ruled Israel's mistaken appreciation of the political and military situation leading to the war and its mismanagement in its early stages. A spontaneous movement led by demobilized reserve soldiers staged large and continuous street demonstrations and vigils. Under mounting pressure, the government felt obliged to establish a committee of inquiry chaired by Chief Justice Shimon Agranat, which in its final verdict called for the dismissal of General Elazar, the chief of staff; General Gorodish, the commander of the Southern Command; and General Ze'ira, the head of the Intelligence Division. The Agranat committee abstained from passing judgment on the political echelon but public anger eventually led to the downfall of Golda Meir, the prime minister, and Moshe Dayan, the minister of Defense.

Despite the IDF's eventual military successes, President Sadat's gambit proved to be successful and gained for Egypt a great psychological and political victory. Their audacious defiance of the Israelis enabled them to recover their national pride and self-esteem, which had been shattered by their defeat in 1967. These contradictory changes of moods on both sides facilitated a long-delayed march towards peace. The Israelis were now ready to conclude interim agreements that provided the Egyptians with a wide belt along the Eastern Sinai and the Syrians Kuneitra, the main town on the Golan Heights. Within another four years, in the wake of a dramatic visit of President Sadat to the Israeli parliament, and the energetic mediation of American President Jimmy Carter, peace between Israel and Egypt was finally reached. Israel withdrew from the rest of the Sinai peninsula, though not from the Gaza Strip. No similar breakthrough was recorded with the Syrians.²³

The Egyptians assumed that the peace agreement they concluded with Israel in 1978 would solve the Palestine problem which, after all, was the main source of their thirty years' quarrel with Israel. The 1978 Camp David Accord indeed included a formal recognition by Israel of the "political rights of the Palestinian people," but negotiations on autonomy for the Palestinians, which were held between Israel and Egypt during 1979–1980, failed to yield an agreed-upon formula. The Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank of the Jordan remained under Israeli conquest while land expropriations and Jewish settlements in the occupied territories expanded by leaps and bounds. As expected, the Palestinians continued their guerrilla and terror attacks against Israel.

After the expulsion of the Palestinian guerrilla groups from Jordan in September 1970, the PLO and its various affiliated groups entrenched themselves in the refugee camps in Lebanon. In addition to military training sites, armament depots, and headquarters, the PLO had, during the 1970s, built an impressive array of educational, medical, social, cultural, and other civic institutions in Lebanon. The Palestinian presence in the country acquired many traits of self-governance, which was facilitated by

constant friction between different religious and ethnic groups within Lebanese society and by the fragile authority of the Lebanese state.²⁴ To many observers, the Palestinians seemed to have created in Lebanon a "state within a state." These developments came to a head when, in 1975, the internecine discord that was simmering for a long time in Lebanon spilt over into a full-scale civil war. The main contending forces were the Christian Maronites, the Druse, and the Moslem Sunnis (The Shi'ites remained, at this stage, somewhat in the background). The Palestinians, who controlled their camps, much of the southern part of Lebanon, and parts of the city of Beirut, were well organized. They participated in the struggle, pitting themselves against the Maronite militias. The Syrian army, too, entered the fray and soon controlled the entire Beq'a Valley and the eastern approaches of Beirut.

Despite the heavy losses that the Palestinians sustained, they held onto most of their bases. Moreover, these developments further established their self-rule, fortifying their resolve to continue their struggle against Israel. In Chapter Nine, Benny Michelsohn accounts for the different methods used by the Palestinian guerrillas during the 1970s to harass Israel. These involved raids from the sea (including one raid into the heart of Tel Aviv), ambushes across the border, skirmishes against Israeli military garrisons and civilian villages, and Katyushka shelling of towns such as Nahariya and Kiryat Shmona. The large-scale excursions and deep penetrations that the IDF launched during those years against the Palestinian forces in Lebanon were mostly operational successes but could not bring respite from Palestinian harassment. The formation of the mostly Christian South Lebanese Army, commanded by Major Sa'ad Hadad and after his death by General Antoin Lahad, who fully collaborated with the Israelis, brought only relative and local relaxation of the troubles in the north.

