

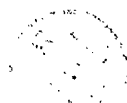
# Bias and objectivity in the historiography of the Arab-Israeli conflict

A case study of the time period 1967-74



Thesis submitted for the degree of PhD

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# Abstract

It has frequently been said that works on the Arab-Israeli conflict are biased to a large degree, but so far there has never been a serious study carried out analyzing the issue of bias and objectivity. This is the purpose of this thesis.

To assist in this task, a methodology is introduced to work as a tool for examining bias. The methodology is focused on themes (e.g. events or interpretations) present in the analyzed sources and aims at categorizing the sources used as being pro-Israeli or pro-Arab in relation to the individual themes. The time frame looked upon is the time from 1967 to roughly 1974, and the works analyzed are all written in English with a presumably Western audience in mind.

The main results of this thesis are that bias occurs in the majority of sources in the majority of instances. A number of various classifications for bias have been established and are discussed in the concluding section of the thesis. In most cases, the established bias is more to be construed as being differences of opinion rather than instances of propaganda. The last major result of this thesis is that although the majority of sources analyzed are biased in the majority of cases, there are not as many clearly pro-Arab or pro-Israeli sources as could be assumed. What this means is that there is a large gray area between the clearly discernibly pro-Israeli and pro-Arab sources, and that there is a great variety in how the various authors present the subject area at hand. Due to the at least perceived ideological and emotional lines drawn in the sand regarding the writing on the history of the conflict, this is perhaps a surprising result.

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### *A note on transliteration*

Both Arabic and Hebrew use alphabets different from the Latin script, and as most of the persons referred to in this thesis are either Arabs or Israelis there may seem to be a need for transliteration. In Arabic, this task seems easy enough as there are a few more or less universally accepted models: namely the methods used in *Encyclopædia Islamica* or the *International Journal of Middle East Studies*. When it comes to Hebrew, however, there is no such universally accepted method. The problem that arises both regarding Arabic and Hebrew is that the great majority of persons referred to in this thesis are (or were) public figures who already have more or less official names in the Latin alphabet. These Anglicized names are almost entirely used in the sources analyzed, and not the properly transliterated names. The former President of Egypt, for instance, is referred to as Gamal Abdel Nasser—which would also be the form you would find it if you were to look him up in an encyclopedia for example—and not Jamal ‘Abd al-Nasir. As there is the risk of actually confusing the reader (or at least those not familiar with Arabic or Hebrew), instead of assisting him or her, I have decided not to use transliteration in this thesis, but instead use the spelling employed in the sources.

## *Acknowledgments*

First of all I would very much like to thank the two supervisors I had at different stages of this process: Dr. Ulrike Freitag and Dr. Heidi Walcher. Their questions, suggestions and various remarks were vital at various stages for the end result of this thesis. I would also at this point like to thank some of the others at the Department of History at SOAS who have provided me with insightful comments and questions, and these include Prof. Ian Brown, Dr. Benjamin Fortna, Prof. Gerald Hawting and Prof. Richard Rathbone. I would also like to thank the other students of the PhD seminar at the Department of History who have provided me with important comments, as has another friend at SOAS, Hideo Iwamoto, who has since left university life to fight poverty in Malawi.

Furthermore, I would also like to thank two persons who have given me a great deal of support at the various twists and turns of this project. Vanessa Curtis, whose initial support and encouragement for embarking on this project in the first place was crucial indeed, and my friend Charlotta Bååth whose encouraging and engaging e-mails in the later and final stages of this project have been very welcome and the kind of crutch needed at times by a sometimes weary PhD student.

Last, but definitely not least, I would like to thank my family for the great amount of support they have given me. I am certain that this thesis would not have been completed had it not been for them. I have said it before, but I here say it again – thank you!

All errors of fact, reasoning and judgment are needless to say my own.

# 1. Introduction

## *Introduction*

Sometimes when discussing with people (friends, family, etc.) that I am studying the historiography of the Arab-Israeli conflict, I am told that what I am doing is very current. This may be true, but the Arab-Israeli conflict has at least since the founding of Israel in 1948 been a persistent conflict that has received a great deal of attention in the media of the world. There are most likely not many weeks in the last 50 years that have not seen at least one reference to the Arab-Israeli conflict in any given leading Western newspaper. Studying the Arab-Israeli conflict has probably been current ever since 1948. Increasingly, however, the conflict has begun to be referred to as the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, or a derivative thereof, but in this thesis the term Arab-Israeli conflict is preferred. The reason for this is that the conflict has historically not only existed between Israelis and Palestinians, but also between Israel, on the one hand, and other Arab nationalities, groups and states on the other.

People with no particular background in the Arab-Israeli conflict also sometimes ask me which of the two sides I believe to be more morally right. The assumption here is probably that I—who presumably have a better knowledge of the conflict—have a better idea of who is to blame for why there is still bloodshed and no peace. This question (of who is to blame) has been and continues to be dealt with in a great number of debate articles and television programs dealing with the Arab-Israeli conflict; where the commentators tend to try to determine or argue who is responsible for the violence or

lack of peace. This is obviously nothing unique to the situation in the Middle East, but can also be seen with regard to other conflicts. The situation in Northern Ireland (another persistent conflict) has for instance at various times and by various commentators been blamed on the Irish Republican Army (the IRA), the Protestants of Northern Ireland and on the British government. Indeed, it is the working assumption of this thesis that the public in the West has a desire to try to determine who is to blame for any given conflict.

One can easily remember how the Serbs were assigned most of the blame for the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina in the early and mid-1990s, although the situation probably was more complex than that. It is also a working assumption that Western public opinion generally does not approve of aggression: Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990 was almost universally condemned in Europe and North America as unjust and plain wrong. On the other hand, the attack on Iraq by the US and its allies six months later with the goal of expelling the Iraqi army from Kuwait was generally not seen as aggression in the West, although it was in some circles. The actions undertaken by the United States and its coalition, it was said, were not an instance of aggression, as they were just a *response* to the initial Iraqi aggression. Of course, the United States and its allies also acted in accordance with resolutions passed by the UN Security Council, which authorized the use of force in order to free Kuwait from Iraqi occupation.

Likewise with regard to the Arab-Israeli conflict, it seems as if a great deal of energy has been devoted to determining or arguing which side has been the aggressor and which side has merely responded to aggression. Which side is good and which side is bad? Although there are of course variations and also voices that disagree with the popular outlook, the assignment of blame is arguably more predictable in the areas directly involved in the conflict (i.e. the Arab world and Israel). Examining how bias works in written material produced in the area and languages directly involved most certainly

would be an interesting undertaking, but the focus in this thesis is on an area where the interest and allegiances with regard to the conflict are not as obvious. It is the West that is the focus of this thesis and in particular the English-speaking world.

English has been selected as it could be argued that it is the major Western language, and in some ways the language through which the West mostly manifests itself (at least in the latter part of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first). Some of the works used are translations from other Western languages and some are written by Arabs and Israelis, but the target audience is the English-speaking West.

In a relatively recent review article in an academic journal specializing on the Middle East, the author poses the question in the title to what degree works on the Arab-Israeli conflict are to be considered scholarship or propaganda.<sup>1</sup> What the author, Neill Lochery, seems to have done in his article is to deem the works he agrees with as scholarship, and those he disagrees with as propaganda. The term scholarship is in this context thought of as being objective and true, while the term propaganda is thought of as being the opposite. Lochery is not the first (see below), nor probably the last writer to choose this manner in which to deal with the question of bias with regard to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Nevertheless, the question the author poses—whether the literature on the Arab-Israeli conflict should be considered scholarship or propaganda—is somewhat at the core of this thesis.

That there is a fair amount of bias in the literature and debate surrounding the Arab-Israeli conflict is something probably most students, or even casual observers, of the conflict would agree with. The conflict is very politicized and also very much alive, so to say that there would be a high degree of bias surrounding it is certainly not an

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<sup>1</sup> Neill Lochery, "Scholarship or Propaganda: Works on Israel and the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 2001," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 37 No. 4 (2001), pp. 219-36.



absolutely preposterous assumption. Yet it is not enough to simply say that a great deal of material written on the conflict is biased and then leave it at that. First of all, the concept of bias is not easily defined and needs to be analyzed further. Secondly, it is important to establish, or at least problematize, the nature of bias in relation to the Arab-Israeli conflict if it indeed does play such a large role in the written material on the conflict. Analyzing the issue of bias and the Arab-Israeli conflict—especially considering how very much alive and heavily contested it is—is an important undertaking in that it in some sense determines how one should look upon the historiography being produced.

So what is bias and how does it materialize itself when it comes to the Arab-Israeli conflict? In the 1994 motion picture *Reality Bites*, the main character is asked at a job interview to define irony. “I can’t define it,” she says, “but I know it when I see it.”<sup>2</sup> The same could be said of bias; that it is something you sometimes notice, but cannot always put your finger on. There are of course definitions of both irony and bias, but part of the problem is that not everyone would agree whether or not a statement is ironic or biased. In this thesis, the goal is to problematize the question of bias: primarily in relation to the Arab-Israeli conflict, but to some degree also in more general terms. As a part of this, a certain methodology is presented that, it is argued, makes the task at hand easier to undertake and the results more reliable. To evaluate the usefulness of this methodology is an important aspect of this thesis. Furthermore, the question at hand is first to try to determine what bias means and, secondly, what its nature is with regard to works on the Arab-Israeli conflict. The third question is how frequent bias is in relation to individual aspects of the conflict and to what degree the sources used also can be said to be biased. The fourth question is simply whether it is indeed possible to

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<sup>2</sup> This is probably somewhat of a tongue in cheek reference to former US Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart who once said that “I can’t define pornography, but I know it when I see it.”

write works on such a politicized conflict without passing judgment on the principal actors. These are the major questions of this thesis.

The first question, on the nature of bias, is in some ways too large to be properly explored without devoting the whole thesis to it. Historians have problematized the question of bias in history ever since the rise of German historian Leopold von Ranke in the nineteenth century and his theories regarding how history properly should be studied, or even before. The rise of the so-called postmodern approach to the study of history in the 1980s further increased the debate and awareness amongst historians. This debate is further discussed below in the section on theory. First, however, the attention is shifted to the question of what has previously been written on the historiography of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

### *Works on the historiography of the Arab-Israeli conflict*

The Arab-Israeli conflict has generated a great number of books, articles, conferences, etc. For instance, historian Kenneth Stein has counted 1,800 entries in *Historical Abstracts* dealing with some aspect of the conflict. This is more than a third of all entries dealing with Middle Eastern history in general.<sup>3</sup> Political scientists and scholars of international relations and international law have also written on the conflict and, besides strictly academic material, the conflict has also generated a large amount of accounts written by diplomats, journalists, different kinds of activists and so forth. There is also a relatively large amount of published diaries, memoirs and other kinds of accounts written by individuals who have played a significant (or not so significant) role in the conflict.

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<sup>3</sup> Kenneth W. Stein, "A Historiographic Review of Literature on the Origins of the Arab-Israeli Conflict," *American Historical Review*, Vol. 96 No. 5 (1991), p. 1451.

With such a large amount of published work one could assume that there would be quite a few studies that deal with the historiography of the conflict, or at least how the debate has taken place. But so far, this has not been the case. There are in fact only a handful of works that touch upon the historiography of the Arab-Israeli conflict. In this section, these works are discussed in order to see what kind of research has been done. It has been decided to divide this section into three sub-sections: studies on the general historiography of the conflict, studies on Israeli historiography and studies on Palestinian and/or Arab historiography.

#### General historiography

The above-mentioned Kenneth Stein has written an article where he discusses the literature regarding the origins of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Stein defines this period as being from the late nineteenth century to 1950 and he has periodized his study into three parts: up to 1950, 1950 (with special reference to the period after 1967) to the mid-1980s and from the mid-1980s to present (the article was published in 1991). In the first period, according to Stein, most of the works dealing with Zionism and Palestine/Israel were ideologically motivated and their authors did not for the most part rely on primary material. The historiography became more complex after 1950 as historians gained an increasing perspective of the history of the conflict. During this period, distinct Israeli and Palestinian historiographies began to appear and, in particular after 1967, more and more work was done on the Palestinian component of the conflict.<sup>4</sup>

In another article on the historiography of the conflict, Stein argues that the reason why the Palestinian component became more important after 1967 is both due to the increased attention given to the conflict after the war of that year and because the Palestinian

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., pp. 1450-65.

movement (i.e. the PLO) became more influential and publicized. So, in other words, the Arab-Israeli conflict was no longer viewed as mostly being a conflict between Israel and its neighbors, but also between Israel and the Palestinians. In the third phase of Stein's study, the causes of the conflict are examined with even greater care. There is also a shift away from the traditional emphasis on high politics, diplomacy and military issues towards an increased stress on the social, economic and cultural aspects of the time period. Israeli historian Ilan Pappé also brings forward this increased emphasis on factors other than the traditional political and military perspectives in a book where he shows examples of new currents in the historiography of the Arab-Israeli conflict.<sup>5</sup>

Edward Said, Palestinian and author of the exceedingly influential *Orientalism*, has written a piece where he claims that although the prevailing view in the West has been to view the conflict through a Zionist (or pro-Israeli) prism, there have been changes. He also uses 1967 as a starting point and argues that there have been more and more works written from a pro-Palestinian point of view since that time. However, the Zionist view is still dominant, especially in the United States. Norman Finkelstein, who has looked into the reception of Joan Peters' *From Time Immemorial* (1984), also shares this perception. The theme of Peters' book, briefly, is that the majority of Palestinians today are not originally from the area of Palestine, and that their ancestors immigrated to Palestine due to the increasing economic progress brought forward by the Jewish immigrants in the Mandate period. Needless to say, this book is not particularly sympathetic toward the Palestinians. When *From Time Immemorial* was reviewed in the US, where it was first published, it received overall good or even very good reviews according to

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid.; Kenneth W. Stein, "A general historiographic and bibliographic review of literature on Palestine and the Palestinian Arabs," *Orient*, Vol. 22 No. 1 (1981), pp. 100-12; Ilan Pappé, "Introduction: new historiographical orientations in the research on the Palestine Question," in Ilan Pappé (ed.), *The Israel/Palestine Question* (London & New York: Routledge, 1999), pp. 1-7.

Finkelstein. In Britain and Israel, however, the book received a more cool and critical response. Finkelstein argues that this example shows the dominant Zionist views held in at least the American debate.<sup>6</sup>

That the view of the conflict has changed is something that Efraim Karsh brings forward in the preface of the second edition of his book where he sets out to refute the findings of Israel's new historians (see below). According to Karsh, the field of Middle Eastern studies has increasingly been taken over by Arabs and Arabists: scholars who focus on the Arab world and are largely apologetic of how Arab states and movements act. The Arabists are also, according to Karsh, inherently anti-Israeli.<sup>7</sup> Speaking of the view held by these Arabists regarding Israel, Karsh says that:

The image of a young and brave David fighting for his life against an uncompromising enemy has ceased to exist; instead it has been transformed into a Goliath, subjugating another people and denying them the right of self-determination.<sup>8</sup>

Both Said and Karsh, as well as Finkelstein, are writing from what is essentially a partisan perspective, and I believe that it is therefore difficult to establish whether the general debate is pro-Palestinian or whether it is pro-Israeli. In other words, it would seem as if both sides want to argue from the position of the "underdog," i.e. that their "side" is not treated fairly and that there is a need to rectify that situation. It is of course, on the other hand, possible that the debate actually did change in a significant way during the 12 years that elapsed between Said's book (1988) and Karsh's (2000).

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<sup>6</sup> Edward W. Said, "Introduction," in Edward W. Said & Christopher Hitchens (eds.), *Blaming the Victims: Spurious Scholarship and the Palestinian Question* (London & New York: Verso, 1988), pp. 1-19; Norman G. Finkelstein, *Image and Reality of the Israel-Palestine Conflict*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London & New York: Verso, 2003), Ch. 2. This chapter is also present in the volume edited by Said and Hitchens above, but in an older version. It should be pointed out that Finkelstein in the bulk of this chapter sets out to argue against the central theme of *From Time Immemorial*, as well as to argue that Peters has not only made mistakes, but actually also has tried to deceive her readers.

<sup>7</sup> Efraim Karsh, *Fabricating Israeli History: The 'New Historians'*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London & Portland: Frank Cass, 2000), pp. xv-xxxix.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xxiii.

Israeli historiography

Writing about Israeli historiography, Israel Kolatt argues that it is only since the early 1960's that there has been an academic interest in the recent history of Israel. Prior to this, historical accounts were not investigative in a scholarly sense and they were also largely colored by bias. Kolatt believes that the reason why more serious historical research began to be carried out in the 1960's is because of institutional improvements in Israel, as well as an increased interest in history amongst the younger generation and Israelis in general. There were also factors external to Israel that led to the increasing scholarly interest in history and Kolatt especially mentions the war of 1967. According to Kolatt, the younger generation tends to have a more critical approach regarding Israeli history than the generation of the "Founding Fathers" and he claims that critical historical research is essential in democratic societies like Israel.<sup>9</sup>

Kolatt's article was published in 1981, which was a few years before the advent of the school of Israeli historians who have been referred to as the new historians. This group of historians has so far mostly concentrated on the last years of the British Mandate, the creation of the state of Israel and the following few years. All in all, these new historians have been critical of what they deem as an old Zionist historiography in addition to being largely critical of how the leadership of Israel and of the *Yishuv* (the pre-state Jewish community in Palestine) acted during the time period under scrutiny. The new historians have been the subject of quite a large number of articles, essays, conferences and so forth, but there have been very few works dealing with them in a more analytical manner. In the majority of works regarding this school of history, in other words, their results and arguments are the main focus. Some of the new

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<sup>9</sup> Israel Kolatt, "Reflections on the Historiography of Zionism and the Yishuv," in Lee I. Levine (ed.), *The Jerusalem Cathedra: Studies in the History, Archaeology, Geography and Ethnography of the Land of Israel. Vol. 1* (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi Institute, 1981), pp. 314-27.

historians themselves have brought forward five or six different aspects of what it is that is new as compared with the old historiography, whereas others have identified three features as being the most clear breaks from the traditional Israeli accounts.<sup>10</sup>

It has been argued by at least two of the new historians that the reason why they started to write in a critical manner about the founding years was their disillusionment over Israel's war in Lebanon, 1982-85. Two other scholars, unconnected with the new historians, have argued that it was the rise of the Israeli far right in the 1980s that led the new historians to view Israel's history in a more unfavorable light.<sup>11</sup> One of these new historians has also argued that the reason why they have had the impact they have is because they have had access to material that was previously classified. Under Israeli law, most governmental documents are declassified after 30 years. When I studied the new historians in another context, I identified three possible reasons for their impact in Israel: the Israeli far right, the peace process and post-Zionism. This is not the place to go into the particular points of my arguments, but it was argued that the causes for the influence of the new historians in Israel are not limited to academia. The new historians are an example of where academics have become part of a more general debate in a society and where society in general has influenced the way academic discourse has been conducted.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Avi Shlaim, "The Debate about 1948," *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 27 No. 3 (1995), pp. 287-304; Benny Morris, *1948 and After: Israel and the Palestinians* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), Ch. 1; Rikard Ehnsiö, *The New Historians of Israel: An Appraisal of their Novelty and the Reasons for their Impact* (MA thesis, School of Oriental and African Studies (University of London), 1999).

<sup>11</sup> Shlaim 1995, p. 290; Simcha Flapan, *The Birth of Israel: Myths and Realities* (London & Sydney: Croom Helm, 1987), p. 5f.; Franklin Vivekananda & Nur Masalha, "Israeli Revisionist Historiography of the 1948 War and its Palestinian Exodus," *Scandinavian Journal of Development Alternatives*, Vol. 9 No. 1 (1990), pp. 71-79.

<sup>12</sup> Shlaim 1995, p. 289f.; Ehnsiö 1999, pp. 15-20.

Palestinian and Arab historiography

Israeli historian Yehoshua Porath has written an article on Palestinian historians writing on the Mandate period. Porath begins by describing Palestinian historiography in the following way:

Palestinian historiography of all types is expostulatory: it uses events to illustrate the virtues of pious adherence to the Cause rather than relating what actually happened. This form of apologetics is characteristic of Muslim Arab historiography, where no attempt is made to differentiate between reality and ideal.<sup>13</sup>

In this article, Porath speaks of Palestinian historiography in quite general terms, although the main bulk of the article provides examples of Palestinian works of history that confirm Porath's views. Porath furthermore argues that Palestinian historians almost never seem to verify facts, and that they are seen as participants in the national struggle of the Palestinian people. It is reasonable, Porath argues, to believe that Palestinian historiography will continue to be of poor quality until the Palestinians have reached their national goals and the concept of Palestinian identity has matured.<sup>14</sup>

In an article that can be seen as a response of sorts to the article described above, Palestinian historian Tarif Khalidi argues that Palestinian historians during the period of 1900-48 worked hard to establish Palestinians as a national entity with valid claims to the land. Khalidi agrees with Porath in the sense that Palestinian historiography was passionate, but he disagrees with his Israeli colleague that Palestinian historiography at the time only was polemics. Instead of just viewing the history written at the time as polemics, one must look at the historiography in its cultural and social context in order more accurately to understand it. The years during Khalidi's period of study, he argues, posed a fundamental

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<sup>13</sup> Yehoshua Porath, "Palestinian Historiography," *Jerusalem Quarterly*, No. 5 (1977), p. 96.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 95-104.



danger to the Palestinian community and it is only in light of this that the passionate works of history written can be understood.<sup>15</sup>

Avraham Sela is an Israeli historian who has studied the Arab historiography of the 1948 war, with a special focus on the Palestinian historiography. Sela argues that most Arab historiography written today is mostly ideological and not based on critical historical research. This is due to two different reasons: that the ongoing Arab-Israeli conflict has fueled an ideological or biased historiography, and that none of the Arab states that participated in the war (i.e. Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and Iraq) have as of yet declassified their official sources regarding the war. Sela then continues to argue that some Arab studies that are more critical have recently appeared, but even they usually rely on established myths and perceptions.<sup>16</sup> In his concluding remarks, Sela puts Arab historiography of the 1948 war in a larger context:

Arab historical writings on the 1948 war have been shaped by an ongoing concern with the fateful issues confronting the Arab world in our time: how to effect a break with centuries of political and cultural decline, and most of all, how to deal with the painful impact of the West on Arab society and culture. Accordingly, it is particularly difficult for Arab historians to treat the Arab-Israeli conflict in purely academic terms. Not only were the Arabs defeated in the crucial 1948 war, but the Palestinian-Jewish conflict prevents the wounds from healing . . . In short, the history of the 1948 war is an essential part of the "unfinished business" of Arab nationalism.<sup>17</sup>

Eugene Rogan and Avi Shlaim, who have edited a volume on the War of 1948, agree with the view presented by Sela above that the Arab historiography of the war is generally quite ideologically motivated and that various myths frequently appear. This was previously also

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<sup>15</sup> Tarif Khalidi, "Palestinian Historiography: 1900-1948," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 10 No. 3 (1981), pp. 59-76.

<sup>16</sup> Avraham Sela, "Arab Historiography of the 1948 War: The Quest for Legitimacy," in Laurence J. Silberstein (ed.), *New Perspectives on Israeli History: The Early Years of the State* (New York & London: New York University Press, 1991), pp. 124-154.

<sup>17</sup> Sela 1991, p. 146.

the case with regard to Israeli historiography, Rogan and Shlaim argue, but the rise of the so-called new historians with their more critical approach to Israeli historiography has led to more balanced accounts. This development has so far not taken place in the Arab states or among the Palestinians, and Rogan and Shlaim are quite clear in their view that they would like to see the old myths shattered just like they have been to a large degree in the Israeli context.<sup>18</sup>

### Concluding remarks

From the above account, one can see that although a great deal has been written about the Arab-Israeli conflict, a relatively small amount of works are devoted to the study of the historiography of the conflict. And, of the works that exist there is not a single monograph. There are only articles. It is also apparent that with a few exceptions (mainly Stein's two articles), most of the works described above are quite polemical or argumentative in nature and, it would seem, motivated by political and/or ideological beliefs. The views that do not correspond with one's own are deemed as being biased or just incorrect. Of course, this is almost to be expected given the charged debate surrounding the Arab-Israeli conflict in general.

Another aspect of the above literature is that most of the works are at least ten years old or more, and the majority of the newer works deal with the new historians of Israel. This is not surprising considering that the new historians have only been a school of historiography since the end of the 1980s. I would however argue that it is rather curious that there have been no comprehensive studies on the general historiography of the conflict written since the peace process started after the Gulf War of 1991, and particularly after the signing of the Declaration of Principles between Israel and the PLO in 1993. The last decade has seen a great deal of changes in

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<sup>18</sup> Eugene L. Rogan & Avi Shlaim, "Introduction," in Eugene L. Rogan & Avi Shlaim (eds.) *The War for Palestine: Rewriting the History of 1948* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 1-11.

the Middle East, and with regard to Israeli-Palestinian relations in particular, if one is to consider both the peace process and its subsequent breakdown in the year 2000 and the beginning of the so-called second *Intifada*.<sup>19</sup>

The most important aspect, however, of the works discussed above is that there is no attempt made to delve into the question of bias from a more analytical point of view. There is no particular method that is employed, and the question of what is bias or propaganda and what are merely differences of opinion is not problematized. Instead, it mostly seems to be the “I know it when I see it”-approach that is used. This is where this thesis is an important and significant step beyond previous studies of the historiography of the Arab-Israeli conflict. In the next section, the question of the nature of bias and objectivity from a theoretical point of view is discussed.

### *Theory: bias and objectivity in the field of history*

In this section, the question of the historian’s objectivity is discussed. This question has been the subject of a substantial debate in recent years due to the rise of the so-called postmodern approach to history. Before tackling the question of postmodernism and history, two books, which were published prior to this whole debate, are discussed in order to show what the debate looked like in the 1960s. The postmodern approach is then discussed, as well as some current arguments against it. It should be noted at this point that the account below is not a definite description of the debate regarding history and objectivity—as that would probably require a dissertation by itself—

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<sup>19</sup> Although Finkelstein’s book was published in 2003, it was as the second edition of a book originally published in 1995. There is some new material in this book that deals with the newer developments of the conflict, but the bulk of the book was originally published in 1995 and has not since been revised. See Finkelstein 2003.

but it is rather included to illustrate to some degree what the debate has looked like. In the conclusion of this section, the implications regarding the questions analyzed are discussed in light of the topic of this thesis.

### Elton and Carr

E.H. Carr's *What is History?* and G.R. Elton's *The Practice of History*<sup>20</sup> have come to be regarded as classic, and it is easy to see why. Both books are written in an easily accessible language even though the authors attempt to go into the difficult questions of what history is, how it is and should be practiced, what kind of limits there are for achieving historical knowledge, and so on. Although the two authors agree on a number of points, they do offer differing opinions regarding objectivity in the discipline of history.

Although Elton's book was published eight years after Carr's, Elton offers a more traditional, or positivist, approach to objectivity. According to Elton, the best way to achieve historical truth is for the historian to approach his or her sources with an open mind and then to engage in both listening and asking questions to the sources. It is the proper use of historical method that will bring the historian closer to the truth. Nevertheless, even with a sound approach regarding the sources, mistakes can—and most likely will—be made. Elton however points out that even if mistakes are made, the joint efforts of historians would in theory be able to reach the level of truth on most topics; except for those where there just are not enough sources available in order to be able to answer the questions posed to them definitely. On the specific question of bias, Elton is of the opinion that it is something most, if not all, historians have. Bias does not affect the historical work in most cases, and it can in fact have a positive effect in some instances when a particular historian's bias

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<sup>20</sup>E.H. Carr, *What is History?* (London: Penguin Books, 1990); and G.R. Elton, *The Practice of History* (London: Fontana Press, 1987). The two books were originally published in 1961 and 1969 respectively.

leads him or her to approach his or her topic in a new way. If a historian's bias does more than just give a different initial perspective, his or her work is coming closer to propaganda.<sup>21</sup>

Carr, as compared with Elton, presents a more relativist view on the whole question of objectivity. He believes that the facts of history are not just there for everyone to use, but that the historian chooses which facts to use in his or her work and this is where interpretation comes in.<sup>22</sup> The following quote shows Carr's line of argumentation:

The facts are really not at all like fish on the fishmonger's slab. They are like fish swimming about in a vast and sometimes inaccessible ocean; and what the historian catches will depend, partly on chance, but mainly on what part of the ocean he chooses to fish in and what tackle he chooses to use – these two factors being, off course, determined by the kind of fish he wants to catch. By and large, the historian will get the kind of facts he wants. History means interpretation.<sup>23</sup>

The above quote would seem to indicate that any historical work is more or less a reflection of its author rather than the sources used, but Carr does in fact retract somewhat from the previous quote when he argues that there are in all actuality no instances where a historian totally controls the interpretation of the facts he or she uses. There are, on the other hand, no instances where the facts are in absolute control of the way a historical work ends up: there is rather a type of interaction between the facts and the historian's interpretation.<sup>24</sup>

So what about the question of objectivity? First of all, Carr refutes the hyper-relativistic notion that all interpretations are equally valid and true in their own context. The reason for this is due to the fact that not all historical facts are equally significant or relevant. In order for the historian to determine which facts are significant and hence being more objective, Carr points out the need to rise above the

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<sup>21</sup>Elton 1987, pp. 83ff, 97, 107-13, 131ff.

<sup>22</sup>Carr 1990, pp. 12-23.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., p. 29f.

## Introduction

historian's own time and society, as well as to realize that there is no easy correlation between fact and interpretation. In other words, the historian who is the most objective is the one who has come to the conclusion that there is no total objectivity or truth.<sup>25</sup>

It is interesting to note that both authors, contrary to the postmodern theorists discussed below, only pay attention to the more intellectual pursuit of finding facts and interpreting these and not to the more literary process of writing history or to the language used in historical sources. This is where we will now turn as we discuss the postmodern approach to history.

### The postmodern approach

As indicated above, something that the postmodernists have brought to the debate regarding objectivity in history is how historical works are written, and Hayden White is someone who has devoted a large part of his writings to this problem. White identifies three major devices used by historians in order to explain the data (or facts) used in their works: emplotment, formal argument and ideology. He then identifies four approaches belonging to each of these three explanatory devices and in order to simplify White's argument, I have organized these below.<sup>26</sup>

<i>Emplotment</i>	<i>Formal argument</i>	<i>Ideology</i>
Romance	Formism	Anarchism
Tragedy	Organicism	Conservatism
Comedy	Mechanism	Radicalism
Satire	Contextualism	Liberalism

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<sup>25</sup>Ibid., pp. 120-25, 130-32.

<sup>26</sup>Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), pp. ix-xii, 1-38.

In White's scheme, emplotment refers to the way in which the historian chooses the major plot line in his or her work. Emplotment, in other words, does not refer to style *per se*, but rather to the perspective held by the historian regarding the events he or she describes. Formal argument is the theory and/or methodology that the historian uses in his or her work, either explicitly or implicitly, and what the ideological explanatory device consists of should be more or less self-explanatory. White's definitions of the different approaches of each explanatory device listed above are quite elaborate, and there is no need to delve into these in the present context, but the interested reader can easily find out for him- or herself in the preface and introduction to White's book *Metahistory*.<sup>27</sup>

The last part of White's theory of the writing of history is the concept of tropes. According to White, the historian when first faced with historical data has to prefigure these in order to use the explanatory devices described above. And, due to the literary nature of the writing of history, the mode in which historians prefigure their material is through the use of the four literary tropes. These tropes (or figures of speech), according to White, are the linguistic tools used by the historian when "making sense" of his or her data, and they are metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche and irony.<sup>28</sup>

So, in essence, the historian plays a much larger role in the writing of history according to White as compared with Elton and Carr above, and this is mainly due to the fact that there is always more than one manner in which to prefigure a certain historical event through the use of the four literary tropes. The tropical (i.e. by using tropes) prefiguration of the historical data, where the historian inevitably will choose a main trope, determines the way in which he or she applies the devices of explanations described above. White points out that the fact that history does not have a technical language, such as that of physics, means that no tropological

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<sup>27</sup>Ibid.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid.

approach can be said to be better than another. This means that a historian who uses a particular trope which leads him or her to emplot an event in a tragic manner is no more right than the historian who, by using a different trope, emplots the same event in a comic mode. However, White does point out that some events intrinsically rule out certain ways of emplotment (he uses the example of the life of John F Kennedy which probably no one would emplot as a comedy).<sup>29</sup> White has also argued against charges that his relativistic literary approach supports the ideas of the so-called revisionists who claim that the Holocaust never took place. In light of this problem, White argues that, "an interpretation falls into the category of a lie when it denies the reality of the events of which it treats, and into the category of an untruth when it draws false conclusions from reflection on events whose reality remains attestable on the level of 'positive' historical inquiry."<sup>30</sup>

Another philosopher of history, F.R. Ankersmit, has also developed a literary approach to history. A historical work is the same as a narratio, which he defines as a "historiographical, narrative representation of the past."<sup>31</sup> Ankersmit then proceeds to argue that the past does not have a narrative structure in itself and that the historian, through the narratio, gives the narrative structure of the past. A narratio is made up of one or more narrative substances, which in turn are made up by individual statements (i.e. facts or data as written down by the historian). According to Ankersmit, a narrative substance is something of an interpretative or classifying tool as it gives order to the individual statements, but it must not be

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<sup>29</sup>Ibid., pp. 426-34; Hayden White, *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), Ch. 3. Exactly why the life of the late American president would not be emploted as a comedy is actually not further evaluated upon by White.

<sup>30</sup>Hayden White, *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), p. 78.

<sup>31</sup>F.R. Ankersmit, *Narrative Logic: A Semantic Analysis of the Historian's Language* (The Hague, Boston & London: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1983), p. 19.



confused with the concept of theory in its traditional meaning. Narrative substances are purely linguistic devices.<sup>32</sup>

Narrative substances, and also narratios, do not reflect the past directly, but only indirectly through their use of individual statements. By this line of argument, there could in theory exist an innumerable amount of narratios dealing with the same subject matter. And, Ankersmit argues, the only way of telling which narratio is better is to determine which one has the highest degree of narrative consistency and not how well it reflects the past it describes: the most objective narratio is the one which has the largest scope in its narrative substance(s) and where the individual statements agree with an actual historical reality. So, in other words, the historian's objectivity is not determined by how he or she uses the sources (facts, data), but rather on the scope of the historian's interpretation and categorization of these sources.<sup>33</sup>

In addition to literary considerations being present in the writing of history, it has also been argued by some postmodernists that the sources historians use, which are in the majority of cases texts, do not reflect the past itself. Rather, the language used in the sources only, or mostly, reflects itself and only secondarily, and in a rather distorted manner, the past it describes. There are of course differences of opinions to what degree historical sources reflect a past reality, but the fact that sources are in most cases texts, which can be analyzed linguistically just like any other texts, nevertheless makes the more traditional view of historical sources more problematic. The implication of this view, in conjunction with the theories of the literary process of writing history described above, is to make the concept of truth and objectivity in history even less plausible from a

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<sup>32</sup>Ibid., pp. 53ff, 86-95, 112, 134-39.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., pp. 173ff, 206ff, 238-52.

postmodern perspective, as the practice of history is thought of as a language based process and not one primarily based on sources.<sup>34</sup>

Another postmodern approach to the question of objectivity is less concerned with linguistics, but rather with the concept of truth and bias in general. This approach is somewhat similar to that of Carr described above: that history is largely interpretation and that there are no absolute truths or totally objective historical accounts. Where Carr and the postmodern approach differ, however, is with regard to if all interpretations are equally valid. Keith Jenkins, who has argued from a postmodern perspective, seems to be of the opinion that all interpretations are equally valid, since the whole question of truth and objectivity is only part of a power structure and is no longer relevant in the postmodern society. This means that the question of bias is irrelevant because there is no objective center in any debate.<sup>35</sup>

#### Arguments against a postmodern approach

American historian Gertrude Himmelfarb has argued that the problems of objectivity in the study of history are not new to the field and have been discussed extensively for at least a century. The difference between previous admissions of the limits of historical truths and objectivity and the postmodern attacks on these concepts is that historians before the rise of postmodernism have tried to tackle these issues by attempting to achieve as great degrees of objectivity and truth in their works as possible. Postmodernists, on the other hand, have gladly embraced the concept that there are no truths, Himmelfarb argues. She is also critical of the postmodern concept, exemplified by Jenkins above, that all interpretations are equally valid in the sense that history loses its meaning if everyone is

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<sup>34</sup>Beverley Southgate, *History: What & Why: Ancient, Modern and Postmodern Perspectives* (London & New York: Routledge, 1996), pp. 70-75; Linda Hutcheon, *The Politics of Postmodernism* (London & New York: Routledge, 1989), pp. 78-92.

<sup>35</sup>Keith Jenkins, *Re-thinking History* (London & New York: Routledge, 1991), pp. 24ff, 32-39.

allowed to have their own interpretations. History in this way is not something that we all share, but rather something divisive.<sup>36</sup>

Appleby, Hunt and Jacob are three historians who have jointly written a book tracing the concept of objectivity in science and of history as a subject, and they believe that the best approach to the question of objectivity is to focus on the object of study itself. This means that when you study an object (in this case the past), you will most likely not be able to mirror that object as it is (or was) but you will rather give your interpretation of it. In a sense, this sounds much like the postmodernists discussed above, but the three authors argue that individual interpretations need to be viewed as such, as interpretations that is, and not as definitive representations of the object in question (i.e. to claim that this is my history and it is as valid as yours). It should be pointed out that the authors do not hold the view that every object can attract innumerable interpretations and, conversely, argue that the kind of interpretations that can be drawn from an object depends on the nature of the object itself. So, in other words, instead of Jenkins' idea that all interpretations are equally valid, these three authors claim that individual interpretations need to take other interpretations into account in order to bring the study of history forward.<sup>37</sup> A quote from their book illustrates what the authors have in mind:

Let's imagine witnesses to a violent argument arrayed around the room where it took place. The sum of their vantage points would give a fuller picture, but the action they were witnessing would not be changed because there were many people watching it. Unless they were standing in each other's way, the perspectives would not be mutually exclusive; nor could the multiplication of perspectives affect the viewers.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup>Gertrude Himmelfarb, *On Looking into the Abyss: Untimely Thoughts on Culture and Society* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994), Ch. 7.

<sup>37</sup>Joyce Appleby, Lynn Hunt & Margaret Jacob, *Telling the Truth about History* (London & New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1994), pp. 254-69, 283ff.

<sup>38</sup>Appleby, Hunt & Jacob 1994, p. 256f.

In his book on the postmodern approach to history, Richard Evans has attacked the view held by White regarding the historian's emplotment by stating that "it is possible to describe the same thing accurately in a number of different styles, just as it is possible to give a full and fair account of, say, Gibbon's argument about the causes of the rise of Christianity without making a misguided attempt to imitate the literary style in which he put it."<sup>39</sup> He also points out that the whole postmodern concept of the fluidity of language is unreasonable in the sense that we would not even know that there was a past if language did not refer to something outside itself. Furthermore, Evans points out that the postmodern relativistic view of truth cannot be applied to postmodernism itself without falling apart. First of all, he argues that the writings of postmodernists, which as historical texts according to the postmodernists themselves have no fixed meaning, are written in a way as to transmit their opinions clearly and convincingly. Second, Evans shows that if the postmodern concept of multiple truths is applied to itself, the whole postmodern approach loses a great deal of its consistency. In other words, why argue for a postmodern approach to history when your writings cannot reflect your ideas accurately due to the fluidity of language and when, for instance, a positivist or Marxist approach to history is just as true?<sup>40</sup>

Even though Evans is quite critical of a postmodern approach to history in general, he does point out that postmodernism has had some positive effects on the study of history. For instance, the postmodern concept of the fluidity of language has led historians to be more careful in their reading of sources, just as the postmodern idea that there are no objective truths has made historians more self-reflective about their own biases. Objectivity, in its traditional meaning, is not possible according to Evans, but it should be aimed for and the historian should attempt to detach him- or herself from

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<sup>39</sup>Richard Evans, *In Defence of History* (London: Granta, 1997), p. 113.

<sup>40</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 112ff, 219ff, 231ff.

his or her subject matter in order to see other perspectives and points of view.<sup>41</sup>

### Conclusion

The most difficult thing when faced with different views on the question of objectivity is how to determine their validity. Due to the more or less philosophical nature of the issue, the various approaches are more difficult to assess than more “normal” problems in history and in a way, I guess, the approach you choose has more to do with you personally than with the way the different theorists present their views.

What the different perspectives have in common, however, is that there are a number of ways in which you can look upon an object (in this case, for example, a historical event). I do not believe many historians today would agree with Elton’s view that the sources only speak through the historian and hence reflect the one and only historical truth. First of all, there are rarely enough sources available to the historian to paint a complete picture of the past. And secondly, historians in most cases have more ambitious goals with their works than to merely recreate the past. If you, for instance, want to explain the causes of the Russian Revolution, it is most likely inevitable that you use some kind of interpretations or analysis, because the sources probably will not tell you in so many words the precise reasons for why the revolution took place. Whenever a certain interpretation is used, it is no longer a direct recreation of the historical past, but rather *one* perspective of this historical past.

