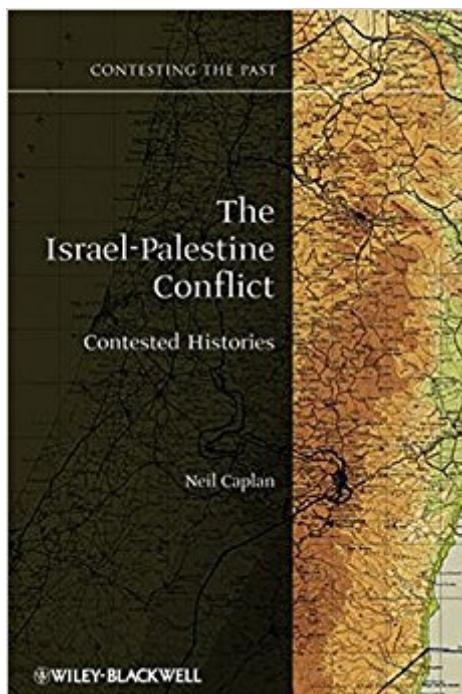


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# The Israel-Palestine Conflict: Contested Histories



## Synopsis

The Israel-Palestine Conflict: Contested Histories provides non-specialist readers with an introduction and historical overview of the issues that have characterized and defined 130 years of the still unresolved Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Provides a fresh attempt to break away from polemical approaches that have undermined academic discussion and political debates Focuses on a series of core arguments that the author considers essentially unwinnable Introduces readers to the major historiographical debates sparked by the dispute Encourages readers to consider more useful ways of explaining and understanding the conflict, and to go beyond trying to prove who is "right" and "wrong" "This volume suggests a fresh and original interpretation to the history of the Arab Israeli conflict. Caplan juggles skillfully and even-handedly between the two narratives, reflecting the parties' own views without embracing the cause of any party." "Joseph Nevo, University of Haifa "An impressive and very valuable work. One could not ask for a better short history of the conflict. Caplan offers readers a study that is extremely well-informed, resolutely fair-minded, and filled with thoughtful insights." "Mark Tessler, University of Michigan

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Several of the methodological and analytical chapters (i.e. those dealing with "missed opportunities" and "obstacles to a settlement") are insightful and very helpful. More important, the substantial core of his book demonstrates that through the layers of propaganda, advocacy and sheer hostility an honest, professional historian can still decipher the code of Israeli Palestinian

relations and convey it to his readers." (Bustan: The Middle East Book Review, 2011) "This is the best book I have seen for use as a text for introductory course on the conflict. Instead of overwhelming students with names, dates, and events, it presents the most important concepts of each stage of the conflict, and connects them to the key issues in contention." (Professor Paul L. Scham, 2011) "The Israel-Palestine Conflict: Contested Histories provides an impressive, balanced, and comprehensive one hundred thirty year history of the conflict. . . This is an original and important contribution to the study of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and I recommend the book wholeheartedly." (Review of Middle East Studies, 1 November 2010) "Th[e] focus on 'dueling narratives' is clearly applicable to the Israeli-Palestinian case, and is employed here with great skill. This is also a very self-reflective book, with as much attention given to arguments over interpretation and historiography as to the history itself. Within this framework, Caplan has provided us with one of the best executed overviews of the Israeli-Palestinian (or Arab-Israeli) conflict available. Perhaps the relativists are correct that perfect objectivity is impossible; nevertheless, Caplan has achieved a level of detachment that ought to be an object of emulation." (Israel Studies Forum, Fall 2010) "A whopping 28-page bibliography and a chronology complete what is surely one of the most accessible, coherent, and balanced accounts available of this very contested history." (Foreign Affairs, January 2011) "Neil Caplan's concise and excellent primer, *The Israel-Palestine Conflict: Contested Histories* places Israel's struggle with the Palestinians and the Arabs in perspective. Caplan, a professor of history at Concordia University in Montreal, analyzes the key issues with piercing insight." (The Canadian Jewish News, July 2010) "The book may serve not only as an advanced introductory reading, but also as an authoritative overview of the literature and disputed issues of the conflict." (H-Soz-u-Kult, May 2010) "Neil Caplan has devoted a lifetime to understanding, teaching, and writing prolifically about the origins and development of Arab-Jewish relations, and particularly aspects of Arab-Israeli negotiations dating back to before World War I. More than half a dozen scholarly monographs later, in writing this summative analysis, he has again maintained a characteristically meticulous devotion to sources. Almost unique in our professional specialty, he enthusiastically presents an unbiased presentation of viewpoints. It will have wide appeal for followers of the conflict, and can be used as an introductory primer for one's first exposure to the conflict's century-long twists and turns." (Middle East Journal, Spring 2010) "Identifies major stumbling blocks ensnaring the potential for peace and eloquently outlines the various intellectual and moral identities of various scholarly approaches. Most valuable is its reconsideration of how history is understood and expressed by scholars, activists, and the victims and perpetrators of this tired and bloody conflict." (Ottawa Jewish Bulletin, March 2010) "In this age

of polarization it is refreshing to read a work on this subject which eschews partisanship, refuses to champion one people over another, and recognizes that both make plausible claims to the same land. (Outlook, November 2009)

"This volume suggests a fresh and original interpretation to the history of the Arab Israeli conflict. Caplan juggles skillfully and even-handedly between the two narratives, reflecting the parties' own views without embracing the cause of any party." — Joseph Nevo, University of Haifa An impressive and very valuable work. One could not ask for a better short history of the conflict. Caplan offers readers a study that is extremely well-informed, resolutely fair-minded, and filled with thoughtful insights. — Mark Tessler, University of Michigan

It is easy to take issue with an effort to provide a neutral perspective on the conflict. Partisans will inevitably view such projects as biased. I thought that Caplan made an admirable effort to present a clear, concise and impartial look at the historical controversies relating to the conflict.

I was excited to read this book, at first. However, the more I read the more I realized that Caplan neglected to include all information about the Israeli side of things. I think he may have done this so that his book seems balanced but not telling the entire story is unfair. I do not recommend this book for someone who is looking to get a fair and balanced approach to the history of the Middle East conflict. Instead I would recommend one of two reads: Mitchell Bard's "Idiot's Guide to the Middle East Conflict" or Michael Rydelniks "Understanding the Arab-Israeli Conflict: What the Headlines Haven't Told You".

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