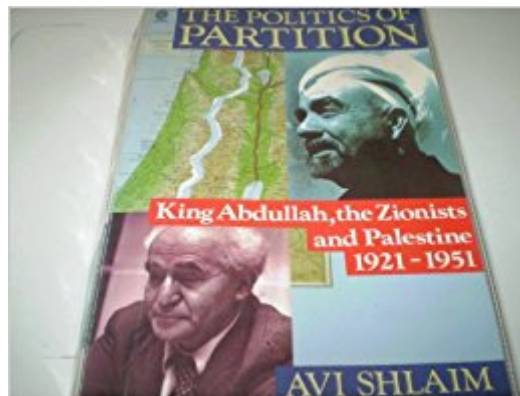




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The Politics Of Partition: King Abdullah, The Zionists, And Palestine, 1921-1951



Synopsis

An abridged edition of "Collusion Across the Jordan", which was published in 1988. The author has rewritten the book, with sharper focus on Abdullah and Zionist leaders, and explains the reasons for these changes in a preface. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Book Information

Paperback: 465 pages

Publisher: Columbia Univ Pr (March 1991)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0231073658

ISBN-13: 978-0231073653

Product Dimensions: 1.2 x 5 x 7.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 1 pounds

Average Customer Review: 3.4 out of 5 stars 8 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #737,979 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #19 in [Books > History > Middle East > Jordan](#) #659 in [Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > Elections & Political Process > Political Parties](#) #695 in [Books > Textbooks > Humanities > History > Middle East](#)

Customer Reviews

`offers a penetrating analysis of the Zionist/Israeli-Abdullah relationship, full of relevatons derived from Shlaim's extensive archival research and interviews with surviving political and miliatry fitures of the period ... lively recounting of secret correspondence and clandestine meetings... Shlaim brings to life the day-to-day history of the pivotal period of Israel's birth'Neil Caplan, Journal of Contemporary History, Vol.36,No.2, 2001 --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Avi Shlaim is at St Antony's College, Oxford. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

If you goal is to be a diplomat or student of Near Eastern history, this is the book for you. But I am a casual reader, ended up takingpages or notes trying to keep it all sorted out and finally gave up. This is a book for a serious reader!

THE 1948 WAR

Like all things dealing with the state of Israel, the 1948 war has been thoroughly distorted. Most Americans think that hordes of savage Arabs invaded Palestine only to be attacked and outwitted by a tiny Zionist David. The reality is much different. The United Nations partition plan had assigned the coastal plains to the Jews with a large section west of the Jordan River assigned to the Arabs. When the war began on or prior to the British withdrawal of May 15, the Jews showered mortar fire into the Arabs in the coastal city of Jaffa, killing many and driving large numbers into the ocean to drown. Many Arab villages, fearing the upcoming violence, had made non-aggression pacts with the Jews which the Jews promptly violated when the war began. Another myth of the war is that the Jews were outnumbered and outgunned. In fact, the Arabs were operating with obsolete World War one weapons. The Zionists, by contrast, were heavily armed with up-to-date weapons. During World War Two, the Zionists had raided British military installations and accumulated large quantities of arms. After the first month of fighting a truce ensued on June 11. The Zionists then acquired airplanes and fighters from Zatec in Communist Czechoslovakia, including Messerschmitt fighters. These armaments, plus modern tanks and artillery, were to prove decisive in the subsequent fighting. The story that the Egyptian, Jordanian, Syrian and Iraqi armies "invaded" Israel is propagandist nonsense. The Egyptian army never got further than Gaza. The Syrian army in the north only briefly entered Israeli territory. The Iraqi army only fought with the Jordanians in the west bank territory allotted by the partition plan to the Zionists. At no point in the fighting did the Arab armies, with the exception of the Egyptians, ever enter into Israeli territory per the partition plan. The Arab armies were beaten badly with the exception of the Jordanian legion. Abdullah, the king of Jordan, had secretly agreed with the Zionists to recognize the Jewish state provided that the Jordanians exercise control over the west bank. Jordan had, at this time, a military treaty with Britain. His Majesty's Government did not want Jordan to take any offensive action against the Zionists and was severely limiting the amount of ammunition available to the Jordanian legion. The legion intervened in the fighting only after the Zionists attacked Jerusalem and started invading the West bank. In an otherwise miserable military performance by the Arabs the Jordanians fought the Jews to a standstill in the battle for Jerusalem. When the Zionists attacked Latrun, a key city, a small force of Jordanians armed with an artillery piece withstood the attack while killing two to three hundred Zionists. Jordan's successful defense saved the West bank for the Arabs until the catastrophe of the 1967 war. The commander of the Jordanian legion, John Bagot Glubb, was severely criticized by the Arabs for their defeat. He was accused of being a British "agent" and engineering the defeat. In fact, Glubb was the Arabs saving grace in 1948. His logistical problems were the consequence of Whitehall's ammunition embargo. Glubb continued with the Jordanians