Whether or not all perspectives are equally valid, as some authors above believe, is not important in the context of this thesis. That question is more or less philosophical in nature and although it is interesting in itself, its implications are not particularly important in the framework of this thesis. What is important, however, is the

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<sup>41</sup>Ibid., pp. 248-253.

concept of holding different perspectives with regard to a single object; whether you refer to it as bias or not. Going back to the example of the Russian Revolution, it is possible to say that it took place either as the Bolsheviks essentially hijacking the revolution of February earlier that same year (1917) and staging a *coup d'état* or to say that the Russian Revolution was a genuine revolution of the people, where the Bolsheviks acted merely as the people's tool. These two perspectives are interpretations of the same historical reality (the revolution) and as long as there is no kind of proof as to either one not corresponding with a historical reality, they are in a sense equally valid. Back in the days of the Cold War—when this question probably was felt as being more important—one would of course have found proponents and opponents of each view who would have argued vigorously for the truthfulness of their particular point of view, and called the other perspective biased, propaganda or plainly wrong.

This is the basic theoretical premise of this thesis: that there are often more than one way of describing a particular historical event or problem. Needless to say, this is for most historians self-evident, but a major question in this thesis is whether these different perspectives are to be considered biased opinions or just scholarly differences of opinion. Or, putting it differently, are the different perspectives only biased in the sense that they argue in favor of a certain side—but still using scholarly criteria for choosing their perspectives—or are they in fact instances of propaganda? Propaganda in this sense of the word would then be to knowingly mislead the reader by not mentioning certain aspects that present one's side in an unfavorable light. Going back to the example of the Soviet Union, writing a biography of Stalin without mentioning or downplaying the purges of the 1930s or the forced collectivization of the agriculture that led to millions dying from starvation could probably be said to teeter the line of being nothing but propaganda or bias in the conventional sense of the word.

In this thesis, the term bias is used more freely, as it is used to indicate differences of opinion rather than what is not objective. When there are two differing views of a certain historical event—which do have some basis in the historical reality they set out to describe, or the historical reality is ambiguous enough to make it impossible to draw any precise conclusions—these are deemed to be biased. But only when the different perspectives are clear as to which side they assign blame. Otherwise, they are more or less just scholarly differences.

The following example from the more recent history of the Arab-Israeli conflict will illustrate what I have in mind: In the autumn of 2000, after the failed final settlement talks that took place that summer, the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians that was launched through the Oslo Accords of 1993 went from bad to worse, as violence erupted in both the West Bank and in Gaza. Looking at what has been said in general about these events, it is clear that there are two distinct ways of looking at why the peace process came to grind to a halt. One is to say that the violence erupted because of Palestinian frustration of not being offered a fair final solution regarding borders, the status of Jerusalem, the issue of the Palestinian refugees, etc. The other view upon the problem is to say that Israel offered more than a fair settlement, and that the violence that broke out was due to a Palestinian inability, in all actuality, to be willing to live in peace with their Israeli neighbors. At this point in time, it is not possible to determine which of these views is more correct (indeed it could of course be that they both are, as they are in some ways not absolutely exclusive to each other).<sup>42</sup> But, and this is how the concept of bias is used in this thesis, they are both biased in the sense that they assign blame to either one of the parties for why the peace process at least temporarily came to a complete

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<sup>42</sup> It could of course be the case that the Palestinians were offered an unfair deal *and* that they are unwilling to live in peace with Israel. In that case, both sides of the conflict could be blamed for why the peace process was brought to a standstill.

halt. They are not biased because they deviate from a supposedly objective center or truth, as it is not possible to establish, at this point in time at least, such a center.

Using this looser concept of bias, one of the main undertakings in this thesis is to see how prevalent bias is, and how the different sides of the conflict are portrayed. The question then arises how you go about approaching this inquiry. This is of course a methodological problem, but there are some theoretical issues that need to be dealt with before an adequate methodology can be formed. A more traditional way of establishing bias would of course be to look at the sources used by a particular historian in his or her work and then to determine whether he or she has accurately represented these and drawn the right conclusions. There are two problems with this approach: (1) it would be necessary not only to look at more or less all the sources used, but also those not used that could have been in order to determine whether the historian you are investigating has given an accurate representation; and (2) there is of course the obvious risk that your assessment in the end will be more telling of your own biases than those of the historian you set out to examine, since you have both looked at the same sources. Because of these problems, I think that a language (or content) based methodology is better suited when it comes to examining the topic of bias. And, this is where the theories of writing history as a literary process put forward by Ankersmit and White come in. These theories, as they are described briefly above, are probably somewhat extreme in the sense that almost all interpretations are deemed as being equally valid. That is not true, as there always has to be a correlation between what the historian writes and the historical past he or she sets out to describe. White and Ankersmit are somewhat extreme in this sense. But, and this is where their theories come in, it is probably the case that the historian has more control of what the end product will look like because of the literary process of writing history than has previously perhaps been acknowledged. How the historian presents



his or her subject matter is in all probability a more fruitful way of approaching the subject than to concentrate on the primary sources used by the historian, and then determining whether or not he or she presents these accurately.

To briefly conclude this section, it has been determined that in most instances there are more than one way of describing or interpreting a historical event. The concept of bias is central in this thesis, and although it has already been discussed above a more succinct definition is perhaps advisable. Bias is in the framework of this work defined as differences of opinion that have a particular view upon either one of the actors involved in the investigation at hand. (In this context Israel on the one hand or, for example, Egypt or the PLO on the other.) Differences of opinion that do not paint either party in either a positive or negative light are not said to be biased, but rather just plain scholarly differences of opinion.

The difference between bias, as it is defined above, and propaganda, which of course also involves a predisposition towards one of the parties, is that the latter arguably also involves the act of actually trying to deceive or mislead your reader. Hence, not informing the reader of a particular event could be argued to teeter the line of being propaganda if that event portrays one of the actors involved in a negative light. Just stating what took place as a matter of fact, even if there indeed is controversy surrounding the event, is however not said to be propaganda in the context of this thesis. The same goes for just giving one interpretation as being the only one, even if there in fact are more interpretations present in the debate. Doing this would certainly be deemed as being biased – as it involves a value judgment – but not as propaganda. For something to be deemed to be propaganda it has to involve the active act of deception of sorts.

Misrepresenting an attestable historical past is therefore said to be propaganda, whereas giving your view on this past – even if it is done in a very matter-of-fact kind of manner – is to be deemed bias.

## *Introduction*

Determining whether or not the different perspectives held in the sources are to be considered propaganda or bias is something that is to be problematized in this thesis in relation to the subject matter at hand: the Arab-Israeli conflict. It has also been decided to primarily look at the content of the different works analyzed, and only secondarily the historical past they rely on. In the section below, the task of finding a methodology for looking upon these issues is discussed.

## *Methodology*

Faced with the prospect of analyzing texts, one is given the choice between two different approaches: a quantitative and a qualitative approach. The most commonly used quantitative approach is sometimes referred to as content analysis and this method has been used in a variety of ways.<sup>43</sup> What the different approaches have in common, however, is that they all employ a method for quantifying certain words or themes and then make whatever inferences from the results. For example, one could measure the quantity of attention given to Nazi Germany, on the one hand, and Imperial Japan, on the other, in American newspapers during 1935-45 to evaluate which state was perceived as the largest threat to the United States. One could here employ a variety of manners in which to quantify the attention given: quantity of column centimeters (or inches), frequency of occurrences of either state on the front pages of the newspapers under investigation, etc.

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<sup>43</sup> For an introduction to content analysis, see for example: Ole R. Holsti, *Content Analysis for the Social Sciences and Humanities* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing, 1969); Klaus Krippendorff, *Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology* (Beverly Hills, CA & London: Sage Publications, 1980); and Robert Philip Weber, *Basic Content Analysis, Quantitative Applications in the Social Sciences*, no. 49 (Newbury Park, CA & London: Sage Publications, 1990).

A more ambitious way in which to use content analysis in relation to the example above would be to quantify and evaluate certain words used in relation to Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan. Here, the person employing content analysis would most likely develop some kind of dictionary in which certain words are given certain values: for instance, the words *expansionist* and *scheming* would be counted as having a negative connotation, whereas the words *stabilizing* and *reasonable* would be defined as positive attributes. Needless to say, this approach tends to be much more time-intensive than the somewhat cruder approach referred to in the above paragraph. The results, however, are probably more interesting if one is to employ this approach.

It is easy to see that a quantitative methodology such as content analysis is much easier to use now with all advances having been made in computer hardware and software. The problem, however, is that the results, regardless of how accurate or scientific they are, can be somewhat disappointing. Even if it is interesting and important to establish that, for example, 62% of the works analyzed linguistically are more positive *vis-à-vis* Israel as compared to the Arab states, a result like that does not tell us the nature of the established bias. There are advances being made both in the field of regular computer software, as well as in the field of artificial intelligence, with regard to the use of language. As computer software will become increasingly advanced, the possible results one could achieve through the use of content analysis probably will become more and more interesting. But for the time being, there will still be some time before we can trust our computers to accurately decipher the more intricate details of human language.

The other approach to text analysis, apart from a quantitative approach, is a qualitative methodology. Qualitative analysis is the most prevalent approach amongst students of historiography, as the focus tends to be more not only on the language employed, but also

on the actual content of the texts under scrutiny. The most common approach in historiography seems to be to question how historians X, Z, *et al* describe and write about event A, time period B, personality C, etc. Often in the field of historiography, the methods used are in all actuality quite commonsensical and are not problematized to a large degree. This is not necessarily a bad thing, as the subject matter in a great deal of instances eludes clear-cut methodologies as employed in other disciplines or indeed by other historians. Analyzing texts from a qualitative perspective, in other words, is harder to do if one wants a precise and straightforward methodology.

For the question at hand in this thesis—the nature of bias in relation to the Arab-Israeli conflict—there is however the need for a more forthright methodology. As a quantitative approach is rejected because of the inability to adequately answer what the characteristics of the supposed bias is, one is forced to consider the use of a more qualitative approach. The question of bias implies that there are differences in the various accounts and these differences are the focus of the methodology employed in this thesis.

If one is simply to look at a small number of works, one can fairly easily just briefly recount what they say and where the works differ, but this approach does not work when one is faced with a larger number of sources. On the one hand, it would be very easy to lose focus of what really is different, as the sources naturally are different in the first place. They are all unique works although they deal with the same subject matter. And, on the other hand, a simple qualitative approach like the one described above would most likely lead to a somewhat confusing and possibly a quite boring final product (the thesis).

Instead the methodological approach used in this thesis is theme based. What this means is that the material is sampled and the samples are analyzed for differences between them. When there are significant differences (i.e. not just regarding style, emphasis and so on) the object of the different views is referred to as a main theme.

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These main themes are then analyzed and evaluated upon in order to see what their implications are and what the different views mean. In other words, which differences are to be considered pro-Israeli and which are to be considered pro-Arab? A number of general works have been sampled<sup>44</sup> and below follows in table form the different main themes for the different time periods, as well as the different views regarding these themes.

### War of 1967

<i>Main Theme</i>	<i>View I</i>	<i>View II</i>
Israeli threats against Syria prior to the conflict.	The threats are not mentioned	There were Israeli threats issued against Syria prior to the beginning of the conflict.
The nature of Egypt's initial request for the removal of the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF).	Egypt initially sought the removal of the whole of UNEF.	Egypt initially only sought a limited withdrawal of UNEF.

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<sup>44</sup> Ahron Bregman & Jihan El-Tahri, *The Fifty Years War: Israel and the Arabs* (London: Penguin Books & BBC Books, 1998); Ian J. Bickerton & Carla L. Klausner, *A Concise History of the Arab-Israeli Conflict* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1991); Fred J. Khouri, *The Arab-Israeli Dilemma*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1985); Benny Morris, *Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict, 1881-1999* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999); Conor Cruise O'Brien, *The Siege: The Saga of Israel and Zionism* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1986); Rinna Samuel, *A History of Israel: The Birth, Growth and Development of Today's Jewish State* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1989); and Avi Shlaim, *The Iron Wall: Israel and the Arab World* (London & New York: Allen Lane & Penguin Press, 2000).

## *Introduction*

Egyptian President Nasser's intentions for asking for UNEF's removal.

Nasser asked UNEF to leave because he wanted Egypt to engage in hostilities with Israel.

The reason why Nasser asked UNEF to leave was due to pressure from other Arab leaders and public opinion. In other words, Nasser was reluctant about this and did not want war.

The request upon Israel to place UNEF on its territory.

This concept is not mentioned.

Israel declined the request to place UNEF on its side of the border.

Nasser's intentions for closing the Straits of Tiran.

The closing of the Straits of Tiran was an Egyptian act of war and Nasser must have known that Israel would respond.

It is also due to Arab pressure that Nasser decides to declare the Straits of Tiran closed to Israeli shipping. Nasser did not either at this point want war.

The implications of the Egyptian-Jordanian defense treaty signed at the end of May 1967.

The defense treaty seriously worsened Israel's military position.

The Jordanian-Egyptian treaty was merely political in nature and did not have any tangible military implications.

The situation of Israel prior to the outbreak of the war.

On the eve of the war, Israel was surrounded by hostile forces, which were bent on Israel's destruction. The following war was hence not a normal war, but a fight for Israel's existence.

There was no Arab master plan to attack and invade Israel; only limited plans what to do in the event of an Israeli attack.

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The reasons for Israel's victory in the war.

Israel won the war primarily due to the Israeli surprise air strikes against all its three opponents on the first day of the war. Other factors also include the high quality and level of dedication of Israeli soldiers and officers, and the ideological motivation of fighting for one's existence. Israel, in other words, won despite being the weaker party to the conflict.

Israel was able to win due to a number of reasons, which all comes down to Israel being the strongest party at the outset. This was the case even if the air strikes had not taken place.

### **The time period between 1967-73**

#### *Main Theme*

Israeli cabinet decision shortly after the war.

#### *View I*

On June 19, 1967 (i.e. a little over a week after the end of the war), the Israeli cabinet makes a secret decision to return the Sinai and the Golan Heights in return for full peace with Egypt and Syria respectively. This plan is abandoned later during the summer. This is in reaction to the three noes at Khartoum (see below).

#### *View II*

No mention of this decision.

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The nature of the Arab Summit meeting in Khartoum 1967 and the meaning of the three noes (no peace with Israel; no negotiation with Israel; and no recognition of Israel).

The three noes indicated that there was no Arab willingness to settle the conflict peacefully.

The three noes should be viewed as a concession to the more extreme forces in the Arab world. In fact, the Summit was a victory for more moderate Arab currents due to the fact that the Summit did not call for any military actions or the need to destroy Israel. For Arab moderates such as Nasser and King Hussein, who had attempted to win support for seeking a political solution, this was still a victory.

Nasser's intentions for starting the War of Attrition in 1969.

Nasser starting the Egypt-Israeli War of Attrition in March 1969 was just another instance of Arab aggression and unwillingness to solve the conflict peacefully.

Nasser decided to start the War of Attrition in order to break the stalemate over the future of the Egyptian territories in Israeli hands. Nasser, in other words, sought to prevent the situation from developing into a situation of *status quo*.

The question of the peace initiative of UN mediator Gunnar Jarring in 1971.

Either Egypt's demands are portrayed as too far-reaching, or Jarring's initiative is downplayed or essentially ignored on the grounds that it was not a viable plan.

Jarring's initiative—which Israel rejected—could have led to peace between Egypt and Israel.



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The question of Egyptian President Sadat's initiative for an interim settlement with Israel of 1971.

Sadat's plan is downplayed or more or less ignored.

Sadat's plan was more or less rejected by Israel, as it could not make the necessary concessions. Sadat's initiative, although only aiming at an interim settlement, could have led to peace between Egypt and Israel further down the road.

## **War of 1973**

### *Main Theme*

Nature of Egyptian and Syrian war aims in 1973.

### *View I*

Both states planned a more comprehensive war in order to capture as much territory as possible and, if possible, break into Israel proper.

### *View II*

Egypt and Syria planned the war as a means to break the status quo and also to capture some of the occupied territories in order to achieve a better bargaining position in the negotiations that were likely to follow the war.

The question of who broke the cease-fire on October 22.

It was both sides that broke the cease-fire on October 22.

Israel broke the cease-fire on October 22 in order to further improve its positions on the western bank of the canal, and to completely trap the Egyptian Third Army.

Ultimate responsibility for the war.

The war was just another instance of Arab aggression aimed at destroying Israel.

Israel was ultimately responsible for the war due to its intransigence regarding coming to terms with its Arab neighbors.

## **The rise of the PLO**

### *Main Theme*

### *View I*

### *View II*

The nature of the PLO policy calling for Israel to be replaced with a "democratic, secular state for all its citizens."

The policy is just a euphemism for the destruction of Israel.

The policy is not a euphemism for the destruction of Israel; it only rejects the idea of Zionism.

The nature of Israel's military failure at the Jordanian town of Karameh in March 1968.

The Israeli military failure at Karameh was mostly due to Fatah. The defeat of the Israelis came to be a great publicity boost for Fatah and the PLO.

The Israeli military failure was mostly due to Jordanian intervention on the side of Fatah.

The question of who was responsible for the plane hijackings and other terrorist attacks carried out in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

PLO as a whole was responsible for the terrorist attacks in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

It was fringe extremist groups, like the PFLP and the DFLP, who were responsible for the terrorist attacks in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Reasons for Jordan's King Hussein's crackdown on the PLO in September 1970.

Jordan's King Hussein's crackdown on the PLO in September 1970 was due to the PLO challenging the Jordanian state.

It was only extremist groups like the PFLP that challenged the Jordanian state. When Hussein chose to act, he did not distinguish between these and moderate groups like Fatah.

The nature of the Black September organization.

The Black September organization was an arm of Fatah.

The Black September, which did have some former or present members of Fatah, was not associated with the latter.

As one looks at these themes and their corresponding different views, it is in some instances clear which side of the debate holds what view and which side holds the other. In other cases, this is most likely not as clear. The meaning of the different views with regard to the main themes is further analyzed in the following chapters. It has in these chapters been decided to refer to the different views as being pro-Israeli or pro-Arab, based on the evaluation of which side is mostly to blame. The binary designation of pro-Arab/pro-Israeli could be viewed as misleading or, perhaps, even incorrect. Labeling some sources as being pro-Israeli is not particularly problematic, but the designation of pro-Arab poses some problems. Not only did the conflict during the time period under investigation directly involve three Arab states (Egypt, Jordan and Syria), each presumably with their own agendas and policies, but also the Palestinians; mostly as represented by the PLO. Nevertheless, I have chosen to use the term pro-Arab in the sense that it signifies views that are opposed to the pro-Israeli views. One could of course also use the terms pro-Israeli and anti-Israeli, but that could be misleading in the sense that there are works that are critical of Israel's conduct in various instances without being critical of Israel in general. In conclusion, the designation of a view as being pro-Israeli in short means that this view paints Israel in a more favorable light than the corresponding pro-Arab view on the same main theme.

### *Research parameters: sources and time-frame*

The Arab-Israeli conflict is quickly becoming one of those fields of study where it is impossible for any individual to hope to read everything written in his or her lifetime. Or, perhaps it is possible to read everything written in a lifetime, but certainly not for a PhD

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thesis. It is in other words necessary to limit the scope of this thesis. First of all, the time frame needs to be limited to a feasible one. The Arab-Israeli conflict has been ongoing ever since the end of the nineteenth century, or at least since the beginning of last century, and has gone through a number of phases with various principal actors and different levels of hostility.

A time period that is of great importance in the whole scheme of things is the time from 1967 to the mid-1970s. Prior to the war of 1967, the conflict was largely one between Israel and its neighboring Arab states; while after the war of 1973, in conjunction with the rise of the PLO, the focus of the conflict had begun to move from principally being an inter-state conflict to a conflict between Israel and the PLO. This is the time period that is under investigation in this thesis, and it is for simplicity divided into four sub-sections: (1) the War of 1967; (2) the time from 1967 to 1973; (3) the War of 1973; and (4) the rise of the PLO from 1967 to roughly 1974. The year 1974 has been selected as a cut-off point for the history of the PLO, as this was the year when the organization was both given the status of being the formal representative of the Palestinian people by the Arab League, as well as being afforded observation status in the United Nations. It was also in this year that the PLO made it official policy that it sought to achieve Palestinian rule on any Palestinian land liberated from the Israelis. The significance and meaning of this policy initiative has been discussed back and forth to a large degree, and this discussion is not to be examined here. It is sufficient to say that 1974 was a significant year in the history of the PLO and a good cut-off point for the investigation at hand.

In almost every work on history, there are two primary aspects that have to be decided upon: what time period to look at and which sources to use. So, now that the time period to be analyzed has been decided, what sources are to be used? In addition to the more or less specific works on certain processes or periods (monographs), there are also more general works that deal with the Arab-Israeli conflict as

a whole. There are also a great number of more personal accounts, written both by outsiders (such as journalists) and by insiders (for example autobiographies written by people who participated in the conflict to a large or not so large degree). Furthermore, there are shorter works on the Arab-Israeli conflict, although usually regarding only some aspects of it, in the form of articles in academic journals, newspapers and magazines. And, due to the great attention given to the Arab-Israeli conflict in the media, there is most likely also a wealth of material in the form of television and radio programs: both in the form of more in-depth documentaries, but also briefer news and debate programs. The final possible form of source is that of fictionalized accounts. The novel *Exodus* by Leon Uris, for instance, has probably shaped the perception of the time around 1948 for many of its readers. To sum up, the possible sources are:

- Specific works
- General works
- Personal accounts
- Various articles and shorter accounts
- Television and radio
- Fiction

The question then is which of these disparate sources to use for the present investigation. First of all, if the task is to examine the issue of bias in material on the Arab-Israeli conflict, it is much more important as well as interesting to examine those works that are not clearly biased already from the outset. As the methodology described above is focused on comparison, it is important that the material used is as similar as possible. The focus in the methodology above is furthermore more on the narrative aspect of the writing of history and less on the analytical. Lastly, the sources used need to be as comprehensive as possible for reasons of comparison. In other words, they need to include as many of the themes described as

possible. To sum up then: the sources used for this analysis are (1) to be perceived to be free of bias at least initially; (2) to be as similar as possible; (3) to be written more in a narrative style than focusing on analysis; and finally (4) to be as comprehensive as possible.

Probably the most obvious class of sources that fulfill the above criteria is that of the specific works; the works in the form of books that deal with specific topics related to the time period of 1967-74 (e.g. works specifically on the War of 1973 or the rise of the PLO). They are hereafter referred to as specific works, and not monographs, as some of them are in fact anthologies made up by shorter articles.

The second class of sources used in this thesis is that of the general works. These are the works that set out to tell the story of the whole of the Arab-Israeli conflict, or at least since Israel's creation in 1948. They are referred to as general because they deal with a greater time span and with a greater number of events than the specific works. As such, the general works devote a smaller amount of space to the same topics as those dealt with in the specific works.

Because it has been decided against using works that can be construed as being biased from the outset, personal accounts are not used as sources because they are just that: personal accounts. These kinds of works, almost needless to say, are traditionally very biased, as writers of personal accounts tend to indulge in their own opinions on various topics (this is of course their big selling-point). In this context, however, it has been decided not to include these personal accounts in favor of exploring the bias of more generic and supposedly detached writers.

As discussed above, there is a need for the sources used to be as comprehensive as possible for comparative reasons. Hence, the shorter articles of magazines, newspapers and academic journals are not used in the present analysis, because they for natural reasons tend to deal only with very specific issues, processes, individuals, etc. It is of course—especially if one considers the newspaper articles—a

vast amount of material which would most likely have to be further limited if one were to use it. This is also the reason why television and radio programs are not used as sources here: there is potentially too great of an amount of material. There is also the issue of breadth when it comes to television and radio, as there are most likely not many that can be as comprehensive as a book; be it a monograph or more general survey.<sup>45</sup>

Lastly, I have decided not to use fiction in this thesis. Although some fictionalized accounts, like *Exodus* mentioned above, give a quite clear view of how the author wants his or her readers to look upon the conflict and are to some degree historiography of sorts, they are after all works of fiction. The author is in other words not forced to the same degree as someone writing a "regular" historical work to delve into every aspect of the conflict. An author of a novel taking place during the war of 1967, for instance, can as part of the creative process completely disregard the diplomatic and political developments which took place prior to the actual outbreak of the war.

There are in other words two principal categories of sources used in this thesis: specific and general works, and these are the terms used from this point onwards. As the specific works relate to the different sub-sections described above, they are discussed in the relevant chapters below. The general works, as they are used throughout this thesis, are here discussed.

First of all, due to the thematic approach of the present analysis, where the focus is more on the narrative, I have been forced to disregard quite a few general works as they are more analytical and less storytelling in nature. What this means is that there are some works where the approach is more to analyze the different actors and

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<sup>45</sup> One of the sources used, however, is based on a documentary series on the Arab-Israeli conflict broadcast on the BBC. See Ahron Bregman & Jihan El-Tahri, *The Fifty Years War: Israel and the Arabs* (London: Penguin Books & BBC Books, 1998).

issues in the conflict, and less to tell the story of how it has developed. If one is to use the kind of methodology described above, it is important that the sources used are quite similar in nature.

Secondly, in addition to works on the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict, it has also been decided to include works on the history of Israel. The reason for this is because these works tend to devote a substantial amount of attention to the conflict. I have not used works on the history of, say, modern Syria for the simple reason that although such works would include material on the War of 1967, they would not include more than just a few references to the rise of the PLO or the Egyptian-Israeli negotiations of the early 1970s.

Thirdly, it has also been decided not to use works written by principal actors in the conflict that are not memoirs. For instance, former Israeli Foreign Minister Abba Eban has written quite extensively on the history of Israel but as a main actor, his works should perhaps not be regarded so much as history *per se*, but rather as Abba Eban's version of the history of Israel as shaped by, among others, himself. The focus in this dissertation, as stated above, is mainly to focus on more generic works, where there is no obvious bias from the outset.

Lastly, it has also been decided to only use works written prior to the year 2000. This was the year when this project was begun, and also when the so-called second *Intifada*, or uprising, began in the Israeli controlled areas. This spiral of violence, it can be argued, has at least for the time being brought the peace process to a complete halt, and it is unclear what the long-term repercussions will be. Nevertheless, it is probably the case that the historiography being produced now is different from that written prior to 2000. As this is still an ongoing process, however, it is probably not advisable to analyze this aspect of the historiography of the conflict quite yet.

Most of the general works are academic in nature, as a large number of these works are written by scholars with positions at universities in the United States and Great Britain. There are,



however, some exceptions worth mentioning: a clinical psychologist whose interest in the Arab-Israeli conflict was awakened through his studies of group conflicts from a psychological point of view has written one of the works analyzed.<sup>46</sup> A former Irish diplomat has written another study, and he claims that his interest in the conflict was stirred when he served as the Irish representative to the UN and found himself seated between the Iraqi and Israeli delegates; who both seemed exceedingly relieved to have someone sitting between them.<sup>47</sup> There are all in all about 25 works that fit the criteria for inclusion described above, and are hence included in this study.

### *Some brief concluding remarks and the framing of questions*

After the preceding sections it is clear that there has not been any serious attempt at studying the question of bias surrounding the Arab-Israeli conflict. Most of the works dealing with the historiography of the conflict tend to be written from an essentially partisan perspective. This thesis is in fact the first work where bias in relation to the Arab-Israeli conflict is at all problematized and looked upon from a more analytical point of view.

Furthermore, it has also been argued in favor of basing the analysis regarding bias on the content of the works under investigation, instead of attempting to establish whether or not the certain views are “true” in the positivist sense of the word. I have also rejected a quantitative methodology in favor of a qualitative, as the latter approach is more likely to deliver interesting results. The

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<sup>46</sup> Baylis Thomas, *How Israel Was Won: A Concise History of the Arab-Israeli Conflict* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 1999).

<sup>47</sup> Conor Cruise O'Brien, *The Siege: The Saga of Israel and Zionism* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1986), p. 13.

method used in this thesis is theme based and binary in the sense that each identified main theme is supposed to consist of a pro-Arab and a pro-Israeli view.

It has been decided to use two different kinds of sources: those that are called specific works—which deal more or less entirely with the different topics of the time period under investigation—and those that are referred to as general works which deal with the Arab-Israeli conflict and the history of Israel in more general terms. The time frame for this study is from 1967 to roughly 1974, and it is divided up into four chapters below: (1) the War of 1967; (2) the time between 1967-73; (3) the War of 1973; and (4) the rise of the PLO. In order to give the reader a sense of what the different sources look like and also to show how different the outcome can be depending on how the authors position themselves in relation to the themes used throughout, a chapter has been included where four sources are analyzed at greater length. The last chapter, quite naturally, is a conclusion.

What then are the major questions of this thesis? First of all, the method employed is to be put under scrutiny. Is it reliable, by using the technique of sampling, to identify differences of opinion in a larger number of sources?

The second main problem investigated in this thesis is with regards to the nature of the established bias. In other words, how frequently do standard pro-Arab or pro-Israeli narratives appear, and what are the possible classifications one can make from the main themes? Are the works analyzed in general mostly biased, or are they only biased with regards to the individual themes? Are the lines, so to say, mostly drawn in the sand with the result of most works clearly being either pro-Arab or *vice versa*, or is the picture more complex than that?

Thirdly, which themes, in light of the possible classifications, are to be considered propaganda of sorts, and which are to be considered

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simply as differences of opinion (or bias as the term is used throughout this thesis)? This question leads into the fourth main question: is it actually possible to write works on the Arab-Israeli conflict (or at least dealing with the time period at hand) that indeed are free of bias? All questions but the last are dealt with in the concluding sections of the following chapters, while the last question is dealt with in the final and concluding chapter of this thesis.

## 2. The War of 1967

### *Introduction*

The War of 1967, also known as the Six Day War or the June War, was the third Arab-Israeli war (the earlier wars having been fought in 1948-9 and 1956).<sup>1</sup> It was a complete victory for Israel and came to dramatically change the geopolitical landscape of the Middle East. After the war, Israel was in possession of the remaining parts of the old Palestine Mandate: the Gaza Strip (seized from Egypt<sup>2</sup>) and the West Bank (seized from Jordan), with their large populations of Palestinians. The Sinai Peninsula, in addition, was captured from Egypt and the Golan Heights from Syria. Due to the great impact this war has had on the region and on the Arab-Israeli conflict, a relatively large amount of works have been written in English on the crisis leading up to the war and the war itself.

Although the authors of the sources used have different ideas as to when one should begin an account of the War of 1967—some go back a few years before 1967, whereas others go back to the creation of Israel in 1948 or even further—I have decided to start my analysis in May 1967. It has been pointed out that Arab-Israeli relations had remained at an antagonistic level ever since 1948, and that the

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<sup>1</sup> It should be pointed out here that I use the term the War of 1967, or the 1967 War, for the simple reason that it seems that the Six Day War is mostly used by authors who are more friendly to Israel, whereas the June War is mostly used by authors who are more pro-Arab. The explanation for this is probably that the former name emphasizes and shows the extent of the Israeli victory, while the latter name could be seen as a way to de-emphasize the Arab defeat.

<sup>2</sup> Although Egypt at this time was referred to as the United Arab Republic (UAR), the name Egypt is used throughout this thesis to avoid confusion.

preceding years had seen a further deterioration; making the War of 1967 more or less inevitable. That may very well be, but it does seem fairly clear that it was the events of May 1967 that led directly to the war. The analogy with World War I could illustrate what I mean: it could be argued in hindsight that the development into two camps of Europe's great powers and the increased hostility between the members of these two camps may in the long run have made a large European war inevitable. But, nevertheless, it was the events in the late summer of 1914 that acted as the catalyst that actually brought the war about. Besides, since the different sources have different starting points, it would be hard to determine a way in which to accurately compare the sources. It should also be pointed out that since some of the sources go back a couple of decades or more, the focus of this chapter could easily shift towards the controversies surrounding the Israeli-Egyptian war of 1956, the establishment of Israel in 1948 and the creation of the Palestinian refugee problem or indeed to the birth of the Arab-Israeli conflict during the Ottoman and British Mandate times.

### *Sources*

In the introductory chapter it was decided to use two kinds of sources: general and specific works. The general works were described in the previous chapter. With regard to the specific works analyzed, the majority of these were published either in 1967 or in the next five years: 8 in 1967, 7 in 1968, 1 in 1969, 2 in 1970 and finally 2 in 1972. After this time period, the number of works on the War of 1967 trickles down quite dramatically, and the last specific work

dealing with the War of 1967 was published in 1992.<sup>3</sup> The vast majority of the specific works are also journalistic in style, with nine works being more academic in nature or written in a mixture of styles.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, one book used in this analysis is actually a textbook written for students between the ages of 12-16.<sup>5</sup>

Most of the writers of these sources are either British or American. There are, however, four works written by Israelis,<sup>6</sup> and four by Arabs.<sup>7</sup> As for the remaining British and American writers, I have not tried to determine any additional ethno/religious ties to the conflict (i.e. which of the writers are Jewish, but not Israeli), for the simple reason that establishing that could prove to be very difficult or even impossible. Going by name alone is of course not a certain way of establishing this, and if one is to use the classification of Jewish/Gentile when it comes to the British and American writers it

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<sup>3</sup> Eric Hammel, *Six Days in June: How Israel Won the 1967 Arab-Israeli War* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1992). Other post-1972 works published were published in 1982, 1987 (two works) and 1990.

<sup>4</sup> Michael Howard & Robert Hunter, *Israel and the Arab World: The Crisis of 1967*, Adelphi Papers, no. 41 (London: Institute for Strategic Studies, 1967); Peter Young, *The Israeli Campaign 1967* (London: William Kimber, 1967); Walter Laqueur, *The Road to Jerusalem: The Origins of the Arab-Israeli Conflict 1967* (New York: Macmillan, 1968); Theodore Draper, *Israel and World Politics: Roots of the Third Arab-Israeli War* (New York: The Viking Press, 1968); Majdia D. Khadduri (ed.), *The Arab-Israeli Impasse: Expressions of Moderate Viewpoints on the Arab-Israeli Conflict by Well Known Western Writers* (Washington, D.C.: Robert B. Luce, 1968); David Kimche & Dan Bawly, *The Sandstorm: The Arab-Israeli war of June 1967: prelude and aftermath* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1968); Michael Bar-Zohar, *Embassies in Crisis: Diplomats and Demagogues Behind the Six-Day War* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1970); Ibrahim Abu-Lughod (ed.), *The Arab-Israeli Confrontation of June 1967: An Arab Perspective* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970); and Samir A. Mutawi, *Jordan in the 1967 War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

<sup>5</sup> Heather Bleaney & Richard Lawless, *The First Day of the Six Day War* (London: Dryad Press, 1990).

<sup>6</sup> David Dayan, *Strike First!: A Battle History of Israel's Six-Day War* (Jerusalem: Massadah Press, 1967); Raphael Bashan, *The Victory: The Six-Day War of 1967* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1967); Eli Landau, *Jerusalem the Eternal: The Paratroopers' Battle for the City of David* (Tel Aviv: Otpaz, 1968); and Bar-Zohar 1970.

<sup>7</sup> Khadduri 1968; Abu-Lughod 1970; and Mutawi 1987. The fourth book is arguably not written by an Arab—it is in fact written by an American Jew who converted to Islam, moved to Jerusalem, married a Palestinian woman and was at the time of the war working for an East Jerusalem newspaper—but the author conveys a very strong sense of affinity to the Palestinian people in his book: Abdullah Schleifer, *The Fall of Jerusalem* (London & New York: Monthly Review Press, 1972).

is needless to say imperative that all authors indeed can be categorized in this way.

Among the writers, the vast majority are journalists in both the writing and broadcasting genres, and the rest academics or students. Besides Abdullah Schleifer (see footnote 7), there are some people amongst the writers who deserve mention. Peter Young, who at the time of writing his book was a reader in military history at the British Royal Military Academy in Sandhurst, had previously been an officer in the Jordanian Arab Legion. Randolph and Winston Churchill were the son and grandson respectively of the late British Prime Minister. Michael Bar-Zohar was later to become a member of the Israeli parliament (the *Knesset*) and Edward Said<sup>8</sup> was later to become a world-renowned scholar, if maybe somewhat controversial, with his book *Orientalism*. Elie Wiesel, the French-American author who won a Nobel peace prize in 1986, has written an introduction<sup>9</sup> to one of the books, and Sir John Glubb, the former British commander of the Jordanian Arab Legion has a lecture reproduced in one of the anthologies.<sup>10</sup>

### *Timeline of events*

May 13: The Soviet Union officially informs Egypt, both through its embassy in Cairo and to a visiting Egyptian delegation, of Israeli troop concentrations close to the Syrian border. These troops were said to be preparing for an attack on Syria and consist of

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<sup>8</sup> Said has an article written in Abu-Lughod 1970; where he does not write on the War of 1967 *per se*, but rather on Western prejudices against Arabs and the Arab world. This article could be seen as a precursor to *Orientalism*. (Edward W. Said, "The Arab Portrayed," in Abu-Lughod 1970, pp. 1-9)

<sup>9</sup> See Menachem Z. Rosensaft, *Not Backward to Belligerency: A Study of Events Surrounding the "Six-Day War" of June, 1967* (London & Cranbury, NJ: Thomas Yoseloff, 1969).

<sup>10</sup> Sir John Bagot Glubb, "The Middle East Situation," in Khadduri 1968, pp. 21-39.

between ten and twelve brigades. It is the universal consensus among the sources that this report was false, but it is not clear whether the Soviets or, for that matter, the Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser were aware of this at the time.

May 14: Egypt deploys troops from across the Suez Canal into the Sinai. Egypt and Syria had a mutual defense treaty since November of the previous year.

May 16-18: Egypt requests the 3,400 man strong United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF), which was positioned in the Gaza Strip, along the rest of the Egyptian/Israeli border and in Sharm el-Sheikh to withdraw. U Thant, the secretary-general of the United Nations agrees, and UNEF is removed from its forward deployments.<sup>11</sup>

May 20: Israel declares a full mobilization of its armed forces. There had been, however, mobilization of various reserve units going on for the last week.

May 22: Nasser announces the closure of the Straits of Tiran to Israeli ships and neutral ships bound for Israel carrying strategic goods (i.e. oil). The Straits of Tiran is the passage between the Gulf of Aqaba, where Israel's only non-Mediterranean port Eilat is situated, and the Red Sea.

May 22-June 4: There are various efforts to defuse the crisis and to gain superpower support undertaken by the parties of the escalating conflict. The Soviet Union, United States, Great Britain and France are also trying to exert pressure on the parties to refrain from violence and the settle the dispute peacefully.

May 30: Jordan's King Hussein travels to Egypt, where he signs a mutual defense treaty and places his armed forces under the command of an Egyptian general.

June 1: Israeli Prime Minister Levi Eshkol caves into domestic pressure and creates a national unity coalition, which includes

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<sup>11</sup> See below for a description of the controversies surrounding this event.



members of opposition parties. Eshkol also relinquishes his position as minister of defense to the former Israeli chief of staff, Moshe Dayan.

June 3: Egypt and Iraq sign a mutual defense treaty, and an Iraqi brigade begins to move from western Iraq into Jordan.

June 4: The Israeli cabinet meets and decides unanimously that Israel should attack first, and that the precise time is to be decided by Dayan and Eshkol; who later decide to have Israel strike the next day.

June 5: The war begins in the morning with an Israeli surprise aerial attack on the Egyptian air force and its air bases; where the Egyptian air force is more or less completely destroyed. Later in the day, the Israeli air force destroys the majority of the Syrian and Jordanian air forces on the ground, and also attacks an Iraqi air base in western Iraq. The Israeli army moves into the Sinai and the Gaza Strip and, after some initial skirmishes, moves into Jordanian-held East Jerusalem and the rest of the West Bank.

June 5-7: Israeli advances strongly on both the Egyptian and Jordanian fronts and, by June 7, the whole of the West Bank is in Israeli hands, including East Jerusalem.

June 8: Israeli troops reach the Suez Canal, meaning that the whole of the Sinai Peninsula and the Gaza Strip is under Israeli control.

June 9-10: Israel launches a ground attack against the Syrian Golan Heights. Prior to June 9, the fighting between Syria and Israel had been limited to artillery duels and aerial battles. The Israeli army has by June 10 driven the Syrian army back to a point east of the town of Kuneitra, and in effect captured the whole of the area known as the Golan Heights.