The circumstances in Lebanon and the continued war waged by the Palestinians based in Lebanon forced the Israelis into an undeclared but rather intensive alliance with the Maronites, who considered the Palestinians as the prime cause of their diminishing power in Lebanese society. Israel provided the Maronite militias with indirect but massive support consisting of training of personnel, the provision of military equipment, intelligence information, and financial assistance. Despite all this, the Maronites were unable to dislodge the Palestinians from their bases. By June 1982, the Israeli government, led by Menachem Begin and goaded to action by Ariel Sharon, the aggressive minister of defense, launched a large-scale invasion of Lebanon. They aimed to totally destroy the Palestinian "State," eject Syrians from Lebanon, and reinstall the Maronites as the strongest and most decisive force in the "Land of Cedars." Self-righteously, Begin code-named this operation as the "War for the Peace of the Galilee."

The highly complex military and political developments of this war, which lasted longer than anticipated, is analyzed by Eyal Zisser in Chapter Ten.²⁵ Though the IDF managed to push the Syrian forces from the approaches of Beirut and destroy their air defenses, it failed to remove them from their hold in the Beq'a Valley. On the other hand, the destruction of the Palestinian civil and power structures in Lebanon was total and complete. Yasser Arafat, chairman of the PLO, who for a while held on under siege and heavy Israeli fire in West Beirut, eventually had to evacuate Lebanon. He was escorted by many of his guerrilla fighters, who were dispersed in different Arab countries, while he established his headquarters in Tunis. The Lebanese chapter in the PLO's saga was over.²⁶

On the other hand, the main failure of the Israeli strategy was its inability to cash in on its alliance with the Maronites. Bashir Joumael, who was elected “under Israeli bayonets” as president of the republic, was shortly thereafter assassinated. His brother Amin, who replaced him, was pressurized by Syria not to endorse a hastily concocted peace agreement between Lebanon and Israel. The policies pursued by Israel alienated all other elements in Lebanon, such as the Druse, the Moslem Sunnis, and the Shi’ites. The latter’s burgeoning guerrilla groups, first the Amal and then, with greater audacity, the Hezbollah, superseded the Palestinians in their never-tiring attempts to harass Israeli forces deployed in the country. Under such pressure, the IDF was forced step-by-step to retreat from areas conquered during the war. By the spring of 1984, the IDF withdrew from its main positions in Lebanon except for the so-called “Security Belt,” in the south, which remained under the control of the South Lebanese Army (SLA). Some Israeli troops maintained strongholds and sent patrols into South Lebanon to help the SLA displace the Shi’a guerrillas from the border.

The unhappy Israeli alliance with the Maronites also adversely affected Israel’s moral image—Maronite militias were allowed by IDF’s command in Beirut to penetrate the Palestinian suburbs of Sabra and Shatila, while Israeli troops kept their distance. Given a free hand, the Maronite militiamen perpetrated a most cruel and shameful massacre.

The entire venture in Lebanon became a highly controversial issue inside the Israeli political and public arena. As its full scope unfolded it became clear that the prime minister’s early pronouncements were being borne out. Menachem Begin claimed that the IDF’s objective was limited to a temporary incursion into Lebanon of an area no deeper than forty kilometers, and the destruction of the Palestinian military establishment in that area. The fateful involvement with the Maronites and the siege of Beirut met with mounting criticism from growing segments of the Israeli population. In response to the Sabra and Shatila massacre, the Israeli peace movement in collaboration with the Labor Party and other social and political forces, held the largest demonstration ever held in Israel. More than a quarter million people swarmed into the municipal square in Tel Aviv demanding the dismissal of Ariel Sharon, who was regarded as the main architect of the entire fiasco. Early in 1983, under the interdiction of a state inquiry committee established by the government and headed by Justice Kahan, Sharon resigned his position as minister of defense but retained his seat in the government. Shortly thereafter, Prime Minister Menachem Begin also resigned to live out his final days in total reclusion. In the 1984 elections, Begin’s party lost some of its public support and was compelled to share power with the Labor Party headed by Shimon Peres. Itzhak Rabin was nominated as minister of defense.²⁷