until 1956 when ousted by a palace coup. In the interim Haj-Amin-al-Husseini assassinated Glubb's patron and protector, King Abdullah, in the al-Asqua, Dome of the Rock mosque, virtually guaranteeing Glubb's removal shortly thereafter. In Egypt, the disaster of the war led to the deposing of the last Pharaoh, King Farouk, and his replacement by Colonel Gamel Abdel Nasser. And that brings up the last point about the 1948 war. Contrary to popular perception, the Arab governments of 1948 did not want to go to war. They privately knew, despite their public proclamations, that the Zionists were militarily superior to the Arab states. There was no realistic chance of defeating them. The Arab states went to war to save face through the force of public opinion. It did them little good but to have done nothing would have brought them all down. And that is the reality of the 1948 war. Such, in a nutshell, is Avi Shlaim's thesis. It certainly upsets the established mythology of Israel's creation and is thus very unpopular. It is, however, amply supported by the facts.

King Abdullah, the founder of Jordan, and son of Sherif Hussein, and grandfather of King Hussein, was a real Arab politician, that I believe Avi has given mostly the best of judgment. I believe, that this man has found a school in Arab politics, and this school has bred politicians like King Hussein and his son, King Abdullah, Presidents Sadat of Egypt, Bourguiba of Tunisia, and King Hassan of Morocco and his son Mohamed VI. Political Realism mixed with all the prudence and wisdom, is what came out of those who have followed this school. Avi, is a great writer of our times, and a good researcher, I love to read for. However, and like all of us, he has some bias while writing for his country. However, this is difficult to get rid of, when you are talking about the Arab Israeli conflict, since it is a conflict that is so deep in this soil, that it is so difficult to get rid of.

I read the unabridged version of the Politics of Partition (called "Collusion Across the Jordan") and found it to be an excellent history. My only regret is that Shlaim didn't keep his original title. In reaction to an earlier review, Efraim Karsh's book "Fabricating Israeli History" DOES NOT disprove Shlaim's assertions at all. Karsh's problem is that he can't tolerate the facts that have been uncovered since Israel's thirty-year law made thousands (perhaps millions) of pertinent documents available. Anyone who reads both books will see that Karsh does not even begin to disprove the well-documented histories written by the revisionist Israeli historians (Benny Morris, Avi Shlaim, Ilan Pappé, Uri Milstein, or Avner Cohen, to name some of the most prominent). I highly suggest Shlaim's book along with Benny Morris's book "The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem" and "The Road Not Taken" by Itamar Rabinovich. These were some of the first books to reveal how Zionist leaders dealt pragmatically and forcefully with their Arab neighbors to create the new Jewish

state.

While much maligned, Avi Shlaim writes an honest and cogent history of Abdullah, Jordan, British involvement in the Middle East and the conflict between Palestinians and Jews leading to 1948. His viewpoint, which many in the dwindling "Peace Now" movement share, needs to be understood. The history he writes is like nothing you will get reading mainstream writers like Bernard Lewis. Don't be scared away by those who say Shlaim's writings are "radical left-wing propaganda." It is nothing of the sort...simply an opinion based on what we should know any ethnic group is capable of doing to "others."

Great book but I really wish there was an affordable edition of the complete work, titled Collusion Across the Jordan.

Avi Shlaim, the faux historian, might want to actually open a real history book to learn that "palestine," which was invented by the British to designate the British Mandate, ceased to exist in 1948 with termination of the Mandate and Israeli statehood. As for "Zionists," Avi would do well to open a Bible to learn that Zion is merely the Biblical reference to Jerusalem and Israel. Thus, a Zionist is simply someone friendly to Israel, a sovereign state where Jews have lived continuously for 3000 years. Those so-called "palestinians" [another British invention] are just rebranded Arab interlopers illegally in Israel.

His central thesis has been answered by everyone from Daniel Pipes and Shabtai Tevet, to Ephraim Karsh's new book "Fabricating Israeli History". He fabricates whole JAE speeches, mistranslates texts, and literally concocts a "Zionist Mythology" straw man to destroy. He fails. Read Karsh's book.

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