## *Main themes*

The major part of this chapter, and indeed of the thesis as a whole, revolves around the concept of bias and the main themes, as was described in the previous chapter. As described in the previous chapter, a number of sources have been sampled, and from these a number of themes have been identified. The classification as a main theme is based on whether or not there are various views regarding the certain event or explanation discussed in the theme, and whether it is possible to discern a certain pro-Israeli/pro-Arab bias or preference. Eight main themes regarding the War of 1967 have been identified and they are dealt with below:

- (1) Israeli threats against Syria at the outset of the conflict;
- (2) The nature of Egypt's request for the removal of UNEF;
- (3) Nasser's intentions for requesting UNEF to be removed;
- (4) Israeli refusal to accept UNEF on its territory;
- (5) Nasser's intentions regarding the closing of the Straits of Tiran;
- (6) The implications of the Egyptian-Jordanian defense treaty;
- (7) Israel's position prior to the outbreak of the war;
- (8) The reasons for Israel's military victory.

### Israeli threats against Syria

Of all the relations between Israel and its neighbors prior to the crisis, those between Israel and Syria were the most tense. There were three main bones of contention between the two states: the issue of the tributaries to the Jordan River (a low-level conflict between Israel, on the one hand, and Syria, Jordan and Lebanon, on the other), the problem with farming-rights in the Syrian-Israeli demilitarized zone (DMZ) and Syrian support of Palestinian groups (primarily Yasser Arafat's Fatah) that were conducting raids into Israel. The problem regarding the tributaries to the Jordan River had

more or less been put on the backburner by 1967, as the Arab states were unable or unwilling to dispute Israel's unilateral actions. As for the farming rights in the Syrian-Israeli DMZ, this was a problem that had been ongoing ever since the Syrian-Israeli armistice agreement in 1949. Basically, Israel charged Syria with interfering with its right to cultivate the land on its side of the DMZ, whereas Syria charged Israel with in fact cultivating Syrian land in order to create facts on the ground. This dispute quite often developed into skirmishes between Israeli and Syrian forces, and a large clash took place on April 7, 1967, when a small skirmish developed into an artillery and mortar duel, as well as an aerial battle in which the Israelis shot down six Syrian fighters.

With regard to the Palestinian groups conducting raids against Israel, these groups in all actuality did not usually initiate their raids from Syrian territory, but more often from Jordan or Lebanon. Nevertheless, Israel regarded Syria as the instigator and made several complaints to the UN Security Council. Probably because of the heavy Syrian military fortifications and the unattractive option of scaling the Golan Heights, Israel chose to retaliate in reaction to raids against mostly Jordanian, but also Lebanese, targets. A large Israeli raid took place on November 13, 1966, when a considerable Israeli army contingent crossed the border and entered the Jordanian village of al-Samu in the southern part of the West Bank, demolished a number of houses and ambushed a Jordanian army column.

When it comes to the identification of main themes, there is mention of Israeli threats of military action against Syria issued in the early part of May 1967 in some sources (see footnote below), whereas these threats are not mentioned in other sources. In none of the sources where these threats are mentioned are they given a large degree of attention—the threats are usually described in a few sentences or a paragraph or two—so one has to use a number of these sources to get

a more clear picture of what kind of threats were issued and who issued them.

First of all, Israel on May 11 informed the UN Security Council that unless Syria ended its provocations, Israel would feel itself entitled to act in self-defense. Prime Minister Eshkol warned in an interview that same day that there was a possibility that Israel would undertake actions no less dramatic than those of April 7 (see above). The next day, another threat was issued in an interview with the Israeli Chief of Staff Yitzhak Rabin, where he hinted to the possibility of action against Syria with the aim of overthrowing the Syrian government. United Press International (UPI) also wrote on May 12 that a high Israeli official had stated that Israel would embark on a limited military campaign with the aim of removing the Syrian government. And, finally, on May 13 the *New York Times* wrote that Israeli leaders had decided that using force against Syria might be the only way to curtail terrorism.<sup>12</sup>

As mentioned above, the sources analyzed do not devote a great deal of space to these threats, and not all of them mention the same threats. They do not generally go into great detail as to whether these threats were serious or not, as events soon came to overshadow whatever plans for action the Israelis may have had.

The reason why these Israeli threats have been identified as a theme is because they assign Israel some of the blame for the crisis that was about to begin. Whether the threats were only meant to influence Syria to decrease or end support for Fatah and the other Palestinian groups, or whether they were in fact an indication of future Israeli actions is of course very hard to determine, and this is something which most authors seem to acknowledge. In the instances

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<sup>12</sup> See for example Fred J. Khouri, *The Arab-Israeli Dilemma*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1985), p. 244; John Quigley, *Palestine and Israel: A Challenge to Justice* (Durham, NC & London: Duke University Press, 1990), p. 158; Benny Morris, *Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict, 1881-1999* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999), p. 304; Avi Shlaim, *The Iron Wall: Israel and the Arab World* (London & New York: Allen Lane & Penguin Press, 2000), p. 236f; Thomas 1999, p. 155; and Howard M. Sachar, *A History of Israel: From the Rise of Zionism to our Time*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996), p. 622.

where the threats are mentioned, they are used more to illustrate Israeli responsibility for the escalation of hostility—as it would seem as if the threats did raise concern in both Syria and Egypt—rather than to illustrate actual Israeli intentions. The following quote demonstrates how American political scientist Mark Tessler looks upon the threats:

In sum, analysts will continue to disagree about Israel's intentions during the early and middle part of May 1967. It is clear that Israel was indeed considering and talking about an attack on Syria. It is not clear, however, that this was to be any more than a sharp and punishing raid, similar to past retaliatory strikes. And it is at least reasonably likely that in mid-May Jerusalem was still hoping to restrain Syria by threats and had not yet definitively decided to exercise the military option for which it was preparing. Be this as it may, it is beyond dispute both that the Arabs genuinely believed an attack on Syria would be forthcoming shortly, and that Jerusalem's own rhetoric did much to foster this Arab belief. Encouraged as well by the erroneous information supplied to him by the USSR, Nasser thus responded to the situation as he saw it and made a move that pushed the region much closer to all-out war.<sup>13</sup>

In the sources where the threats are not mentioned, more of the blame for the creation of the crisis is placed on Nasser for acting on the Soviet report; which it is doubtful he even believed himself. So, mentioning these threats could be seen as being pro-Arab—as some of the blame for the crisis that would evolve into war is placed on Israel's shoulders—whereas not mentioning them could be seen as pro-Israeli.

#### Partial removal of UNEF

The United Nations Emergency Force, which was to be the first UN peacekeeping force, was originally set up as part of the withdrawal of French and British troops from the area of the Suez Canal following the Suez War of October/November 1956. In this war—where Israel,

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<sup>13</sup> Mark Tessler, *A History of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1994), p. 387.

France and Great Britain acted jointly—Israel overran the whole of the Sinai in addition to the Gaza Strip. Due to immense pressure from both the Soviet Union and the United States, Israel withdrew from the areas captured in March the next year and UNEF was placed with Egyptian consent as a buffer on the Egyptian side of the border between the two states, as well as in Sharm el-Sheikh. In 1967 UNEF consisted of about 3,400 men with contingents from India, Brazil, Yugoslavia, Canada, Norway, Denmark and Sweden.

This main theme is in some ways the most confusing dealing with the War of 1967 in the sense that it does not seem clear what actually took place. The question is whether or not Egypt initially requested the whole of UNEF to be withdrawn or not. What is interesting here is that the absolute majority of the sources examined do not acknowledge that there is in fact a controversy regarding Egypt's initial wishes, but rather just state either that Egypt sought the withdrawal of the whole of UNEF or that Egypt only wanted a partial withdrawal. Below follows an attempt to show the extent of the controversy as it is discussed in the sources.

On May 16, the Indian commander of UNEF, General Indarjit Rikhye, received a telegram brought to him by a courier from the chief of staff of the Egyptian Army, General Mohamed Fawzi, asking for the removal of UNEF from observation points along Egypt's border with Israel. Rikhye replied that he could only comply with the request if he was ordered to do so by the secretary-general of the UN, but promised to notify UN headquarters. U Thant, the Burmese secretary-general of the United Nations, received Rikhye's report in the early evening of May 16 (New York time) and a little over an hour later he told the Egyptian ambassador to the UN, Mohamed Awad El Kony, that any request for the withdrawal of UNEF must be addressed directly by the Egyptian government to the secretary-general. Thant also told the Egyptian ambassador that any request for a redeployment of UNEF would in essence be unacceptable and

amount to the termination of the UNEF mission. Two days later, on May 18, Thant received a formal request for the termination of UNEF from Foreign Minister Mahmoud Riad of Egypt. The secretary-general complied with the request and UNEF began to evacuate its positions. It is also stated in one account that Riad initially requested the withdrawal of UNEF only from the international Egyptian-Israeli border (i.e. not from Sharm el-Sheikh or the Gaza Strip), but that Thant rejected this position.<sup>14</sup>

The controversy regarding whether Egypt wanted UNEF to be removed in total or only partially redeployed is to some extent dependent of how one interprets Fawzi's original telegram to the commander of UNEF. In his book, Sydney Bailey quotes Thant as describing the letter as "cryptic . . . both unclear and unacceptable . . ."<sup>15</sup> This is something that the other writers who discuss the controversy also acknowledge: that Fawzi's message was unclear as to whether all or only some UNEF positions should be abandoned. To add to the confusion, it seems as if the Egyptian officer who delivered the telegram to Rikhye verbally emphasized the need for UNEF to be evacuated from in particular Sharm el-Sheikh.<sup>16</sup> Mark Tessler, in addition, brings forward the argument that there may have been a discrepancy in policy between the military and civilian branches of the Egyptian government on the question of the removal of UNEF.<sup>17</sup>

It is not the purpose here to try to determine whether or not Egypt sought a complete withdrawal of UNEF or not—although it seems clear that there is a need for additional research on this topic—but rather to illustrate that there is a limited debate on this issue. As

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<sup>14</sup> Sydney D. Bailey, *Four Arab-Israeli Wars and the Peace Process* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990), pp. 191-5; Quigley 1990, p. 159; and Tessler 1994, p. 390f. Tessler quotes Foreign Minister Riad as saying that he initially requested a withdrawal of UNEF from the Israeli-Egyptian international border (i.e. not from the Gaza Strip or Sharm el-Sheikh), but that Thant refused to agree to this. Riad was then forced to request the removal of the whole of UNEF.

<sup>15</sup> Bailey 1990, p. 193. Bailey does not give a reference to this quote.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 193.

<sup>17</sup> Tessler 1994, p. 390f.

stated above, the majority of sources studied do not delve into this controversy. They rather state their views on the issue as a matter of fact:

On the following day, May 16, Egypt acted to raise the temperature in the region still further and to threaten Israel. That day, at ten in the evening, Nasser ordered the United Nations to remove its forces from Sinai. Since 1956 a United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) of 3,400 men had been stationed in the Gaza Strip and at Sharm el-Sheikh, at the southern tip of the Sinai Peninsula, with the internationally approved task of monitoring the Egyptian-Israeli cease-fire.<sup>18</sup>

On May 16, Egypt insisted that some UNEF units leave their positions along certain parts of the demarcation lines so that Egyptian soldiers could take over. UN Secretary-General U Thant maintained that UNEF had to be withdrawn completely or be allowed to patrol the entire length of the borders as in the past. Consequently, on May 18, Egypt formally requested that UNEF be fully withdrawn.<sup>19</sup>

In the works that bring forward Egypt's initial request for a partial withdrawal of UNEF, the ones that give details as to which areas were to be evacuated generally mention that Egypt wanted UNEF to stay in the Gaza Strip and in Sharm el-Sheikh and to withdraw from all or some of its positions on the international Egyptian-Israeli border.<sup>20</sup> This is of significance because of the reasons Israel quoted for going to war against Egypt in 1956: terrorist raids originating in the Gaza Strip and the closure, at Sharm el-Sheikh, of the Straits of Tiran to Israeli shipping to and from Eilat. So, in other words, a partial removal of UNEF can be seen as an Egyptian move which would be less threatening to Israel than a full withdrawal (the pro-Arab view).

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<sup>18</sup> Martin Gilbert, *Israel: A History* (New York: William Morrow, 1998), p. 366.

<sup>19</sup> Khouri 1985, p. 246.

<sup>20</sup> See for example W. Byford-Jones, *The Lightning War* (London: Robert Hale, 1967), pp. 18ff.; Kimche & Bawly 1968, p. 93; Bar-Zohar 1970, pp. 32ff.; Schleifer 1972, pp. 107ff.; Hammel 1992, p. 30f.; Quigley 1990, p. 159; T.G. Fraser, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1995), p. 82f.; Sachar 1996, p. 623; Thomas 1999, p. 159; Kirsten E. Schulze, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict* (London & New York: Longman 1999), p. 36; and Ahron Bregman, *Israel's Wars, 1947-93* (London & New York: Routledge, 2000), p. 46.



An emphasis on full withdrawal indicates a more belligerent Egypt and is hence labeled the pro-Israeli view.<sup>21</sup>

#### Reasons for the removal of UNEF

If the previous two main themes described deal with whether or not something is mentioned (threats against Syria) or how something is interpreted (partial removal of UNEF), this theme actually deals mostly with the intentions of President Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt. Because whether or not a partial withdrawal of UNEF was initially intended, at the end of the day Nasser decided to have the whole of UNEF removed and in essence its whole mission terminated. It should be pointed out here that the sources analyzed assume that Nasser made all the pertinent decisions during this crisis and, hence, any analysis of why Egypt decided to order the complete withdrawal of UNEF needs to focus on his intentions.<sup>22</sup>

In some of the sources, albeit a minority, Nasser's intentions for ordering the removal of UNEF are clear in the sense that he must have wanted to engage in a war with Israel.<sup>23</sup> By asking for the removal of UNEF, "Egypt acted to raise the temperature in the region still further and to threaten Israel."<sup>24</sup> Or, as another writer puts it:

All that stood between the frenzied Arabs and the doomed Israelis, so Nasser seems to have thought, was the presence of the United Nations Emergency Force at Sharm el-Sheikh and the

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<sup>21</sup> For examples of pro-Israeli views in this instance, see Bashan 1967, p. 9f.; Howard & Hunter 1967, p. 18; Hal Kosut, *Israel & the Arabs: The June 1967 War* (New York: Facts on File, 1968), p. 45f.; J. Robert Moskin, *Among Lions: The Battle for Jerusalem June 5-7, 1967* (New York: Arbor House, 1982), p. 32; O'Brien 1986, p. 409f.; Samuel 1989, p. 121; Gilbert 1998, p. 366; and Mitchell G. Bard, *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Middle East Conflict* (Indianapolis: Alpha Books, 1999), p. 225.

<sup>22</sup> In the sources analyzed, there is no attempt to decide to what degree Nasser in all actuality was in total control of Egyptian policy.

<sup>23</sup> See for example Bashan 1967, pp. 9ff.; Ruth Gruber, *Israel on the Seventh Day* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1968), p. 47; Rosensaft 1969, p. 26f.; Leonard J. Davis & Moshe Decter, *Myths and Facts 1982: A Concise Report of the Arab-Israeli Conflict* (Washington, DC: Near East Report, 1982), p. 31; David Dolan, *Holy War for the Promised Land: Israel's Struggle to Survive* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1991), p. 129; and Gilbert 1998, p. 366.

<sup>24</sup> Gilbert 1998, p. 366.

Gaza Strip; remove that and victory was his; so he asked the UN to remove it, a request with which the Secretary-General of that organization at once, and inexplicably, complied.<sup>25</sup>

The above quote, besides illustrating the view that Nasser wanted to go to war against Israel, also shows to some extent the emotional language employed in some of the sources. The logic behind this argument that Nasser's action indicated a willingness to wage war is of course relatively simple, although it is actually only implicit in the sources where this argument is presented: by removing a UN *peacekeeping* force, or *buffer*, Nasser could only want one thing.

In the majority of sources, where Nasser's intentions are evaluated, the case is made that Nasser was not interested in attacking Israel by the time he had UNEF removed.<sup>26</sup> That is not to say that he did not change his mind later throughout the crisis according to some of the sources (see below). There are a number of reasons given for why Nasser chose this course of action: (1) the need to have UNEF removed in order to effectively deter Israel from attacking Syria; (2) pressure from other Arab regimes; (3) internal Egyptian pressure; (4) a desire to improve his position as the preeminent leader of the Arab world; and (5) a desire to score a political victory over Israel without having to go to war. The last reason given for Nasser's decision is evaluated upon further below in the section dealing with Egypt's closing of the Straits of Tiran.

Although UNEF was a relatively small force stretched along a long border, its removal was of importance if Nasser wanted to deter Israeli actions against Syria. Whether or not Egypt actually would have come to Syria's assistance in the case of an Israeli attack is of

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<sup>25</sup> Rinna Samuel, *A History of Israel: The Birth, Growth and Development of Today's Jewish State* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1989), p. 121.

<sup>26</sup> See for example Byford-Jones 1967, pp. 18ff.; Churchill & Churchill 1967, p. 29; Kimche & Bawly 1967; Young 1967, p. 77; Abraham Rabinovich, *The Battle for Jerusalem: June 5-7, 1967*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Philadelphia, New York & Jerusalem: Jewish Publication Society, 1987), p. 25; Khouri 1985, 245f.; Tessler 1994, p. 389f.; Fraser 1995, p. 82; Bregman & El-Tahri 1998, 66; and Morris 1999, p. 305f.

course difficult to determine, and none of the authors who discuss the removal of UNEF as a deterrent move actually try to. What is important here is that Nasser's move is described as defensive and not belligerent. As for pressure from other Arab regimes, Nasser had been described as merely posturing by moving troops into the Sinai and, in the words of two authors, in order "[t]o free himself from criticism by Arab radio – especially in Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Syria – that he was hiding behind the skirts of the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF), he decided to remove UNEF from Sinai and tackle the Israelis."<sup>27</sup> Although some authors mention that domestic pressure also led to Nasser's decision, details about this pressure is left out and it is therefore not clear as to whether it was exerted mostly by other high Egyptian officials or by "the man on the street." That Nasser held a desire to improve his stature in the Arab world and (once again?) assume its leadership has been named as another aspect of why Nasser ordered UNEF to be withdrawn. This point is naturally connected with the deterrent aspect of the removal (assisting another Arab state in danger) but also with responding to criticism from some of the other Arab states.

In the sources where Nasser is said not to have wanted a war with Israel by having UNEF removed, whether only some or all the aspects above are discussed, Nasser's action is described as a political move. This is of course in contrast to the sources where it is argued that Nasser acted the way he did because he desired a military conflict with Israel. The difference between the two groups of sources is in this case quite clear: in the majority of sources, where Nasser's decision is described as a political move (the pro-Arab view), Egypt is presented in a much less belligerent light than in the sources where it is spelled out that Nasser sought a military confrontation with Israel (the pro-Israeli view). It should be pointed out that quite a few of the authors who emphasize the political nature of Nasser's decision also

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<sup>27</sup> Bregman & El-Tahri 1998, p. 66.

point out that it may not have been a particularly clever decision in hindsight, as it invariably did escalate the conflict.

UNEF on Israeli territory

After Egypt stated on May 18 that it no longer wished to keep UNEF on its territory, Israel, according to some sources, was approached by Great Britain, the United States, Canada and by Secretary-General U Thant to accept UNEF on its side of the Egyptian-Israeli border. These suggestions, according to the sources where this is mentioned, were given to Israel either on May 18 or during the following few days. Israel declined this offer.

The fact that Israel refused to accept UNEF on its territory is only mentioned very briefly in some accounts, whereas it has been further evaluated upon in others. There have been different reasons given for Israel's refusal, and one of the explanations given is that the Israeli move was motivated by Israel's aggressive leanings:

[I]f the Israeli leaders had really believed that an invasion was immanent and Israel's survival was at stake, they could easily have precluded any Arab attack by accepting U Thant's urgent suggestion that UNEF be allowed to take up positions in their territory. This could have been arranged very quickly by a transfer of men and equipment over an extremely short distance. . . . By firmly and unhesitatingly rejecting U Thant's proposals, Israel indicated that she was less interested in thwarting an Egyptian attack than she was in making sure that a UN presence did not frustrate her own ability to strike at the UAR at the time of her own choosing.<sup>28</sup>

Israel, in other words, was not particularly worried, at this point at least, with an Egyptian invasion, and was more concerned with leaving its options open.<sup>29</sup> Another explanation that has been given for Israel's refusal is that accepting UNEF on its side of the border would not solve the problem of the Straits of Tiran. As the reader may recall, one of the positions in Egypt from where UNEF had

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<sup>28</sup> Khouri 1985, p. 282.

<sup>29</sup> See, in addition to Khouri above, Mutawi 1987, p. 99; and Quigley 1990, p. 160.

withdrawn was from Sharm el-Sheikh, and with Egyptian troops about to take over the position, if they had not already, an Egyptian blockade of the Straits of Tiran was something that the Israelis most likely viewed as a realistic possibility. By accepting UNEF on its side of the border, so this argument goes, Israel would have curtailed its ability to act if Egypt were to close the Straits to Israeli shipping.<sup>30</sup>

Israeli writer Michael Bar-Zohar brings forward a third explanation for Israel's decision as he describes a meeting between Nasser and Secretary-General Thant. This meeting took place in Cairo on May 24 (i.e. after Egypt had closed the Straits of Tiran to Israeli shipping), and Bar-Zohar gives this account of what took place:

Candidly Nasser also proposed a solution for the problem of the U.N. troops—why not station them in Israeli territory?

U Thant fell into the trap. Deeply impressed by Nasser's restraint and sincerity, he failed to recognize that all the Egyptian President's "concessions" merely restated in different terms the official policy of Egypt. The U.N. force was not to return to Egyptian soil, and essential materials like oil, the principal product that Israel imported through the strait, would never reach Elat. On the Israeli side [sic] of the frontier, the U.N. force would be proof of Nasser's total triumph.<sup>31</sup>

Besides alluding to Nasser's cunning personality, Bar-Zohar also hints to the fact that Israel's decision not to accept UNEF on its territory was of a political, and not military, nature. By accepting UNEF, Israel would have given Nasser an unacceptable political victory; as Nasser would have been viewed as the one in total control of events.

It is interesting to notice that there are three different views of Israel's decision, and that these three views have different implications. The implication of the first view, that the Israeli refusal can be viewed as an example of Israel's possibly aggressive motives, is

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<sup>30</sup> Schulze 1999, p. 36.

<sup>31</sup> Bar-Zohar 1970, p. 102.

quite clear as it is spelled out more or less directly. As for the implication of the second view, that Israel's rejection can be explained in view of the fact that a blockade of the Straits of Tiran was likely, Israel's move comes across as less antagonistic. This is because Israel's action is described in more of a defensive manner: Israel could not accept UNEF on its territory if it was to be able to strike at Egypt in the case of a closure of the Straits. The prospect of Israeli military action is determined whether or not Egypt announces a blockade. Bar-Zohar's view, that Israel's decision was political and not military in nature, is the view that depicts Israel in the least belligerent way. First of all, Israel's decision to not accept UNEF was not made out of military considerations. And, secondly, Israel's decision was made to counter an already belligerent move made by Nasser (having UNEF removed from his territory).

The most interesting aspect of this theme, however, is that there are a great number of instances where Israel's refusal is not mentioned. In the works that deal more or less exclusively with the War of 1967, only seven mention the Israeli decision.<sup>32</sup> When it comes to the general books, there is more mention of this theme, but still less than half of the works bring it up. That the offer to accept UNEF on its territory and Israel's subsequent rejection of this offer is only mentioned in a minority of sources is indeed interesting, and two writers actually charge Western press with either failing to mention this or actively burying the offer and the refusal.<sup>33</sup> Be that as it may, but the fact that Israel's rejection of UNEF—regardless of how Israel's

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<sup>32</sup> Charles W. Yost, "How it Began," in Majdia D. Khadduri (ed.), *The Arab-Israeli Impasse: Expressions of Moderate Viewpoints on the Arab-Israeli Conflict by Well Known Western Writers* (Washington, DC: Robert B. Luce, 1968), p. 81; Kosut 1968, p. 46; Bar-Zohar 1970, p. 102; Edgar O'Ballance, *The Third Arab-Israeli War* (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1972), p. 25; Schleifer 1972, p. 113; Mutawi 1987, p. 99; and Bleaney & Lawless 1990, p. 44.

<sup>33</sup> Schleifer 1972, p. 113; Michael W. Suleiman, "American Mass Media and the June Conflict," in Abu-Lughod 1970, p. 152. Suleiman does not deal with the War of 1967 *per se*, but rather how it was reported in American newsmagazines (e.g. *Time*, *US News and World Report*, etc.). He concludes that there was a strong pro-Israeli and anti-Arab bias in all the magazines he analyzed.

decision is explained—cannot be said to be a move which lessened the risk of a war *could* be an explanation why this aspect of the crisis leading up to the war is not even mentioned in the majority of the sources. Due to the infrequency of works mentioning the whole concept of UNEF on Israel's side of the border, in addition to the implications of Israel's refusal, works that mention this concept are in this instance deemed pro-Arab, while works where this concept is ignored are considered pro-Israeli.

### The closing of the Straits of Tiran

On May 22, at the Egyptian air base of Bir Gafgafa in the Sinai, President Nasser of Egypt announced that the Straits of Tiran were to be closed for Israeli shipping and for neutral ships bound for Israel carrying strategic goods (i.e. oil). The blockade went into effect the next day. When it comes to this theme, as was the case with Nasser's request for the removal of UNEF, Nasser's personal intentions are the main bone of contention between the sources. Even though some sources argue that Egypt may have had a fairly strong legal case for closing the Straits the move by Nasser, regardless of his intentions, is viewed almost universally as a step that intensified the crisis.<sup>34</sup> The question is whether Nasser, by deciding to block the Straits, had his mind set on a war with Israel.

In some sources, Nasser's actions from the very beginning leading up to the actual war were led by his desire to go to war against Israel. Or, as in the words of one writer: "During the tense days preceding the Six-Day War, Gamal Abdel Nasser's thoughts and actions seemed to be governed exclusively by his monomaniacal desire to annihilate the State of Israel."<sup>35</sup> This view is a minority view, as shown above regarding Nasser's intentions for having UNEF removed, but when it comes to the closing of the Straits, some of the writers who did not

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<sup>34</sup> For examples of sources where it is argued that Egypt may have had a strong legal case for closing the Straits, see Churchill & Churchill 1967, p. 42f.; and Schleifer 1972, pp. 118ff.

<sup>35</sup> Rosensaft 1969, p. 34.

see Nasser's orders for the withdrawal of UNEF as an indication of his warlike thinking view the blockade of the Straits of Tiran as the turning point. By closing the Straits, something that Israel had always viewed as a *casus belli*, Nasser must have known that there was going to be a war.<sup>36</sup>

As for the writers who argue that Nasser in fact did not want war by having the Straits closed, the same arguments that were presented in the case of the removal of UNEF are quoted: the desire to deter Israel from striking at Syria, internal and external pressure and a wish on Nasser's part to score a political victory over Israel.<sup>37</sup> In the words of one of the writers who argue that the closing of the Straits was a way for Nasser to achieve a political victory:

It [the closing of the Straits] canceled the main achievement of the Sinai Campaign. The Israeli economy could survive the closure of the straits, but the deterrent image of the IDF [Israel Defense Force] could not. Nasser understood the psychological significance of this step. He knew that Israel's entire defense philosophy was based on imposing its will on its enemies, not on submitting to unilateral dictates by them.<sup>38</sup>

The Egyptian closure of the Straits was in other words a gamble of sorts, where Nasser believed that he could force his will on the Israelis who would not react. Nasser's decision, according to this view, was an example of brinkmanship. In the disciplines of international relations and political science, brinkmanship is sometimes described as the tactic employed when an actor challenges its opponent with an action deemed unacceptable and potentially harmful by the actor's adversary. Needless to say, the actor who

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<sup>36</sup> See for instance Young 1967, p. 141; Draper 1968, p. 26; Gruber 1968, p. 47; Kimche & Bawly 1968, p. 178f.; Rosensaft 1969, p. 26f.; Viorst 1987, p. 191; Bailey 1990, p. 198f.; Sachar 1996, p. 626; Bregman & El-Tahri 1998, 67f.; Gilbert 1998, p. 368; and Bard 1999, p. 226.

<sup>37</sup> See for example Churchill & Churchill 1967, Ch. 2; Laqueur 1968, p. 231f.; Yost 1968, p. 82; Mutawi 1987, p. 93f.; Bleaney & Lawless 1990, p. 44; Khouri 1985, p. 246f.; J.R. Gainsborough, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict: A Politico-Legal Analysis* (Brookfield, VT: Gower Publishing, 1986), pp. 126f., 132f.; Quigley 1990, p. 162; Smith 1992, p. 196; Morris 1999, p. 306; and Thomas 1999, p. 160f.

<sup>38</sup> Shlaim 2000, p. 237.



pursues the tactic of brinkmanship estimates or hopes that the adversary will not respond and hence present the actor with a significant victory; be it territorial, economic, political, etc.

As with the case of Nasser's decision to have UNEF removed, an emphasis on Nasser's desire to engage in a war with Israel by closing the Straits of Tiran is here defined as the pro-Israeli view. Conversely, the interpretation that Nasser's move was political in nature can be argued to be pro-Arab.

#### The Egyptian-Jordanian defense treaty

As the crisis began in May 1967, relations between Jordan and Egypt were not particularly good. It therefore came as a surprise to most observers when Jordan's King Hussein traveled to Egypt on May 30, signed a mutual five-year Egyptian-Jordanian defense treaty and placed the Jordanian armed forces under the command of an Egyptian general; Abdul Munim Riad (not to be confused with Mahmoud Riad, the Egyptian Foreign Minister). General Riad was to work in cooperation with the Egyptian military command.

The reasons for Hussein's decision to travel to Cairo and sign the treaty are more or less ignored in a large number of sources, or they are just explained as part of an overarching scheme to attack Israel: "The entire Arab world was called upon to support the Egyptian-Syrian attempt to wipe out the Jewish state."<sup>39</sup> Where the pact is analyzed more in depth, the consensus seems to be that Hussein made his decision because of Arab nationalist feelings, as well as because of pressure and fear of political instability from the Palestinian citizens of the kingdom. The following quote illustrates this view:

Hussein's flight to Cairo had been a desperate bid by the king to maintain his credibility as a leader in the Arab world, and particularly among his Palestinian subjects on the West Bank.

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<sup>39</sup> Dolan 1991, p. 129.

With Nasser weaving clouds of glory by his challenge to Israel, Hussein faced severe unrest among his own people, perhaps civil war, if he chose to sit out the looming conflict as he had sat out the Sinai Campaign in 1956.<sup>40</sup>

Samir Mutawi, whose focus is on Jordan during the crisis and the war, argues that Hussein was genuinely afraid of an Israeli attack on his territory in order to capture Jerusalem and the West Bank. The king believed, according to Mutawi, that Israel could very well chose to attack his country even if there were no hostilities on the common border, as they could easily just use previous raids originating from Jordanian territory as an excuse. Hence, the treaty with Egypt should be viewed as an attempt by Hussein to discourage Israel from attacking Jordan. Mutawi also mentions the king's commitment to the Arab cause as well as his fear of civil disturbances as factors leading to the decision to travel to Egypt.<sup>41</sup>

During the discussion of the previous themes, it was pointed out that the majority did not see Nasser's request to have UNEF removed as an indication that he had his mind set on war. With the closing of the Straits of Tiran, some of those who argued that Nasser initially did not seek war change their perception and argue that the closing was an indication of Nasser's hostile intentions. In the case of the Egyptian-Jordanian treaty, some of the writers who up to this point in the crisis have argued that Nasser was not set on war and that a military confrontation could have been avoided now make the case that the pact made war inevitable. The reason for this is that Israel's position was severely undermined with the pact, and that the pact presented Israel with a great military threat:

The Defence Pact of May 30 was undoubtedly the turning-point between peace and war. Strategically, an alliance between Egypt and Jordan could scarcely be tolerated by Israel. For Israel would now be exposed to attack at its most vulnerable point, the 'soft under-belly' where Jordanian territory formed a salient into Israel

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<sup>40</sup> Rabinovich 1987, p. 57.

<sup>41</sup> Mutawi 1987, pp. 101-10.

and provided a hostile base for attack only twelve miles from the Mediterranean coast. Under the defence pact, the Egyptian Chief of Staff would command both Jordanian and UAR Forces in the event of war, so establishing a pincer which could be manipulated from Cairo.<sup>42</sup>

What is interesting to note regarding this view of the defense pact is that it is assumed to be offensive in nature. The pact was officially a defensive treaty, which spelled out that both states committed themselves to come to the assistance of the other in the case of an attack. It could, in other words, only be a threat to Israel if Egypt and Jordan actually were planning an attack.

There are some writers who argue that the pact between Egypt and Jordan in fact did not present Israel with a significant military threat. The line of argumentation here goes beyond the obvious threat of Israel having to potentially fight two or, if one adds Syria to the equation, three armies. Instead, the authors who argue that the pact was not particularly important argue that for a military pact to be truly effective, a great deal of time is necessary to invest in the effort of preparation and coordination. One of the authors in fact argues that the pact may in all actuality have caused more problems than it alleviated for Egypt and Jordan.<sup>43</sup>

The implications here should be quite clear: that King Hussein decided to sign a defense treaty with Egypt because he was afraid of civil unrest in his country, or indeed of an Israeli attack, needless to say paints a less belligerent picture of the king than just mentioning the pact, or than saying that the pact was part of an Arab plan to encircle Israel. As for the threat the pact posed to Israel, an emphasis on Israel's grave situation after the pact came into effect signifies a more belligerent Arab effort, or a pro-Israeli view, because an emphasis on Israel's precarious position also signifies an offensive

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<sup>42</sup> Randolph S. Churchill & Winston S. Churchill, *The Six Day War* (London: William Heinemann, 1967), p. 52f.

<sup>43</sup> Hammel 1992, p. 38. Other works where it is argued that the treaty was not a significant military threat to Israel are Young 1967, p. 80; and Khouri 1985, pp. 249, 281.

aspect of the pact. The authors who question or downplay the threat the pact posed to Israel are on the other hand defined to write from a pro-Arab perspective in this instance.

Israel's situation leading up to the war

As we have seen above, quite a few writers see the Jordanian-Egyptian pact as something that seriously worsened Israel's position, whereas some writers see the pact as quite inconsequential with regard to Israel's security. As there is a discussion of the seriousness of the pact, in addition to the Iraqi and Saudi military contingents being moved into Jordan, about half of the specific works make the conclusion that Israel's very existence was in danger prior to the war, while only 25% argue that Israel was not in any real danger.<sup>44</sup> What is implicit, or in some cases explicit, in this assessment is: (1) that the Arabs were going to attack; and (2) that if Israel was attacked and defeated there was going to be Israeli casualties in genocidal proportions. In relation to a discussion of Israel being in an extremely dire position, and of course also because of Israel's Jewish character, there are a number of allusions made to and parallels drawn to the Holocaust:

Would this be a new holocaust? Had Israel been born in 1948 only to be destroyed in 1967? Had the great "ingathering of all the peoples" brought them into one tiny land, the more easily to be slaughtered?

These were the darkest days the people had known since Auschwitz.<sup>45</sup>

Where Israel's survival is described as having been in serious danger, the greater number of Arab troops is mentioned, as is the fact that Israel was more or less completely surrounded. There is furthermore no real distinction made between the states that Israel potentially

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<sup>44</sup> See Appendix 1 for the exact distribution of how the specific works relate themselves to this theme.

<sup>45</sup> Gruber 1968, p. 60. Quote is two paragraphs in original.

faced in a confrontation (Egypt, Jordan and Syria) and the Arab world at large in a number of sources. In one of the sources, the author repeats in a number of instances that Israel's 2 ½ million citizens faced over 100 million Arabs.<sup>46</sup>

As mentioned above, half of the specific works include the concept that Israel's existence was threatened. In the more general books, the situation is somewhat different: less than half of the works make the claim that Israel's existence was in danger, but these sources nevertheless outnumber those that argue that Israel was not in any serious danger. The reason for this is that the ambiguous sources make up the difference.<sup>47</sup> There are also only a few allusions made to the Holocaust in the general works, and then it is mentioned in the sense that some Israelis were afraid of a second Holocaust or that Holocaust survivors were more worried during the weeks leading up to the war than other Israelis.

In the works where Israel's situation prior to the outbreak of the war is described in less dangerous terms, the primary reason given is that Israel, despite the possibility of having to face three armies, was the strongest party. It has also been mentioned that there were no realistic Arab offensive plans—or even a desire to go to war—and that there was very little, if any, true military cooperation between the three Arab states. Referring to the situation after King Hussein's trip, one author gives the following observation: "Egypt now had defense pacts with two nations who were sworn enemies of each other. Military rhetoric notwithstanding, the Arab military was hardly united."<sup>48</sup> The assessment of sworn enemies apart, Jordan did sever diplomatic relations with Syria in May 1967 due to the latter regime's real or alleged aims of overthrowing King Hussein. Abdullah Schleifer, who at the time of the war was a journalist in Jordanian East Jerusalem, has written on what he deems as the almost

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<sup>46</sup> Dorothy Fuldheim, *Where Were the Arabs?* (Cleveland: The World Publishing Company, 1967).

<sup>47</sup> See Appendix 1 for the exact distribution.

<sup>48</sup> Smith 1992, p. 197.

universal view in May and June 1967 that Israel was the weakest party prior to the war:

The one common conviction that did arise among the masses of Arabs, Israelis, Europeans, and Americans—and, in the most immediately paralyzing sense, throughout the Arab elite in the final hours—was the belief that a formidable Arab war machine did indeed exist. In the case of educated Arab conviction, this Arab armed force was considered sufficient to withstand any Israeli assault and to mount a limited counterattack, but the broader Arab public imagined a sweep to Tel Aviv. In the carefully cultivated understanding of the Western and Israeli publics, this Arab force was poised for Nasser's signal to rush in and exterminate every Israeli.<sup>49</sup>

Although Schleifer mentions the Western and Israeli view that there was going to be a genocide if the Arabs were to win the war, he does not, and nor does any other writer who doubts the danger Israel was in, evaluate whether there would have been a bloodbath or not if the Israelis would have lost. Of course such an evaluation would be rather speculative, but it is interesting to note that there is no such attempt in any of the sources analyzed.

The implications of this theme are very important. This is because Israel used and still uses the argument of anticipatory self-defense for why it struck first in the war. Anticipatory self-defense basically means that instead of waiting to receive the initial blow, you instead strike first in order to gain, and hopefully keep, the initiative. As the legitimacy of anticipatory self-defense is a highly debated subject in international law<sup>50</sup> (although this debate is in fact only mentioned in two of the sources<sup>51</sup>), an emphasis on the fact that Israel was faced with such a grave danger that it could mean the destruction of the

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<sup>49</sup> Schleifer 1972, p. 125.

<sup>50</sup> For a review of this debate, see for instance Anthony Clark Arend & Robert J. Beck, *International Law and the Use of Force: Beyond the UN Charter Paradigm* (London & New York: Routledge, 1993), Ch. 5. The debate mostly seems to focus on how to interpret Article 51, which is the article in the UN Charter that deals with the right of states to use force in self-defense.

<sup>51</sup> Gainsborough 1986 and Quigley 1990.

state legitimizes Israel's attack on its neighbors. No one would expect Israel to wait for an attack that could prove fatal out of respect for international law, if indeed anticipatory self-defense is illegal, when it could prevent the danger to its existence by being the first to attack.

On the contrary, by arguing that Israel was not in any mortal danger, Israel comes across as the aggressor. If anticipatory self-defense is a widely debated concept, there seems to be an almost universal consensus that unprovoked aggression is indeed illegal according to international law.

Furthermore, to argue that Israel was about to be destroyed by the armies of three Arab states presents Israel as being the underdog; with all the sympathy usually given instinctively to the weaker party of a conflict. By maintaining that Israel did not face annihilation, or indeed an attack, the parties are presented as being more equally footed. Or, when one takes the massive defeat the Arab states suffered in the war that followed, the Arab states could be seen as in fact being the weaker party. In conclusion, the argument that Israel faced serious danger is here the pro-Israeli view, whereas the contention that Israel's situation prior to the war was not grave is in this instance the pro-Arab view.

#### Reasons for Israel's victory

There is no question in the sources that Israel won a great victory in the war and, subsequently, that the Arab states that participated (Egypt, Jordan and Syria) suffered great defeats. The question, however, is why Israel was able to win so decisively over its opponents and how the reasons given for Israel's victory fit in with the general discussion of the War of 1967. What is of course of most interest is how the authors who argue that Israel was faced with the real prospect of annihilation prior to the war explain the fact that Israel was able to rout the armies of three countries and seize a large amount of enemy territory in only six days of fighting.

