



One State, Two States: Resolving the Israel/Palestine Conflict

By Benny Morris

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“What is so striking about Morris’s work as a historian is that it does not flatter anyone’s prejudices, least of all his own,” David Remnick remarked in a *New Yorker* article that coincided with the publication of Benny Morris’s *1948: A History of the First Arab-Israeli War*. With the same commitment to objectivity that has consistently characterized his approach, Morris now turns his attention to the present-day legacy of the events of 1948 and the concrete options for the future of Palestine and Israel.

The book scrutinizes the history of the goals of the Palestinian national movement and the Zionist movement, then considers the various one- and two-state proposals made by different streams within the two movements. It also looks at the willingness or unwillingness of each movement to find an accommodation based on compromise. Morris assesses the viability and practicality of proposed solutions in the light of complicated and acrimonious realities. Throughout his groundbreaking career, Morris has reshaped understanding of the Israeli-Arab conflict. Here, once again, he arrives at a new way of thinking about the discord, injecting a ray of hope in a region where it is most sorely needed.

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One State, Two States: Resolving the Israel/Palestine Conflict By Benny Morris Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Review

"Morris is one of the most authoritative historians of the Israeli-Arab conflict. In his new book, he presents and up-to-date interpretation and suggestions for its solution."—Walter Laqueur
(Walter Laqueur)

"What is so striking about Morris's work as a historian is that it does not flatter anyone's prejudices, least of all his own."—David Remnick, *New Yorker*
(David Remnick *New Yorker*)

"I urge you, in the strongest terms, to read 'One State, Two States.' . . . I very much hope that it will ignite a freer, more honest, radically different conversation on the left, one informed by historical knowledge and current realities rather than the fantasies—alternately sentimental, infantile and grandiose—for which such a high price has been paid by all sides."—Susie Linfield, *TruthDig.com*
(Susie Linfield *TruthDig.com*)

"gloomy, concise, and spot-on"—*Commentary*
(*Commentary* 2009-08-01)

"Morris details the various proposals for a "one-state" or "two-state" solution to the conflict that should have followed the UN General Assembly division of the territory and termination of the [British Mandate]. In a final chapter, he considers correctly that neither solution is practical or realistic. The best option, he feels, would be a West Bank-Gaza-Jordan confederation with Israel. . . . Recommended."—W. Spencer, *Choice*
(W. Spencer *Choice* 2010-02-01)

"A rich and persuasive account of just how deep-seated and historically rooted the antagonism is between Israelis and Palestinians."—Ira Smolensky, *Magill's Literary Annual 2010*
(Ira Smolensky *Magill's Literary Annual 2010*)

From the Author

A conversation with Benny Morris

Q: What do you see as the relation between this book and *1948: The First Arab-Israeli War*?

A: In a way, *One State, Two States* follows through on *1948*. That is, 1948 is still with us, both in the sense that a two-state solution for the Palestine problem is what the international community and the Israeli left and center still want, and in the sense that the refugee problem, created in that year, remains with us and is the main motor force of Palestinian revanchism.

Q: Last year, you stated that if Palestine were to accord Israel legitimacy, this conflict would be soluble but that, at present, the Palestinian mindset makes this impossible. How can this mindset be changed?

A: Mindsets can be changed over the long term through education and gradual osmosis. But this doesn't seem to be happening among the Palestinians or, for that matter, the Arab world in general. Rather the opposite—these peoples are growing increasingly radicalized, making the requisite change of mindset even

less probable in coming decades. Alternatively, mindsets can be changed at a stroke, albeit a very violent stroke, in a critical instant in history—as German and Japanese mindsets changed almost overnight around 1945. Perhaps a similar trauma would do it for the Arab world. Perhaps.

Q: Are you now more hopeful about the possibility of resolving the Israeli-Arab conflict?

A: No, I do not hold out high hopes for the future, believing that the Palestinian national movement has never accepted, and continues to reject, in its innermost being, a two-state solution, while most Israeli Jews, 99 percent of them, do not agree to a one-state solution and most Arabs will not agree to sharing government in a one-state solution based on parity, so neither solution will come about. So, no, I am not optimistic.

Q: What impact do you hope your book will have?

A: I hope it will propel readers to think about the problem and its possible, or impossible, solutions. And to think about the Jordanian option, which I believe should be resurrected as the only, albeit slim, avenue toward a brighter future.

About the Author

Benny Morris is professor of history, Middle East Studies Department, Ben-Gurion University, Israel. He has published many previous books as an author and editor, among them *Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict, 1881–2001*; *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem Revisited*; and *Making Israel*. He lives in Israel.

Users Review

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Jerri Jackson:

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