By 1987, a growing number of Palestinians inside the territories controlled by Israel, who continued to suffer great economic setbacks and who were constantly humiliated by the Israeli occupation, despaired of being delivered by outside forces. While the PLO remained in their eyes “the sole representative of the Palestinian people” and Arafat was still considered by most as their venerable leader, many realized that the PLO was incapable of redeeming them. A younger generation of inspired students decided to take their fate into their own hands. In December 1987, a spontaneous uprising of mainly young Palestinians erupted all over the towns and villages of Palestine. It soon became known as “the Intifada” (in Arabic

"Shaking up"). Young men and women, even children, took to the streets chanting, hoisting their national flags, and throwing stones and occasionally hurling incendiary bombs at the Israeli troops who tried to contain them.²⁸ The Israeli army, ill-prepared for such a confrontation, was taken by surprise and overreacted. Lacking the appropriate means to disperse unarmed demonstrations, they resorted to shooting and the rate of Palestinian casualties, consisting mostly of the young, began to soar. This resulted in a further escalation of resistance, causing Israel great setbacks in the international arena. Gruesome scenes of Israeli brutality were portrayed throughout the world by means of electronic and other media. It was as if the young Palestinians were exclaiming to the Israelis and the world at large: "We know we cannot kill the Israelis but we can make them kill us and thus shake the stalemate and bring about the end of occupation."

As Reuven Aharoni explains in Chapter Eleven, the Palestinian resistance during the first Intifada found its expression in sustained street skirmishes of youngsters who defied the Israeli forces. The Palestinians proudly called the youngsters "the stone children." This was accompanied by an intensive campaign of wall graffiti. Palestinian quarters and public property were plastered from top to bottom with lengthy texts and animated slogans painted in red, black, and green, according to the party that painted them. Also there were numerous commercial and labor strikes. Palestinian workers of the Israeli civil administration resigned en-masse. In order to relieve the people from the need to apply to the hated Israeli authorities, self-help institutions in different social, medical, educational, and administrative areas were organized by various local and national groups. The Palestinian civil society received an important boost. The Intifada that began as a spontaneous uprising also enhanced the local leadership and the national leaders who lived inside the occupied areas. Shortly after its outbreak a group of leaders began to publish "official" communiques in encouraging rhetoric that contained instructions concerning strikes, demonstrations, and other ways of running the campaign. However, the unrest and public excitement also deepened inner dissent and gave a strong boost to the more uncompromising Islamic groups, in particular the Hamas. In an attempt to regain leadership, the PLO National Council declared in December 1988 the virtual founding of a Palestinian State and its recognition of the State of Israel.²⁹

The political stalemate between the left Labor Party and the right Likud that resulted from the 1984 elections immobilized Israeli politics and prevented an appropriate Israeli political response during the first year of the Intifada. In the elections held in October 1988, the intransigent incumbent Likud, Prime Minister Shamir, gained a slight margin over his rival Shimon Peres, but the political stalemate remained intact. Only under heavy U.S. pressure did Shamir begin to consider a political response to the Palestinian uprising. He did not relinquish his definitive opposition to the creation of a Palestinian state or his total rejection of any recognition or negotiations with the PLO. On the other hand, he had to reconsider his refusal to participate in an international conference, jointly convened by the United States and Russia, to discuss the political future of the Palestinian people.

During the Gulf War in the winter of 1991, Israel was attacked by some forty Iraqi long-range missiles. Extensive material damage was caused in Tel Aviv and other locations in Israel's centers of population. The Palestinians rejoiced and hailed Saddam Hussein, while the PLO officially declared its support of the Iraqi

regime and its invasion of Kuwait. Nevertheless, the victorious Americans, who were assisted by a coalition of a number of Arab states (including Syria, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt) felt compelled to sponsor a serious peace process.

