

Arabs And Jews In Palestine And Israel 1917-2017: A Century of Conflict and Cohabitation

In the last century, the region of Palestine and Israel has witnessed a tumultuous history, marked by conflicts, struggles, and attempts at peaceful coexistence. The interactions between Arabs and Jews have been at the center of this complex narrative, shaping the present state of affairs. This article aims to explore the key events, challenges, and achievements that have defined the relationship between Arabs and Jews in Palestine and Israel from 1917 to 2017.

The Balfour Declaration: A Turning Point

One of the pivotal moments in this tale occurred with the Balfour Declaration in 1917. Issued by the British government, it expressed support for the establishment of a "national home for the Jewish people" in Palestine. While this declaration was welcomed by many Jews around the world, the Arab population of Palestine viewed it as a betrayal of their own aspirations for self-determination.

Resulting tension between Arabs and Jews escalated in the following decades as Jewish immigration to Palestine increased, driven by the desire to escape persecution in Europe and establish an independent Jewish state. Conflicting nationalist aspirations led to clashes and violence, setting the stage for a turbulent future.

Enemies and Neighbors: Arabs and Jews in Palestine and Israel, 1917-2017

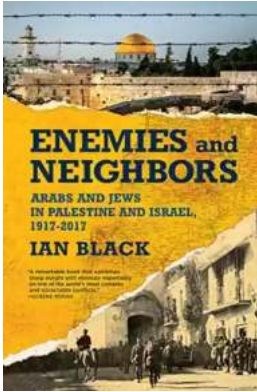
by Ian Black(Kindle Edition)

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The United Nations Partition Plan and the Creation of Israel

After World War II, with the horrors of the Holocaust fresh in memory, the international community sought to resolve the Arab-Jewish conflict in Palestine. In 1947, the United Nations proposed a partition plan dividing Palestine into separate Arab and Jewish states. While the Jewish leadership accepted the plan, Arab nations rejected it, setting the stage for the 1948 Arab-Israeli war.

The war resulted in the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, an event celebrated by Jews worldwide but mourned by Palestinians who were displaced from their homes. The creation of Israel solidified the divide between Arabs and Jews, leading to ongoing conflicts and territorial disputes for decades to come.

The Six-Day War and Its Aftermath

In 1967, the region experienced another seismic shift with the Six-Day War. Israel launched a preemptive strike against its Arab neighbors, resulting in a swift Israeli victory and the capture of the West Bank, Gaza Strip, Sinai Peninsula, and the Golan Heights. This significantly altered the dynamics of the Arab-Jewish relationship, as Israel gained control over territories home to a significant Arab population.

The aftermath of the war presented a complex challenge for both Arabs and Jews. Israel was faced with the task of managing the occupied territories, while Arab Palestinians faced increased restrictions on movement and civil rights. This period saw the rise of Palestinian nationalism and the emergence of radical groups, further complicating efforts at peace and coexistence.

The Oslo Accords and the Peace Process

In the early 1990s, peace negotiations gained momentum with the signing of the Oslo Accords between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). This agreement aimed to establish interim self-governance for Palestinians and pave the way for a final settlement.

Although the Oslo Accords raised hopes for a lasting resolution, they ultimately fell short of achieving lasting peace. The agreement faced implementation challenges, including ongoing disputes over settlements, borders, and the status of Jerusalem. The failure to reach a comprehensive solution resulted in a wave of violence and heightened tensions between Arabs and Jews.

The Roadmap for Peace and Contemporary Challenges

Following the collapse of the Oslo Accords, attempts at peace have continued through various initiatives, such as the Roadmap for Peace proposed by the international community. Yet, the road to peace remains elusive, with both sides grappling over fundamental issues.

Contemporary challenges faced by Arabs and Jews in Palestine and Israel include ongoing settlement expansion, security concerns, access to religious sites, and the right of return for Palestinian refugees. These issues contribute to the continued bitterness and mistrust between the two communities, preventing genuine progress towards a sustainable solution.

A Vision for the Future: Coexistence and Reconciliation

Despite a history marked by conflict, there have been notable instances of cooperation and coexistence between Arabs and Jews in Palestine and Israel. Grassroots organizations and individuals have sought to bridge the divide through initiatives promoting dialogue, understanding, and shared society.

Looking ahead, fostering mutual respect, acknowledging historical narratives, and addressing the root causes of the conflict will be crucial in facilitating coexistence and reconciliation. Investing in education, dialogue, and economic cooperation can create opportunities for a shared future based on inclusion, equality, and peace.

: Reflecting on the Past, Working Towards a Better Future

The history of Arabs and Jews in Palestine and Israel from 1917 to 2017 reflects a century of struggle, pain, and resilience. The relationship between these two communities has been shaped by historical events, nationalist aspirations, and unresolved issues. Yet, despite the challenges, hope remains for a future where Arabs and Jews can live side by side in peace and harmony.

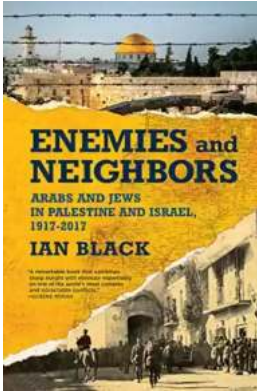
As we reflect on the lessons of the past, it is essential that we strive for understanding, empathy, and open dialogue. By acknowledging the narratives of both Arabs and Jews, and by fostering shared society initiatives, we can work towards a future where the conflicts of the past are finally resolved, and a lasting peace takes root in Palestine and Israel.

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“Comprehensive and compelling...a landmark study” of the Arab-Zionist conflict, told from both sides, by the author of *Israel’s Secret Wars* (Sunday Times, UK).

Setting the scene at the end of the nineteenth century, when the first Zionist settlers arrived in the Ottoman-ruled Holy Land, Black draws on a wide range of sources—from declassified documents to oral testimonies to his own vivid-on-the-ground reporting—to illuminate the most polarizing conflict of modern times.

Beginning with the 1917 Balfour Declaration, in which the British government promised to favor the establishment of “a national home for the Jewish people” in Palestine, Black proceeds through the Arab Rebellion of the late 1930s, the Nazi Holocaust, Israel’s independence and the Palestinian Nakba (catastrophe), the watershed of 1967 followed by the Palestinian re-awakening, Israel’s settlement project, two Intifadas, the Oslo Accords, and continued negotiations and violence up to today.

Combining engaging narrative with political analysis and social and cultural insights, *Enemies and Neighbors* is both an accessible overview and a fascinating investigation into the deeper truths of a furiously contested history.



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