It is noteworthy that in a large amount of the sources where Israel's poor situation before the war is emphasized, there is only limited analysis of why Israel won. The major reason for Israel's victory in most of these sources is the surprise air strike against the Egyptian air force on the morning of June 5, and the subsequent air strikes against the air forces of Jordan and Syria later that same day.<sup>52</sup> Through these air strikes, Israel gained and kept almost complete air supremacy for the remainder of the war. Although Israeli historian Benny Morris does not argue in his book that Israel was in severe danger prior to the war, he claims that the air strikes were instrumental for Israel's victory:

The day's air offensives gave Israel almost unhindered superiority over the battlefields of Sinai, the West Bank, and the Golan Heights and freed the IAF for continuous support missions against the Arab ground forces. The Israeli planes were to bomb, napalm, and strafe the Arab positions and armored columns almost at will; the main problems were to be fatigue, turnaround times, repairs, maintenance, and friend-or-foe identification of ground forces. The constant Israeli air attacks were a major factor in the successive demoralization and collapse of the Egyptian, Jordanian, and Syrian armies.<sup>53</sup>

Another aspect that has been brought forward as a key feature of Israel's victory is the psychological aspect of fighting for its existence. According to this view, Israeli soldiers and officers fought with great courage to the limit of their capabilities and with a large amount of self-sacrifice. The Israeli soldiers, in this view, fought not only to preserve their own lives, but also to preserve the lives of their families and indeed for the survival of their state. Closely linked to this aspect of Israel's victory is the argument that the Israeli officers were unique in the sense that they led their troops not with the command of "Forward!" but rather with the command of "Follow me!" The great

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<sup>52</sup> See for example Churchill & Churchill 1967, p. 177; Gruber 1968, pp. 193ff.; Rabinovich 1987, p. 100; Samuel 1989, p. 122; Bickerton & Klausner 1991, p. 151; Smith 1992, p. 198; Fraser 1995, p. 84f.; Bard 1999, p. 226f.; Schulze 1999, pp. 37ff.; and Shlaim 2000, p. 241.

<sup>53</sup> Morris 1999, p. 318.



dedication and courage, as well as the high level of training, shown by the Israeli officer corps is also pointed out as a main aspect of Israel's victory. The following quote illustrates these two concepts:

Its [the Israeli army] units came together to do a particular job, which was examined, discussed, decided upon, and executed in a workmanlike manner. If they fell down on that job, they knew it would mean the end of Israel. Officers maintained their authority not by orthodox discipline but by personal example. Their function was to lead and if necessary to get killed, as many of them did. But if they did get killed, their men knew what to do – and even if they did not, their training and their *esprit de corps* enabled them to keep the initiative. The morale and efficiency of the Israelis was not the product of military indoctrination; it was rooted in their realization that they had escaped massacre once, and were unlikely to get a second chance.<sup>54</sup>

In contrast to the factors brought forward above, there are authors who argue that Israel won the war so decisively and speedily because Israel in all actuality was the strongest party. The authors of the three specific works that deal more or less exclusively with the war from an analytical military point of view all argue that the war was won by the strongest party.<sup>55</sup> Some of the factors mentioned that were involved in Israel's victory include: (1) superior Israeli planning and military intelligence; (2) a unified command, whereas the three Arab states had three different commands; (3) shorter supply lines; (4) in all actuality more troops and military hardware on the separate fronts and sectors, as the Israelis were able to swiftly move troops from sector to sector and front to front; (5) inferior training and discipline in all three Arab armies; and (6) the early breakdown of communications in the Arab armies that was partly caused by Israel jamming its opponents' radio frequencies.<sup>56</sup> It should be pointed out

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<sup>54</sup> Howard & Hunter 1967, p. 29.

<sup>55</sup> Young 1967; O'Ballance 1972; and Hammel 1992. There are a few other works that deal more or less exclusively with the military aspects of the war, but they are less analytical and more descriptive in nature. The authors of these works, in other words, are more concerned with telling a story than with analysis.

<sup>56</sup> See above works, in addition to Khouri 1985, p. 260f.

here that the air strikes are mentioned as being important as well, but more for determining the speed with which Israel won.

The implications of these two outlooks are quite clear. By bringing forward the surprise air strikes on the air forces of Egypt, Jordan and Syria as the main reason for Israel's victory, Israel's preemptive strike is justified (the pro-Israeli view). If Israel faced the grave danger of annihilation prior to June 5, the surprise attack on that day was the single factor that not only prevented the Arab armies from attacking Israel, but also ensured Israel's continued existence as a state. The air assaults were then in other words both necessary and justified.

If, on the other hand, Israel was in fact the strongest party all along (the pro-Arab view), the justification of the surprise attacks becomes more precarious. This is because Israel, being the strongest party from the outset, was not in any mortal danger. Any argument for using anticipatory self-defense cannot in this situation use the claim that Israel had to launch a surprise attack in order to safeguard its existence. And, due to the heavily debated issue over the legality of anticipatory self-defense in general, Israel's actions at the outbreak of the war could be seen as nothing short of unjustified aggression.

#### Main themes: conclusions

In her general study of the Arab-Israeli conflict, historian Kirsten Schulze argues that there are four different interpretations of who was to blame for the War of 1967. The first interpretation is what Schulze defines as the Israeli, and which lays the blame on Nasser for the war by closing the Straits of Tiran. The second interpretation sees Nasser's actions as political, and not military, in nature and subsequently places the blame of the conflict on Israel's shoulders. According to Schulze, the third interpretation sees the war as the result of a mutual policy of escalation that led to the war more or less

by accident. And, finally, the fourth interpretation sees the war as a result of superpower manipulation of their regional clients/allies.<sup>57</sup>

The three first interpretations brought forward by Schulze are seen in the sources analyzed, whereas there is only one example of the fourth.<sup>58</sup> Soviet manipulation of both Egypt and Syria is mentioned in a number of sources with regard to the report claiming Israeli troop concentrations and intentions to attack Syria. This, however, is where the role of superpower manipulation ends in the sources analyzed, as it is mentioned in a number of sources that the Soviet Union repeatedly urged both Egypt and Israel to refrain from escalating the crisis. Although there were definite superpower interests in the region—Israel and Jordan had close relations with the United States, whereas Egypt and Syria were allied with the Soviet Union—the superpowers, according to the majority of sources, in fact only played a limited role in the crisis and the following war. In one of the sources, however, the United States is pointed out as giving more than just psychological assistance to Israel:

Although the United States did not acknowledge a direct role in the fighting, it sent reconnaissance aircraft that traced nighttime movement of Egypt's ground troops to facilitate daytime Israeli air attacks on them. The Egyptian troops were forced to move at night because, with their air force destroyed, they had no protection against air strikes. The air strikes were important in Israel's rapid victory.<sup>59</sup>

As we have seen in the discussion above, there are clearly a number of sources where it is claimed that the Arabs were responsible for the war. Some writers claim that Nasser wanted to go to war from the

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<sup>57</sup> Schulze 1999, p. 33.

<sup>58</sup> Glubb 1968, p. 21-39. In this article, which is a reprinted version of a lecture given by Glubb to the Middle East Institute in Washington D.C. in October 1967, Glubb argues that the Soviet Union may have planned the whole war in order for the Arab states to get defeated. The Arab states would then be forced to come to the Soviets for assistance and the USSR would hence become more entrenched in the Middle East. It should be pointed out that Glubb only gives limited attention to this theory in his lecture.

<sup>59</sup> Quigley 1990, p. 162.

very beginning, some see the removal of UNEF or closing of the Straits of Tiran as the turning point, whereas some see the defense pact between Egypt and Jordan as the determining factor. What the writers who put the blame on the Arabs all have in common is the argument that although Israel in fact initially started the war, it was only in *reaction* to prior Arab actions.

In the works where Israel is pointed out as the guilty party, the authors are usually more subtle in assigning blame. The charge given to Israel is mostly implicit in the sense that Israel is described as the strongest party, and that hence its use of anticipatory self-defense was not justified. Israel is in other words blamed for overreacting to threats that were not real, or at least not as serious as they are portrayed in some of the more pro-Israeli sources. Nasser's actions prior to the war are also pointed out as being political, and not military, in nature. The assignment of blame to Israel for the war is in this sense "softer" than in the sources where the Arabs are portrayed as the belligerent party. There are, however, exceptions where Israel is described in more aggressive terms: "A supportable case can be made that Israel *sought* or welcomed belligerent Arab postures to justify war against a weak Arab world as *prophylaxis* against possible future war."<sup>60</sup> One author in fact charges Israel with having decided to go to war already in the beginning/middle of May 1967, but began planning for a war in the near future from 1965 onwards.<sup>61</sup>

As far as the view that the war was the result of mutual Arab and Israeli escalation and that both parties were to blame for the war, this notion is mostly prevalent in the general studies. It is also among the general works where most of the works that are as a whole ambiguous of who is to blame are found. The general works tend, more so than the specific works, to give more than one side to the story and their authors also tend to be more careful with giving their opinions on controversial points. There are nevertheless a number of

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<sup>60</sup> Thomas 1999, p. 167. Emphasis in original.

<sup>61</sup> Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, "Israel's Arab Policy," in Abu-Lughod 1970, pp. 66-90.

general works where the author's opinions on who is to blame are either explicit or not particularly hard to deduce.

In the above descriptions of the main themes, certain views were pointed out as being either pro-Israeli or pro-Arab. Below follows two charts where the proportions between the views deemed pro-Israeli, pro-Arab and ambiguous are shown. The values in the different fields indicate the number of works holding a certain view.

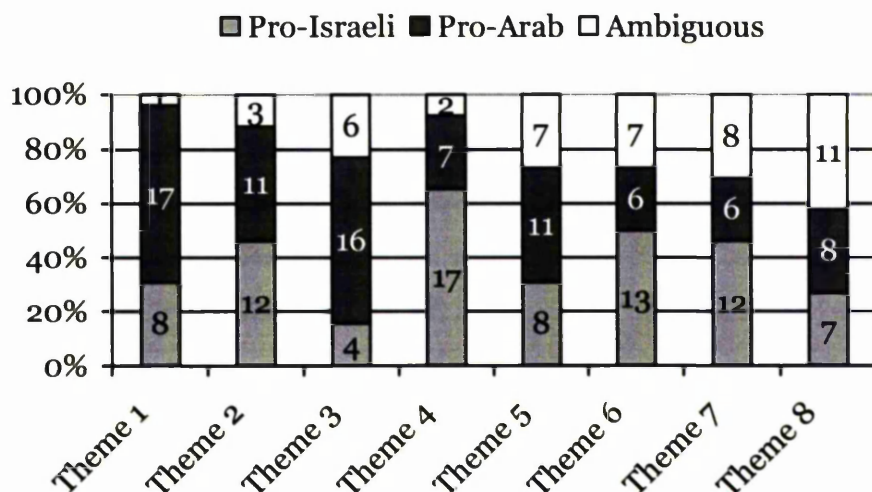


Figure I: Proportion of views held in the specific works

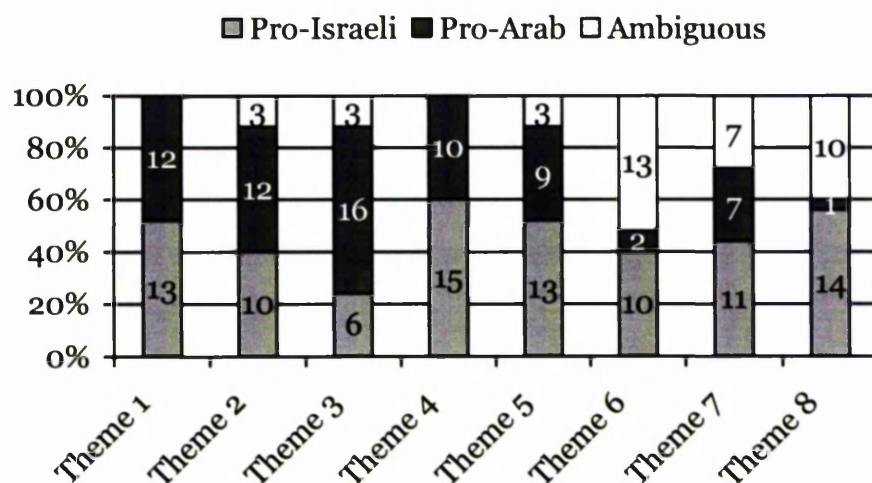


Figure II: Proportion of views held in the general works

What kind of conclusions can be made from the tables above? First some issues of the analysis of main themes need to be discussed. It should be pointed out, first of all, that not all designations of either pro-Israeli or pro-Arab are as clear-cut as others. What this means is that whereas some sources clearly spell out, for instance, that Nasser undoubtedly was set on war when he closed the Straits of Tiran, others only imply that he was. Then there are sources where it is not clear how the author relates him- or herself to the main themes. These sources have been deemed ambiguous in relation to the theme in question.

Second, it should be remembered that although some works are deemed as pro-Arab in relation to one or more themes, they are as a whole pro-Israeli in nature, and *vice versa*. This is especially clear considering that the majority of sources view Nasser's request for the removal of UNEF as a political move (the pro-Arab view), while the majority of sources also view Israel's position immediately prior to the war as extremely dire (the pro-Israeli view).

One of the first things apparent in the above charts is that there are quite a few sources that are deemed to be ambiguous in relation to the themes. This is in some cases due to what the sources concentrate on: for instance, some of the sources focus exclusively on the diplomacy and politics leading up to the war and leave the military aspects of the crisis more or less unexplored, whereas others do the reverse. In one of the sources, as a matter of fact, not a single one of the themes is evaluated upon as the author's focus is exclusively on the Israeli paratroopers' fight in Jerusalem.<sup>62</sup> In other cases, some themes are only touched upon, but not evaluated (for example writing that "on May 30, Jordan's King Hussein traveled to Cairo and signed a mutual defense treaty with President Nasser").

Nevertheless, most of the sources analyzed do position themselves as being either pro-Arab or pro-Israeli in relation to the main themes.

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<sup>62</sup> Landau 1968.

It is only regarding theme 6 (implications of the Jordanian-Egyptian defense treaty) that there are more ambiguous views held in the general works than there are outspoken views. All in all, however, it could be argued that the above charts illustrate that the method of sampling a few sources to identify differences in views in relation to major themes works quite well. The question then is whether or not the themes as such are valid, and whether or not the different views assigned to the themes are reasonable.

As described above, there are two themes (1 and 4) where the writers are classified as being either pro-Israeli or pro-Arab by either mentioning or not mentioning a certain event. The assumption made regarding these two themes is that the events as such (Israel threatening Syria and not accepting UNEF on its territory) could be construed as not working in Israel's favor. And, by failing to mention them, the author has committed him- or herself to a pro-Israeli view in relation to this topic. It is in other words assumed that the author knew about this event and chose not to include it in the final work. It would seem as if the events described above are well-known enough to merit this classification. The problem, however, is that there probably *are* authors who did not know about the events in question—or did not focus their works on the politics/diplomacy leading up to the war—and are hence deemed pro-Israeli. It is of course impossible to know in how many of the works deemed pro-Israeli this is the case.

It is in the above charts possible to deduce that there is some chaos in how the different sources relate to the main themes. What this indicates is that there are no clear standard narratives of the war—either from a pro-Arab or pro-Israeli perspective. Or, to put it perhaps more accurately, there are some standard narratives, but they are not employed all that extensively. The standard pro-Israeli account would maybe read something like this:

By asking UNEF to be removed in full, by closing the Straits of Tiran and by signing the pact with Jordan, Nasser clearly had his mind set on war. Prior to the war, Israel's very existence was in danger and the only option Israel had in order to survive was to launch a surprise attack, which proved to be successful.

A standard pro-Arab narrative, on the other hand, could look like this:

Nasser initially only sought a partial removal of UNEF, and his actions were only deterrent and political in nature. He did not, in other words, seek to go to war against Israel. Israel was not in any serious danger prior to the war, even after the Jordanian-Egyptian defense treaty, and hence Israel's surprise attack was not justified. Israel won the war because it was the strongest party already from the outset.

Although these standard interpretations are used in some sources, they are the exception. In the majority of sources, the authors chose their own interpretations, or indeed chose not to delve into certain aspects, and are not bound by the standard narratives. Nevertheless, at the end of the day it is also clear that there are more pro-Israeli views than there are pro-Arab views, especially when it comes to describing the later events of the crisis. This is probably not that surprising to most students of the Arab-Israeli conflict. What may, however, come as a surprise is that there are in fact so many ambiguous and pro-Arab views in relation to the themes.



As for possible classifications of the themes, there are four possible categories:

- (1) Themes in which a certain event does not paint a favorable light of one of the adversaries, and is hence ignored in a number of sources (themes 1 and 4);
- (2) Themes where it is not entirely clear what took place, but the different authors chose one or the other narrative without commenting on the difficulties surrounding the event (theme 2);
- (3) Themes where the intentions of a certain actor (in this case Egyptian President Nasser) are interpreted differently (themes 3 and 5);
- (4) Themes where larger situations and events are interpreted differently, with quite distinct implications (themes 6, 7 and 8).

If one were to say that all differences in opinion shown in relation to the different themes are biased in some way, one could also make the case that the themes in the first two classifications are examples of a more conscious bias, while the themes in the latter two classifications could be said to be more of differences of opinion. The reason why it is possible to say that the themes belonging to the former two classifications could be construed as being examples of more conscious bias is because they most likely involve some sort of selection of the material. The selection referred to is that the author in these instances has made a narrative choice that works in favor of the view he or she is trying to transmit to the reader. When it comes to the second theme (whether or not Egypt initially requested the withdrawal of the whole of UNEF or not), there are as mentioned above only a few sources that mention the fact that it is not entirely clear of what actually took place. By choosing one factual statement (either in favor of a full or of a partial withdrawal) and by not

mentioning that there is a debate of what happened, the author has in some ways manipulated how the event is described.

That authors manipulate the description of events to fit a grander scheme is of course nothing new and it could easily be said that the themes belonging to the latter two classifications could also be said to be examples of this. The difference, however, is that the themes in the latter classifications do not deal with events in the strictest sense of the word: they rather deal with interpreting a historical process. Whereas the themes belonging to the former classifications deal with whether something happened or how it happened, the themes belonging in the latter two classifications deal with the tougher questions of how to interpret a certain event or situation. Were the air strikes carried out by Israel instrumental to winning the war, or would Israel have won regardless? Was Israel facing the real prospect of destruction prior to the war, or was Israel's position never particularly dire? These kinds of questions are not on the same level as whether or not Egypt at the outset sought a complete withdrawal of UNEF or not. This question could, theoretically at least, be settled through locating and reading all pertinent documents. The harder questions belonging to the latter themes, on the other hand, are much tougher to answer with the same certainty, and this where interpretation comes in. Interpreting is something historians and others do all the time, as many questions are more or less impossible to settle conclusively, and the themes belonging to the latter classifications are probably no different. The difference, perhaps, is that the authors of the examined sources in most cases just state how they view the events; without offering the different opinions that in fact do exist.

In the introduction, it was said that the question of whether works on the Arab-Israeli conflict should be considered scholarship or propaganda is an important question of this thesis. When it comes to the themes belonging to the two former classifications above, one has an easier case arguing that we are talking about propaganda than

regarding the themes belonging to the latter two classifications. In other words, it could be said that there are most likely instances of propaganda within the former themes. There are probably authors who in all actuality deceive their readers by not telling the whole story. As for the latter themes, the different views held could be seen more as differences of interpretations, or bias in the sense of the word as used in this thesis as they present one of the actors of the conflict in a more positive light than the other.

### *Further Observations*

In some of the early specific works, it is claimed that Israel in fact did not fire the first shot on June 5, but that Israel merely responded to Egyptian troop movements and indications that Egyptian airplanes were on their way towards Israel. This view corresponds well to the official Israeli account of events presented at the start of the war: i.e. that Israel was not the instigator of violence. This account changed about a month later (July 7) with a statement by Prime Minister Levi Eshkol; where he acknowledged that Israel did strike first as an act of anticipatory self-defense.<sup>63</sup> Some of the writers simply transmit the Israeli account whereas there are some writers who question the validity of the Israeli claims. British journalist W. Byford-Jones, for instance, points out that it is unclear what happened to the Egyptian airplanes that were supposedly on their way to Israel, as the majority of the Egyptian air force was destroyed on the ground. Byford-Jones also questions whether it was indeed possible for anyone to see the dust of Egyptian movements towards the border from the area of Mitzpe Ramon in the Negev, as Israel had claimed as one of the

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<sup>63</sup> For a discussion on this topic see Quigley 1990, p. 163f.

indications that Egypt was about to attack.<sup>64</sup> In conclusion to these questions Byford-Jones argues that, “[p]robably Israel’s greatest achievement off the battlefields had been in making it seem to the world that Egypt had started the war.”<sup>65</sup> What is interesting about this is that it shows the great speed some of the specific works published in 1967 were written and published, as it was only a month later that Israel officially acknowledged having fired the first shot.

Another interesting observation regarding the sources is the propensity of allusions made in the specific works to the Bible, early Jewish history, the history of the pre-state Jewish community of Palestine and the Holocaust. Besides the obvious allusions made to the Bible (e.g. “Hebron is where Abraham is said to be buried”), there are also statements alluding to the Bible or other aspects of Jewish history made that seem to play into a larger Zionist framework; justifying not only the war but also the very existence of Israel as a Jewish state:

For the first time in more than nineteen hundred years, the flag with the Star of David flew over Jerusalem. It had not done so since the Roman general Titus had marched his legions into the Temple to find the mysterious God of the Jews, whom they worshipped and for whose sake they refused to bow to the Roman gods—a refusal that meant death for them. . . . Not since that day had Jerusalem been theirs, and on this June day in 1967 there flooded through the land an emotion difficult to comprehend, one of spiritual exaltation as well as military pride. Other victories against the Arabs were a necessary achievement for survival, but Jerusalem was different; this was more than survival, this was a spiritual experience, a victory exalted beyond military victory. No sooner had the gates opened than a hundred thousand people, as if animated by the same impulse, walked the long uphill path to the Wailing Wall. Strong men wept, soldiers and civilians alike.<sup>66</sup>

There are quite a few accounts about the capture of the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem that are similar to the above quote, but allusions to the

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<sup>64</sup> For Byford-Jones’ discussion on this topic see Byford-Jones 1967, pp. 72, 103f, 166.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 166.

<sup>66</sup> Fuldheim 1967, p. 67f.

Jewish connection to the Holy Land either through history, the Bible or both are present in other contexts as well. As for the references made to the Holocaust, these are somewhat obvious in the sense that it is pointed out in a great deal of sources that Israel most likely would have faced casualties of genocidal proportions if it had lost the war. Although the connection between the allusions made to the Holocaust and the enterprise of Israel as a whole is mostly implied in the majority of the sources, the following quote illustrates the connection quite clearly:

To act against the enemies of the Jews, and if necessary to act alone—that was why the state of Israel had been created in the first place. In the Jewish mind, the situation in the spring of 1967 seemed classic. The Jews menaced by their enemies, were now abandoned by their friends. Was this not the story of the Holocaust? It was the scenario for which the Jews demanded a state of their own. The crisis reaffirmed the Jewish disposition, cultivated during centuries of anti-Semitism, to believe that in crisis the Jews could count only upon themselves.<sup>67</sup>

The connection between the Holocaust and Zionism is needless to say a large topic that probably deserves a study of its own. It is also a possibly contentious issue beyond the scope of this thesis, and is hence not further explored. It should be pointed out, however, that it has been claimed by some scholars that the War of 1967 acted as a catalyst for the growth of interest in the Holocaust in at least the United States.<sup>68</sup>

Possibly due to the swiftness of the war, there were not that many civilian casualties or acts of atrocities committed by either parties (or at least not in comparison with other wars of the twentieth century). Some appalling acts are nevertheless mentioned in a few sources, and

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<sup>67</sup> Milton Viorst, *Sands of Sorrow: Israel's Journey from Independence* (New York: Harper & Row, 1987), p. 92.

<sup>68</sup> For a discussion on the role of the War of 1967 for raising interest in the Holocaust in the United States see for example Peter Novick, *The Holocaust in American Life* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1999), Ch. 8.

these are here discussed. The one act that is mentioned in quite a few sources is the Egyptian army firing on its own troops trying to cross the Suez Canal. As the Egyptian army came to disintegrate from the Israeli offensive, a large number of Egyptian soldiers came to flee on their own or in small groups from the Israelis; trying to reach the Canal in order to cross over to the more populated western side. A great number of Egyptians never made it to the Canal and subsequently died of thirst, hunger and/or exposure to the sun and the other elements. It has been estimated that as many as 10,000 or even more Egyptian soldiers perished in this manner. The atrocity that has been pointed out is that there were instances where Egyptian soldiers on the western side of the Canal fired on other Egyptian soldiers trying to swim over the waterway. In some sources, the reasons for these killings are not mentioned, but in some it is said that the soldiers firing had orders to do so in order to prevent Egyptian refugees from reaching the populated parts of Egypt and subsequently telling the general public of the disastrous performance of the Egyptian army. It has also been pointed out, however, that the shootings could simply have been the result of mistakenly identifying the swimming soldiers as Israelis trying to cross the Canal.<sup>69</sup>

The other atrocity committed by the Arabs mentioned in some sources is the instance where two captured Israeli pilots are said to have been murdered on Syrian television. In one account, these pilots were hacked to pieces, in one they were crucified and in yet another source only the fact that they were murdered is mentioned.<sup>70</sup> In two works, furthermore, Egyptian villagers in the Nile Delta are charged with having murdered a captured Israeli pilot.<sup>71</sup>

The Israelis, on the other hand, are charged in some accounts with having deliberately destroyed civilian property on the West Bank; in particular in the towns of Qalkilya and Tulkarm where a

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<sup>69</sup> See for instance Bashan 1967, p. 145; Byford-Jones 1967, p. 117; O'Ballance 1972, p. 168; and Bleaney & Lawless 1990, p. 48.

<sup>70</sup> Fuldheim 1967, p. 95; Young 1967, p. 89; Gruber 1968, p. 109.

<sup>71</sup> Bar-Zohar 1970, p. 216; and Young 1967, p. 89.

great number of houses were destroyed and property damaged. It is also said in some sources that the Israeli army completely leveled four smaller villages in the so-called Latrun salient (close to the Tel Aviv-Jerusalem highway). Furthermore, the Israelis are also charged with having used napalm as well as regular artillery and air strikes on civilian areas in Jerusalem and in the rest of the West Bank. There are also charges made in some sources against the Israelis for having expelled a large number of West Bank Palestinians from their homes, and for having killed captured Egyptian prisoners of war.<sup>72</sup> Abdullah Schleifer, the East Jerusalem journalist, has written that there was Israeli looting, committed by both soldiers and civilians, in captured East Jerusalem. Schleifer, who devotes quite a bit of space to improper Israeli behavior in Jerusalem, makes the point that poor conduct by occupying armies of course is nothing unique to the Israelis and that other cities have suffered worse fates, but he also points out that this aspect of the war was largely neglected by Western press.<sup>73</sup>

All in all, however, there is not a great deal of mention of atrocities or inappropriate actions committed by either parties in the sources analyzed.

While reading the more popular, or journalistic, accounts that were published shortly after the war, one is sometimes struck by the similarities between the books. It is of course inevitable that books that deal with the same topic tend to be quite similar, but with some of these works it goes a little beyond that. In quite a few of the works, the same quotes appear, the same events are described in similar terms, etc. What these works have in common is that they are all written from the perspective that the focus is on Israel—but not always from a pro-Israeli position—and that most of their authors

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<sup>72</sup> See for example Morris 1999, pp. 319, 327f; O'Ballance 1972, pp. 205, 217; Smith 1992, p. 200; and Thomas 1999, pp. 176-83.

<sup>73</sup> Schleifer 1972, pp. 181-205.

were in Israel around the time of the war. A possible reason for the similarities between these sources could therefore be that the authors of these works relied quite heavily on their Israeli hosts for material.

The following example illustrates the similarities between seven sources quite well. They all deal with the initial Israeli breakthrough into Jerusalem's Old City by the commander of an Israeli paratroop brigade, Colonel Mordechai Gur. The three first quotes are in the words of their authors, while the latter three quotes are from Gur's mouth directly. The last quote appears verbatim in two sources (see reference).

Colonel Gur ordered his sturdy driver, Ben Tsur, a bearded fellow, weighing some fifteen stones, to speed on ahead. They passed the tanks and saw the Gate before them with a car burning outside it. There wasn't a lot of room, but the Colonel told Tsur to drive on. So they passed the burning car and saw St. Stephen's Gate half-opened in front. Regardless of the danger that somebody might drop grenades into their half-track from above, Tsur pushed on and flung the door aside. The half-track crunched over the fallen stones, passed a dazed Arab soldier, turned left, and came to a third gate. Here, a motor-cycle lay blocking the way. In spite of the danger of booby-traps Tsur drove right over it. So Colonel Gur reached the Temple Mount.<sup>74</sup>

Gur told his bearded driver, Ben-Tsur, to race ahead. They saw a car in flames outside the gate. The gate was half-opened. Ben-Tsur flung it wide open and, heedless of grenades and snipers, he sped on toward the third gate, the last before the Mount of the Temple. A motorcycle barred the road. Was it a booby trap? Gur was somehow certain it was an Israeli cycle. It was not. They sped right over it.<sup>75</sup>

Five meters ahead loomed the gate. There was only a fraction of a moment before he [i.e. the driver] would hit, but it was enough to make out two huge doors, the left one hanging partially open. He steered for the center of the gate. The half-track slammed hard and the left door toppled backward, the right door swinging open. An Arab jumped clear behind the gate, and a shower of small stones from the damaged arch fell into the half-track. They were inside the Old City.

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<sup>74</sup> Byford-Jones 1967, p. 147.

<sup>75</sup> Gruber 1968, p. 99f.



Gur ordered Ben-Tsur to turn sharply to the left. In that direction lay the Temple Mount, a walled compound with its own gates. A motorcycle stood across the path and the thought that it might be booby-trapped occurred to Ben-Tsur, but he drove the half-track over it and passed through the Tribes' Gate into the Temple compound.<sup>76</sup>

Our driver was a bearded fellow by the name of Ben-Zur. He tended to move along calmly, but when I told him 'Drive on!' he drove on. Near the gate a vehicle was burning, all but barring the way. But Ben-Zur had his orders, and he zoomed past it. At the gate a door swung, half-open; no doubt there were grenades above it. Ben-Zur sent the half-track right through, taking the door with him and just missing the shower of stones that came toppling down. An Arab was standing off to one side; would he be letting go with a grenade? Ben-Zur didn't give him time to make up his mind, but sped right by. We turned left to the third gate. It was open, but a motorcycle straddled the entrance; mined, no doubt, we thought. But Ben-Zur had his orders. He flattened the motorcycle (it had not been mined) and a moment later he halted the half-track on the Temple Mount.<sup>77</sup>

I told the half-track driver, 'Bentsur, go ahead!' and he spurted forward. We overtook the tanks, sped out in front, and there was the wall in front of us. A burning car on the road left us only a narrow passage. We passed the blazing vehicle and saw a half-open door in the gate. Above it there could have been—or should have been—grenades. 'Bentsur, keep going!' I yelled. He stepped on the gas and plunged into the door, shattering it and crushing the stones raining down from above that were blocking the road. As we thrust through, we passed an Arab on our right. A thought flashed through my mind—he could throw a grenade of fire a weapon. Nothing happened and we raced on, swerved sharply to the left, and reached another gate blocked by a motorcycle. 'Was it booby-trapped' we wondered. 'Bentsur, keep going!' The driver crashed through the motorcycle, which was not booby-trapped, and headed for the Temple Area.<sup>78</sup>

I told my driver, Ben Tsur, a bearded fellow weighing some 15 stone, to speed on ahead. We passed the tanks and saw the Gate before us with a car burning outside it. There wasn't a lot of room, but I told him to drive on and so we passed the burning car and saw the Gate half-open in front. Regardless of the danger that

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<sup>76</sup> Rabinovich 1987, p. 364f. The first edition of this book was published in 1972 by the same publisher.

<sup>77</sup> Mordechai Gur quoted in Bashan 1967, p.95.

<sup>78</sup> Mordechai Gur quoted in Dayan 1967, p. 167.

somebody might drop grenades into our half-track from above, he pushed on and flung the door aside, crunched over the fallen stones, passed by a dazed Arab soldier, turned left and came to another gate. Here, a motorcycle blocked the way but, despite the danger of a booby-trap, my driver drove right over it and we reached the Temple Mount.<sup>79</sup>

It is fairly clear that the above examples are indeed really quite similar—both in language and the details of their content—and that they must be relying on the same source. However, none of the authors who describe this episode provides us with a reference; except for Raphael Bashan, who writes that this account first appeared in the Hebrew language newspaper (called *Khativon*) of the paratroop brigade that conquered the Old City, and to be based on Gur's notes of the assault.<sup>80</sup> The fact that the quote was translated from Hebrew to English could explain the discrepancies between the sources that quote Gur directly. The above examples also show the popular style employed in quite a few of the early specific works.

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<sup>79</sup> Mordechai Gur quoted in Churchill & Churchill 1967, p. 140; and in Young 1967, p. 135.

<sup>80</sup> Bashan 1967, p. 80.

### 3. The time from 1967 to 1973

#### *Introduction*

In the previous chapter, the War of 1967 was described as it is problematized in the works under investigation. The War of 1967 proved to be of truly great importance in the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Regardless of its reasons, Israel's Arab neighbors suffered a great defeat, the territory under Israel's control was increased many-fold and a large number of Palestinians in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip came under Israel's direct control.

What took place during the years in-between the War of 1967 and the War of 1973 is dealt with in this chapter. Or, to put it more correctly, what happened in relation to Israel and its Arab neighbors is discussed. The growth in importance of the PLO and the so-called Palestinian question is described in a later chapter. During the time of 1967-73, there was a comparatively large amount of activity in the realms of diplomacy and politics relating to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Various peace initiatives were launched by the superpowers, by the United Nations and indeed by the parties themselves. None of these materialized however, and this is the focus of this chapter. There was also an armed conflict that took place between Israel and Egypt during this time—the so-called War of Attrition—and this is also discussed.

The focus in this chapter, as was also the case in the previous chapter, is on the main themes. These could in some ways be said to be the most important aspects of this time period, with one exception. In the fall of 1967, the United Nations Security Council

passed a resolution (number 242) that has come to be seen as one of the most important documents written on the Arab-Israeli conflict. There is no reason to go into the details of the resolution or how it came about; it is sufficient to say that it provides the so-called “land for peace”-formula. It calls on all parties in the region to accept each other’s existence and boundaries, the end of all belligerency and for Israel to withdraw from territories captured in the war of earlier that same year.<sup>1</sup> Another important aspect of resolution 242 is that it emphasizes the need to justly settle the refugee problem in the region.<sup>2</sup> Resolution 242 is readily available in a great number of works on the Arab-Israeli conflict as well as on the Internet, but it has also been included in this work as an appendix (appendix III).

## *Sources*

Compared with the literature relating to the War of 1967, the literature dealing with this time period is more modest in quantity. This time period is in some ways under-researched if one is to compare with other aspects of the Arab-Israeli conflict. But, in contrast to the sources used for the previous chapter, it is possible to give a short rundown of the individual titles that deal specifically with this time period. The general works used for this analysis are the same as those used in the previous chapter, whereas they are

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<sup>1</sup> In the French language version of the resolution, the definite article *les* is used in front of the word territories. Israel is in other words called upon to withdraw from all territories in this version. This has led to some controversy surrounding which of the two versions (i.e. the French or the English) should be regarded as the authoritative one, but the consensus amongst scholars of international law seems to be that it is the English version that should be favored. This is because the resolution was originally presented as a British draft, and it was this text that was voted on.

<sup>2</sup> This has almost universally been seen as a reference to the Palestinian refugee problem, but in one of the sources analyzed in this study the authors say that it also refers to the Jewish refugees who left Arab states around the time of Israel’s establishment in 1948 (Davis & Decter 1982, p. 41).

described in the introductory chapter. The specific works relating to the chapter are discussed in chronological order of publication:

Norman Bentwich's book *Israel: Two Fateful Years 1969-70*<sup>3</sup> is a journalistic book that deals mostly with how domestic Israeli politics and society changed after the War of 1967. There are only a few references made to the problems dealt with in this study.

Edgar O'Ballance, who also wrote on the War of 1967, has in addition written a book on the War of Attrition.<sup>4</sup> Like his book on the War of 1967, this work deals mostly with the military aspects of the armed conflict. It is written in a popular style with, one would assume, a readership in mind that is more interested in military matters than in politics and diplomacy.

The first more academic book published in English that deals with the time of 1967-73 was published in 1974 by Lawrence Whetten.<sup>5</sup> This book is very detailed and analytical in nature. It is however quite clear that it was written during the Cold War; as there is a great deal of discussion of the role of the superpowers in the Middle East in general (i.e. not dealing with the Arab-Israeli conflict specifically).

In 1978 an anthology was published which was the result of a conference held at the Shiloa Center (since 1983 called the Moshe Dayan Center) for Middle Eastern and African Studies at Tel Aviv University.<sup>6</sup> The conference in question, which dealt with the Middle East during the time of 1967-73, was held in 1974 and was as a matter of fact delayed due to the War of 1973. The anthology is quite large in scope, as it deals with such varied aspects as economics, inter-Arab and domestic Arab politics, the role of the superpowers, etc. There is

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<sup>3</sup> Norman Bentwich, *Israel: Two Fateful Years 1967-69* (London: Elek, 1970).

<sup>4</sup> Edgar O'Ballance, *The Electronic War in the Middle East 1968-70* (London: Faber & Faber Ltd., 1974).

<sup>5</sup> Lawrence L. Whetten, *The Canal War: Four-Power Conflict in the Middle East* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1974).

<sup>6</sup> Itamar Rabinovich & Haim Shaked (eds.), *From June to October: The Middle East between 1967 and 1973* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1978).

in fact only one article in this anthology that deals more specifically with the problems under investigation here.<sup>7</sup>

Israeli scholar of international relations Yaacov Bar-Siman-Tov published a book in 1980 that deals more or less exclusively with the War of Attrition.<sup>8</sup> The focus is on the war—mostly from a military tactical and strategic point of view—but the author also discusses some of the more political and diplomatic aspects of the conflict.

Another Israeli, Mordechai Gazit, has written a short book that was published in 1983.<sup>9</sup> This book deals with the question of the different peace initiatives launched during this time period, and Gazit deals with his material in an academic and analytical manner. The book was prepared when the author spent a year as a senior research fellow at both the Leonard Davis Institute for International Relations and the Harry S. Truman Research Institute for the Advancement of Peace, both tied to the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

The seventh book written on a specific aspect of the time period in question was published in 1985 by British writer Sydney Bailey.<sup>10</sup> Bailey has been the author of a great number of works on British politics and the workings of the United Nations. In this book, the author deals more or less exclusively with how the United Nations Security Council Resolution 242 came to be (see above on this resolution). The book is very detailed and the focus is obviously on diplomacy and politics.

In contrast to some of the perhaps dry academic works described above stands David Korn's *Stalemate* from 1992.<sup>11</sup> This book is written in a more popular style, and the author is a former American

<sup>7</sup> William B. Quandt, "The Arab-Israeli Conflict in American Foreign Policy," in *ibid.*, pp. 3-24.

<sup>8</sup> Yaacov Bar-Siman-Tov, *The Israeli-Egyptian War of Attrition, 1969-1970: A Case-Study of Limited Local War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980).

<sup>9</sup> Mordechai Gazit, *The Peace Process 1969 - 1973: Efforts and Contacts* (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, The Hebrew University, 1983).

<sup>10</sup> Sydney D. Bailey, *The Making of Resolution 242* (Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1985).

<sup>11</sup> David A. Korn, *Stalemate: The War of Attrition and Great Power Diplomacy in the Middle East, 1967-70* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992).

diplomat who served at the American embassy in Tel Aviv during most of this time period. The scope of this book is quite large, and the author focuses on both the military as well as the political/diplomatic aspects of the conflict.

The last book written specifically on this time period was published as late as 2000.<sup>12</sup> It was written by American military historian George Gawrych, who teaches at the US Army Command and General Staff College and specializes on the Middle East. As indicated in the title, the book deals with both the 1967 as well as the 1973 wars, but it also deals with the time in-between. Although the focus is mostly on military matters, there is also a discussion of the politics and diplomacy of the years 1967-73.

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<sup>12</sup> George W. Gawrych, *The Albatross of Decisive Victory: War and Policy Between Egypt and Israel in the 1967 and 1973 Arab-Israeli Wars* (Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 2000).

## *Main themes*

As described in the introductory chapter, there are main themes where there is controversy in the sources dealing with this time period. These main themes are:

- (1) The secret decision made by the Israeli cabinet on June 19, 1967—in other words shortly after the war—where it was decided that Israel return the Sinai and the Golan Heights to Egypt and Syria respectively in return for full peace;
- (2) The nature of the Arab Summit meeting in Khartoum in August/September 1967;
- (3) Nasser's decision for starting the War of Attrition in March 1969;
- (4) The initiative of UN mediator Gunnar Jarring in February 1971;
- (5) The initiative launched by Egyptian president Anwar Sadat, also in February 1971.

These are dealt with below.

### The secret Israeli cabinet decision

The method of sampling was introduced in the introductory chapter of this thesis, and the result of this sampling is the basis for the classification of the main themes. When it comes to the first theme of this chapter, however, it seems as if the method did present us with inaccurate results. But, before we go into what was perhaps inaccurate about this theme, let us first look at what this theme is about in the first place.

