Israel and Palestine: Reappraisals, Revisions, Refutations
Avi Shlaim

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AVI SHLAIM is a Fellow of St Antony's College and a professor of international relations at the University of Oxford. He was elected a Fellow of the British Academy in 2006. His books include The Politics of Partition; War and Peace in the Middle East: A Concise History; and The Iron Wall: Israel and the Arab World. He lives in Oxford

Back cover

‘Avi Shlaim is the sort of historian every country needs. An exposé of national myths, the supreme scholar of Arab—Israeli negotiations.’ Philip Hansel, Spectator

‘Valuable ... provides even the hardened student with so new perspectives.’ Economist

‘One of the best and most illuminating accounts of Arab—Israeli relations in years.’ Foreign Affairs

With characteristic rigour and readability, Avi Shlaim reflects on a range of key issues, transformations and personalities in the Israel-Palestine conflict. From the 1917 Balfour Declaration to the 2008 invasion of Gaza, Israel and Palestine places current events in their proper historical perspective, and assesses the impact of key political and intellectual figures, including Yasir Arafat and Ariel Sharon, Edward Said and Benny Morris. It also re-examines the United States’ influential role in the conflict, and explores the many missed opportunities for peace and progress. Clear-eyed and meticulous, Israel and Palestine is an essential tool for understanding the fractured history and future prospects of the region.
Meanwhile, the review of this book by Benny Morris in The New Republic is worth looking at, I think.

In these organisations, but uncongenial to Shlaim’s romantic ideology, are not brought to the reader’s attention.

Fatah’s Constitution, and Hamas’s Charter, documents which are eloquently expressive of the history and balance of forces seen as the victims” while only the Israelis are to be seen as aggressive. Regardless of the evidence, apparently.

By the bounds of Shlaim’s preferred, and structuring, ideology - namely that “the Palestinians, by any reckoning, can only be

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Jewish Arab refugees than Palestinian refugees.

concrete experience of living in Arab countries before the Jewish nakba began in 1948, generating, by the 1970s, even more

uncomplicated ideological preferences of some of his northern european hosts. These are not perspectives that would ever

There are some interesting passages here, but Shlaim’s slightly facile and romantic positions are all too easy to take from

development of local industry was actively impedes so as to make it impossible for the Palestinians to end their

(There can be little responsible doubt about what “complete liberation of Palestine” or “eradication of ‘Zionist’ ... cultural

Article (19) ... this struggle will not cease unless the Zionist state is demolished and Palestine is completely liberat.

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Generally, there is a too strong a sense of distortion of the historiographic project by an anxiety to conform to the

Shlaim argues thatIsrael’s brutal military occupation of Gaza was ‘deliberate de-development’. The USA and the EU helped

A little too anxious to conform to fashionable ideology

Shlaim believes that "job of the historian is to judge". This seems, alas, to entail some noticeable shoe-horning of reality to fit

 requirements of ideological fashion and convenience.

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The purely ideological section devoted to Benny Morris is diagnostic of Shlaim’s predicament. It fails to engage with a single

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