Under a U.S. threat of economic sanctions, Prime Minister Shamir was reluctantly dragged to the Madrid Conference, convened in 1991, where he was not prepared to countenance the participation of the PLO. The Madrid Conference, which was in itself little more than an occasion for declamatory speeches, gave rise to further negotiations, held in Washington, D.C., between Israel and its enemies, Syria, Lebanon, and a Jordanian delegation which included Palestinians from the occupied territories. What seemed at the time to be the beginning of a serious peace process brought the first Intifada to an end. Unfortunately, a positive outcome did not materialize.

By the end of 1992, after having regained the leadership of the Labor Party and as a result of a constitutional change that provided for direct popular elections of the prime minister, General Itzhak Rabin headed a new coalition in which his old rival, Shimon Peres, became the minister of foreign affairs. Likud was relegated to the opposition. Rabin tried at first to continue the pattern of negotiations established in Madrid, but it soon became clear that his Palestinian interlocutors lacked powers to make decisions independently of the PLO leadership based in Tunis.

Arafat, who was drastically weakened by his pro-Saddam orientation during the Gulf War and who lost much of his financial support from Arab oil-producing countries, retained the loyalty of his own people. Rabin and Peres came to the conclusion that only direct negotiations with the PLO could ensure a serious peace process. Secret negotiations in Oslo resulted in the August 1993 signing on the White House lawn of the now famous Oslo Accords and the no-less-famous handshake between Arafat and Rabin.³⁰ The bestowal of the Nobel Peace Prize upon Arafat, Rabin, and Peres created the semblance of a promising beginning which might have heralded the end to the 100 years of strife between Arabs and Jews in Palestine. But as Chapter Twelve of this text makes clear, the fanfare in Stockholm was perhaps premature, for yet more bloodshed and suffering was to follow.

Implicitly, the Oslo Accords amounted to an exchange of security for Israel against independence for the Palestinians, but the agreements were flawed in that their ultimate objectives were not clearly specified. They were formally no more than agreements for some interim arrangements while a final settlement was to be hammered out to embrace all the main outstanding issues such as borders, the future of Jerusalem, and the problem of the Palestinian refugees. The essential practical change that the Oslo Accords caused was the establishment of the Palestinian Authority, first in the Gaza Strip and Jericho and then within the major Palestinian towns in the West Bank. Arafat and his lieutenants returned to Palestine from Tunis and elsewhere, expecting to pave the way for their independent state.

At first a mood of optimism prevailed, but the rise of the nonconforming groups inside the Palestinian community spearheaded by the Hamas continued to perpetrate acts of terror and provoked punitive reprisals by Israel. The assassination of Rabin in November 1996 and the eventual return to power of Likud, now headed by Benjamin Netanyahu, prevented all prospects of the Oslo Accords from succeeding. The rising wave of suicide bombers in the midst of Israeli towns hardened Israeli security measures and made life in the occupied territories unbearable. The replacement of over 120,000 Palestinian workers, employed in Israel by foreign

laborers, dramatically increased unemployment and poverty among the Palestinians. Closures of Palestinian towns and villages and a network of roadblocks manned by Israeli soldiers heightened the level of humiliation experienced by the Palestinians.

A brave but mishandled attempt by Prime Minister Barak at his meeting with Arafat, hosted by President Clinton at Camp David in June 2000, failed to produce a compromise. The provocative visit of Ariel Sharon, the new head of Likud, on the Temple Mount in October that year resulted in the spontaneous rioting of young Palestinians. In an attempt to quell the unrest, several of the young rioters died. This triggered a new wave of demonstrations and violent attacks by Palestinian guerrillas, provoking severe repressive measures by Israeli forces. The renewed Palestinian uprising soon acquired the name "Intifada II," or "Indifadat al Aqsa" (named after the old mosque on the Temple Mount, where it began).