On June 19, 1967, the Israeli cabinet made a secret decision—the results of which it transmitted to the United States—that Israel was willing to return the Sinai and the Golan Heights to Egypt and Syria respectively in return for full peace, demilitarization and guarantees



of free shipping through the Straits of Tiran and the Suez Canal. This decision did not include any mention of the areas of the West Bank, Jerusalem or the Gaza Strip.<sup>13</sup>

There are different views as to whether or not Egypt and Syria indeed were made aware of the decision but, nevertheless, the decision soon lost in importance. Some authors blame this on what they describe as Arab intransigence or aggressiveness as it was seen in the Khartoum declaration (see below.)<sup>14</sup> Others say that it was a combined result of Arab refusal to negotiate in addition to a hardening of Israel's position:

Egypt was not yet in a state of mind to make a rational compromise. Soon those in the Israeli cabinet — notably Yisrael Galili and Yigal Allon — who were against the land for peace proposal gained the upper hand, and the 19 June 1967 proposal was withdrawn.

The stalemate would last another decade. The greatest opportunity in the fifty years war to secure peace had been lost.<sup>15</sup>

Israeli historian Avi Shlaim has described the June decision as “one of the most significant decisions in the annals of Israeli foreign policy.”<sup>16</sup> Be that as it may, but the secret decision *does* paint Israel in a more benign light. This decision was taken prior to the UN Security Council Resolution 242, which laid the foundation for the “land for peace”-formula. This was the reason why it was included as a main theme where mentioning the decision was seen as being pro-Israeli, whereas not mentioning it was regarded as being pro-Arab.

There is however a problem with classifying a theme in this manner. It has to be assumed that the authors are aware of the event in question, but chose to ignore it. When it comes to this decision it is not certain that this is the case. It was after all made in secret, and

<sup>13</sup> Korn 1992, p. 13f; Shlaim 2000, p. 253; Morris 1999, p. 330.

<sup>14</sup> See for instance Gilbert 1998, p. 402.

<sup>15</sup> Bregman & El-Tahri 1998, p. 101.

<sup>16</sup> Shlaim 2000, p. 253.

there only seems to be a few references made to it in the primary sources. As far as official Israeli documentation, Israel in most cases employs a thirty year rule for declassifying secret material, so the decision would not have been made public prior to 1997 at the earliest.

In the sources where the decision is mentioned, it is sometimes referred to as being discussed in a few autobiographies. Israeli Foreign Minister Abba Eban's *An Autobiography* (New York, 1977) is mentioned as discussing the decision, as is Minister of Defense Moshe Dayan's Hebrew-language *Aveneh Derech* (Tel Aviv, 1976).<sup>17</sup> However, in most of the works where the June decision is mentioned, it is not indicated where the author received his or her information.

If Eban and Dayan's autobiographies indeed are the only primary sources where the decision is mentioned, it is probably not safe to assume that the decision is widely known. It would, in other words, probably not be advisable to label the sources where the decision is not mentioned as being pro-Arab. Using the June 19 decision as a main theme is in other words decided against.

#### The nature of the Arab summit meeting in Khartoum

Between August 28 and September 2, 1967, an Arab summit meeting was held in the Sudanese capital of Khartoum. This was the first meeting between Arab leaders since the Arab-Israeli war a few months earlier. Every Arab leader, with just a few exceptions,<sup>18</sup> was there and the end result was a declaration that laid out a basic strategy for approaching the new situation in the Middle East. The whole declaration is reproduced as an appendix at the end of this thesis, but this is how the crucial article reads:

<sup>17</sup> Morris 1999, Ch. 7 n. 119; Shlaim 2000, p. 253; Korn 1992, Ch. 1 note 9.

<sup>18</sup> The Syrian and Algerian presidents decided not to attend the meeting, but sent their respective foreign ministers in their places. Due to health problems, neither King Idris of Libya nor the president of Tunisia attended as well. They did, however, send high-ranking officials to represent them at the meeting. Khouri 1985, p. 312.

The Arab Heads of State have agreed to unite their political efforts at the international and diplomatic level to eliminate the effects of the aggression and to ensure the withdrawal of the aggressive Israeli forces from the Arab lands which have been occupied since the aggression of June 5. This will be done within the framework of the main principles by which the Arab States abide, namely, no peace with Israel, no recognition of Israel, no negotiations with it, and insistence on the rights of the Palestinian people in their own country.<sup>19</sup>

This text and its implications has been interpreted quite differently in some of the sources under investigation, and that is the focus of this theme. On the one hand, there are those who argue that the Khartoum declaration is merely yet another instance of Arab intransigence and indicates an unwillingness to live together with Israel in peace.<sup>20</sup> The wording of the last section of the declaration has sometimes led to the declaration being referred to as the “three noes of Khartoum,” or a derivative thereof. According to this view, the implications of the declaration are quite clear, as they are more or less spelled out in the three negatives above (no peace, no negotiations and no recognition). The negative use of language is also highlighted in some sources; for instance in Mitchell Bard’s easily accessible introduction to the Arab-Israeli conflict, *The Complete Idiot’s Guide to Middle East Conflict*. Bard has here decided to name the section in which the Khartoum declaration is discussed and quoted as “The Arabs Say No, No, No.” Needless to say, Bard does not present the declaration in a light favorable to the Arab side of the conflict.<sup>21</sup> In some sources, where the secret decision made by Israel mentioned above is discussed, the declaration in Khartoum led to a hardening of Israel’s position and subsequently why the secret decision lost its significance.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Avalon Project at Yale Law School. URL: <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/mideast/khartoum.htm>.

<sup>20</sup> See for example Korn 1992, pp. 71f, 208f; Gawrych 2000, p. 100f; Gilbert 1998, p. 402; Samuel 1989, p. 123; Dolan 1991, p. 131; Blumberg 1998, p. 115; and Davis & Decter 1982, p. 37.

<sup>21</sup> Bard 1999, p. 232.

<sup>22</sup> See for example Korn 1992, p. 71f.

On the other hand, there are sources where the Khartoum declaration is looked upon from different perspectives.<sup>23</sup> Israeli historian Avi Shlaim, for instance, views it as somewhat of a triumph for the more moderate forces in the Arab world:

In fact, the conference was a victory for the Arab moderates who argued for trying to obtain the withdrawal of Israel's forces by political rather than military means. Arab spokesmen interpreted the Khartoum declarations to mean no formal peace *treaty*, but not a rejection of a state of peace; no *direct* negotiations, but not a refusal to talk through third parties; and no *de jure* recognition of Israel, but acceptance of its existence as a state.<sup>24</sup>

The declaration is in other words to be seen as moderate in the sense that it did not call for a military solution to the conflict, as indicated in the first section of the declaration, as well as providing the Arab states with "bargaining chips." The Arab states, according to this view, could offer peace, direct negotiations and recognition to Israel if they were given considerable concessions.<sup>25</sup> Or, the declaration was moderate in the sense that it gave the Arab states the possibility of offering Israel everything *but* formal recognition and peace.<sup>26</sup> The intransigent wording of the three noes is also in some cases explained as being a concession made both to the more extreme forces present at the summit meeting, as well as to the general Arab public. They are also presented as being a response of sorts—and perhaps as a way of the Arab states to save face—to the perceived or real Israeli unwillingness to withdraw from some or all of the territories captured in the war as part of a settlement.<sup>27</sup>

What these views all have in common is that they present the Khartoum declaration in a less negative light than the former view that argued for the declaration's inflexibility. In the framework of this

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<sup>23</sup> See for example Whetten 1974, p. 49ff; Bailey 1985, p. 174; Khouri 1985, p. 313f; Lesch & Tschirgi, p. 22; Fraser 1995, p. 88; and Bailey 1990, p. 261f.

<sup>24</sup> Shlaim 2000, p. 258. Emphasis in original.

<sup>25</sup> See for example Bailey 1985, p. 174.

<sup>26</sup> See for instance Khouri 1985, p. 313f; and Shlaim 2000, p. 258.

<sup>27</sup> Morris 1999, p. 345f; and Khouri 1985, 313f.

thesis—and the methodology of assigning different views as being pro-Israeli or pro-Arab—the first view, where the declaration is presented as an uncompromising and somewhat extreme text, is the pro-Israeli view. The Arab states are in this view presented in a belligerent and not particularly conciliatory manner. Conversely, the second view, where the declaration is described in more moderate terms is deemed to be the pro-Arab view. Writing from a pro-Arab perspective, or at least with regard to this issue, the Khartoum declaration is problematic, as it does not, at least perhaps on first inspection, portray the Arab states in a particularly favorable light. Journalist Milton Viorst, however, gives an interesting interpretation of the declaration, which not only is favorable to the Arab side but also presents the declaration as being somewhat of a milestone in Arab-Israeli relations:

[A] fundamental change had taken place at Khartoum, so subtle it is not clear that the Arabs themselves at first discerned it. There, the shift away from bombast began. On the eve of the Six-Day War, Nasser had proclaimed that his "object will be the destruction of Israel." In contrast, at Khartoum the Arab leadership promised—even in pronouncing the "three noes" and rejecting a peace conference—to recover the occupied territory, not in battle but in "joint political and diplomatic action." Thenceforth, Arab governments would often enough speak of war, but with the object of improving their leverage to compel Israel to return lost territories. The talk of destroying Israel itself virtually disappeared.

The Khartoum conference, notwithstanding the "three noes," demonstrated that the Six-Day War had broken a psychological barrier. It was not that Arabs became more tolerant of Zionism. Rather, they learned they had no choice but to tolerate Israel's existence. The recovery of the lost land became the new objective, transforming the rhetoric and, with it, the real goals of Arab leadership.

It is a reasonable premise that the Arabs' shift began as no more than a tactic. Yet for many Arabs, hearing the new, more limited objective proclaimed over and over again, while talk of Israel's destruction vanished, inevitably created a fresh truth. It is a truth on which a whole generation of Arabs has now been raised. If it did not convert the Arab mind to approval of Israel, it surely narrowed the distance between rejection and acceptance. If

asked directly in 1967, most Arabs would, like Nasser, have answered that nothing had changed. Some would offer the same answer today. But the shift in goals that took place in Khartoum contained an implicit admission by the Arab world that Israel had become part of Middle East reality, likely to be around for a long time. It was a signal that the Arabs had found room in their worldview for Israel's legitimacy.<sup>28</sup>

### The War of Attrition

The war of June 1967 ended in cease-fire agreements on all fronts. However, the fighting did not end completely, as skirmishes took place every now and again on all three fronts. Almost from the very beginning of the cease-fire, there were skirmishes between Egyptian and Israeli ground forces and naval ships along the Suez Canal, as well as in the Mediterranean and the Red Sea. One of the most spectacular results of these skirmishes was probably the sinking of the Israeli destroyer Eilat in the fall of 1967.<sup>29</sup>

Although there was a certain amount of activity on the Egyptian-Israeli front, it is not normally termed as being a full war. In March 1969, however, Egypt launched what has since been called the War of Attrition. The name comes from a speech held by Nasser, the Egyptian president, soon after the outbreak of the war where he said that Egypt had embarked on a war of attrition against Israel. From initially being limited to artillery duels across the canal—with occasional commando raids undertaken by both parties—the war came to escalate in the summer, when Israel started using its air force to bomb the Egyptian artillery on the western bank of the canal. The war escalated further in January the following year (1970) as the Israeli air force began bombing Egyptian targets that were not in the proximity of the canal (mostly around Cairo and in the Nile Delta). As Egypt and the Soviet Union were relatively close allies at this time, the USSR began sending massive amounts of material and personnel

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<sup>28</sup> Viorst 1987, p. 105f.

<sup>29</sup> The sinking of Eilat was the first time guided surface-to-surface missiles were used in real naval warfare, and is therefore a milestone of sorts in the history of warfare at sea.

to Egypt in the spring of 1970. And, before the war finally ended in August through an American brokered cease-fire agreement, Israeli and Soviet pilots had fought each other in the skies over the canal.<sup>30</sup>

Although there is some controversy surrounding the Israeli decision to start bombing the Egyptian interior, the major controversy is the question of why Egypt decided to launch the war in the first place. The Israeli decision for starting its in-depth bombings is discussed below, as this topic is not large enough to be construed as a main theme. There are essentially two differing views as to why the Egyptian president Nasser decided to embark on a larger war in March 1969. The first view sees the decision as yet another instance of Arab aggression.<sup>31</sup> What is implied in this view (or perhaps even outspoken) is the Arab—or in this instance Egyptian—inability and unwillingness to try to solve the conflict through peaceful means. The following quote by British historian Martin Gilbert illustrates the contrast between the approach to the conflict as seen by Israel and Egypt:

Golda Meir's first announcement as Prime Minister was to say that 'we are prepared to discuss peace with our neighbors, all day and all matters'. Within three days, President Nasser replied that 'there is no voice transcending the sounds of war' and 'no call holier than the call to war'. In March 1969 – following Nasser's dictum 'what was lost in war must be restored by war' – Egyptian artillery opened fire on the Israeli forces stationed on the east bank of the Suez Canal. Israel returned the fire with alacrity. What became known as the War of Attrition had begun.<sup>32</sup>

Egypt, in other words, was simply not willing to solve the conflict peacefully, and the War of Attrition was another example of Egypt's aggressive position. Whether or not Egypt hoped to be able to

<sup>30</sup> For a comprehensive account of the War of Attrition from a military point of view see for instance Bar-Siman-Tov 1980.

<sup>31</sup> See for example O'Ballance, p. 57; Korn 1992, p. 108; Gawrych 2000, p. 103-110; Bard 1999, p. 237; Blumberg 1998, p. 117; Dolan 1991, p. 132; Fraser 1995, p. 92; and Samuel 1989, p. 123.

<sup>32</sup> Gilbert 1998, p. 410. Golda Meir became Israel's new prime minister after her predecessor, Levi Eshkol, died in February 1969.

eventually cross the canal and recapture the Sinai, or whether Egypt just hoped to force an Israeli withdrawal without making any concessions of its own is not entirely clear according to this view. The decision made by Nasser to embark on another war with Israel is furthermore in some instances explained as being a way for him to enhance his image as a leader of the Arab world, who did not fear carrying on the fight against Israel.<sup>33</sup>

The opposite view of Nasser's decision to launch the War of Attrition, which is actually the majority view, is that the war was part of an attempt to solve the conflict through political means. One line of argumentation in this is that Nasser sought to create enough instability in the region to force the superpowers to get involved in trying to solve the conflict.<sup>34</sup> Related to this perspective is that Egypt did not want the cease-fire line from 1967 (i.e. the Suez Canal) to develop into a *de facto* border. As long as the cease-fire line was under dispute, this line of thinking goes, there was bound to be some outside involvement to settle the dispute politically.<sup>35</sup> Yaacov Bar-Siman-Tov, an Israeli scholar of international relations, provides us with an example of the third view on the more political motivation of the decision to start the war:

Prolonged war of attrition was thus a strategy directed toward reversing the balance of power between the warring sides in favor of Egypt (by means of erosion of Israel's strength), or at the very least to create a balance of power between the two sides. Once this balance of power was brought about between the two sides, Egypt could envisage adopting some other kind of strategy in order to realize her aims in full. The effectiveness of the new strategy chosen would be enhanced by the already lowered state of the enemy's morale.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>33</sup> See for example O'Ballance 1974, p. 57; and Bard 1999, p. 237.

<sup>34</sup> See for example Bailey 1990, p. 288; Morris 1999, p. 348; and Lesch & Tschirgi 1998, p. 24.

<sup>35</sup> See for example Shlaim 2000, p. 289; Khouri 1985, p. 363; and Tessler 1994, p. 445.

<sup>36</sup> Bar-Siman-Tov 1980, p. 56.



So, although the war was to wear down the Israelis through military means, the ultimate goal was political in nature. Bar-Siman-Tov also argues that part of the Egyptian strategy was to eventually cross the canal to establish a foothold on the eastern bank, but the purpose of this was only to have further leverage over Israel.<sup>37</sup>

What these views have in common—and they are needless to say not mutually exclusive—is that Nasser’s decision to launch the war was politically motivated. Although starting a war is aggressive as such, its end objective was not just aggression for its own sake, but rather to improve Egypt’s stance in achieving a political solution to its dispute with Israel. By focusing on a political final aim of the war, Nasser and Egypt are portrayed in a more favorable light than in the view exemplified by Martin Gilbert above; where the decision is presented as being nothing but an example of Egyptian belligerence. Hence, the view of the start of the War of Attrition as something with a political goal in mind is here deemed to be the pro-Arab view, and the view where the decision to launch the war is described as only being aggressive in nature is the pro-Israeli view.

#### The Jarring proposal

In February 1971—that is about six months after the cease-fire agreement between Egypt and Israel following the War of Attrition went into effect—Gunnar Jarring, the Swedish diplomat who had been appointed to mediate in the Middle East by the secretary-general of the United Nations, gave Egypt and Israel each a proposal. In this memorandum (it was presented in identical forms to both parties), Jarring requested an undertaking by Egypt to enter into a formal peace agreement with Israel. And, from Israel, Jarring requested that it withdraw to the former Palestine-Egypt border from the days before 1948. Israel would in other words withdraw from the

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 56f.

Sinai Peninsula, but the Gaza Strip would still be in Israeli possession.<sup>38</sup>

About a week after Jarring's initiative, Egypt gave its reply. Egypt was willing to enter into a peace agreement with Israel under these premises, but with a few additional demands: (1) a commitment to settle the Palestinian refugee problem in accordance with earlier UN resolutions on the topic; (2) that Israel was to withdraw from the Gaza Strip as well; and (3) that a UN peacekeeping force was to be established to ensure that no further violence erupted. Two weeks later, the official Israeli reply came and there it said that Israel viewed Egypt's willingness to sign a peace treaty with great favor. However, when it came to the issue of Israeli territorial concessions, it was said that Israel was willing to withdraw from the cease-fire lines to what were to be the final borders as settled in the peace treaty, but it was also said that Israel would not withdraw to the pre-War of 1967 lines.<sup>39</sup>

The reason why the so-called Jarring initiative has been included as a main theme is because there are some sources that describe it as a major breakthrough in Arab-Israeli relations, while others either downplay its importance or just do not mention it at all.<sup>40</sup> Where the importance of the initiative is stressed, Egypt's willingness to actually sign a peace treaty with Israel, and hence recognize its existence, is brought forward. This, according to some sources, was a major step forward and Israel is blamed for not grasping this opportunity. Baylis Thomas, for instance, quite clearly stresses the initiative's importance: "Israel was bluntly negative, declaring that there would be no withdrawal to the pre-1967 lines – a missed opportunity to

<sup>38</sup> See for example Quandt 1978, p. 17; Khouri 1985, p. 366; Sachar 1996, p. 695f.; and Shlaim 2000, p. 300.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid. It should be noted that Sachar does not mention that Israel did not accept withdrawing to the lines of June 5, 1967; only that Israel ultimately found the proposal unacceptable.

<sup>40</sup> For examples of the former view, see Quandt 1978, p. 17; Shlaim 2000, p. 300f.; and Khouri 1985, p. 366. For examples of the latter view, see Gazit 1983, p. 66-73; Viorst 1987, p. 142; Gainsborough 1986, p. 181; and Sachar 1996, p. 695f.

avoid the 1973 Yom Kippur war.”<sup>41</sup> Where Israel’s negative reply to Jarring’s initiative is mentioned and looked upon in an unfavorable light, the fact that Jarring himself was disappointed with Israel—as were indeed the American Secretary of State William Rogers and other American officials—is brought forward.<sup>42</sup>

Conversely, there is also the view where Jarring’s initiative is either downplayed as not being particularly important, not mentioned at all or presented as being unreasonable from Israel’s perspective. Israel should in other words not be blamed for replying it would not withdraw to the old armistice lines. In his academic work on the various negotiation efforts that took place during the time period at hand, Mordechai Gazit writes of the last sentence of Israel’s reply; where it was said that Israel would not withdraw to the old lines:

It was this last sentence which drew most of the fire. Israel ought not, it was contended, have put its position in the negative, and should not have stressed its refusal to withdraw to the June 1967 lines. This contention, however, would seem ill-founded. Even if Israel had made her withdrawal merely conditional on the establishment of “agreed boundaries”, this answer would still have been considered unacceptable, because the notion “agreed boundaries” involves negotiations to settle where the boundaries will be, while Jarring’s *aide-mémoire* altogether excluded negotiations between Israel and Egypt on the issue of territory.<sup>43</sup>

Gazit also argues that by demanding from Israel a complete withdrawal from the Sinai, Jarring had stopped being an impartial mediator, and instead come to side with one of the parties (i.e. Egypt).<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Thomas 1999, p. 196.

<sup>42</sup> Benny Morris, for instance, quotes the American Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs Joseph Sisco as saying that “Israel will be considered responsible for the rejection of the best opportunity to achieve peace since the establishment of the state.” Morris 1999, p. 389.

<sup>43</sup> Gazit 1983, p. 66f.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 73.

Whether or not something may have come out of Jarring's proposal is of course difficult to say, and it is furthermore not the purpose of this whole exercise, but Egypt did answer in the affirmative (with some additional conditions) to its part of the proposal, whereas Israel answered in the negative. As such, Israel's rejection of sorts can hardly be said to paint Israel in a particularly good light. Hence, the sources where Jarring's proposal is discussed and Israel criticized are deemed to be pro-Arab in relation to this theme. The sources where the proposal is downplayed, not mentioned or presented as not being viable in the first place (see for instance above quote) are said to be pro-Israeli.

#### The Sadat plan

On September 28, 1970, the Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser died of a heart attack. Nasser was a very influential leader—both domestically and internationally—and when he was succeeded by his much less well-known deputy Anwar Sadat, it was unclear not only how long Sadat was going to stay in power but also what the implications were going to be with regards to Israel.

Sadat's first real initiative concerning the conflict with Israel was his proposal in February 1971. As can be recalled from the above section on Jarring's initiative, it was also first sounded in February and the fact of the matter is that both Sadat's and Jarring's plans were floated around simultaneously. This certainly led to some confusion—especially considering that neither initiative dealt with the other—but as the Jarring initiative lost in importance after Israel's reply in late February, the Sadat plan became more central. The plan, as proposed by Sadat, was briefly that Israel was to withdraw from the eastern bank of the Suez Canal to positions further inland, and that Egypt could begin to open the canal for shipping and to rebuild the Egyptian cities on the western bank of the canal that had been seriously damaged in the War of Attrition. Sadat's plan, he said as he presented it to the Egyptian National

Assembly, was to be the first step for implementing UN Security Council Resolution 242.<sup>45</sup>

This plan was in fact quite similar to ideas that had already been communicated by Israeli Minister of Defense Moshe Dayan to Israeli press. The purpose of this idea, according to Dayan, was to reduce Egypt's willingness to engage in another war with Israel. Nevertheless, the Sadat plan was received rather coldly in Israel, and although Israel never formally rejected it, its importance vanished to nothing as the negotiations over the details of the plan dragged on for months through the use of the US as a go-between.

The negotiations between Egypt and Israel over Sadat's plan were quite complex; especially considering that they involved the United States as well. To add to the intricacy of the negotiations, there also seems to have been the case that the American Secretary of State William Rogers and National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger had different agendas, which they transmitted to the different parties. There is no need to delve into these developments here. The question at hand, however, is initially how the sources discuss whether or not the plan was viable in the first place, and whether Israel in fact rejected it by stonewalling the plan. And, secondly, there is also the question of whether or not the plan is presented as being important.

In quite a few sources, the blame for why the plan did not materialize is laid at the feet of Israel.<sup>46</sup> This quote, for instance, which is from the book that accompanied the BBC series on the Arab-Israeli conflict sums up this argument quite succinctly:

In a speech to the Israeli Knesset five days later [i.e. after Sadat first launched his plan], Prime Minister Golda Meir responded to Sadat's initiative. Gideon Rafael sums up this occasion: 'After Sadat's February 4th speech, I had strongly urged Golda to

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<sup>45</sup> See for example Gazit 1983, pp. 78-100.

<sup>46</sup> See for instance Whetten 1974, p. 146ff; Quandt 1978, p. 18; Khouri 1985, p. 366; Schulze 1999, p. 45; and Lesch & Tschirgi 1998, p. 24.

respond. In the Knesset on 9 February, she extended a finger to him – not a hand'.<sup>47</sup>

Although Israel never formally rejected the plan, its initial cold reception and insistence on small details ended the viability of the plan. The Sadat plan, in other words, ended up like so many other initiatives on the Arab-Israeli conflict: never formally rejected, but losing in momentum and finally ending up in the dustbin of failed proposals. In some sources, it is even said that Israel accepted the plan of sorts almost a year after it was first launched, but by that time Israel's concessions were too small and too late.<sup>48</sup>

The question then is whether or not the Sadat plan was an important event in Egyptian-Israeli relations and if Israel in fact missed an opportunity. Former Irish diplomat Conor Cruise O'Brien, for example, is quite clear on this point: "After that great, historic initiative, things went on exactly as before, until the Yom Kippur War; and the reason for the Yom Kippur War was that they did go on exactly as before."<sup>49</sup> Israel, in other words, perhaps could have avoided the war that was to take place two years later if it had been more forthcoming regarding Sadat's plan.

Where Israel is blamed for not acting more favorably to the plan, and where the plan is presented as a major breakthrough in Egyptian-Israeli negotiations, it is given quite a bit of attention. This is not the case where the role of the plan is downplayed, or where Israel is not said to implicitly have rejected the plan.<sup>50</sup> There are a number of sources where the plan is not mentioned at all, and in others it is only touched upon briefly. In Mark Tessler's massive work (around 900 pages) on the Arab-Israeli conflict, the peace moves at the time are presented in this manner: "While he had promised his

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<sup>47</sup> Bregman & El-Tahri, p. 108. Gideon Rafael headed Israel's foreign ministry at the time.

<sup>48</sup> See for example Shlaim 2000, p. 308f; and Morris 1999, p. 390.

<sup>49</sup> O'Brien 1986, p. 505.

<sup>50</sup> See for example Gazit 1983, pp. 94f, 124ff; Gainsborough 1986, p. 184f; and Sachar 1996, p. 696.

countrymen that 1971 would be a 'year of decision,' the year came and went with no important accomplishments, and the Egyptian president's transparent excuses were satirically lampooned in Cairo."<sup>51</sup>

In some other works, where the plan is discussed more extensively, both Israel and Egypt are said to share some of the blame for why the plan did not materialize.<sup>52</sup> The plan is also in one instance said to have been unreasonable from the very beginning and, implicitly, that Israel should not be blamed for its failure.<sup>53</sup>

The instances where the Sadat plan is presented as being an important initiative that could have led to some serious results, but that was implicitly rejected by Israel are here deemed to be pro-Arab. The reason for this is twofold: (1) that Egypt took the first step in trying to reach a peaceful settlement of the conflict, or at least a peaceful interim agreement; and (2) that Israel rejected this plan by not being accommodating enough. Taking O'Brien's view as presented above—that the plan could have led to the war of 1973 not having taken place at all—is even more damning of Israel. Downplaying the plan, not mentioning it or leaving the blame for why the plan did not succeed on both actors is here classified as being the pro-Israeli view. The reasoning here is that dealing with the plan in either of these three ways does not paint Israel in a bad light, as the pro-Arab view undoubtedly does.

#### Main themes: conclusion

In the above sections, some views were presented as being pro-Arab and some as being pro-Israeli with regard to the main themes that are discussed. Below follows two charts to illustrate how these views manifest themselves in the specific and general works respectively.

<sup>51</sup> Tessler 1994, p. 478f.

<sup>52</sup> See for example Bickerton & Klausner 1991, p. 174; and Gawrych 2000, p. 129f.

<sup>53</sup> Davis & Decter 1982, p. 44. In this work, the plan is presented as an American initiative, which Sadat made unreasonable by insisting that the Israeli withdrawal from the Suez Canal was only to be the first step for Israel withdrawing completely to the lines of pre-June 1967.

Specific works, just to remind the reader, are the works that focus exclusively on the time period at hand, whereas the general works deal with a greater time span.

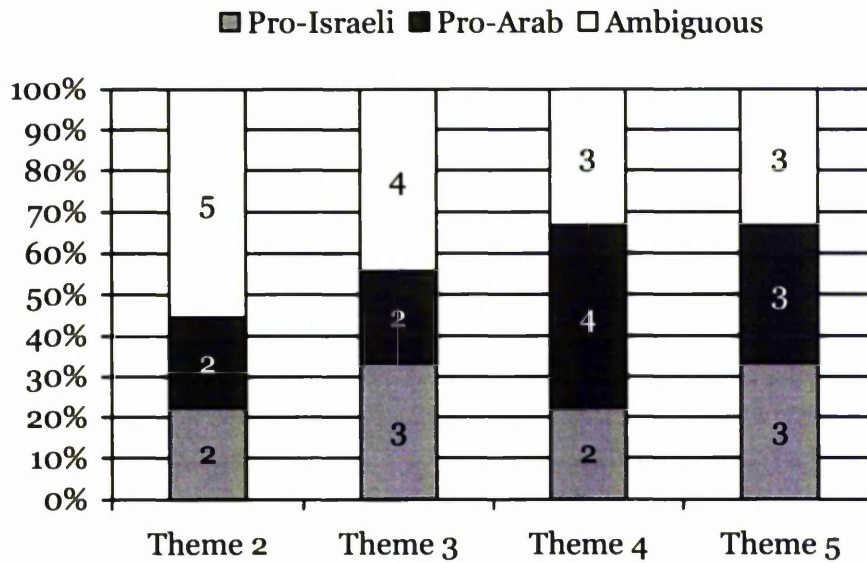


Figure I: Proportion of views held in the specific works

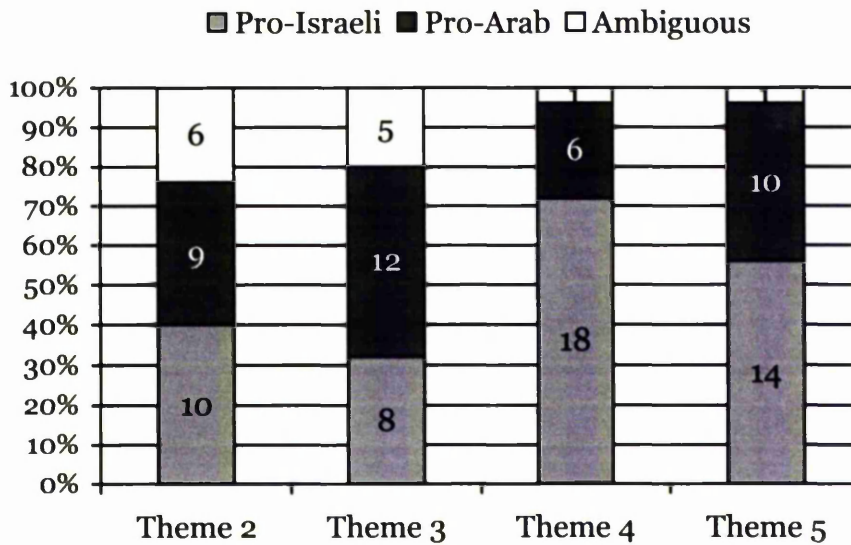


Figure II: Proportion of views held in the general works



Two things need to be brought forward. The first thing is that there is no bar for theme one. As can be recalled from above, theme one—which dealt with the secret Israeli cabinet decision—was rejected as a theme, as there were uncertainties as to how well-known this event was in the first place. The second thing that needs to be brought forward is that some works have been assigned as being ambiguous with regard to themes four and five in the specific works. As can be recalled from above, these two themes deal with the initiatives of Gunnar Jarring and Anwar Sadat respectively. The assignment of pro-Israeli/pro-Arab was made dependent on whether or not the initiatives were emphasized or not, and whether or not Israel is blamed for they not materializing. The problem with a few of the specific works is that they do not deal with this time period or with the various negotiations of the early 1970s.<sup>54</sup> So, in other words, these works have been deemed to be ambiguous with regard to themes four and five.

Comparing the main themes in this chapter with those in the previous chapter on the War of 1967, it becomes obvious that the present ones are more disparate. They do not follow a more or less straight line of narrative—as was the case in the previous chapter—but are interspersed in the main narrative of what took place during the time period in question.

This has to do with the major difference between this time period and the War of 1967. In the accounts of the War of 1967, an event that took place over the course of a few weeks is described; while in this case, a greater time span is described that not only saw the events described above, but also the rise of the PLO as a more independent force, the beginnings of building Israeli settlements on the territories as well as some (it would turn out) major domestic changes in Israeli

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<sup>54</sup> Bentwich 1970; O'Ballance 1974; and Bar-Siman-Tov 1980. The first book was published in 1970, so it would for obvious reasons not include anything on the Jarring and Sadat initiatives. The latter works deal more or less exclusively with the War of Attrition and events that transpired prior to the war.

society. For this reason, there is not the same continuity between the main themes in this chapter as in the pervious.

Going back to the graphs above, however, the same chaos of sorts as was shown in the previous chapter is clear here as well. What this means is that there is a wide spectrum of ways of approaching the issues presented. There are, in other words, not a majority of standard narratives. A pro-Israeli standard narrative would read something like this:

The Khartoum declaration was another instance of Arab intransigence and hostility towards Israel, and showed that there was no Arab willingness to settle the conflict peacefully. The War of Attrition was yet another instance of Arab aggression, and the Jarring and Sadat initiatives were not particularly viable or important [or they are not mentioned at all].

A pro-Arab standard narrative, on the other hand, could sound like this:

The Khartoum declaration was in fact moderate and paved the way for the Arab world being willing to solve the conflict politically. The so-called three noes are to be viewed as perhaps bargaining chips that could be discarded in exchange for substantial Israeli concessions. The War of Attrition was nothing but an Egyptian strategy for eventually settling its conflict with Israel through political means. Both the Jarring and the Sadat initiatives were important and viable and, had they not been rejected by Israel, they could have led to peace or at least to the War of 1973 never having taken place.

Just as in the case of the War of 1967, these two standard narratives give vastly different outlooks on what took place and how the events should be interpreted. But, as was also the case in the previous chapter, these standard narratives rarely appear. The authors have more control and freedom over what explanations they chose and what events they chose to concentrate on.

Compared with the main themes in the previous chapter, there is only half the number of themes in this. They can be classified in the following manner:

- (1) Theme where there are differences of opinion as to how interpret a particular text and its implications (theme 2);
- (2) Theme where the intentions of a person or state are under dispute (theme 3);
- (3) Themes where the importance, viability and the reasons behind the ultimate failure of a political initiative are looked upon differently (themes 4 and 5).

As far as the two first themes, it is fairly easy to say that they are merely instances of bias, as the term is used in this thesis to signify differences of opinion that have implications for how the antagonists are portrayed. The Khartoum declaration is quite problematic, and it is of course possible to make different inferences from it. The same goes for Nasser's intentions for starting the War of Attrition. It is not possible to deduce from the archival source material what his intentions were, and whether you see it as merely an instance of Arab aggression or part of a larger strategy to solve the Egyptian-Israeli dispute politically is more or less just a difference in outlook.

The latter two themes, which are of course really quite similar, are more problematic from a bias/propaganda point of view. As already stated above, the works under investigation have been deemed pro-Arab for emphasizing the importance of either initiative (i.e. Jarring or Sadat) and that they were rejected by Israel. The classification as pro-Israeli, on the other hand, has been based on whether the source in question blames both sides (or only Egypt) for why the initiatives did not bring about anything tangible, downplays the initiatives and their importance (as compared with the pro-Arab sources) or simply does not mention the initiatives at all. The issue of which side is to blame and whether or not the initiatives in fact were important is of

course mostly a judgment call. Or, to put it differently, these are questions of interpretations, and as such are to be considered bias within the framework of this thesis. When it comes to the question of not even including the two initiatives, it is more difficult to assess whether we are speaking of mere bias or propaganda. As the two initiatives hardly can be said to "work in Israel's favor," it is tempting to say that by not even including mention of them, the author has deliberately chosen to mislead his or her readers. It could also be the case, however, that the author simply views the initiatives as irrelevant enough to not even include them. It should probably not be an issue of whether or not the authors are aware of these two initiatives, as they are discussed in quite a few sources and apparently received a fair amount of attention when they were current in the early 1970s. Whether or not one should look at not including mention of either the Jarring or the Sadat initiatives as simple bias or propaganda is a judgment call, but it is to be construed as pro-Israeli.

### *Further observations*

There are besides the five main themes discussed above a number of minor controversies or interesting items in the sources. These are: (1) the nature of Israel's decision to begin to carry out aerial bombings in the Egyptian interior during the War of Attrition; (2) the more general question of why there was no peace during this time period; and (3) the role of Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir. These are discussed below.

In January 1970, during the War of Attrition discussed above, Israel made the decision to escalate the war further by beginning to bomb military targets in the Egyptian interior (mostly around Cairo and in

the Nile Delta). There are a number of reasons quoted in the sources for why the Israelis choose this line of action. Some of these include that Israel sought to relieve pressure on its troops along the Suez Canal, that Israel wanted to force Egypt to end the war and that the in-depth bombings were initiated in order to, if possible, lead to the overthrow of President Nasser. Whatever the goals were behind Israel's decision, the in-depth bombings did not lead to the war ending, but rather to it being further escalated as the Soviet Union became more directly involved with assisting its ally.

What is interesting here is the claim that Israel sought Nasser's overthrow through its bombing campaign. There is no instance in the sources where Israeli leaders are said to have said publicly that this was a goal, but there are sources where Israeli politicians are quoted as saying that they would not mourn Nasser's disappearance or that a change of regime in Egypt would not be a bad thing.<sup>55</sup> In other sources, the authors simply arrive at the conclusion that removing Nasser was part of the goals involved with the in-depth bombings, while others only mention the more military strategic aims as described above.<sup>56</sup>

The whole topic of why Israel decided to embark on its in-depth bombings is not dealt with in the majority of sources, but it is interesting in the sense that stating that Israel sought Nasser's removal is quite unfavorable to Israel. The reason for this is that it is common inter-state practice not to interfere in the domestic political situation of each other. This concept is also firmly entrenched in the UN Charter. Needless to say, meddling in domestic politics has always been done by states, and it seems as if this formal taboo may be disappearing when it comes to the world community and so-called rouge states. But, nevertheless, saying that part of Israel's goals for

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<sup>55</sup> See Korn 1992, pp. 176-84; and Morris 1999, p. 355.

<sup>56</sup> For examples of the former view see, in addition to the references in the previous footnote, Smith 1988, p. 219; and Shlaim 2000, p. 292. For examples of the latter view, see for instance Bar-Siman-Tov 1980, p. 117f.; Gilbert 1998, p. 413; Bregman 2000, p. 64; and Gawrych 2000, p. 114.

initiating the in-depth bombings was to have Nasser overthrown is not particularly flattering for Israel.

Another important aspect of the works analyzed is the whole question of why the time period in question did not produce any peaceful solutions to the conflict, but was in fact only an "in-between period" between two armed conflicts. This question is really quite central, but there are—perhaps surprisingly—only a few sources where this is discussed. There are—perhaps not too surprisingly—three perspectives on why there ultimately was no peace: that both sides are to blame, that the Arabs are to blame and that Israel is to blame. Historian Kirsten Schulze has laid part of the blame on both parties, or perhaps even on the situation in general, quite concisely: "Israel's strong position after the war did not encourage concessions, while the Arabs' weak position made it impossible to become an equal negotiating partner."<sup>57</sup> The other views are discussed below.

In a few sources, it is said that Israel did everything in its power to achieve a peaceful settlement after the War of 1967. That this did not materialize is either implicitly or explicitly blamed on the Arabs. The declaration of Khartoum is, for instance, presented as a clear example of continued Arab hostility towards Israel and it is presented as being a guiding light for the Arab states in the following years.<sup>58</sup>

During this time period, the impression is given in some sources that the greatest chances for a peaceful settlement existed between Israel and Egypt, as compared with the other neighboring states to Israel. But, it is argued in some sources, it was mainly due to Israeli inflexibility and intransigence that the dispute was not settled politically.<sup>59</sup> Israel did seek peace of sorts, but it was to be on its own terms and only in accordance with its needs:

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<sup>57</sup> Schulze 1999, p. 41.

<sup>58</sup> See for example Gazit 1983, p. 124ff.; Bickerton & Klausner 1991, p. 163; Dolan 1991, p. 131; and Bard 1999, p. 242ff.

<sup>59</sup> See for example Whetten 1974, pp. 302ff, 326; O'Brien 1986, pp. 505-10; and Khouri 1985, p. 365.

Israeli insistence that its security required dealing with the Arabs from a position of military strength was the prime factor in prolonging the conflict. A resumption of hostilities after six years of fruitless attempts to start negotiations was the harsh price the Israelis had to pay for not learning the lesson that their demand for essentially an unconditional surrender ran counter to their true security interests.<sup>60</sup>

The general question of who was to blame for why there was no peaceful settlement during the time of 1967-73—and hence perhaps for why the War of 1973 took place—is curiously enough only dealt with explicitly in a few sources, but it is of course dealt with implicitly in the majority of sources. The smaller main themes are of course all part of the larger question of why there was no peace.

