



INTRODUCTION

The conflict that has pitted since 1948 the State of Israel against its Arab neighbors is the direct result of the decision by the United Nations to divide Palestine into two states, one Jewish and the other Arab, but the origins of the conflict have their roots in the history of the Middle East.

When, on 2 November 1917, then-foreign-minister Lord Arthur James Balfour officially declared to Lord Edmond de Rothschild that Great Britain would look favorably upon the creation of a Jewish Homeland in Palestine, he made inevitable the conflict between Arabs and Jews that has lasted the better part of the 20th century and, in the early years of the 21st century, still shows no sign of resolution. Indeed, petroleum, East-West tensions, and, most enduring, the Palestinian people's homelessness have hardened the roots of the conflict and turned the region into a battleground for international economic and political interests.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is one of the oldest and most complex in the region. For many years it has had serious international repercussions. The five wars that were fought since 1948 involved, indirectly, the two superpowers, the United States and the then U.S.S.R. The 1978 peace accords between Israel and Egypt, the Palestinian-Israeli "Declaration of Principles" of 1993 (later known as Oslo I), and the Israel-Jordan peace treaty of 1994 are important milestones in the peace process, but the conflict goes on.

While one cannot affirm that the September 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States were caused by the situation in Israel and in the Occupied Territories, it nevertheless remains that stagnating Israeli-Palestinian negotiations may have nourished growing resentment—if not hatred—toward America and resulted in the birth and growth of extremist movements around the world and far beyond the Middle East.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has touched and continues to affect masses of persons, famous and anonymous, and of all origins, professions, and ages. It has mobilized and still involves many countries outside the region, especially the United States, Russia, Great Britain, France, as well as political organizations such as the United Nations, the European Community, and the Arab League. All these entities share humanitarian as well as strategic concerns, while they may disagree ideologically or on ways to end the conflict.

The Middle East is a complicated region, where religions, politics, the past, the present, local and international interests, even water, are all intertwined issues. The cradle of the three major monotheistic religions that venerate the same prophets and claim the same holy places, this part of the world also holds natural resources and strategic access to Africa and Asia that only add to the complexity of the situation.

The dictionary is a tool to better understand this multi-faceted reality, unravel the many threads of its history, and penetrate the unique political characteristics of, and at play in, the region. Expanded, both in number of entries and in scope, from its original French version—Fayard's *Shalom, Salam*, by Claude Faure, released in Paris in 2002—and entirely rewritten to answer appropriately the questions of English-reading audiences, the two-volume work offers 1140 cross-referenced definitions. Written with the non-specialist in mind, the *Dictionary of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict* does not deliver a single point of view, nor does it develop an opinion-based analysis. The work gives voice to the many positions at play through the history of the political parties, the movements, organizations, individuals, wars, peace treaties, and news media that have shaped and been shaped by this fifty-year-old conflict.

The detailed history of events, the contents of negotiations and agreements, the description and explanation of the many United Nations resolutions, and the detailed biographies that appear in this work make it a real tool for student and researcher alike. While the research for the dictionary carries it into 2004, the body of the work aims at providing as wide and deep a background to facilitate understanding of the issues at stake. The timeline of the conflict, which appears at the back of each volume, supports the fully

developed and cross-referenced entries. It goes back to the first Zionist Congress (1897) in Basel, Switzerland, and Theodor Herzl's articulation of the long-held dream of a homeland for the Jews and on to the consequences of Israel's decision to build a wall of separation from the occupied territories. Some 110 images and maps help the reader locate and visualize the lands as well as the people involved in the dispute. Rounded up with a bibliography designed to support the readers' interest in further research, the *Dictionary of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict* provides an exhaustive, un-biased, and easily accessible body of knowledge on a complex and tragic reality.

The efforts of many must be acknowledged: Mr. Claude Faure, who supplied the original idea and the first list of entries in this dictionary. Prof. Philip Mattar, who introduced us to Profs. Rochelle Davis and Neil Caplan, who provided patient guidance, deep knowledge and understanding of the history of the region, and the collegiality necessary to the redevelopment of a dictionary on such a sensitive topic. Their work was facilitated by the thoroughness of the research provided by Dorothy Bauhoff, Justine Ciovacco, Sylvia Engdahl, and Drew Silver, who rewrote and added to the original materials faithfully translated by Philip Beichtmann. Melissa Hill, project editor, deserves much credit for skillfully putting together a complicated project that needed to be done.

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