Unlike the first Intifada, which was characterized mostly by civil disobedience and low-level street violence, the second uprising soon became lethal. Suicide bombers attacked Israeli busses, restaurants, cafes, and bus stations, causing the death of hundreds of innocent people including women and children. In addition, there were numerous road ambushes and some audacious penetrations into Jewish settlements in the occupied areas, all of which undermined the sense of security felt by most Israelis.

Harsh countermeasures taken by the IDF and the Israeli police included large-scale and recurrent invasions of towns and villages, which in terms of the Oslo Accords were under the control of the Palestinian authority. These were accompanied by large-scale arrests, the demolition of houses, missile attacks by helicopters targeted to kill instigators of acts of terror (which also included innocent bystanders), the continuous closure of entire Palestinian zones, and the confinement of Yasser Arafat to his headquarters in Ramalla. Those measures, which failed to end the Palestinian resistance, resulted in thousands of Palestinian fatalities and injuries and imposed extreme poverty and suffering on most of the Palestinian population. During the three years of the new Intifada, close to 1,000 Israelis and over 3,000 Palestinians were killed and at least triple such numbers were wounded.

Shaul Shay's attempt, in Chapter Twelve, to analyze a still-ongoing conflict has perhaps been the most taxing. The unavoidable lack of a proper perspective; the intensity of emotional, political, and ideological strife, both within Israeli society as well as in the international arena; the variety of the incidences that have occurred; the complex fusion of military and political factors; and the constant oscillation between hope and despair have all contributed to making his task exceedingly difficult. In addition, more than any other conflict, this one has totally polarized Israeli public opinion. It is almost impossible to present a narrative that would be received by all readers as an unbiased assessment of the events in question. Even so, the reader is provided with sufficient facts to make his or her own judgement.

The ongoing conflict dealt with in this text is in essence a struggle between Jews, seeking to establish their right of self-determination in the land considered to be the cradle of their nation, and indigenous Arab aspirations regarding the same land, where incidentally, they have been present for centuries.³¹ As a result of the initial weakness of the Palestinians and the defeats they suffered from the hands of the better-organized Israelis, the entire Arab world, especially the four Arab states adjacent to Palestine as well as Iraq, stepped into the breach. Between May 1948

and October 1973, the wars described in Chapters Two through Eight primarily involved Arab regular armies, while the Palestinians remained to a large extent on the margins. What had started out as a Palestinian resistance to the Zionist endeavor in the 1936 revolt and during the first half of 1948 came back to haunt the land. The Palestinian comeback began in 1965 as a result of guerrilla insurgency. It gathered momentum on account of the popular uprising of the first Intifada (1987–1990) and more so with the commencement in October 2000 of the second and more lethal Intifada. The peace agreements that Israel signed with Egypt and Jordan and the relative weakness of Syria and Lebanon, as well as the collapse of Iraq in 2003, had originally left the Palestinians to their own devices. At the same time, it brought home to them the fact that only a painful historic conciliation between the national aspirations of the Israeli Jews and the Palestinian Arabs, entailing a fair and mutually agreed-upon division of the land, would resolve the conflict.

Recurrent polls taken among both Palestinians and Israelis have shown that a clear majority of both nations had already arrived at that conclusion. Of course this has not applied to all of them. Strong, armed, and violent minority groups among the Palestinians still cherish the hope of being able to bring about the dismemberment of the Jewish State. Strong and still-influential segments within the Israeli ruling elite still strive to retain Israeli control over the entire land west of the river Jordan, which would of course deny the Palestinians their rights and aspirations. No conciliation can be achieved between these two extremes and therefore no end to the conflict can be achieved so long as these extremes remain influential.