Closely related to the view that Israel was to blame for why the years in question produced no substantial results is the view that a great deal of the blame is to be put on the shoulders of the person who was Israel's prime minister during most of the time in question, Golda Meir. She is in some sources presented as having personally ended the developments that could in have led to peace. Former American diplomat David Korn has written the following:

Her critics joked that Golda Meir had not had a new idea since the 1920s. Though she had lived in the Middle East for more than forty years, her image of the Arabs could hardly have been more stereotyped. She denied absolutely that there existed a Palestinian people. She never tired of saying that she for years had challenged those who claimed peace was attainable to bring her a live Arab who would say publicly that he was ready to accept Israel and make peace with it. No one had been able to do it before, and she did not think anyone ever really would.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Whetten 1974, p. 326.

<sup>61</sup> Korn 1992, p. 141f.

Others have also concentrated on Meir's inflexibility, stubbornness and apathy with regard to Israel's relations with its neighbors.<sup>62</sup> The question then is why Meir is singled out. The personalities of both Nasser as well as Sadat are of course also evaluated upon in the sources—both positively and negatively—but the reasons why authors would want to do that are more clear; in a more authoritarian country like Egypt during the time in question, personalities are generally more important than in democratic countries like Israel.

It could be that putting a large deal of blame on Golda Meir is apologetics of sorts. To say, in other words, that Israel *was* inflexible during the time in question, but that was largely because of this one person. There could have been peace between Egypt and Israel if Meir had not been prime minister during this time, and it is not "Israel" that should be blamed for this but rather Prime Minister Golda Meir.

It could also be that the harsh criticism that Meir receives in some sources is merely another example of holding women to a different standard than men. It has been said that another female prime minister, Margaret Thatcher, was judged more harshly—both while she was in office and afterwards—for no other reason than being a woman. If this is indeed the case is naturally very hard to determine, but it can be construed as being, so to say, food for thought.

This section ends with another quote, which shows not only how Meir is criticized but also the view that Israel could have had peace if only she had acted differently:

Golda Meir's premiership was marked by a stubborn refusal to reevaluate Israel's relations with the Arab world. She personally had no understanding of the Arabs, no empathy with them, and no faith in the possibility of peaceful coexistence with them. This bolstered a simplistic view of the world in which Israel could do no wrong and the Arabs no right. More than most Israeli leaders, she exhibited the siege mentality, the notion that Israel had to

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<sup>62</sup> See O'Brien 1986, pp. 505-510; Viorst 1987, p. 138; Bregman 2000, p. 167; and Shlaim 2000, p. 323f.



barricade itself behind an iron wall, the fatalistic belief that Israel was doomed forever to live by the sword. Meir was a formidable war leader, but her own policy of immobilism was largely responsible for the outbreak of the Yom Kippur War. In her five years as prime minister she made two monumental mistakes. First, she turned down Jarring's suggestion that Israel should trade Sinai for peace with Egypt, the very terms on which the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty was to be based eight years later. Second, she turned down Sadat's proposal for an interim settlement, thus leaving him no option except to go to war in order to subvert an intolerable status quo.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Shlaim 2000, p. 323f.

## 4. The War of 1973

### *Introduction*

The War of 1973 was either the fourth or the fifth Arab-Israeli, depending on how you count.<sup>1</sup> (In some cases, the Egyptian-Israeli War of Attrition is not referred to as having been a war in the larger meaning of the word, but rather just skirmishes.) The war is not only referred to as the War of 1973, but also as the Yom Kippur War, the Ramadan War (or a derivative thereof) or the October War. The war broke out on the Jewish holiday of Yom Kippur and was mostly fought during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. This is how one author of one of the sources used discusses the different names of the war:

The war between the Arabs and the Israelis, which broke out in the Middle East on 6 October 1973, is known to the Arabs as the "War of Ramadan," to the Israelis as the "Yom Kippur War," and generally to nonpartisans in the West as the "October War of 1973."<sup>2</sup>

This war is different from probably all the earlier wars in the sense that there is no question as which side fired the first shot (either actually or metaphorically). All accounts of the war agree that the war began with a coordinated attack by Egypt and Syria on Israel, an

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<sup>1</sup> The earlier wars having been, in chronological order: The War of 1948, The Suez War of 1956, The War of 1967 and the 1969-1970 War of Attrition.

<sup>2</sup> Edgar O'Ballance, *No Victor, No Vanquished: The Yom Kippur War* (San Rafael, CA: Presidio Press, 1978), p. 1. It is of course interesting to note that O'Ballance after discussing the implications of which name to use for the war then decides on the name of Yom Kippur War in the title of his book.

attack that had been planned months in advance. As will be seen below, the reasons for this war, however, are disputed. Below follows a brief outline of the main events of the war:

October 6: Egypt and Syria attack Israel in a surprise attack; crossing the Suez Canal and breaking through into the Golan Heights.

October 8: Israel launches an unsuccessful counterattack on Egypt.

October 9-11: The Israeli army is able to drive the Syrians out of the Golan, and also captures additional Syrian territory.

October 14: Egypt launches a new offensive from its narrow bridgehead on the eastern bank of the Suez Canal. This offensive is repelled by Israel.

October 15: A small Israeli unit crosses the Suez Canal and sets up a bridgehead on the western bank.

October 16-22: Israeli positions on the western bank of the canal are improved and it seems as if the Egyptian Third Army, which is positioned on the eastern side of the canal, is about to be completely cut off.

October 22: United Nations Security Council adopts a resolution calling for a cease-fire.

October 22-25: The cease-fire is broken and Israel is able to capture more territory on the western bank of the canal.

October 25: The cease-fire finally comes into effect and the war ends.

With the exception of Israel's invasion of Lebanon in 1982, the War of 1973 was to be the last inter-state war in the Arab-Israeli conflict. And—but of course with the benefit of hindsight—after the war and the subsequent disengagement agreements between the parties, it is quite possible to say that the Arab-Israeli conflict had shifted from being a primarily inter-state conflict between Israel and its Arab neighbors to a conflict that above all involved Israel and the Palestinians. This, quite naturally, did not happen overnight, but the

War of 1973 probably did play a part in accelerating this already visible development.

So, in other words, the War of 1973, just as the War of 1967, was an important event in the course of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Contrary to that armed conflict, however, there is not as much controversy in the historiography surrounding the War of 1973, and this is clear when looking at the main themes of this chapter. The themes are discussed below, but first follows an introduction to the sources used.

### *Sources*

Compared with the literature on the War of 1967, there is less written on the War of 1973. This is perhaps because there are less controversial points surrounding the war, that the war was not seen as great of an event as the War of 1967 or simply the fact that there were no additional journalists in the region when the war broke out. As can be recalled from the chapter on the War of 1967, there were many journalists in the Middle East in the weeks leading up to the war and many of these wrote books while there or after their return. The War of 1973, by contrast, was not expected so there were no more journalists than usual in the region.

As with the case of the literature on the War of 1967, there is a disparate group of books used in this present analysis. There is a highly illustrated book that on the surface looks almost like a children's book, but is on closer inspection obviously written with an adult readership in mind.<sup>3</sup> Then there is the book written by an Egyptian Marxist journalist, who focuses on what the results of the

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<sup>3</sup> David Eshel, *Mid-East Wars: The Yom Kippur War* (Hod Hasharon, Israel: Eshel-Dramit, 1978).

war were and what they will be for the future.<sup>4</sup> There is an anthology of articles on the war written by Israeli academics, and then there is a similar anthology composed of articles written by Arabs.<sup>5</sup>

Most of the works are nevertheless quite similar accounts written by Western academics or journalists. The main focus in a great number of these works is on the military aspects of the actual war, as the war itself is quite interesting from a more strict military point of view. First, the fact that it was a successfully executed surprise attack is of interest. Second, the fact that the Egyptian army had to somehow cross the Suez Canal in order to engage the Israelis is also interesting from a military tactical perspective. Thirdly, the fact that the Israeli army was able to turn the tables and launch a canal crossing of its own is another interesting aspect of the war from a military point of view. And finally, like so many wars, the War of 1973 saw the use of new weapons or the use of new tactics with old weapons. In this case, it was the use of various anti-tank weapons used by the Egyptian and Syrian infantry.

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<sup>4</sup> Mohamed Sid-Ahmed, *After the Guns Fall Silent: Peace or Armageddon in the Middle-East* (London: Croom Helm, 1976).

<sup>5</sup> See P.R. Kumaraswamy (ed.), *Revisiting the Yom Kippur War* (London & Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 2000) and Naseer H. Aruri, *Middle East Crucible: Studies on the Arab-Israeli War of October 1973* (Wilmette, IL: The Medina University Press International, 1975) respectively.

## *Main Themes*

Compared to the War of 1967, the accounts of the War of 1973 do not include as many various points of controversy (or main themes as they are referred to in this thesis). With regard to the War of 1973, there are three main themes and they are discussed below:

- (1) The nature of the Arab war aims;
- (2) The question of which side broke the first cease-fire of October 22, 1973;
- (3) The issue of which sides ultimately should be viewed as being responsible for the war.

### The nature of the Arab war aims

The War of 1973 was the result of a coordinated surprise attack by Egypt and Syria, and this attack came about after a great deal of planning that had taken place beforehand. So, as already mentioned above, the War of 1973 is quite different from the War of 1967 as at least one of the warring parties wanted the war to take place when it did and had some conceptual idea behind what should be accomplished with this use of force. This is not in dispute. What is disputed, however, are the aims of the Arab states.

One perspective on this is to present Egypt and Syria as having nothing but political goals with the war. The war, in other words, was fought not so much to gain territory, but for what were ultimately political reasons. In the view of an Egyptian journalist writing on the war, there could only be three possible reasons for why the Arab states launched the war: (1) to exterminate the state of Israel; (2) to recapture the territories captured by Israel in 1967; or (3) to use the war for political purposes to achieve a negotiated solution to the

conflict.<sup>6</sup> The following quote discussing the Egyptian President Anwar Sadat's decision for launching the war illustrates this last view:

Sadat was not suggesting a full-scale war against Israel, but a limited war. The main aim of this was to break the stalemate. As Shazly [the Egyptian chief of staff] recalls, Sadat said to his commanders, 'If you get back ten centimetres of Sinai, I can solve the problem.' The idea of a limited war was both new and controversial. It meant, in effect, that Sadat was prepared to compromise and to accept that a limited war would only liberate *part* of the land occupied by the Israelis during the 1967 War. By the same token, it implied that Sadat would consider negotiating the remaining portions of Egypt's occupied land – this was an unthinkable proposition for most Egyptians who had been swayed by a decade of rhetoric that had focused on revenge and the destruction of Israel.<sup>7</sup>

The Arabs, in other words, saw the war as the first step in the process of having their territories lost in 1967 returned. Although starting an armed conflict quite naturally is aggressive in nature, this is mitigated by the fact that the goals of the war ultimately were not military (i.e. aggressive) in nature. On the contrary, they were political (i.e. peaceful).<sup>8</sup>

The other view on the question of Arab war aims is that the war was fought either to recapture the territories lost in 1967, or to go even further and brake into Israel proper. In other words, the Arab war objectives were ultimately aggressive in nature.<sup>9</sup> There are different views on the level of Arab belligerence: on the one end there is for instance American journalist David Dolan who simply says that

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<sup>6</sup> Sid-Ahmed 1976, p. 27. Although the author believes that recapturing the lost territories by force would be considered a legitimate undertaking, the war was launched for political reasons.

<sup>7</sup> Bregman & El-Tahri 1998, p. 114f. Emphasis in original.

<sup>8</sup> See for example Bregman & El-Tahri 1998, p. 114ff.; Donald Neff, *Warriors against Israel: How Israel Won the Battle to Become America's Ally 1973* (Brattleboro, VT: Amana Books, 1988), p. 306; O'Ballance 1978, p. 13ff.; O'Brien 1986, p. 512-21; Avraham Sela, "The 1973 Arab War Coalition: Aims, Coherence, and Gain-Distribution" in Kumaraswamy 2000, p. 56; and Shlaim 2000, p. 319.

<sup>9</sup> Bard 1999, p. 246; Davis & Decter 1982, p. 47f; and Sachar 1996, p. 748.

"[t]he full-scale Arab jihad was renewed on Saturday afternoon, October 6, 1973."<sup>10</sup> At the other end of the spectrum are those who present the Arab war objectives as an attempt to recapture the lost territories of 1967. The war was in other words not fought to destroy the state of Israel, but rather with the more limited objective of recovering lost Egyptian and Syrian lands.<sup>11</sup> But, even though this presents the Arabs in a less belligerent light than the view that the war was fought to destroy the Jewish state, this perspective still portrays the Arab side in a negative and aggressive manner. The reason for this being that the Arabs at the end of the day chose not to try to achieve a negotiated settlement, but rather impose their own. Compared with the perspective that the war just a stepping-stone toward a negotiated settlement—and not a means to an end in itself—this view does portray Egypt and Syria in a more negative light. Needless to say, the perception that the Arabs fought the war in order to destroy Israel is also really quite negative of the Arab states in question. There is also the view where the war is presented as a means both to recover lost land as well as wiping out Israel:

Egypt's aim was to recover the whole of Sinai, and if they had succeeded in overrunning the passes and the opportunity had been present the Arabs would have gone on to demolish Israel as state and hand over the country to the Palestinians.<sup>12</sup>

In the original classifications of the main themes, the former view—that the objective of Egypt and Syria was to regain some of their lost territory in order to negotiate a final settlement—was deemed to be pro-Arab. This is because it paints the Arab states as being less aggressive than in the latter view where the objective is either presented as recapturing all of the lost territories or destroying Israel.

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<sup>10</sup> Dolan 1991, p. 132.

<sup>11</sup> See Frank Aker, *October 1973: The Arab-Israeli War* (Hamden, CN: Archon Books, 1985), p. 19. Here, Egypt is presented as seeking to recapture its lost territories, whereas Syria is described as seeking to win a complete victory over Israel. See also Gainsborough 1986, p. 183.

<sup>12</sup> A.J. Barker, *The Yom Kippur War* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1974), p. 97.



This view is classified as being the pro-Israeli view. So are also the sources where there is no reason given for the Arab attack. Not discussing possible objectives for the attack is in other words classified as being pro-Israeli, as presenting the view of two states attacking another without any objective is probably not to be construed as nothing but sheer aggression.<sup>13</sup>

There is, however, a problem with the above classification. In a number of sources, the view is presented whereby Egypt is said to have had limited and political goals with the war, whereas Syria is said to have had the goal of either recapturing the whole of the Golan or even to break into Israel proper.<sup>14</sup> So, in other words, the objective of one party is described in pro-Arab terms while the objective of the second party is described from a pro-Israeli stance. There are three ways of approaching this problem. The first is to deem all these sources as being ambiguous. There is an inherent contradiction in relation to the theme, and hence the sources are of no use regarding this. The second and third way to approach this question is to deem these sources as either being pro-Israeli or pro-Arab: although one party is presented as being more peaceful the other is portrayed as being more belligerent. The question then is which of the two designations is the more accurate: pro-Arab or pro-Israeli?

Although this is quite naturally a judgment call—which by its very nature is not scientific in the proper sense of the word—it could be argued that presenting the view of Egypt having limited, political goals with the war whereas Syria had larger, more military guided goals is in fact pro-Arab. This is primarily due to two factors.

First, Egypt at the time was (and perhaps still is) the most important Arab state. In most works on the Arab-Israeli conflict in

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<sup>13</sup> See for example Michael I Handel, *Perception, Deception and Surprise: The Case of the Yom Kippur War*, Jerusalem Papers on Peace Problems, No. 19 (Jerusalem: Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1976); Lesch & Tschirgi 1998; and Samuel 1989.

<sup>14</sup> See Jerry Asher & Eric Hammel, *Duel for the Golan: The 100-Hour Battle that Saved Israel* (New York: William Morrow, 1987), p. 19f.; Peter Allen, *The Yom Kippur War* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1982), pp. 20f., 83; Bailey 1990, p. 310; Bickerton & Klausner 1991, p. 175f.; Bregman 2000, pp. 71, 83; Schulze 1999, p. 45f.; and Thomas 1999, p. 198.

general or the War of 1973 in particular, Egypt is given a much greater deal of attention than Syria. Hence, even though Syria's goals are presented as being more aggressive than Egypt's (i.e. the pro-Israeli view), the image being projected is that of a more reasonable and less belligerent Arab side as Egypt is given more attention.

Second, the goals of the Arab states in question are actually presented as being different. This in itself is probably to be construed as being pro-Arab. The reason for this is that in traditional pro-Israeli accounts, there is usually a "lumping together" of all the Arab actors. The Arabs is one large group that can consist of the whole Arab world, a few Arab states, the Palestinians, etc. Be that as it may, but when the disparate Arab actors are combined into a single group they are in most cases presented in a negative light (see for instance the above quote on the Arabs restarting their jihad above). The Arabs are in some sense united in their hatred of Israel. So, emphasizing that Egypt and Syria did have different goals with the war does present the Arab side in a more pluralistic and arguably less aggressive manner.

Nevertheless, however, this aspect of the theme is problematic, and it is further discussed in the conclusion of the main themes in this chapter, as well as in the concluding chapter of this thesis where the methodology used is evaluated.

#### The broken cease-fire of October 22, 1973

As a result of joint US-Soviet negotiations, a United Nations Security Council resolution was presented early in the morning of October 22 (New York time). This resolution (Security Council Resolution 338) called for a general cease-fire to go into effect no later than twelve hours after it was adopted. This resolution was to end the war, but the issue at hand concerns the fact that the war continued for another few days until October 25. The cease-fire was in other words broken and the question here is that there are two different views as to which side violated it.

As can be recalled, the war on the northern front had by October 22 more or less come to a standstill. The Syrians and Israelis were still fighting and there were skirmishes taking place between the two parties for months after the war officially ended, but there were no major troop movements after the October 22 cease-fire went into effect. The war on the northern front had already essentially come to an end by that time. On the southern front, however, the war was still very hot at the time when the October 22 cease-fire was declared.

Israeli troops had already crossed the Suez Canal a week prior, and had improved their positions quite drastically during that time. The Egyptian Third Army—which was stationed on the eastern bank of the canal—looked like it could be completely cut off as the Israeli army gained more ground on the western bank. By October 22, the Egyptian Third Army was still not completely encircled, but by the time the fighting finally ended on October 25, it was.

This is where there are differing views as to what happened. There is on the one hand the view that the cease-fire came at a time when the Egyptian and Israeli forces were very mixed-up and where there were no clear front lines. In what most likely began as smaller skirmishes soon led to the fighting continuing until the situation on the ground was “cleaner” and a cease-fire more sustainable. So, it was in other words both sides that broke the cease-fire.<sup>15</sup>

Another way of presenting the broken cease-fire is simply to ignore the cease-fire being broken. The war is then presented as having ended on either October 22 (the date of the first cease-fire resolution) or October 25 (the date of the last cease-fire resolution), and there is no mention of the cease-fire having been broken by either of the parties.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> See for example Aker 1985, p. 120; Allen 1982, pp. 224, 228f.; Barker 1974, p. 137; Bickerton & Klausner 1991, p. 178; Gilbert 1998, p. 458; and Sachar 1996, p. 781.

<sup>16</sup> See for example Eshel 1978, p. 74f.; Lesch & Tschirgi 1998, p. 26; Samuel 1989, p. 138ff.; and Tessler 1994, p. 476f.

Yet another manner of presenting the broken cease-fire is to say that it was primarily broken by Israel. This is how Milton Viorst discusses Israel breaking the cease-fire:

But having grudgingly accepted the agreement, the Israelis immediately found excuses to violate it. Determined to punish Egypt for the effrontery of starting the war, they continued to move forward, tightening the ring at the rear of the Third Army, enlarging their military options to include the capture of Cairo or, at least, the surrender of Egypt's forces.<sup>17</sup>

Israel, in other words, deliberately violated the cease-fire in order to encircle the Egyptian Third Army. Completely surrounding the Egyptian force—and thus being able to control its access to food and water—would be beneficial for Israel in the disengagement talks likely to take place after the war, this line of thinking goes.<sup>18</sup> In some sources it is also said that Israel had the approval of Henry Kissinger, the American secretary of state, in breaking the cease-fire in order to further improve its positions.<sup>19</sup> Israeli historian Benny Morris, furthermore, argues that although the cease-fire was broken by both Egypt and Israel, the difference is that the Israeli violations were sanctioned by the Israeli cabinet and high command. The Egyptian violations, on the other hand, were locally initiated.<sup>20</sup>

Emphasizing that the initial cease-fire was broken largely by Israel is of course quite damning of this country, as a United Nations Security Council resolution is to be followed. Accepting a cease-fire resolution and then breaking it in order to improve its situation is not fair play. So, the view that Israel was the party that primarily broke the cease-

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<sup>17</sup> Viorst 1987, p. 166.

<sup>18</sup> See for example al-Haytham al-Ayoubi, "The Strategies of the Fourth Campaign" in Aruri 1975, p. 96; Gainsborough 1986, p. 182; Gerner 1994, p. 116; Walter Laqueur, *Confrontation: The Middle East and World Politics* (New York: Quadrangle/The New York Times Books, 1974), p. 108ff, 197; O'Ballance 1978, p. 256f.; Khouri 1985, p. 370; and Smith 1988, p. 231.

<sup>19</sup> See for example Fraser 1995, p. 103; Morris 1999, p. 435f.; and Neff 1988, p. 270f.

<sup>20</sup> Morris 1999, p. 430.

fire is henceforth termed as being the pro-Arab view. Conversely, either saying that both sides violated the cease-fire or simply not mentioning that the first cease-fire was broken is then termed the pro-Israeli view. This is more in opposition to the pro-Arab view that Israel was the insubordinate party than that the view that both parties broke the cease-fire implicitly is more positive towards Israel. Saying, in other words, that both parties broke the cease-fire or simply ignoring the question of blame does not paint Israel in a positive light *per se*, but this perspective should be seen in contrast to the pro-Arab view that paints Israel in a negative light.

#### Responsibility for the war

Compared to the War of 1967, the War of 1973 is more straightforward as to which side, so to say, fired the first shot. It was the Arab states. Egypt and Syria began the war—this is not in dispute—but the question then is why. The time period between 1967 and 1973, as described in the above chapter, saw some moves towards a negotiated settlement of the conflict between (arguably) the most important parties: Egypt and Israel. Nothing, however, came from these steps. And, this is where the question of blame for the War of 1973 ultimately lays according to the sources where this issue is discussed.

As is the usually the case, there are two different views of which side is to blame for the war. One view places this blame on the shoulders of Israel. Israel, it is said, was quite content with the *status quo* that had developed after its victory in 1967. The Arabs, or at least Egypt, had sought to regain their lost territories through political means, but this had failed due to Israeli intransigence:

The principal reasons for the October War of 1973 were that Egypt and Syria sought to recover their own territories seized by Israel in 1967, after they had exhausted, without success, all diplomatic means to secure Israel's withdrawal, and to free their soil from foreign occupation.<sup>21</sup>

Or, as put forward quite succinctly by Irish diplomat Conor Cruise O'Brien:

The Yom Kippur War could have been avoided if the Government of Golda Meir, under the ascendancy of Moshe Dayan, had not acted on the assumption that Israeli needed no foreign policy, only a defense policy.<sup>22</sup>

So, even though Syria and Egypt started the war, the ultimate blame should be placed at the feet of Israel. Had Israel been more forthcoming and willing to compromise, the War of 1973 would never have taken place.<sup>23</sup>

The other view of looking at this is to blame the Arab states for the war. As there is no question of which side started the war, putting blame on the Arabs is in some cases done by just not indicating any Israeli responsibility. By just mentioning that the Arabs began the war without delving into any real or perceived Israeli responsibility, the question of blame is quite easily transferred to the Arab states. This is in other words blame by implication.<sup>24</sup>

Another perspective on the question of ultimate blame for the War of 1973 is to more explicitly say that the Arab states were to blame. Here, a basic Arab unwillingness to live in peace with Israel is sometimes referred to: "Meanwhile, rather than reconciling

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<sup>21</sup> Gainsborough 1986, p. 183.

<sup>22</sup> O'Brien 1986, p. 510.

<sup>23</sup> For examples of this view, see al-Ayoubi 1975, p. 65ff.; Gerner 1994, p. 115; Kouri 1985, p. 364f.; Laqueur 1974, p. 254f.; Lesch & Tschirgi 1998, p. 25; Morris 1999, p. 388ff.; O'Ballance 1978, p. 13; Sela 2000, p. 44ff.; Shlaim 2000, p. 319; and Viorst 1987, p. 160f.

<sup>24</sup> See for example Allen 1982; Bickerton & Klausner 1991; Blumberg 1998; Eshel 1978; Gilbert 1998; Handel 1976; and Samuel 1989.

themselves to Israel's existence, the Arab states looked for a way to avenge the humiliation of their defeat."<sup>25</sup> The War of 1973 was, in other words, merely another instance of Arab aggression and inflexibility. As Israel can and could not negotiate on the fundamentals of its own existence, it bears no responsibility for the war.

As the first view sees the war as something that could be blamed on Israel, this perspective is termed the pro-Arab view. And, conversely, the second view, which sees the war as being the Arabs' "fault," is deemed the pro-Israeli view.

#### Main themes: conclusion

One of the main differences between the main themes related to the War of 1973 and the previous aspects of the conflict discussed above, is that there are fewer points of controversy. As can be recalled from the War of 1967, there were many different points where the sources disagreed. Another difference between the previous chapters and the present is that there is perhaps more of a tilt towards a pro-Arab perspective than was previously the case. Below follows in table form the distribution between the views held in reference to the different themes:

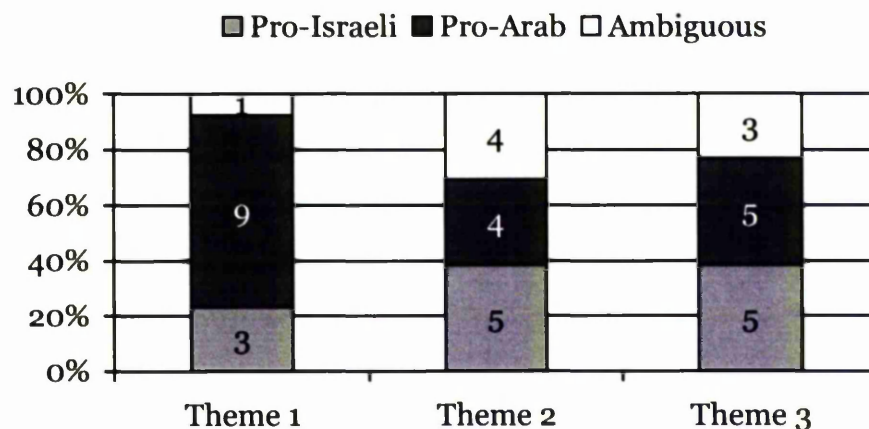


Figure I: Distribution of views in the specific works

<sup>25</sup> Bard 1999, p. 246. For other examples of this view, see Barker 1974; Davis & Decter 1982, p. 45ff.; and Dolan 1991, p. 132.

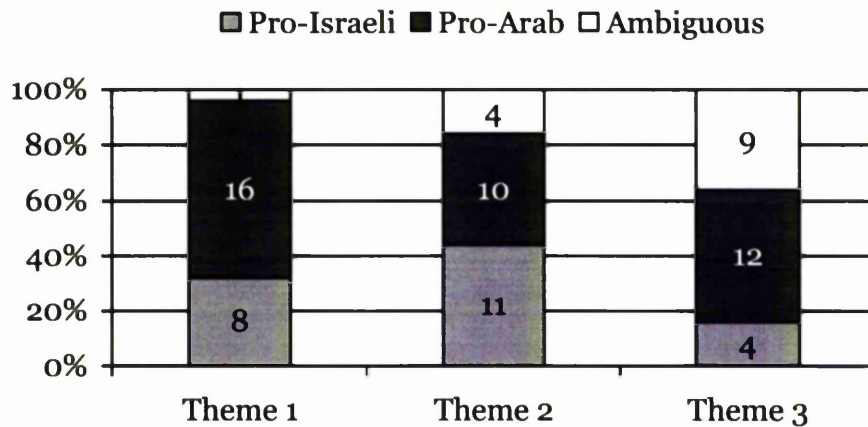


Figure II: Distribution of views in the general works

So, as one can see from the above graphs there is a definite pro-Arab tilt with regard to themes one and three in at least the general works, whereas the views held with regards to theme two are more evenly distributed. Themes one and three, as can be recalled, deal with the objectives of the Arab states and the ultimate responsibility for the war respectively. They are in other words more interpretative than theme two, which deals with the more down-to-earth matter of who broke the October 22 cease-fire.

The question then is why there is such a clear pro-Arab tilt with regard to theme one. Part of the answer lies in the way the theme was initially classified: even those sources that present Syria as having maximalist goals while Egypt's are more political and limited in nature have been deemed pro-Arab (see above). There are quite a few sources that hold exactly this perspective, and it is of course problematic to determine that Syria having maximalist goals (regardless of Egypt's objectives) is to be regarded as pro-Arab. Or, putting it differently, it is quite clear that presenting both Syria and Egypt as having limited, political objectives with the war clearly can be construed as being pro-Arab, while both states having different agendas is more problematic. The best way to deal with this problem



would probably be to classify the sources in three different categories: pro-Arab (both states having limited objectives), pro-Israeli (both states having more aggressive goals) and something like an intermediate pro-Arab. Using this classification, we would have the following distribution (the sources deemed ambiguous have been excluded due to clarity):

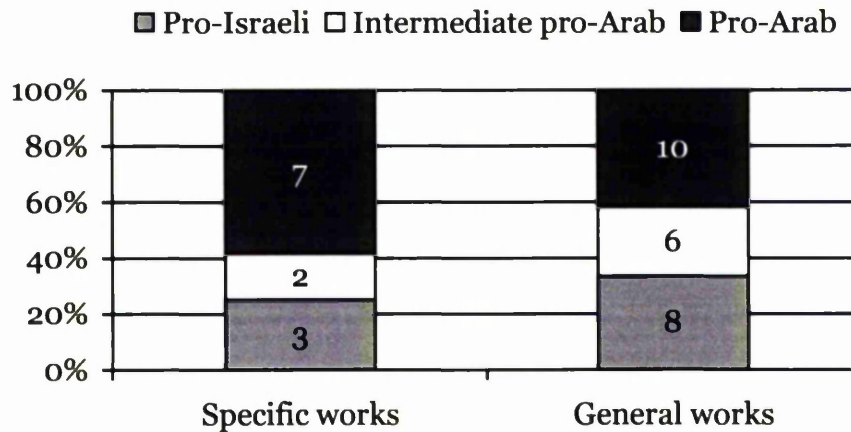


Figure III: Distribution of views in relation to theme one (Arab war aims)

Although the term “intermediate pro-Arab” is not particularly good, the above chart shows that there are quite a few sources that walk the middle ground between the clearly pro-Arab and pro-Israeli sources. What this illustrates though is that in some instances the dyad of pro-Arab/pro-Israeli is kind of a rough tool, and that sometimes there is the need for a classification that describes more of a middle ground. This issue is discussed further in the concluding chapter of this thesis, where problems found when using this methodology are discussed.

In this chapter, there are three different kinds of themes:

- (1) Theme where the intentions/objectives of two parties are under dispute (theme one);
- (2) Theme where what actually happened is under dispute (theme two);
- (3) Theme where it is disputed how to interpret a larger historical event (theme three).

Just like the case with the earlier chapters the points of controversy—or main themes as they are called in this thesis—are quite diverse in their scope and significance. Themes one and three (i.e. regarding the Arab states' objective and the ultimate blame for the war) are more interpretive in nature and should be looked upon as being nothing but bias as the term is used in this thesis. They represent nothing but mere differences of opinion, and it would be difficult (or perhaps even impossible) to decide empirically and conclusively which perspective is correct.

When it comes to theme two (on the broken cease-fire), it would seem as it would be possible to determine with greater accuracy which perspective is the correct. Was the cease-fire broken primarily by Israel or by both sides? In theory it is probably feasible to answer this question conclusively, but part of the problem is that you would have to rely mostly on the accounts provided by the parties directly involved (i.e. Egypt and Israel), as there does not seem to have been any non-partisan observers present at the time. This could change of course if new material would surface, but for the time being the question of the broken cease-fire should be looked upon as being more a question of bias than willful propaganda.

In the previous chapters, the question of standard narratives is raised. One problem with the War of 1973 is that there are not many points of controversy, and subsequently only three main themes.

There is also the problem of the objectives of Syria and Egypt raised above. Nevertheless, a standard pro-Israeli narrative of the War of 1973 would probably look something like this:

On October 6, 1973, Egypt and Syria in an act of aggression with the aim of retaking their lost territories and if possible carry the war further attacked Israel without any prior warning. The UN sponsored cease-fire of October 22 was broken by both Egypt and Israel, and the war did not end until October 25. The Arab states, with their inability to live in peace with Israel, are to blame.

A pro-Arab standard narrative, on the other hand, would perhaps come out something like this:

On October 6, 1973, Egypt and Syria attacked Israel in a surprise attack. The objective of the war was to break the deadlock and to eventually reach a negotiated settlement for the return of the territories lost in 1967. The UN sponsored cease-fire of October 22 was primarily broken by Israel in order to improve its position on the ground and to encircle the Egyptian Third Army. Israel is largely to blame for the war, as its intransigence left Egypt and Syria with no other choice than armed conflict to break the *status quo*.

Compared with the earlier chapters, there are more standard narratives present in the sources. This is probably, however, due to the fact that there are simply less possible ways in which to depict the War of 1973—there are not as many main themes—compared with the events dealt with in the earlier chapters.

### *Further observations*

As the War of 1973 began with a surprise attack without any public warnings or direct indications, there is some debate as to what degree Israel was aware that there was going to be a war. Most sources where this is discussed argue that Israel did not know for certain that war was about to break out until the early morning of October 6 (or in some cases on the day before). The war, as can be recalled, began at 2 pm. that same day. That there was no further warning was an intelligence failure on the part of Israel. In most sources where Israeli knowledge of the impending attack is discussed, it is also said that a preemptive strike was discussed but decided against due to political considerations. Israel, according to this view, did not want to “come off” as the aggressor.<sup>26</sup>

This is obviously in contrast to the view held in many sources on the War of 1967. At that time, Israel’s very survival was at stake and a preemptive strike was the only option. The Israeli leadership deciding against striking first implies a belief that Israel’s military position had changed since 1967 as it no longer faced total destruction. Whether or not this is due to the Israeli army being stronger, the Arab armies being weaker or because of the strategic buffer given by the territories taken in 1967 is in most cases not clear. This, however, is how the issue is looked upon in one source:

The options then [in 1967], too, had been to make the first strike or be obliterated; Israel had chosen survival and been condemned roundly as the aggressor. On this occasion the greater risk was to be taken—a risk, however, partly offset, at least in Israeli opinion, by the much stronger borders she possessed in 1973.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> See for example Allen 1982, p. 40f.; Barker 1974, p. 40; Bregman & El-Tahri 1998, p. 119ff.; Fraser 1995, p. 99; Gainsborough 1986, p. 183; Gilbert 1998, p. 431; Handel 1976, pp. 37, 52; Laqueur 1974, p. 88f.; Neff 1988, pp. 131-9.; O’Ballance 1978, p. 59ff.; Samuel 1989, p. 137; Schulze 1999, p. 47; and Shlaim p. 319.

<sup>27</sup> Allen 1982, p. 46.

In general, the War of 1973 is described in less dramatic terms than the War of 1967. There are a few exceptions where Israel's position at the outset is described in quite dramatic terms, but in most cases the doomsday feeling that was transmitted in a number of sources on the War of 1967 is not present.<sup>28</sup> Nevertheless, this is how Mitchell Bard describes the military position at the beginning of the war:

The equivalent of the total forces of NATO in Europe was mobilized on Israel's borders. On the Golan Heights, approximately 180 Israeli tanks faced an onslaught of 1,400 Syrian tanks. Along the Suez Canal, fewer than 500 Israeli defenders with only three tanks were attacked by 600,000 Egyptian soldiers, backed by 2,000 tanks and 550 aircraft.<sup>29</sup>

Bard's perspective, however, is the exception. In most cases, the war is not described in terms of Israel facing destruction. So, in this sense, the War of 1973 is in quite a few sources presented with less emotion and as having been more of a "normal" war than the War of 1967.

Part of the reason why the War of 1973 is not described in very emotional terms is probably because it was more or less entirely fought between the militaries of the warring parties, and there were hardly any civilian casualties. In this sense, the war of 1973 was a "clean war," or at least compared with other wars of the twentieth century. There are however a number of instances in the sources where various atrocities committed by the Arab side of the conflict are mentioned. In most of the works where atrocities are brought up, the authors simply mention what Israel claimed happened—the killing of smaller numbers of Israeli prisoners of war by the hand of their mostly Syrian, but in some cases also Egyptian, captors—without committing themselves to whether these claims were true or

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<sup>28</sup> For examples of when Israel's position at the outset of the war is described in more dramatic terms, see Bard 1999, p. 247; Dolan 1991, p. 133; Gilbert 1998, p. 432; and Samuel 1989, p. 138.

<sup>29</sup> Bard 1999, p. 247.

not. The Israeli allegations are simply just transmitted through to the reader.<sup>30</sup>

In two cases, there are direct allegations made directly by the authors of the sources used. British colonel A.J. Barker says that some Israeli soldiers who surrendered to the Syrians "were butchered and their mutilated bodies were buried nearby".<sup>31</sup> But, the authors that are most damning in their condemnation of the Arabs are Leonard Davis and Moshe Decter. They delve into the question of atrocities in greater length than any other source and are more clear about their accusations against the Arabs. The following quote, which contains a quote inside a quote, is a good example of how the Arab side is presented by Davis and Decter:

Syrian Minister of Defense Mustafa Tlas told the Syrian National Assembly in December 1973 of the following example of "supreme valor" by Syrian troops:

"There is the outstanding case of a recruit from Aleppo who murdered 28 Jewish soldiers all by himself, slaughtering them like sheep. All of his comrades in arms witnessed this. He butchered three of them with an ax and decapitated them. In other words, instead of using a gun to kill them, he took a hatchet to chop their heads off. He struggled face to face with one of them and throwing down his ax managed to break his neck and devour his flesh in front of his comrades. This is a special case. Need I single it out to award him the Medal of the Republic? I will grant this medal to any soldier who succeeds in killing 28 Jews, and I will cover him with appreciation and honor his bravery."<sup>32</sup>

The language in the above quote is of course really quite strong, and it is not representative of the language used when describing the atrocities taking place in the war. Rather, it has been included to exemplify the extremely negative view of "the Arab" as presented in some sources. In the above quote, not only is the anonymous recruit

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<sup>30</sup> See Asher & Hammel 1987, p. 94; Lester A. Sobel (ed.), *Israel & the Arabs: The October 1973 War* (New York: Facts on File, 1974), p. 141f.; and O'Ballance 1978, pp. 129f., 306. O'Ballance also transmits the Israeli allegation that captured Israeli soldiers were subjected to a truth drug by their Syrian captors (pp. 256, 335).

<sup>31</sup> Barker 1974, p. 69.

<sup>32</sup> Davis & Decter 1982, p. 51. There is no reference given to this quote.

from Aleppo presented as somewhat of a monster, but the Syrian establishment is also depicted in less than civilized terms as it not only accepts this behavior but also in fact rewards it with a medal.

There are no allegations made—either direct or indirect—against Israel for having violated the rules of war. The only allegation of misconduct by Israel is the Syrian claim that Israeli pilots were found chained to their cockpits due to poor morale. This is naturally quite similar to the claim made in the War of 1967, where the Israeli army claimed it found Syrian soldiers chained to their guns on the Golan. The author who transmits this allegation against Israel, Edgar O'Ballance, is quite skeptical about its validity.<sup>33</sup>

A small aspect of the War of 1973 that is in fact only mentioned in two sources is the charge that American Secretary of State Henry Kissinger in fact encouraged Sadat to go to war.<sup>34</sup> The line of argumentation here is that the US could only exert pressure on Israel to withdraw from Egyptian territory if there was a crisis in the area. It would not be an exaggeration to say that Kissinger was and still is a controversial figure, and these charges are no less controversial. Not only would Kissinger's supposed encouragement run counter to stated US policy at the time, but it is also not clear whether or not Kissinger had the approval of his superior, President Richard Nixon. As already mentioned, this is a small aspect only mentioned in a few sources, but it is interesting in the larger picture of the history of the latter part of the twentieth century where the role and actions of Henry Kissinger are quite heavily contested and debated.

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<sup>33</sup> O'Ballance 1978, p. 306.

<sup>34</sup> See Bregman 2000, p. 69; and O'Brien 1986, pp. 512-21.

## 5. The Rise of the PLO

It is probably not an exaggeration to say that one of the most influential non-state actors in world politics in the latter part of last century has been the Palestine Liberation Organization. The PLO, as representing the Palestinians in various forums, has received a tremendous amount of attention compared with other, similar organizations, and its chairperson since the late 1960s, Yasser Arafat, is probably in possession of one of the most well-recognized names and faces in world politics today.

