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Side By Side: Parallel Histories Of Israel-Palestine



Synopsis

In 2000, a group of Israeli and Palestinian teachers gathered to address what to many people seemed an unbridgeable gulf between the two societies. Struck by how different the standard Israeli and Palestinian textbook histories of the same events were from one another, they began to explore how to disarm the teaching of the history of the Middle East in Israeli and Palestinian classrooms. The result is a riveting dual narrative of Israeli and Palestinian history. Side by Side comprises the history of two peoples, in separate narratives set literally side-by-side, so that readers can track each against the other, noting both where they differ as well as where they correspond. The unique and fascinating presentation has been translated into English and is now available to American audiences for the first time. An eye-opening and inspiring new approach to thinking about one of the world's most deeply entrenched conflicts, Side by Side is a breakthrough book that will spark a new public discussion about the bridge to peace in the Middle East.

Book Information

Paperback: 416 pages

Publisher: The New Press (March 6, 2012)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1595586830

ISBN-13: 978-1595586834

Product Dimensions: 6.1 x 1.2 x 9.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.3 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars See all reviews (18 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #42,923 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #11 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > Specific Topics > War & Peace #30 in Books > History > Historical Study & Educational Resources > Study & Teaching #32 in Books > History > Middle East > Israel & Palestine

Customer Reviews

This book's simple yet ingenious innovation is a layout common to every English-Hebrew siddur: the right facing page is the Israeli narrative and the left facing page is the Palestinian side, each describing the same events. For example, page 168 is in the middle of the chapter about the 1950s-1960s. The Israeli page features a photo of Adolf Eichmann on trial in Jerusalem; the Palestinian page features a photo of a Palestinian refugee woman embracing a relative through a

border fence. The Israeli chapter is titled "The State of Israel: The First Decades" and faces "Years of Homelessness and Despair." As one reads about the bombshell effect Eichmann's trial had on Israeli Jewish identity, you can't help but glance at the other page describing the systematic dispossession of Palestinian property under absentee laws. Those of us versed in both narratives may be quite familiar with the different traumas important to both sides. But to see them so vividly and loyally portrayed side by side reminds me of how important efforts like this remain. For avid consumers of Middle East histories, this is an innovative quick reference guide. And for those entirely new to this issue, I highly recommend any book that is simple, clear and fair to both sides -- for which this approach is uniquely, brilliantly qualified.

This is a remarkable book. It is not only a good quick history of Palestine/Israel, but it shows how accounts of the same events vary depending on one's outlook. And, given the high emotions on each side, it is remarkable that the authors were able to work together. For a balanced account of the history of the region it is excellent and there is little else like it to be read.

A group of teachers, professors and journalists tried to develop a unified narrative of the Israeli-Palestinian crisis for practical teaching purposes. They failed. Instead they created this side-by-side presentation of the Israeli narrative and the Palestinian narrative. They are teaching it, and the book was written with feedback from classroom teachers. Pretty amazing.

I had to order this book for an honor's seminar on the Palestinian conflict. At first I was overwhelmed by the stories - a different side of the conflict is told on either side of the book. The left hand is the view point of Israeli, while the right hand is the view point of Palestinians. At first it is slow but the book picks up and if you are very knowledgeable or new to the conflict (as I was) you will like the book as long as you take the time to read it, and are interested in political/social/cultural affair. This book is not meant to be a text book. This book is not meant to give one simple facts or to make one side look better or worse than the other. This book is meant to show the reader how the conflict may be analyzed by Israeli and Palestinian citizens - side by side. It is meant to give the reader an understanding of how this struggle came to be and how it has evolved over the years and the reason for the strife that exist between the two ethnic groups today.

This is a wonderful book that literally shows both sides of history at once. It was very interesting to see what was included and what was left out -- on both sides of the story. I would have liked the

texts to be more parallel. There were some historical events that were mentioned only on one side of the book. I understand that one of the purposes of this book is to highlight those gaps, but I would like to know what the other side says about those occurrences when they are not omitted. Overall, a very informative and interesting historical account of Israel and Palestine.

This book is intended for students, but should be read by everyone, especially all those one-sided screamers and blamers that can be relied on to ruin any semi-sane discussion of the Palestinian issue by jumping in and repeating ad nauseam a few (often questionable) old claims that they think support their particular point view. Buy one and give it to your public library. It might just educate a few people--if they read both sides--as they are presented here by a team from both sides.

It is wonderful to hear 2 sides for once. I am so tired of each sides self righteous ranting and when I ask for the other viewpoint am told there is no other correct one but theirs. Be prepared because it is difficult to read. A few pages Israeli and then turn back three pages and read the same time period all over again from the Palestinian or Arab point of view. I loved listening to both and wish the book went further than 2001.

Extremely well laid out. It is fascinating to read these narratives side by side. I read this during my birthright trip. I felt so much more informed of the issues and people's feelings about them. This deeply enriched my experience and allowed me to have much more meaningful conversations with people on all sides of the spectrum.

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