



# Israel and Palestine

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Reviewer:

[Clive Barnes](#) [3]

~~Not a Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

4

So fierce do opinions rage on both sides of this continuing conflict that the presence of a quote from Yasser Arafat on the cover may be enough to convince some that this is not an even-handed book. Actually, Gallagher makes a good job of steering a course for his readers through the history of Palestine without getting blown to one side or the other. Of necessity, given the competing claims for historic ownership of the land, he begins with the ancient past; but he gets properly under way with the rise of Zionism in the late 1800s and the policies of the British in the First World War towards the ambitions of Arabs and Jews for statehood. The account that follows brings us up to the present, examining the involvement of the great powers as well as the struggle on the ground. This is one of a series on international flashpoints, and the format works well here. Within a comfortable double page spread, a heading paragraph in bold briefly sets out the subject of the section's argument and a concluding timeline both sums up the chronology and sometimes relates local developments to international ones. Maps chart the perplexing movement of boundaries; there are potted biographies of the main figures; and some well chosen photographs take the reader from refugee camp and battlefield to the conference table. This is a clear headed political and diplomatic history. There is less consideration of social, economic or cultural developments, and the book's deliberately judicious approach means that the unaligned reader will experience the ferocity of views it engenders only at a safe distance.

Running Order:

1

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