The PLO was founded in 1964 to represent the Palestinian people, but it was not until after the War of 1967 that it started to become a more important actor in the conflict. And, it could be argued, by the time this analysis ends, in 1974, it had become one of the principal actors. If the Arab-Israeli conflict in 1967 was more or less an inter-state affair between Israel and its Arab neighbors, then by 1974 it had clearly gained another dimension through the rise of the PLO and the addition of a Palestinian component.

The PLO was created in 1964 as already mentioned, but it was not until after the War of 1967 that it truly became an important actor. After the war, in 1968 to be precise, the nature of the PLO changed, as the various guerrilla organizations came to dominate the organization. The PLO after 1968 not only became more independent from the Arab states, but it also became more of an umbrella organization where the different guerrilla organizations held different degrees of influence. The most important of these organizations was



that founded by Arafat and a few of his companions: Fatah.<sup>1</sup> Other organizations include the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP)<sup>2</sup> and al-Saiqa in addition to a number of smaller groups.

Some of the major events surrounding the PLO during this time period—apart from the various guerrilla organizations gaining greatly in influence as mentioned above—are discussed further below, but they include:

- The violent confrontation between the PLO and the Jordanian regime in September 1970, whereby the PLO for all practical was expelled from Jordan.
- The campaign of international terrorism, especially in the form of plane hijackings, that took place in the late 1960s and early 1970s.
- The emergence of the so-called Black September Organization, which undertook what is probably the most well-known terrorist operation committed by the Palestinian groups; namely the taking of Israeli athletes as hostages during the 1972 Olympic Games in Munich.
- The important and final political acknowledgement of the PLO as a representative of the Palestinians in 1974, when it was afforded the status of the sole representative of the Palestinian people by the Arab League. Later that same year, Yasser Arafat addressed the United Nations General Assembly and the PLO was given observer status in this world body.

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<sup>1</sup> Fatah seems to be the variation of the name most often used. Other variations include al-Fatah, Fateh and Fath. They are all, however, names of the same organization.

<sup>2</sup> The DFLP is also sometimes referred to as the Popular Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PDFLP) as well as the Popular Democratic Front (PDF). The DFLP seems to be the most commonly used name however.

## Sources

The specific sources used for the analysis of the rise of the PLO are quite disparate in nature. There are a few that are quite academic and analytical in nature,<sup>3</sup> whereas there are some that are much more popular in style.<sup>4</sup> The history of the PLO certainly has some spy novel characteristics to it, and it is hence quite natural that there are books that focus on these aspects of the organization's history.

Due to his great importance in the history of the post-1968 PLO as well as probably due to the interesting life he has led, there have been quite a few biographies written on Yasser Arafat.<sup>5</sup> These have also been included in this analysis, as they are to a large degree also the history of the PLO. The life of Yasser Arafat and the PLO, in other words, have traditionally been so intertwined that a biography of the former almost reads like a history of the latter.

There are a few works written by Palestinians and some by Arabs of other origins, as well as some written by Israelis.<sup>6</sup> Helena Cobban's work on the PLO and Alan Hart's biography on Arafat are perhaps to be regarded as standard works in the sense that they seem to have

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<sup>3</sup> See for example Paul A. Jureidini & William E. Hazen, *The Palestinian Movement in Politics* (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1976); and Alain Gresh, *The PLO: The Struggle Within: Towards an Independent Palestinian State* (London: Zed Books, 1988).

<sup>4</sup> See for example Neil C. Livingstone & David Halevy, *Inside the PLO: Covert Units, Secret Funds, and the War Against Israel and the United States* (London: Robert Hale, 1991); and Jillian Becker, *The PLO: The Rise and Fall of the Palestine Liberation Organization* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1984).

<sup>5</sup> Alan Hart, *Arafat: A Political Biography* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1989); Andrew Gowers & Tony Walker, *Behind the Myth: Yasser Arafat and the Palestinian Revolution* (London: W.H. Allen, 1990); John & Janet Wallach, *Arafat: In the Eyes of the Beholder* (London: Heinemann, 1990); and Saïd K. Aburish, *Arafat: From Defender to Dictator* (London: Bloomsbury, 1998).

<sup>6</sup> Works written by Palestinians and Arabs of other origins include Jamal R. Nassar, *The Palestine Liberation Organization: From Armed Struggle to the Declaration of Independence* (Westport, CN: Praeger, 1991); Yezid Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State: The Palestinian National Movement, 1949-1993* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997); and Aburish 1998. Works written by Israelis include Aryeh Y. Yodfat & Yuval Arnon-Ohanna, *PLO: Strategy and Tactics* (London: Croom Helm, 1981); and Neil C. Livingstone & David Halevy, *Inside the PLO: Covert Units, Secret Funds, and the War Against Israel and the United States* (London: Robert Hale, 1991).

been quoted quite extensively by other authors.<sup>7</sup> All in all, the sources used in this section are quite disparate in style, scope as well as general outlook.

### *Main Themes*

It would not be an exaggeration to say that the PLO has generated a fair amount of controversy over the years, and this is reflected in the main themes related to this time period. These are:

- (1) The meaning of the PLO formula for a “democratic, secular state for all its citizens”;
- (2) The reasons for the Israeli army’s defeat at the Jordanian town of Karamah in 1968;
- (3) Responsibility for the international terrorism and hijackings of the late 1960s and early 1970s;
- (4) Reasons for Jordan’s King Hussein to decide to move against the PLO in 1970;
- (5) The organizational affiliation of the Black September Organization.

These themes are discussed below.

#### The nature of the formula for a “democratic, secular state”

Whether or not he actually said so or not (it seems to be contested), the view of the PLO *vis-à-vis* Israel prior to 1967 is often captured by observers through the phrase of “throwing the Jews into the sea” as supposedly uttered by the first chairperson of the PLO, Ahmed Shukayri. Whether or not he actually made this statement makes no

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<sup>7</sup> Helena Cobban, *The Palestinian Liberation Organisation: People, Power and Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984); and Hart 1989.

difference here, but to a large degree that seems to have been the perceived political policy of the PLO prior to 1967. In the late 1960s, however, there is a shift as the concept of a “democratic, secular state for all its citizens” is formulated. Exactly which group first developed this concept is not that relevant—in some instances it is said to have been the DFLP<sup>8</sup> and in some Fatah<sup>9</sup>—what is relevant in this context is how the concept is interpreted. The formula for the democratic state became official PLO policy in the late 1960s.

There are some authors who do not look upon this formula with favor. It is said that the formula for a democratic state is merely a euphemism for the destruction of Israel, and it is also said in some instances that it is a propaganda ploy.<sup>10</sup> This is how two Israeli writers present their view:

The term “democratic state” was much used by the PLO. It should be noted that it means an Arab state named Palestine, established on the territory of all of Palestine, after the *destruction* of the State of Israel. The slogans promise equal rights to its citizens, but to Jews it means only rights of a religious minority to individuals and not of a national entity – and only to those Jews who “will be considered Palestinians” – and not to a people. It says nothing about the right of Jews to self-determination or any minimal national rights.<sup>11</sup>

The term democratic state, in other words, did not include the Jewish people, but only the Palestinians. And, as the authors make quite clear, this was to take place after the destruction of Israel.

There is also the view that regardless of the intentions of the PLO in sanctioning this formula, it would have been impossible for the Israelis to interpret it differently than merely a call for collective suicide. First of all, the implicit rejection (and call for dismantlement) of Zionism present in the formula is said to be the same as the

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<sup>8</sup> See for example Wallach & Wallach, p. 233.

<sup>9</sup> See for example Hart 1989, p. 275; and Gresh 1988, p. 17.

<sup>10</sup> See for example Yodfat & Ohanna, 1981, p. 57; Davis & Decter 1982, p. 101; Becker 1984, p. 82; Bickerton & Klausner, p. 165; Wallach & Wallach 1991, p. 233; and Sachar 1996, p. 810.

<sup>11</sup> Yodfat & Arnon-Ohanna 1981, p. 57. Emphasis in original.

rejection and call for destruction of the Jewish presence; as Zionism, in the view of the Israelis, is said to be the *raison d'être* of the Jewish state. Second, it would have been impossible for the Israelis to take the formula "at face value" after years of violence and conflict.<sup>12</sup>

As is often the case, there are a number of different ways in which to look at this issue. The opposite from the above is quite obviously to argue that the formula for a "democratic, secular state" should be viewed as something positive offered by the PLO. The biographer of Yasser Arafat, Alan Hart, for instance argues that the formula in a sense does call for the dismantling of Israel, but then only by political means. Israel, in other words, with its political institutions is to be dismantled and replaced with a state for both Jews and Arabs. So, even if the formula in a sense calls for the destruction of Israel, it is not to be interpreted as a call for genocide or "throwing the Jews into the sea" but rather just to bring something down in order to build something new.<sup>13</sup> French scholar Alain Gresh, who has written on the evolution of Palestinian political thought, argues that the formula represents an important stage as the PLO now accepted the idea of a Jewish presence in a future Palestine. Gresh also makes the point that the view that the formula calls for a secular state is incorrect. The term that is used, however quite sparingly according to Gresh, is non-sectarian. Whether or not secular and non-sectarian could be said to illustrate the same idea in this context is probably more or less semantics.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> See for example Bard E. O'Neill, *Armed Struggle in Palestine: A Political-Military Analysis* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1978), pp. 8, 221f.; and Barry Rubin, *Revolution Until Victory?: The Politics and History of the PLO* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994), p. 40.

<sup>13</sup> Hart 1989, p. 275. For other works where the moderate aspects of the formula are emphasized, see also Jureidini & Hazen 1976, p. 98; Khouri 1985, p. 358; Quigley 1990, p. 228; Nassar 1991, p. 198f; Gerner 1994, p. 89f.; Tessler 1994, pp. 437-42; and Thomas, 1999, p. 191f.

<sup>14</sup> Gresh 1988, pp. 49ff. Secular and non-sectarian obviously is not the same thing, but in normal discourse the two terms seem to indicate the same notion. For instance, the United States is sometimes described as being a secular state. This is not correct in the strictest sense of the word, as the majority of Americans seem to

Whether or not the destruction of Israel actually refers to the physical destruction of Israel or just the destruction of its political institutions is however not a question of semantics. The difference between the two outlooks is crucial. According to one perspective, the PLO “was suggesting a political formula that articulated the rights of Palestinians and offered a possible solution to the conflict with Israeli Jews.”<sup>15</sup> And, from another perspective, the formula was “a euphemism for propaganda purposes to dismantle Israel and was intended to replace the admittedly ineffective slogan of ‘driving the Jews into the sea.’”<sup>16</sup> Looking at the formula as a means to solve the conflict through a multicultural state for both peoples is of course much more positive towards the PLO than to say that it was simply a ploy or euphemism for the physical destruction of Israel. Hence, the former view is here deemed to be the pro-Arab view, whereas the latter view is defined as the pro-Israeli.

#### The battle at Karameh

After the War of 1967, the low-intensity conflict between Israel and the various Palestinian groups continued. Although Israel was quite successful in countering Fatah and other groups on the West Bank, raids continued to be undertaken from across the Jordan River. And the Israeli army continued to retaliate. One of the largest of these operations was undertaken on March 21, 1968, when a fairly substantial Israeli force crossed the river in order to move against the Fatah bases in and around the Jordanian village of Karameh.

Whether or not Karameh in strict military terms was a major Palestinian victory and thus an Israeli defeat, it was certainly viewed as such in many quarters and the battle came to be a great publicity

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have some religious belief (i.e. are not secular). What is meant is of course non-sectarian as the United States does not have an official state religion. The terms secular and non-sectarian, in other words, are sometimes used to describe the same concept although they do not actually have the same meaning in the strictest sense.

<sup>15</sup> Thomas 1999, p. 191f.

<sup>16</sup> Bickerton & Klausner 1991, p. 165.

boost for both Fatah as well as Yasser Arafat personally. The battle at Karamah is in many cases presented as having been the catalyst that led to the Palestinian movement as represented by Fatah and the PLO becoming as important as it did in the late 1960s/early 1970s.

There are two different perspectives when looking at the battle at Karamah. One is to present it as a victory by Fatah over the Israeli army, and the other is to portray it as a Fatah victory with considerable Jordanian assistance. Palestinian journalist Saïd Aburish, for instance, is quite clear in how he presents the battle:

The ill-trained and poorly equipped Palestinians heroically held their ground and used the rocky terrain effectively against an estimated fifteen thousand-strong Israeli force. For a few hours the Palestinians fought alone, compensating for their lack of heavy weaponry with impressive improvisations and dramatic individual sacrifices. The Jordanian artillery and armoured units stayed behind and held their fire, but when the pressure on the guerrillas intensified, the Jordanian field commander, Mohammed Al Abdallah – who had already made repeated calls to army headquarters to ask for permission to assist the Palestinians – took the initiative and ordered his troops into the fray. At this point, the Israelis decided not to press their attack and withdrew.<sup>17</sup>

Although there was Jordanian assistance, it was the Palestinians who put up the hardest fight.<sup>18</sup> In others works, the Palestinian aspect of the fighting is downplayed or not even mentioned,<sup>19</sup> or the battle is not presented as a having been a defeat for the Israelis.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Aburish 1998, p. 81.

<sup>18</sup> In addition to the above quote, see for example Jureidini & Hazen 1976, p. 13f.; Amos 1980, p. 34; Cobban 1984, p. 42; Khouri 1985, p. 358; Gresh 1988, p. ix; Smith 1988, p. 214; Brynen 1990, p. 38; Bickerton & Klausner 1991, p. 165; Nassar 1991, p. 81; Rubin 1994, p. 18f; Tessler 1994, p. 425; Fraser 1995, p. 90; Lesch & Tschirgi 1998, pp. 23, 75; Schulze 1999, p. 43; and Thomas 1999, p. 194f. Baylis Thomas not only does not bring up any Jordanian assistance, he in fact makes the claim that the Jordanian army failed altogether to come to the assistance of the Palestinians.

<sup>19</sup> See O'Neill 1978, p. 47; Hart 1989, p. 263; Gowers & Walker 1990, p. 58ff.; Wallach & Wallach 1990, p. 32; Sayigh 1997, p. 178f.

<sup>20</sup> See Becker 1984, pp. 4, 62f.; and Livingstone & Halevy 1991, p. 8of.

Even though there are two different views on how it was fought, the battle of Karameh is probably not to be construed as being a main theme as they are used in this analysis. The reason for this is quite simple: there are no discernable views *vis-à-vis* the actors. In other words, it is not possible to say that one view is pro-Israeli or *vice versa*. Saying that the battle was an Israeli defeat primarily because of Palestinian resistance or due to Jordanian involvement is not clearly assigning blame or vindicating either of the main actors.

As the purpose of this analysis is to analyze the question of bias—and not just scholarly differences—this theme is rejected as a main theme. It could in fact be hypothesized that an emphasis on the Palestinian component can be viewed as either pro-Israeli or pro-Palestinian. Pro-Israeli in the sense that the Palestinian groups are presented as a strong and viable threat to Israeli security. Pro-Palestinian in the sense that the fact that the outnumbered Palestinians were able to beat off a stronger Israeli force can only be attributed to the strong Palestinian belief in their cause. (This is of course similar to the argument made in reference to the War of 1967, where one reason for the Israeli victory is said to have been the strong Israeli motivation and belief in their cause.) Nevertheless and speculation aside, due to the difficulties of placing this theme in relation to the binary designation of pro-Israeli/pro-Arab it has been decided against using it in the present analysis. It is, however, discussed further in the concluding chapter where difficulties with using the methodology employed in this thesis are discussed.

### The use of terrorism

In the late 1960s, yet another aspect was added to the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict; namely the use of international terrorism. Already from the creation of Israel in 1948 there had been various actions undertaken against Israeli targets by Palestinian groups and individuals. In Israel they were referred to as being terrorist operations and in Palestinian quarters they were referred to guerrilla



actions (or derivatives thereof). What was new with the use of the so-called international terrorism that began after the War of 1967 was that the targets were outside the immediate area of the conflict, and indeed often outside the Middle East.

Mostly, the terrorism involved plane hijackings, and as the targets often were European and American airlines a great deal of the passengers had no relation whatsoever to the conflict in the Middle East. Almost needless to say, the international terrorism of the late 1960s and early 1970s was quite heavily criticized in the West and it is therefore natural that the issue of Palestinian terrorism has been debated to a large degree.

There are two principal views of looking at the issue at hand. As the PLO was made up by a number of different organizations, with Yasser Arafat's Fatah being the largest and most influential, one way of presenting the international terrorism of this time period is to emphasize the organizational differences. This is how two American scholars writing in the mid-1970s evaluate the issue of Palestinian terror:

When tabulating the terrorist acts that have taken place since 1968, certain points should be stressed. The PFLP was responsible for most of the terrorist acts that took place between July 1968 and March 1974. The BSO was a close second. The terrorist groups also practiced certain types of acts as opposed to others. For instance, the PFLP concentrated mostly on attacks and hijackings while the BSO specialized in bombings and sabotage. Yet statistics show that of all the acts instigated by the guerrilla groups, most stressed bombings, with attacks coming in second and hijackings third. Israel, quite naturally was the recipient of most of these acts. However, Jordan was a close second. Fatah, because it basically refrained from acts of international terrorism, concentrated its attacks primarily against Israel and Jordan.<sup>21</sup>

The PFLP, or Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, was and still is a Marxist group that is often presented as being quite a bit

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<sup>21</sup> Jureidini & Hazen 1976, p. 88.

more radical than Fatah. The BSO, or Black September Organization, was a small group that only existed in the first half of the 1970s. The BSO is discussed further below.

The intricacies of internal PLO politics apart, what the above view illustrates is the view that Fatah, and hence the PLO in general, was not behind the international terror. It was smaller groups that were behind these attacks and Fatah and the PLO in general should not be held responsible.<sup>22</sup>

The other view to present the international terrorism of the late 1960s/early 1970s is to look upon it as having been undertaken by the PLO or the Palestinians at large. Mitchell Bard, for instance, is quite clear in his view on the terrorism: "After 1967, the scale of terrorism intensified, with the PLO increasingly choosing to attack Israeli targets, or simply Jews, outside the Middle East. This was the height of hijacking and other heinous activities."<sup>23</sup> There is in other words no distinction made between the PLO as an umbrella organization and the member groups of which it consisted.<sup>24</sup>

The implications of this theme are quite clear: in the first view, Fatah and in some ways the PLO in general are presented as being more moderate, whereas in the second view the whole of the PLO is presented as being more militant and extreme. Hence, the first view is here said to be the pro-Arab perspective and the second to be the pro-Israeli.

What is interesting about this theme is that it illustrates quite well the importance of how something is presented. As both views in some

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<sup>22</sup> See for example Amos 1980, pp. 76-81; Cobban 1984, p. 145f.; Khouri 1985, p. 359; O'Brien 1986, p. 481; Hart 1989, p. 286; Wallach & Wallach 1990, pp. 166, 232; Gowers & Walker 1990, p. 84; Nassar 1991, p. 88; Gerner 1994, p. 86ff.; Fraser 1995, p. 91; Sachar 1996, p. 699ff.; Sayigh 1997, p. 213f.; Bregman & El-Tahri 1998, p. 142; and Morris 1999, p. 376ff.

<sup>23</sup> Bard 1999, p. 239.

<sup>24</sup> See O'Neill 1978, pp. 86, 110, 151f.; Davis & Decter 1982, p. 99ff.; Becker 1984, p. 85; Viorst 1987, 135f.; Samuel 1989, p. 130; Bailey 1990, pp. 295, 301, 343; Livingstone & Halevy 1991, p. 100ff.; Blumberg 1998, p. 113; and Gilbert 1998, p. 417ff.

sense are historically correct—it would seem as if the actions undertaken were carried out by smaller member groups of the PLO—the issue at stake is how this historical reality is presented. Was the PLO in general an organization that condoned and committed terrorism, or was it just the smaller and more radical groups that did so? Of course, the answer to this question to a large degree lies with how the PLO is looked upon organizationally, but it is also very much a question of presentation. This theme, in other words, is perhaps a clearer example of where the different views held are biased than other themes. It is probably historically correct both saying that the terror of the time period was carried out by smaller member groups of the PLO, as well as saying that it was undertaken by the PLO in general. But, the outcome in how the Palestinian cause during this time period is presented is vastly different.

#### The Jordanian expulsion of the PLO

After the War of 1967, Jordan came to be what was in all probability the most important base of the PLO and its different groups. In some sense this was probably natural, as the Israeli-Jordanian border is quite long and as there is a large Palestinian population in Jordan. The battle at Karameh (see above) was to be a great boost for the Palestinian presence in Jordan, and the Jordanian King Hussein even publicly praised the fighters after their clash with the Israelis.

In 1970, however, after only three years had passed since the war and two since the battle of Karameh, the situation in Jordan had gone sour. After a violent confrontation in September that year between the Jordanian army and the PLO, the latter was more or less completely expelled from Jordan and was forced to set up their presence in other Arab states (most notably Lebanon). The reasons behind this violent confrontation—which has come to be referred to as Black September in Palestinian historiography—is the concern of this theme.

One way of looking at the reasons behind this confrontation is to argue that it was the more radical groups of the PLO (the Marxist/Maoist PFLP and DFLP) that challenged the Jordanian regime. These militant groups with their call for a Leftist revolution needless to say posed a challenge to the regime in Jordan, and the king had to act. Mainstream PLO, as represented by Fatah and Arafat, did not seek to overthrow the king, however, and in fact acted to defuse the increasingly tense situation in Jordan prior to September 1970. When the king decided to take action, he did not differentiate between the radical and the more mainstream groups and hence moved the Jordanian army against all PLO factions:

The core ideology of Fateh . . . included a stress on Palestinian non-intervention in the internal affairs of existing Arab states; but this concept was not shared by many of the other Palestinian guerrilla groups gaining influence in Jordan in the late 60s. The PFLP still clung to the pan-Arabist ideological approach of its Arab Nationalists' Movement origins; the DFLP, despite Fateh's midwifery at its birth, was soon thereafter calling for the establishment of soviets (workers' and peasants' councils) in some areas of northern Jordan; Saiqa and the Arab Liberation Front were the Palestinian guerrilla sections of respectively the pro-Syrian and the pro-Iraqi wings of the (pan-Arabist) Baath party, and so on. For all of these groups, a confrontation with Hussein, whom they saw variously as 'reactionary', 'a puppet of Western imperialism' or 'a Zionist tool', was considered not only desirable, but also ideologically necessary. Thus, in direct contradiction to Fateh's long-held ideology, throughout late 1969 and the first half of 1970, the Palestinian guerrillas' challenges to Hussein's authority multiplied as rapidly as their traffic-control roadblocks spread throughout more and more of the capital.<sup>25</sup>

According to this view, in other words, the blame for the confrontation should not be placed on the shoulders of Arafat and Fatah, but rather with the smaller, more radical factions of the PLO. The PLO at large as represented by Fatah is innocent.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Cobban 1984, p. 48f.

<sup>26</sup> See for instance Jureidini & Hazen 1976, p. 51; Yodfat & Ohanna 1981, p. 30; O'Brien 1986, p. 480; Smith 1988, p. 223; Gowers & Walker 1990, p. 75ff.; Wallach & Wallach 1990, pp. 167, 312, 470; Nassar 1991, p. 131; Sayigh 1997, pp. 244f., 258;

There is however another way of looking at the confrontation, and that is to say that it was in some sense inevitable. The Palestinian movement in Jordan had gained so much in size and weight that that fact alone was a challenge to the regime. And, although the more radical groups are to be held utterly responsible for the confrontation, some of the blame should rest with Arafat and Fatah for failing to properly define the role of the Palestinian movement inside Jordan. As for the perhaps inevitability of the clash, it has been argued that the two parties—the PLO and King Hussein—in fact had incompatible goals for the future of the occupied territories and that a clash between the two in all actuality perhaps was bound to happen at some point in time.<sup>27</sup>

The second major way of looking at the clash is to simply say that it was the PLO that challenged the Jordanian regime and its king. The distinction in policy present among the different groups as indicated in the above quote is not a factor, and it was the whole of the PLO that challenged the regime in Jordan and sought to overthrow its head of state.<sup>28</sup>

The distinction here between the different outlooks is quite clear. On the one hand, mainstream PLO as represented by Fatah is cleared of guilt for causing the violence in September 1970. On the other hand, the whole of the PLO is blamed. As the first view makes a distinction between Fatah and the other more radical groups in relation to their relations with the Jordanian regime, it is here said to represent a pro-Arab view. The reason for this is that it makes this distinction between what is said to be a mainstream and a radical PLO. Mainstream PLO was not interested in interfering with the

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Aburish 1998, p. 103ff.; Bregman & El-Tahri 1998, pp. 142-47; Lesch & Tschirgi 1998, p. 23; and Thomas 1999, p. 195.

<sup>27</sup> O'Neill 1978, p. 168; Sayigh 1997, pp. 244f, 258; and Aburish 1998, p. 103ff.

<sup>28</sup> See for instance Becker 1984, p. 75f.; Khouri 1985, p. 359; Viorst 1987, p. 135; Samuel 1989, p. 142; Bailey 1990, p. 290; Brynen 1990, p. 11; Bickerton & Klausner 1991, p. 168f.; Livingstone & Halevy 1991, pp. 81, 103; Rubin 1994, pp. 34f., 141; Blumberg 1998, p. 113; Gilbert 1998, p. 417; Bard 1999, p. 240f.; and Morris 1999, p. 373f.

domestic politics of an Arab state; it was only the more militant groups that wanted to do so. By contrast, saying that it was the whole of the PLO that challenged King Hussein's regime almost needless to say paints the whole organization in a more aggressive light, and is thus to be construed as the pro-Israeli view.

#### The nature of the Black September Organization

In late November 1971, Prime Minister Wasfi Tal of Jordan was gunned down in Cairo. The group that claimed responsibility for his assassination called itself the Black September Organization (or BSO), and this was to be its first of quite a few actions. The name of the organization was a reference to the violent expulsion of the PLO from Jordan (see above). The BSO quickly turned out to be most prolific when it came to various terrorist attacks: mostly letter bombs and plane hijackings. Probably the most well-known of all actions undertaken by the BSO—and in all likelihood by the Palestinian groups in general—was when a group of BSO members captured nine Israeli athletes at the 1972 Olympic Games in Munich and took them hostage. Due to the fact that it took place during such a highly publicized event as the Olympic Games, the hostage-taking received an immense amount of attention.

The controversy surrounding the Black September Organization is not so much regarding the magnitude of its acts of violence; the controversy is rather over the organizational affiliation of the group. As already discussed above in relation to theme three, the question of affiliation is touchy indeed. In that theme, as can be recalled, the question was to what degree it is possible to talk of the PLO as committing the terrorist actions of the late 1960s/early 1970s.

The case of the BSO, however, is different as there are a number of authors who claim that the organization had direct ties to Fatah. The BSO, in other words, was an offshoot from mainstream PLO. If there indeed existed clear ties between the terrorist organization of the BSO and the moderate, mainstream organization of Fatah, the

allegations made that the PLO was a terrorist organization probably would hold more ground. The BSO acting as a front for Fatah would in other words make this organization—as well as the PLO in general due to Fatah's great influence in this umbrella organization—seem quite a bit more extreme and militant.<sup>29</sup>

The other view of looking at the organizational affiliation of the BSO is to say that there were no ties between this organization and Fatah.<sup>30</sup> It is sometimes said that the BSO did have some former or present members of Fatah within its ranks:

The truth about the Black September (Terror) Organization can be summed up as follows. It was a part of Fatah. The entire leadership, including Arafat, debated the playing of the terror card. But the decision to use terror was not taken by the leadership. With the exception of Abu Iyad who, at the time, was widely regarded as Arafat's number two, all of Fatah's top leaders were opposed to the use of the terror weapon. The decision to resort to it was taken by embittered individuals within the ranks of Fatah's fighters.<sup>31</sup>

But, even if there were some Fatah members within the BSO, Fatah's leadership is cleared from having "played the terror card." Within this view that the BSO was not an arm of Fatah, there are a number of different perspectives as to what degree there was a BSO-Fatah connection. In some cases, there was no connection between the two groups in any way. In some cases, as illustrated in the above quote, there were connections between the groups on the personal level but not on the organizational level. And, in some cases, there was some connection between the Fatah leadership and the BSO, but the leadership around chairman Arafat did not approve of the activities

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<sup>29</sup> See for instance O'Neill 1978, p. 151; Yodfat & Arnon-Ohanna 1981, p. 33; Davis & Decter 1982, p. 99; Becker 1984, p. 77, 107; O'Brien 1986, p. 481f.; Smith 1988, p. 225; Samuel 1989, p. 130; Wallach & Wallach 1990, pp. 169, 328, 384; Livingstone & Halevy 1991, p. 103-6; Rubin 1994, p. 38; Fraser 1995, p. 95; Sachar 1996, p. 701; and Morris 1999, pp. 376ff., 386.

<sup>30</sup> See for instance Jureidini & Hazen 1976, p. 84; Amos 1980, pp. 64, 221; Quigley 1990, p. 198; Nassar 1991, p. 97f.; Gerner 1994, p. 90; and Tessler 1994, p. 483ff.

<sup>31</sup> Hart 1989, p. 337.

of the BSO.<sup>32</sup> The Fatah leader mostly said to have played a role with regards to the BSO is Abu Iyad mentioned in the quote above.<sup>33</sup>

In view of the binary designations of pro-Israeli/pro-Arab, the view of the BSO that designates it as being an arm of Fatah is here said to be the pro-Israeli view. The reason for this is that by saying that there was a clear connection between Fatah and the terrorist organization of the BSO, Fatah is presented as a more militant organization. As Fatah more or less represented the mainstream and moderate views held within the PLO, this organization is also tainted by a clear Fatah-BSO connection. This is also the case where it is said that the BSO was created as an arm of Fatah, but where Arafat did not play any role in this decision. The opposite is the case where it is said that there was no connection between Fatah and the BSO (or where the connection is limited to individuals): Fatah is cleared from the connection with terrorism and could still be looked upon as a moderate force. This is the pro-Arab view.

#### Main themes: conclusion

The Palestine Liberation Organization is an organization that throughout the years has given rise to a large degree of controversy. Is it or is it not a terrorist organization? Is it or is it not committed to the national rights of the Jewish population of Israel? Is it or is it not dedicated to solving the conflict through peaceful means instead of through violence? These questions, as well as others, have surrounded the PLO throughout its history. In this chapter, these questions are broached in some sense through the main themes discussed above. Below follows in table form the tabulated results of the analysis regarding the main themes in this chapter. Theme two, which deals with the battle of Karamah, has been excluded due to the difficulties surrounding that theme (see above).

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<sup>32</sup> Cobban 1984, pp. 54f., 148; and Aburish 1998, p. 123f.

<sup>33</sup> Abu Iyad (or Salah Khalaf which was his real name) is often said to have been Arafat's second-in-command. He was assassinated in 1991.



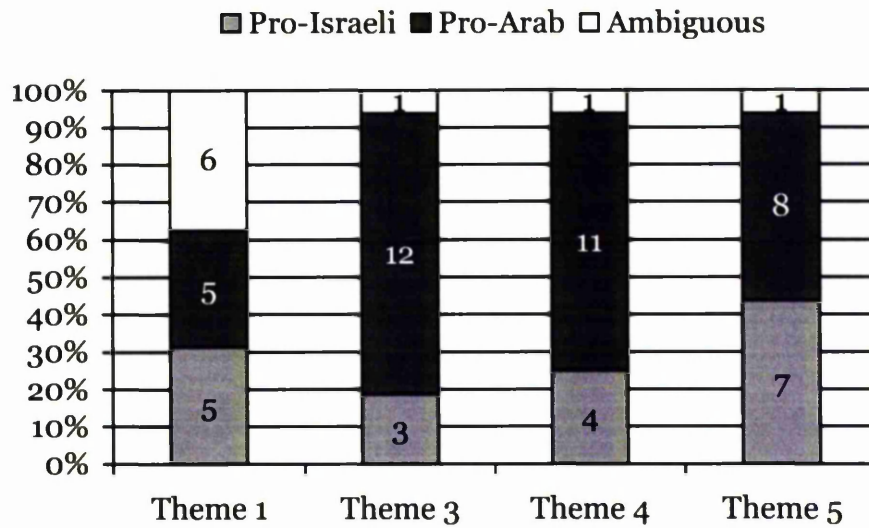


Figure I: Proportions of views held in the specific works

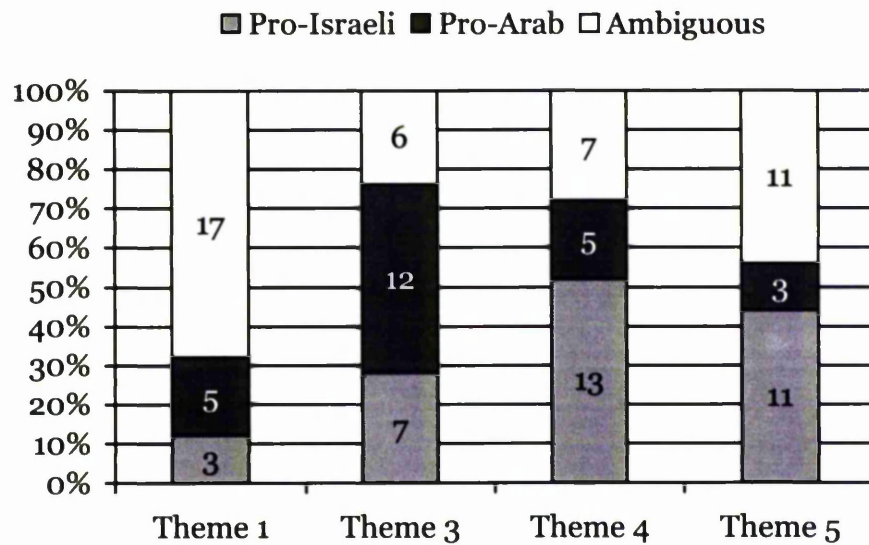


Figure II: Proportions of views held in the general works

There are two quite noticeable aspects of the above charts that probably need mention. The first thing is the fact that there is a quite clear pro-Arab tilt in the specific works. In the previous chapters, it

was not possible to see such a clear tilt towards the pro-Arab point of view.

The other thing that can be noted in relation to the above graphs is the fact that the absolute majority of general sources are to be deemed ambiguous in relation to the first main theme (which deals with the nature of the “democratic state”-formula). Although this is perhaps somewhat strange—as regardless of how it is viewed, the formula for a democratic state could be said to have been an interesting development in the history of the PLO—it should also be recalled that the general works in most cases only dedicate a small amount of attention and text to each individual topic. And, in relation to the history of the PLO in general, the formula for a democratic and secular state for all its inhabitants is perhaps not as important as other aspects.

The main themes regarding the rise of the PLO can be classified in the following fashion:

- (1) Theme where the controversy is how to interpret a certain policy or formula (theme one);
- (2) Theme where the actual historical reality is disputed (theme five);
- (3) Themes where the same historical reality can be presented in different manners with different implications (themes three and four).

When it comes to the main themes in this chapter, there is one theme (theme one) where the controversy is how to interpret a certain policy or formula. The formula, as discussed above, is the call made by the PLO in the late 1960s for a democratic and secular/non-sectarian state for both Jews and Palestinians. The controversy, simply put, is whether or not to take this formula, so to say, at face value or whether to say that it should not be taken seriously and that the implicit anti-

Zionist call in the formula is a call for the physical destruction of the Jewish state.

There is one theme (theme five) where the actual historical reality is in dispute. Was the Black September Organization an arm of Fatah or not? This question could in theory be answered with a yes or a no, but at least for the time being this seems difficult; especially when one considers the secrecy surrounding the organization at the time.

And, lastly, there are two themes (three and four) where the same historical reality can be presented in two different manners with different implications. Saying that the PFLP and other smaller groups were responsible for the terror of the late 1960s/early 1970s or that it was the PLO in general that was behind the same terror is quite different. The same is of course also the case with the situation in Jordan: saying that it was the more militant groups that caused the confrontation or saying that it was the PLO also presents the latter in different lights. The interesting thing about these two themes, however, is that both outlooks, or interpretations, in some sense are not mutually exclusive. The PFLP *was* a member of the PLO so it could be said that the latter was a terrorist organization. But, on the other hand, it could also be said that the PFLP was a perpetrator of terror, whereas the PLO in general was innocent. Both claims could both be deemed accurate, but their implications for how the Palestinian movement is presented are quite different.

On the question of standard narratives—the kind of narratives that are more or less exclusively pro-Israeli or *vice versa*—it seems as if they to a large degree are more prevalent, at least in the specific works, in relation to the rise of the PLO than they were in relation to the other aspects of the time period as discussed in the previous chapters. The reason for this is hard to explain. It could be that the works written on the PLO or Yasser Arafat simply are more ideologically motivated. Alan Hart, for instance, who has written a biography on Arafat, seems to be quite impressed by his object of

study. Although he is not unquestionably loyal to Arafat, his affinity shines through throughout the book.<sup>34</sup> Likewise, Jillian Becker's work on the PLO seems to have been guided to a large degree by her antipathy and disgust with said organization.<sup>35</sup> Even if there are of course works analyzed in the previous chapters that seem to have been guided by ideological motives, it would seem as if these kinds of works are more prevalent when it comes to the PLO. This is perhaps due to the controversial nature of the PLO.

Looking at the four themes discussed above, the following could probably be how a pro-Israeli standard narrative would read:

When the PLO called for a democratic and non-sectarian state for all its citizens, it was just a euphemism for the destruction of Israel. The goal was still to destroy the Jewish state. The PLO carried out the international terrorism that took place in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Furthermore, it was the PLO that challenged the authority of King Hussein of Jordan and this led to the violent clash of September 1970. The Black September Organization that undertook a number of violent terrorist actions was a front for Fatah, Yasser Arafat's own organization.

A pro-Arab standard narrative, on the other hand, could look like this:

The PLO formula for a democratic and non-sectarian state for all its citizens was a major step forward in Palestinian political thinking and was an attempt to solve the conflict through political means. It was groups like the PFLP that carried out the international terrorism of the time period, and likewise it was the smaller and more militant groups that challenged King Hussein in Jordan. Fatah, the mainstream and moderate Palestinian organization, refrained from international terrorism and did not

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<sup>34</sup> For instance, Hart concludes in the beginning of his work that (1) no leader, Arab or Jew, has done more to prepare a settlement than Arafat; (2) that there could have been a settlement already by 1980 had Israel produced a leader with the same skill and courage as Arafat; and (3) that Arafat holds the key to peace on the Arab side. Hart 1989, p. 13f.

<sup>35</sup> This is how Becker describes the PLO in the first few pages of her book: "The history of the PLO is a chronicle of wrong judgments, of repeated mistakes, of lessons never learnt, of faith in wishes. It is full of cruelty, wretchedness, atrocity, violent death and the destruction of a country, all proceeding from the follies of fanaticism and self-deception." Becker 1984, p. 5.

seek to overthrow the Jordanian regime. The Black September Organization, although it is possible that it included some former or present members of Fatah, was an independent force.

### *Further observations*

Probably one of the most curious aspects when Yasser Arafat is discussed is when his sexual orientation is delved into. Unsurprisingly, this subject is not broached in most sources. However, there are two sources where it is said that Arafat is either homo- or bisexual. In one of these sources, it is casually mentioned that Arafat started to be called Yasser by a male teacher with whom he had an affair while still in school.<sup>36</sup> In the other source where the sexuality of Arafat is discussed, it is said that there is ample anecdotal evidence as to the chairman of the PLO being either bi- or homosexual. The authors of this work for example quote the memoirs of a Romanian intelligence officer who claims to have conclusive evidence of Arafat having an affair with one of his bodyguards.<sup>37</sup>

What is interesting about this is of course not whether the claims are true or not, but rather the fact that the two sources that bring up the question of sexuality are probably the ones that are the most critical of Yasser Arafat. Not only is Arafat accused of being a terrorist and a criminal—as is the case in these two sources—he is also “accused” of being homosexual. What this shows is not only how critical some authors are of Arafat, but also that the label of homosexuality is supposed to be negative in these authors’ opinion. Or at least was when the two works were written (1984 and 1991). It is not certain whether or not labeling someone as being homosexual today could be construed as an attack, but it most likely will not be in the not so distant future.

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<sup>36</sup> Becker 1984, p. 41.

<sup>37</sup> Livingstone & Halevy 1991, p. 91.

As Yasser Arafat has been, and still is, an immensely important person in Palestinian politics, there is a great deal written on Arafat from a more personal angle as well as the more strictly political. One of the most curious aspects mentioned where the person of Yasser Arafat is discussed is where it is said in two instances that he has somewhat unusual habit of pouring tea instead of milk over his cornflakes to eat for breakfast.<sup>38</sup> There are other things mentioned in the sources about the more personal aspects of Yasser Arafat (e.g. his love for fast cars or his habit of not going to bed until very late at night) as well as a great deal of anecdotes from his quite eventful life. That Arafat receives so much attention—and not only in the biographies dealing with him—is of course a reflection of the importance he has had in the history of the PLO.