The simple historic fact should be recognized that the entire conflict was initially caused by the uninvented arrival of masses of Jews in a land already inhabited by the Palestinians. But the Zionist project had arisen two generations before the Palestinians began to develop their own separate national consciousness and was conceived in a different world in which European colonialism was not considered a sin. By 1948, three years after the Holocaust in which six million Jews were exterminated, the 650,000 Jews already living in Palestine, of whom many, like myself, were born in the country, faced no alternative other than to fight for their personal survival and collective right of self-determination.

That war resulted in a de-facto compromise: The land was in fact partitioned between the Jews and the Arabs. Extremists on both sides declined to acknowledge that compromise. The Arabs who demand the return of all the Palestinian refugees to their homes do not accept the verdict of history that gave the Jews a state in which, as a majority, they may develop their own national identity. On the other hand, the Jews who still aspire to hold on to all the territories west of the Jordan do not accept the verdict of history that has left some space for the Palestinians to develop, in freedom and independence, their own national identity.

In reading through this text one may easily detect mistakes committed and opportunities lost to redress wrongs omitted. One may detect many ill-advised measures taken that cannot but be defined as evil perpetrated by one side or the other. Yet it is not a story of an encounter between villains and righteous people. It is the story of a tragic clash between patriots dedicated to the welfare of their own people, the story of a tragic confrontation of two national movements contesting the same small piece of land, that has transformed it into one of the most intractable issues in modern times. A war between villains and a righteous people can more readily be ended when the good defeat the bad with the assistance of a

well-meaning international community. Tragedies will continue to haunt people as long as they are unable extricate themselves from their causes and learn to live within more realistic limits in the fulfillment of their hopes and dreams.

It seems that in recent months, the conflict between the Palestinians and the Israelis has reached a moment of truth. Every sober person, on both sides of the barricades, appreciates what is required for an historic conciliation—the creation of a Palestinian state in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank more or less within the limits of the June 5, 1967 borders. Jerusalem ought to be the shared capital city of both the state of Palestine and the state of Israel. The Palestinian refugee problem should be solved by allowing the refugees to settle in the new Palestinian State, in the states where they are already present, and in other states which may open their gates to them. Naturally, they ought to be fully compensated for losses to property that occurred during the conflict. Some already discern the light at the end of the tunnel, but it requires leaders of vision on both sides to persuade their people that despite all the anguish of forfeiting futile dreams, it is far better to come to terms with reality and accept the only possible way out.

NOTES

1. In a speech Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin held in Cairo on the occasion of the signing of the second Oslo Agreement, he mentioned Avraham Yalovsky, my wife's great-grandfather, who was assassinated by Arabs on the outskirts of Nes Ziona in 1886, the first Jewish victim of the 100 years' conflict over Palestine.

2. For a discussion of the early phases of Palestinian nationalism, see Rashid Khalidi, *Palestine Identity: The Construction of National Consciousness*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1997. Joel Migdal and Baruch Kimmerling recognize an earlier expression of Palestinian aspirations in the revolt against Mohamed Ali, the Egyptian ruler of Palestine during the 1830s. See B. Kimmerling and J.S. Migdal, *Palestinians: The Making of a People*, New York: Free Press, 1993.

3. For a comprehensive discussion of development of the Zionist movement, see Walter Z. Laquer, *A History of Zionism*, New York: Schocken Books, 1989. For a discussion of the beginning of the British mandate over Palestine and the development of the Jewish community in Palestine in the 1920s, see Howard M. Sachar, *A History of Israel*, New York: Knopf, 1987.

4. For good analysis of the early phases of Palestinian resistance to the Zionist project, see Yehoshua Porath, *The Palestinian Arab National Movement, 1929–1939*, London: Frank Cass, 1977.

5. Benny Morris, *Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict, 1881–1999*, New York: Vintage Books, 2001; Avi Shlaim, *The Iron Wall: Israel and the Arab World*, London: Allen Lane, 2000.

6. For brief biographical notes on the contributors and their publications, see Appendix A.

7. For some treatment of the last days of the British rule in Palestine, see R. Louis and R. Stookly (eds.), *End of the Palestinian Mandate*, Austin, Texas, 1986; and Richard L. Jasse, *Zion Abandoned: Great Britain's Withdrawal from Palestine Mandate, 1945–1948*, Ph.D. thesis at the Catholic University of America, Washington D.C., 1980 (University Microfilm).

8. For a comprehensive survey of the 1948 war, see N. Lorch, *Israel's War of Independence, 1947–1949*, Hartford, CT: Hartmore House, 1968.

9. The Egyptians remained in control of the Gaza Strip.

10. Professor Avi Shlaim of Oxford described these events as a collusion between King Abdulla and the Zionists under the tacit auspices of the British to divide Palestine amongst themselves to the exclusion of the Palestinians. See A. Shlaim, *Collusion across the Jordan: King Abdulla, the Zionist Movement, and the Partition of Palestine*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988. On the involvement of the Jordanian army in the 1948 war, see J. B. Glubb, *A Soldier with the Arabs*, London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1957, and B. Morris, *The Road to Jerusalem: Glubb Pasha, Palestine and the Jews*, London, Tauris 2002, Ch. 5, pp. 145–208.

11. For a good summary of the PRC efforts, see N. Caplan, *Futile Diplomacy*, Vol. 3, *The United Nations, The Great Powers, and Middle East Peace Making 1948–1954*, London: Frank Cass, 1997. A shorter version in *idem*, *The Lausanne Conference, 1949*, Tel Aviv, 1993.

12. Benny Morris preferred to call it “Border Wars.” See B. Morris, *Israel’s Border Wars 1949–1956*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 1993. See also M. Oren, *The Origins of the Second Arab-Israeli War: Egypt, Israel, and the Great Powers*, London: Taylor & Francis, 1992, Ch. 8.

13. Even in the 1952 edition of the most prestigious compendium of international law, *armistice* is defined as a temporary truce, rather as a finite end of belligerency. See F. L. Oppenheim, *International Law*, London: Longman, 1952, pp. 546–547.

14. The deal was ostensibly concluded with Czechoslovakia but was in fact a Soviet deal.

15. The Hebrew version was titled: *There Will Be War Next Summer . . . The Road to the Sinai War, 1955–1956*, Tel Aviv, 1997. The English shortened version carries the title *Israel in Search of War: The Sinai Campaign, 1955–1956*, Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 1998. Scores of books were published on this war. For one, see M. Bar-On, *The Gates of Gaza: Israel’s Road to Suez and Back, 1955–1957*, New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1994.

16. Ami Gluska completed his Ph.D. thesis on this subject and is currently preparing it for publication.

17. Even more than the 1956 Suez War the Six-Day War attracted the attention of many writers. For a comprehensive bibliography, see the end of Michael Oren’s book, starting with page 405. *Six Days of War: June 1967 and the Making of the Modern Middle East*, New York: Presido Press, 2003.

18. For an animated narrative of these events from a Palestinian perspective, see Salah Khalaf (Abu Iyad), *My Home, My Land: A Narrative of the Palestinian Struggle*, New York: Times Books, 1981. For a good analysis of these developments, see H. Cobban, *The Palestinian Liberation Organization: People, Power and Politics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984.

19. For another source on the War or Attrition with Egypt, see Y. Bar-Siman-Tov, *The Israeli-Egyptian War of Attrition 1969–1970*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1980.

20. On the Egyptian calculations leading to the war, see Field Marshal Mohamed Abdel Ghani El Gamasi’s memoirs, *The October War*, Cairo: American University in Cairo, 1993. Gamasi was the Chief of Operations during the war. A critical view from Egypt was presented by then-chief of staff General Sa’ad el Shazly in *The Crossing of Suez: The October War (1973)*, London: Third World Center for Research, 1980.

21. A recent, thorough investigation of the surprise was published in Hebrew by Uri Bar-Joseph, *The Watchman Fell Asleep: The Surprise of Yom Kippur and Its Sources*, Tel Aviv, 2001.