Another note-worthy aspect of the works on the PLO involves the incident that took place in the Sudanese capital of Khartoum. In the early spring of 1973, a number of Black September Organization members managed to break into the Saudi embassy where a reception was being held for the American *chargé d'affaires*. A number of guests were taken hostage and the BSO members made a couple of demands for the release of prisoners in several countries. The negotiations, however, got nowhere and the episode ended in the embassy's basement with the murder of the American ambassador and the American and Belgian *chargé d'affaires*.

The murder of diplomatic personnel is needless to say not commonplace, but the interesting aspect of the events in Khartoum are the charges that the hostage-takers were receiving orders on the radio directly from the PLO headquarters in Beirut.<sup>39</sup> In some cases, it is even said that Arafat personally was to have ordered the murders of the diplomats:

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<sup>38</sup> Wallach & Wallach 1990, p. 22; and Gowers & Walker 1990, p. 73.

<sup>39</sup> O'Neill, 1978, p. 188; Davis & Decter 1982, p. 99; Livingstone & Halevy 1991, pp. 87, 279ff.; and Rubin 1994, p. 38.

U.S. officials had ample evidence of Arafat's and the PLO's direct involvement in the Khartoum murders but chose—for reasons never made clear—to suppress the evidence, including the intercepts of the radiotelephone conversations between Abu Ghassan [the BSO operative in charge in Khartoum] and Fatah headquarters in Beirut.<sup>40</sup>

What is interesting about these allegations is that they are quite naturally damning of the PLO (or Fatah) leadership and also of Arafat where he is implicated. To say that there was a Fatah-BSO connection in general terms is one thing; to say that Arafat or someone else within the Fatah leadership specifically ordered the murder of hostages goes quite a bit further in labeling Fatah (and by extension the PLO) to be a terrorist organization.

The events in Khartoum are only mentioned in a few sources and hence there are also only a few works where the Fatah leadership and Arafat are cleared of the allegations made against them.<sup>41</sup> That there would not be that many works arguing against the claim of Fatah culpability is perhaps not too surprising, as the Fatah-BSO link is discredited in a number of sources. If, in other words, it has already been argued that the BSO was not acting under orders from the Fatah leadership in general, there is no reason to argue that the BSO was not acting under orders in this instance either.

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<sup>40</sup> Livingstone & Halevy 1991, p. 283.

<sup>41</sup> Sayigh 1997, p. 311; and Aburish 1998, p. 125.

## 6. Four examples

The purpose of this chapter is to see how four different sources describe the events analyzed in this thesis. This is done so that the reader can get a clearer picture of how the different sources position themselves with regard to the themes described in the above chapters. But, and perhaps foremost, the major purpose of this brief *exposé* is to illustrate how different the various stories turn out depending on how the author positions him- or herself with regard to the main themes.

Four sources have been selected that represent four different strands of narrative. Two are quite clearly pro-Israeli and pro-Arab respectively, whereas two are less discernable in their views.

### *Martin Gilbert*

Martin Gilbert's *Israel: A History* was published just in time for Israel's fiftieth anniversary as a state in 1998. The book begins with telling the story of Zionism in the latter part of the nineteenth century and goes through the years of the pre-state Jewish community in Palestine (which is often referred to by its Hebrew name the *Yishuv*), the establishment of Israel in 1948 and continues right up to the time it was published. The book is written in an easily accessible language, and the focus is more on telling a story than to analyze.



Martin Gilbert, who hails from Great Britain, has in addition to this work published a great number of historical works and atlases; including an officially endorsed biography of Winston Churchill. Gilbert is a honorary fellow of Merton College at Oxford.

### War of 1967

Gilbert begins his account on the War of 1967 by discussing the skirmishes that had taken place along the Israeli-Syrian border that spring, as well as the raids having been undertaken by various Palestinian groups.<sup>1</sup> In light of the skirmishes, Gilbert brings up the Soviet claims that Israel was planning a war, but concludes that they were false and unsubstantiated.

The focus in Gilbert's book is obviously Israel and in the War of 1967, Israel's main antagonist was President Nasser of Egypt:

Gradually, during May, President Nasser emerged as a champion of the Syrians – or rather of the Arab world generally, the leadership of which he so wished to assert. Beginning on May 13, Egyptian troops moved in large numbers into the Sinai . . . As the Egyptian troops moved forward, Cairo Radio set the tone of a propaganda war that became Egypt's daily barrage: 'Egypt, with all its resources, is ready to plunge into a total war that will be the end of Israel,' the radio declared.<sup>2</sup>

Nasser, and the rest of the Arabs, are henceforth portrayed as the aggressors in Gilbert's account. Nasser ordered the whole of the United Nations peacekeeping force to be removed, and he did this in order to raise the temperature and to threaten Israel. Furthermore, Nasser more or less committed himself to war by closing the Straits of Tiran in the Red Sea for Israeli shipping.

Israel, on the other hand, is described throughout as trying to resolve the crisis through peaceful means. However, as the crisis becomes increasingly threatening to Israel, its leadership comes closer and closer to making the decision to go to war. The pact

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<sup>1</sup> This section is based on Gilbert 1998, pp. 365-95.

<sup>2</sup> Gilbert 1998, p. 366.

between Egypt and Jordan certainly was a factor for why the decision was ultimately made, as the pact seriously worsened Israel's position and threatened its very existence. When the war finally began, on June 5, it was Israel's swift surprise air strikes against in particular Egypt that ultimately led to victory.

### The time of 1967-73

Martin Gilbert's book is in some respects a chronology of events, and in the chapter that deals with the time period following the War of 1967 he brings up a number of aspects that have previously not been discussed in this thesis.<sup>3</sup> Not only does Gilbert discuss how the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza—with their significant Palestinian populations—first came to manifest itself, he also discusses the birth of the so-called Land of Israel Movement with its maximalist goals as well as the beginnings of Israeli settlement construction on the territories captured in 1967. Gilbert also brings up the positive outlook generally held by the Israeli public during these years, as well as the immigration of a fairly large amount of Soviet Jews.

When it comes to the issues that have been discussed above in chapter three, Gilbert mentions the adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution 242. In relation to resolution 242, Gilbert makes two specific observations: (1) that it acknowledges the territorial and sovereign rights of all states in the area, including Israel; and (2) that it fails to mention the name Israel. This last point was distressing to the Israelis, a view Gilbert seems to share, in that it presumably showed an Arab unwillingness to refer to Israel by its proper name (and hence to accept its existence).

Gilbert furthermore brings up the secret decision made by the Israeli cabinet in June 1967, and this is how he describes it in relation

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<sup>3</sup> This section is based on Gilbert 1998, pp. 396-425.

to the declaration made by the Arab League in Khartoum in September that same year:

Hardly had the war ended when, on 16 June 1967, the Israeli government conveyed far-reaching peace proposals to Egypt and Syria, through the good offices of the United States. These proposals included a readiness to withdraw from most of the West Bank, with only minor adjustments in the border. But when the Arab answer came, from the Khartoum Arab summit conference on September 1, it was a resounding negative, three negatives in fact: 'No peace. No negotiation. No recognition.'<sup>4</sup>

The message Gilbert wants to convey here is quite clear: that Israel sincerely sought to resolve the conflict through peaceful means, but that the Arabs were of a different opinion. Israel is here portrayed as the reasonable party to the conflict, whereas the Arabs are described in less than levelheaded terms. It should also be pointed out here that Gilbert often "lumps" the Arabs all together, without making any distinctions between the perceptions of the different states.

The Arab unreasonableness conveyed by Gilbert above is also seen in how Nasser's decision to embark on the War of Attrition is described. Nasser is said to have begun the war in order to regain the territories lost in 1967 and by this action to have completely rejected the hand offered by Golda Meir, the then newly appointed Israeli prime minister. Meir's first statement in her new position, according to Gilbert, was that she was prepared to discuss peace with all of Israel's neighbors at any time. Quite naturally, Nasser beginning the War of Attrition within days of this statement was a rejection of Meir's pacific intentions. It should also be pointed out here that Gilbert does not discuss the initiatives launched to settle the Egyptian-Israeli conflict peacefully in 1971 (see below).

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<sup>4</sup> Gilbert 1998, p. 402. In other sources where this decision is discussed, it is most commonly said to have been made on June 19, and not June 16 as indicated by Gilbert. Furthermore, it is also said in a number of sources that it is not at all clear that the United States informed either Egypt or Syria of the secret decision.

### The War of 1973

When discussing the War of 1973, Gilbert focuses to a large degree on the military events.<sup>5</sup> Israel did not expect war beforehand and it was only on the morning of October 6, the same day the war began, that the military command realized that war was imminent. On realizing this, Israeli Chief of Staff David Elazar asked Moshe Dayan, the minister of defense, for permission to undertake a preemptive strike like the one six years earlier. Dayan, however, declined on the grounds that it would make Israel look like the aggressor and because the US had warned Israel from firing the first shot.

Gilbert does not portray the War of 1973 in as gloomy a light as he described the time right before the War of 1967. The same hopeless feeling of an impending doomsday is not conveyed here. Gilbert, in other words, does not present the War of 1973 as having been a fight for Israel's very existence.<sup>6</sup>

When discussing the cease-fire agreement that came into effect on October 22 but that was broken almost immediately afterwards, Gilbert writes that it was indeed broken by all parties. But, the view that is generally conveyed by Gilbert is that the cease-fire was mostly broken by Egypt and Syria. These two parties were more responsible for why the cease-fire did not last than was Israel.

Gilbert hardly goes into why the war broke out at all in the first place, and Syria's reasons for choosing to engage in another war are not discussed. The following quote is the only instance where Gilbert discusses possible reasons for Egypt to embark on the war:

Egypt had regained its honour: this was the object of the attack in the first place, rather than any sweeping forward through Sinai to

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<sup>5</sup> This section is based on Gilbert 1998, pp. 426-61.

<sup>6</sup> On one occasion, however, Gilbert makes a remark that could indicate that he views the war as having been a fight for Israel's very existence. Discussing the fact that the war broke out on the Jewish holy day of *Yom Kippur*, Gilbert makes the case that it was in fact easier to mobilize than it perhaps would have been otherwise: "The fact that so many were in synagogue or at home saved the State." (Gilbert 1998, p. 432)

the borders of Israel itself. For Egypt the October War was a war not of conquest, but of self-assertion.<sup>7</sup>

Egypt's aims, in other words, were not entirely aggressive in this war, whereas the lack of any discussion on the possible aims of Syria with this campaign could indicate that the latter's only motivation was sheer aggression.

### The rise of the PLO

Just like the inter-state Arab-Israeli relations that were interspersed in the text in the chapter on the time following the War of 1967, the Palestinian component of the conflict during these years is also described in different sections in this chapter.<sup>8</sup> Although the ins and outs regarding the battle of Karameh was rejected as a main theme due to the difficulty in ascertaining which view was to be said to be the pro-Arab and *vice versa*, there is an aspect that Gilbert brings up regarding the attack that is of interest. Apparently, when the attack was being planned, Moshe Dayan, the Israeli minister of defense, went on an archeological dig near Holon in central Israel. Archeology was a hobby of Dayan's, as it seems to have been for a number of prominent Israelis, but this dig was to have dire consequences as the trench that Dayan was excavating collapsed on top of him. Dayan was completely buried by the collapsing dirt and had to receive medical attention after he was dug out. The interesting aspect of this is not the accident in itself, but that Gilbert writes that Fatah claimed that Dayan had in fact been injured in a Fatah raid while he was supervising the preparations for the attack on Karameh. That Fatah would falsely make a claim like this about something so easily corroborated or disproved shows the low regard Gilbert holds of the mental capacities of this organization.

Gilbert in general does not differentiate between the various Palestinian groups. When discussing the international terrorism that

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<sup>7</sup> Gilbert 1998, p. 460.

<sup>8</sup> This section is based on Gilbert 1998, pp. 396-425.

took place in the late 1960s/early 1970s, Gilbert makes no distinction between the different organizations and just says that Palestinians committed terror. Likewise with regard to relations between the Palestinian movement and Jordan's King Hussein, Gilbert simply says that the PLO attempted to overthrow the king.

Gilbert does not go into the how the PLO policy of a "democratic, secular state for all its citizens" is to be interpreted. He is quite clear, however, how he views the ultimate goals of the PLO. For instance, he quotes Yasser Arafat as saying that the aim of the PLO is to liberate the land from the Mediterranean to the Jordan River, and that the major cause is not concerned with the results of the War of 1967 but rather to eliminate the Zionist entity from Palestine.<sup>9</sup>

### Conclusion

Martin Gilbert's book on the history of Israel is all in all quite pro-Israeli. The Arab side is portrayed throughout as being the aggressor, and the only exception really is that Egypt is not said to have had maximalist goals when embarking on the War of 1973. Egypt, in other words, did not have the overarching goal of eliminating the state of Israel, but rather more limited and political goals.

Israel in Gilbert's book is portrayed as either the victim of Arab hostile intentions, or as the reasonable party in the conflict that tries to settle it through peaceful means.

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<sup>9</sup> Gilbert does not give a reference for the quote paraphrased above.

*Mark Tessler*

Mark Tessler's *A History of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict* was published in 1994. It is a broad survey of the conflict from the emergence of Zionism and Arab nationalism in the nineteenth century up to the signing of the Declaration of Principles (or Oslo Accords) in 1993. The scope of the book is quite large and it consists of over 900 pages if one includes endnotes and bibliography.

Mark Tessler is a political scientist who at the time of writing was professor at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. He currently holds tenure at the University of Michigan.

War of 1967

Contrary to Martin Gilbert discussed above, Tessler discusses the issue of Israeli threats having been made against Syria in May of 1967.<sup>10</sup> As discussed in the chapter on the War of 1967 above, it is in a number of cases argued that a contributing factor to the crisis in the spring of 1967 were the threats issued by Israel to Syria that it curtail the guerrilla activities of Fatah or face the consequences. Tessler discusses these threats and although he says it is impossible to say whether Israel intended to carry them out or not, they were in his opinion critical for raising the temperature in the area.

As far as the removal of UNEF is concerned, Tessler is of the opinion that although it is not entirely clear what happened, Nasser initially did not want the whole of this force to be removed.<sup>11</sup> He did not want the positions in Gaza and at Sharm el-Sheikh—i.e. the positions most likely to develop into trouble spots—to be abandoned.

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<sup>10</sup> This section is based on Tessler 1994, pp. 378-97.

<sup>11</sup> As discussed in chapter two above, there is controversy regarding the nature of Egypt's initial request for having UNEF removed. Did Egypt initially want the whole of the peace-keeping force removed, or did it only want the UN force to abandon certain positions? As discussed above, this controversy is only broached in a few sources and Tessler is one of these. In most other sources, on the other hand, it is simply just said that Egypt initially wanted either a complete or a limited withdrawal without mentioning that it is in fact less than clear what actually happened.

Furthermore, Tessler brings up the two views held regarding Nasser's intentions for having UNEF removed: the view that this was due to Nasser's aggressive intentions and the view that the request to have UNEF removed was a political move. Tessler, in contrast to Gilbert above, leans toward the latter interpretation. Tessler also mentions that Israel was asked to accept UNEF on its side of the border but refused. Israel having accepted UNEF on its side of the border would have lessened Israeli-Egyptian tension, Tessler argues, but it would not have solved the issue over the Straits of Tiran.

If Nasser's actions so far, according to Tessler, had been relatively moderate and politically guided, the Egyptian closing of the Straits of Tiran was different. Although Tessler says that it is of course not possible to know for sure what Nasser's intentions were for closing the straits, he also contends that "in taking this step, Nasser and other Egyptian leaders understood that it would be considered a *casus belli* by Israel."<sup>12</sup> The closing of the Straits of Tiran was the turning point in the crisis and what made an armed clash inevitable.

When King Hussein of Jordan traveled to Cairo and signed a mutual defense pact with Nasser on May 30, Israel's situation worsened quite seriously. Israel prior to the war not only faced superior numbers of Arab troops and military hardware, but it also faced the difficult prospect of having to fight a war on three fronts. When Israel chose to strike on June 5, the major factor for why it won was the surprise air strikes on the air forces of its adversaries.

### The time of 1967-73

Just as Gilbert above, Tessler deals with the time between the wars of 1967 and 1973 by discussing different aspects.<sup>13</sup> Dealing with the inter-state politics of the time, Tessler offers a quite detailed discussion on the declaration of the Arab League in Khartoum. Here, Tessler first tells his readers how analysts of a more pro-Israeli

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<sup>12</sup> Tessler 1994, p. 392.

<sup>13</sup> This section is based on Tessler 1994, pp. 407-481.



persuasion have tended to see the Khartoum Declaration as extreme and intransigent. Tessler then proceeds to discuss the declaration in the framework of it in fact being moderate in nature. First, there is no talk of the destruction of Israel in the declaration. Second, there is an emphasis for unified political efforts to secure an Israeli withdrawal. Third, the three noes (no peace, no recognition and no negotiations with Israel) can be seen as being bargaining chips, so to say, and to be traded in for similar Israeli concessions. Although Tessler does not say so explicitly, he does lean toward the latter view in seeing the Khartoum Declaration as being quite moderate in nature.

Having discussed the declaration at Khartoum, Tessler then moves on to UN Security Council Resolution 242 before he continues to discuss the War of Attrition. The War of Attrition, according to Tessler, began as a result of Egypt's declared objective of destroying the Israeli defensive positions on the eastern bank of the Suez Canal (the so-called Bar-Lev Line). The Egyptian attack was in other words an attempt to prevent the situation from developing into a situation of permanent *status quo*. Another reason for why Nasser decided to embark on war in 1969, although this was never stated at the time, was to create a sense of urgency among the great powers and the United Nations to solve the situation along the Egyptian-Israeli cease-fire line. The War of Attrition, in other words, was started primarily for political reasons.

Tessler is quite brief when it comes to the initiatives of UN mediator Gunnar Jarring and President Anwar Sadat of Egypt. On Gunnar Jarring, Tessler does not discuss the plan drafted by the Swedish diplomat in 1971, but simply concludes that "the Jarring mission came to an end in April 1969 having made almost no real progress toward the resolution of the conflict."<sup>14</sup> Sadat is described as having tried unsuccessfully to resolve the conflict with Israel through diplomacy. Tessler only mentions Sadat's attempts briefly in a few

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<sup>14</sup> Tessler 1994, p. 422.

sentences and does not mention the specific initiative launched by the Egyptian president in early 1971. Tessler, however, does bring up another initiative launched by Sadat in 1971, but then only in an endnote:

Sadat had also sought a diplomatic breakthrough in 1971, taking action that some considered as dramatic as his expulsion of Soviet advisors the following year. Early in 1971, he gave an interview to *Newsweek* editor Arnaud de Borchgrave, in which he stated that Egypt was ready to recognize and make peace with Israel. De Borchgrave flew to Jerusalem with this information and told Prime Minister Golda Meir that Sadat would soon repeat his offer of peace to UN envoy Gunnar Jarring. Meir dismissed Sadat's overture, however, leading some Israeli analysts, as well as de Borchgrave, to conclude that "Mrs. Meir here missed the greatest opportunity to prevent the [1973] war."<sup>15</sup>

#### War of 1973

Mark Tessler does not deal with the War of 1973 at any great length.<sup>16</sup> He begins his account by giving details about the Egyptian and Syrian surprise attack, and how completely taken off guard the Israeli army found itself when the war started. Tessler then proceeds to discuss how the war eventually came to turn to Israel's advantage, and that the situation was quite different from the initial outset when the war ended on October 24: "The IDF [Israel Defense Forces] had transformed what very nearly had been a disaster for the Jewish state into a total military victory."<sup>17</sup> Tessler, in other words and as compared with some other sources, does not go into the issue of the broken cease-fire of October 22.

After having discussed the war and how it ended, Tessler moves on to discuss possible reasons for why the two Arab states chose to launch the war in the first place. Prior to this discussion, in other

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<sup>15</sup> Tessler 1994, note 30, p. 479. Brackets around the year 1973 in original. Contrary to the quote above regarding Gunnar Jarring having ended his mission in 1969, one is here given the impression that he was still working for a diplomatic solution in 1971.

<sup>16</sup> This section is based on Tessler 1994, pp. 474-81.

<sup>17</sup> Tessler 1994, p. 477.

words, Tessler merely describes the war as an Arab attack without an apparent objective. Discussing Arab objectives for launching the war, Tessler does not go into the objectives of Syria at any greater length. He does, however, indicate a certain Syrian moderation as he says that it had informally accepted UN Security Council Resolution 242 in 1972.

When Tessler discusses the goals held by Egypt, he argues that President Sadat's plan all along was political and diplomatic at its core. The war was never intended to be anything more than a limited campaign with the aim of capturing enough territory to convince the Israelis that the key to Israel's security was not holding on to territorial buffers, but rather to have good relations with their neighbors.

Interestingly enough—although Tessler is quite clear in his view that at least Egypt fought the war for strictly political reasons—he does not go into the question of which side is ultimately to blame for the war being fought in the first place. If the war was not fought for anything but political reasons, it is an interesting question which side is more to blame for why politics and diplomacy did not produce any results prior to the war. But, as already mentioned, Tessler does not delve into this issue.

### The rise of the PLO

On the rise of the PLO, Tessler provides a fairly extensive account of how the organization went through a number of crucial organizational changes after the War of 1967. He also goes into the ideological changes that also took place within the Palestinian movement during these years. When discussing the PLO formula for a "democratic, secular state for all its citizens," Tessler brings up the fact that the formula was not seen as being sincere within Israel, as well as by a number of analysts. The formula was a euphemism for the destruction of the Jewish state. Speaking more broadly on PLO ideology at the time, Tessler says that:

[e]ven though some critical analyses of the PLO's ideology may be persuasive, it does not follow that the Palestinians' proposals were put forward with duplicity and cynicism. Like any similar document, the 1968 PLO charter reflected the political environment within in which it was drafted; and in this case the tensions and contradictions identified by the PLO's critics are in large measure a result of the organization's deliberate use of constructive ambiguity.<sup>18</sup>

The formula, in other words, should be seen as having been sincere.

In relation to the situation in Jordan, Tessler argues, Fatah was initially opposed to interfering in the domestic affairs of Arab states. But, due to the great pressure exerted on the Jordanian regime by the more radical groups like the PFLP and DFLP, Fatah proved to be either unwilling or unable not to side with these smaller groups. This means that at the end of the day, Fatah—contrary to its stated policy of non-interference in internal Arab affairs—became a partner in the PLO challenge to King Hussein's rule in Jordan. Fatah was thus responsible to some degree at least for the violent confrontation of September 1970.

Contrary to perhaps the majority of sources, Tessler does not discuss the Palestinian international terrorism of the time period to any larger degree. He only mentions it in a few instances and is all in all quite ambiguous on the organizational affiliations of the perpetrators. He does however mention a few actions as having been carried out specifically by the PFLP. As far as the Black September Organization is concerned, Tessler briefly just mentions it as having been a secret organization that carried out a number of terrorist attacks. He does not go into the question of its alleged or real connections with Fatah.

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<sup>18</sup> Tessler 1994, p. 442.

### Conclusion

Compared with Martin Gilbert above, Mark Tessler's account is more even-handed in how he portrays the antagonists of the conflict. There is a sense of moderation in quite a few instances where the Arab side is described. The Arabs, in other words, are not just irrationally bent on Israel's destruction, but do have some political and more moderate goals in some cases. Likewise, Israel is not universally praised but also at times criticized for its actions or inactions. In this sense, Tessler's book is quite a bit more even-handed than Gilbert's. Another central difference between the former and the latter is that Tessler does not clearly assign victimhood to either of the parties, like Gilbert did with regard to Israel.

### *Benny Morris*

Just like Gilbert and Tessler discussed above, Benny Morris' *Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict, 1881-1999* is a comprehensive study of the conflict. Beginning its story in 1881, which is usually said to have been when modern Jewish immigration to Palestine began, Morris goes through the conflict in a chronological manner up to the time when the book was published. The book in general is quite comprehensive in scope and includes a great deal of analysis.

Benny Morris has in later years arguably become one of the better-known names in the field of the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict. He became known in the late 1980s as one of Israel's new historians (see chapter one above), and his book on the Palestinian refugee crisis, *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem*, has become what is perhaps a standard text (or at least required reading) on the topic.

The War of 1967

Benny Morris begins his account on the War of 1967 by discussing the nature of the tensions along the Syrian-Israeli border.<sup>19</sup> He furthermore brings up both Israeli Chief of Staff Yitzhak Rabin and Prime Minister Levi Eshkol having made threats against Syria in the first half of May. Morris does not go into the intricacies of the initial Egyptian request for the removal of UNEF from its positions; he rather says that between May 16-18, Egypt requested that the whole of UNEF be removed. It would, however, seem as if Nasser may have hoped that the United Nations—either through the General Assembly or the Security Council—would have refused Egypt's demand, and thus allowed the Egyptian president a political victory with his army present in the Sinai but with UNEF in place to separate it from the Israelis.

Morris sees both the removal of UNEF as well as the closing of the Straits of Tiran—factors that other sources see as examples of Nasser's belligerent plans for Israel—as having been politically motivated. The significance of the pact between Jordan and Egypt signed in late May is not discussed at any greater length. Morris is quite clear though that even if the mood indeed *was* gloomy in Israel at the time and it was seen in many quarters as if a second Holocaust was in the making, Israel was never in any real danger:

The armies were extremely ill-matched. Israelis, throughout their history, have tended to see themselves as the "weaker side," their army smaller and less well armed than their Arab enemies'. The truth, in 1967 as at other times, was different.<sup>20</sup>

And, despite some initial Egyptian plans for a preemptive strike against Israel in May, captured Egyptian documents show that the over-arching strategy was defensive in nature. Even though Morris

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<sup>19</sup> These tensions included the alleged or real Syrian support for Palestinian guerrilla raids against Israel, the issue over the use of water from the Jordan River and its tributaries and the issue of farming rights in the demilitarized zone (the DMZ) between the two states. This section is based on Morris 1999, pp. 302-329.

<sup>20</sup> Morris 1999, p. 311.

argues that Israel was the strongest party from the outset, he also argues that the surprise air strikes carried out by Israel at the beginning of the war were instrumental in securing its victory.

Contrary to Gilbert and Tessler discussed above, Morris to some extent discusses Israeli misconduct in the war. Some Egyptian prisoners of war, for instance, are said to have been killed by their Israeli captors, and it is also said that some Israeli commanders on the West Bank forced Palestinians living there to flee. This was to have taken place without the approval of the Israeli cabinet. Lastly, Morris also brings up the Israeli army systematically destroying houses in certain West Bank towns, as well as completely leveling four villages in the so-called Latrun salient close to the Tel Aviv-Jerusalem highway.

#### The time of 1967-73

Morris begins his discussion on the inter-state relations during the time of 1967-73 by bringing up the secret decision made by the Israeli cabinet shortly after the war.<sup>21</sup> Through this decision, the Israeli cabinet decided that it was willing to give back the Sinai and the Golan Heights to Egypt and Syria respectively in exchange for full peace. This decision was never made public, but it was transmitted to both states through the United States. Both Egypt and Syria, however, rejected the overture.

Moving on to the resolution adopted by the Arab League in Khartoum in September 1967, Morris describes it as “a defiant, rejectionist platform that was to bedevil all peace moves in the region for a decade.”<sup>22</sup> It was partly due to the harsh Arab position as well as due to domestic Israeli factors that the secret decision made a few months earlier came to lose in significance.

When President Nasser of Egypt launched the War of Attrition in 1969, Morris argues, it was in order to induce direct pressure on

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<sup>21</sup> This section is based on Morris 1999, pp. 329-63, 387-400.

<sup>22</sup> Morris 1999, p. 345f.

Israel—as well as indirect pressure through the superpowers—to withdraw from the Egyptian territory. The war, in other words, was launched with a political objective in mind. On the War of Attrition, Morris also says that the primary objective behind Israel's decision for escalating the war through in-depth bombings of the Egyptian interior was to reach a cease-fire agreement along the Suez Canal. A possible secondary objective could however have been to have Nasser overthrown.<sup>23</sup>

Discussing the peace initiative of UN mediator Gunnar Jarring, Morris says that this was the first time Egypt officially declared a willingness to live in peace with Israel. Israel, on the other hand, rejected the proposal and Morris seems to be somewhat critical of Israel for having taken this course of action. Similarly, Morris also brings up the plan for an interim settlement of the conflict proposed by President Sadat. Israel eventually *did* accept some of the required concessions, Morris argues, but when it did was too late. Morris seems to convey some disappointment with Israel for not having acted sooner and more decisively.

### War of 1973

Already from the outset when discussing the War of 1973, Morris makes it clear that neither Egypt nor Syria sought to destroy Israel.<sup>24</sup> The war was not a fight for Israel's survival. However, the objectives for the war were different for Egypt and Syria. The former sought to capture a slice of land on the eastern bank of the Suez Canal and to use the war to break the *status quo*. The war for Egypt was political and the real results of the war, it was anticipated, were to come after the war had ended. For Syria, on the other hand, the attack on Israel was seen as a way to capture what it had lost in 1967: the Golan Heights. Syria, in other words, did have larger and perhaps more

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<sup>23</sup> See chapter 3 for a discussion on the in-depth bombings.

<sup>24</sup> This section is based on Morris 1999, pp. 387-441.



aggressive goals with launching the war but as already mentioned above, Morris does not see the War of 1973 as anything but limited.

When the war came, it came as a complete surprise for the Israelis. Morris sees this as partly being the result of a general Israeli disdain for the Arabs:

The Arabs' success in springing this strategic surprise—a feat that has taken its place in military history alongside Hitler's invasion of Russia and the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor—owed much to the Israeli perception of the Arab forces as inherently incompetent, weak and incapable of mounting such a deception.<sup>25</sup>

Another interesting point that Morris brings up is that it seems, he argues, that some senior Israeli ministers early in the war (i.e. before it turned to Israel's advantage) discussed the possibility of using nuclear weapons. Morris transmits the view that there is a great deal of uncertainty regarding this episode, but that it is possible that Prime Minister Golda Meir and Minister of Defense Moshe Dayan ordered the arming of missiles with nuclear warheads and that nuclear arms may have been loaded onto a group of Israeli warplanes.

As far as the broken cease-fire of October 22 is concerned, Morris says that it was broken by both Egypt and Israel. The main difference, however, is that the Egyptian non-observance of the cease-fire was local in nature, whereas the Israeli disregard for the UN resolution was officially sanctioned from the top. It is also quite clear that the party that benefited from the fighting continuing for three more days was Israel.

Morris is quite clear on the issue of which side is mostly to blame for why the war took place in the first place. It was Israel and its intransigence that ultimately led Sadat to reach the conclusion that a limited war was the only option to recover the Egyptian territory lost in 1967.

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<sup>25</sup> Morris 1999, p. 394.

### The rise of the PLO

Benny Morris deals quite extensively with the rise of the PLO that took place after the War of 1967.<sup>26</sup> One aspect, however, of the history of the PLO during this time period that he does not deal with is the PLO policy of a “democratic, secular state for all its citizens.” This is not dealt with at all in Morris’ book.

When delving upon the question of the relations between the PLO and King Hussein of Jordan, Morris argues that it was the Palestinian movement as a whole that challenged the Jordanian regime. Although it was the PFLP that was behind the hijackings of three commercial jets that came to be the catalyst that brought about the violent confrontation in September 1970, Morris does not differentiate between the various member organizations of the PLO in general regarding the power struggle in Jordan.

On the issue of the international terrorism carried out by Palestinians in the late 1960s and early 1970s, Morris does differentiate between the various groups. It was the more radical groups like the PFLP that carried out these attacks. The mainstream organization of Fatah was opposed to these kinds of operations.

This, however, changed with the forming of the Black September Organization. The BSO was a secret arm of Fatah, Morris argues, and was formed as a compromise between the more moderate and extreme forces within this organization. In fact, Morris is of the opinion that the moderate wing of Fatah had to accept the creation of the BSO in order to survive.

Rounding up his section on the rise of the PLO, Morris gives a fairly good insight on how he sees the significance of the Palestinian renaissance that began after 1967:

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<sup>26</sup> This section is based on Morris 1999, pp. 363-86.

The Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip and the crushing of the Arab armies in June 1967 reenergized the Palestinian people and put the Palestinian problem back on the international agenda. An issue dead for close to twenty years had suddenly come alive; it was kept alive, and the Palestinian people were mobilized and motivated, by dint of unremitting guerrilla/terrorist activities against Israel. A desperate people both rediscovered its identity and found a means of expressing its political will through violence. Palestinian guerrilla warfare across the Jordan River and over the Lebanese-Israeli frontier may have been of no more than nuisance value, militarily speaking. But it gave Jerusalem and the world no respite and in various ways kept the Arab states, generally unenthusiastic about doing battle with Israel, mobilized in varying degrees behind the Palestinian cause.<sup>27</sup>

### Conclusion

As already mentioned above, Benny Morris became known in the latter part of the 1980s as one of Israel's so-called new historians. As such, he was said to be more critical of Israel and its actions than had previously been the case in Israeli historiography. In the book used in this thesis and discussed above, it is clear that Morris at times is quite critical of how Israel has acted. For instance, he seems to be quite firm in his view that Israel, through its intransigence, is mostly to blame for why there was no peaceful solution to the conflict with Egypt and why the War of 1973 came to be fought at all.

Nevertheless, Morris also offers some blame on the Arab side to the conflict when he for instance labels the Khartoum Declaration as having been defiant and rejectionist. He also conveys a sense of being somewhat suspicious, and not at all all-embracing, of the PLO. Even though Israel in Morris' book does receive the lion's share of blame, he does not assign victimhood to the Arab side as clearly as Gilbert did with regard to Israel.

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<sup>27</sup> Morris 1999, p. 385f.

*Fred Khouri*

Fred J. Khouri's *The Arab-Israeli Dilemma* is perhaps somewhat different from the works analyzed above. Khouri's book is more focused on analysis than the others, although it of course consists of a large amount of narrative.<sup>28</sup> Like the other works, Khouri sets out to give a complete account of the Arab-Israeli conflict from the beginnings of Zionism and the Jewish immigration in the latter part of the nineteenth century. The difference, however, between Khouri and the other sources is that Khouri has specific chapters dedicated to more particular questions such as the Palestinian refugees or the precarious nature of Jerusalem. The works of Gilbert, Tessler and Morris are more focused on the telling of a story.

Another difference is also that Khouri focuses more on the political and diplomatic aspects of the conflict—for instance with regard to the role of the UN—and less on the military aspects. Khouri's book is the third edition of a book that was originally published in 1968. The second edition was published in 1976.

Fred Khouri was a professor of political science at Villanova University in Pennsylvania at the time of writing. He was of Lebanese origin, although he was born in the United States. He has written quite extensively on the Middle East and was also associate editor of the *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Affairs*.

War of 1967

Khouri devotes quite a large segment of his book to the War of 1967.<sup>29</sup> He first goes through the issues regarding Israeli-Syrian relations and the border disputes that took place prior to the war. Khouri then proceeds to discuss the threats that were made by Israel against Syria

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<sup>28</sup> As can be recalled from the first chapter, all sources used in this thesis need to have a focus on narrative as compared with analysis. As the methodology employed focuses on comparison, it is important that the sources used are as similar as possible. Hence, all sources used have more of a focus on the narrative aspects than the analytical.

<sup>29</sup> This section is based on Khouri 1985, pp. 242-92.

in the middle of May and that these threats played a part in the development of the crisis that would lead to the war. On May 16, after having deployed additional troops to the Sinai, President Nasser of Egypt requested that some UNEF positions be abandoned so that they could be taken over by the Egyptian army. Nasser, in other words, did not seek the full removal of UNEF. U Thant, secretary-general of the United Nations, refused to accept a partial removal and Nasser was thus faced with the choice of letting UNEF remain as a whole or to be completely removed. He chose the latter. Nasser's motive for having UNEF removed, Khouri argues, was both due to internal and external pressure to do so, but also in order to effectively deter a possible Israeli attack on Syria. At this point, U Thant asked Israel to accept UNEF on its side of the border but this was declined by Israel.

Just like Nasser's decision to have UNEF removed from its positions was political in nature, so was his closing of the Straits of Tiran. Nasser felt himself to be under great pressure to take this course of action and although it was also a way for him to reassert his position as a leader of the Arab world, he did not seek to go to war against Israel.

The pact that was signed between Egypt and Jordan at the end of May did not present Israel with a great threat, as it would have been necessary for months of coordination and cooperation to pass for the pact to be effective from a military point of view. Israel's position was not dire prior to the war and the fact that Israel refused to accept UNEF on its side of the border indicates that the Israeli leadership did not see the situation in this light either. Israel was the strongest party militarily all along, and that is why it won the war:

There were many factors which contributed to Israel's swift and conclusive victory. As in earlier wars, the Israelis started out with excellent military intelligence, supply, and communication services; well-trained and disciplined soldiers had great fighting spirit and the skill to make full use of modern military equipment

and techniques; highly competent military leaders who had effectively coordinated air and ground units into a single, mobile striking force had devised a daring, offensive strategy and a unified command; and benefited from short lines of communications.<sup>30</sup>

All in all, Khouri is quite clear regarding which side he believes to be more responsible for the war. The most important factor for why the Arab side could be said to share some of the blame for the war, Khouri argues, is due to its use of inflammatory and bellicose language during the crisis leading up to the war. This did not calm the situation—quite the reverse—but the largest part of the blame on the war lies with Israel for acting aggressively and seemingly not wanting to solve the crisis through peaceful means.

#### The time of 1967-73

Khouri deals really quite extensively with the time period following the War of 1967, and then mostly from an analytical point of view.<sup>31</sup> He does not discuss the secret decision made by the Israeli cabinet right after the war, but as can be recalled from the discussion in chapter three this is not to be construed as being inherently pro-Arab. The theme regarding the secret decision, as can be recalled, was rejected on the grounds that it could not be assumed that everyone was aware of it having been made. Khouri, on the contrary however, does say that by the end of the summer of 1967, Prime Minister Eshkol, as well as other prominent Israelis, was referring to a Greater Israel that would have the natural borders of the Suez Canal and the Jordan River.

When discussing the declaration agreed upon by the members of the Arab League in Khartoum in September 1967, Khouri says that the terminology of the three noes was included mostly as a matter of form as this kind of language was popular with the Arab masses. The essence of the declaration in Khartoum was its emphasis on working

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<sup>30</sup> Khouri 1985, p. 260f.

<sup>31</sup> This section is based on Khouri 1985, pp. 308-70.

on the international and diplomatic levels to regain the lost Arab territories. There was no talk in the declaration of destroying Israel, and in fact the declaration cleared the way for the Arab moderates in that they could pursue a political solution and offer Israel everything short of formal recognition and peace.

When Nasser launched the War of Attrition in 1969, the plan, Khouri argues, was to inflict heavy losses in personnel and also to disrupt the Israeli economy. The aim of the war was political in nature, as the objective was to show Israel as well as the rest of the world that Egypt did not accept the Suez Canal becoming the *de facto* border between the two states.

Writing on the initiative launched by Gunnar Jarring, the UN mediator, in early 1971, Khouri says that Egypt accepted it and hence declared itself willing to enter into a peace agreement with Israel. Israel, on the other hand, declared that it would not return to the borders that were in place prior to 1967, and hence came to reject the Jarring initiative. Khouri goes on to say that Egypt received a fair amount of praise for its acceptance, whereas Israel was criticized for not responding more favorably.

Likewise, with regard to the plan for an interim agreement launched by President Sadat in 1971, Israel also rejected the plan by being unwilling to make the necessary concessions. In general, Khouri transmits a view throughout of being critical of what he sees as Israeli intransigence. The following quote illustrates this view:

Distrustful of Arab intentions and convinced that time was on their side and they could maintain military superiority indefinitely, that Israel had more to gain than lose from prolonging the *status quo*, and that any attempt to seek a detailed Israeli peace program would cause the downfall of the delicately balanced government coalition which was deeply divided on territorial and other issues, Israeli officials refused, despite the urgings of some American officials and some Israelis, to take any serious peace initiative and decided to sit tight politically and to

wait for the Arabs to become “realistic” to the point where they would make the first move.<sup>32</sup>

### War of 1973

Khoury is quite brief in how he deals with the War of 1973, and the details of the actual war are only given about a page of text.<sup>33</sup> The war, in Khoury’s view, was launched by Egypt and Syria for strictly political reasons. The purpose was to launch a limited war that was to break the political stalemate. The war was to be followed by a political process with the aim of recovering the Egyptian and Syrian territories lost in 1967. The war was clearly not launched for strictly aggressive reasons.

When discussing the broken cease-fire, Khoury does not say anything of it having been broken by Egyptian forces. It was only Israel that broke the cease-fire, Khoury seems to say, and this was done in order to destroy the almost completely surrounded Egyptian Third Army. This army, as can be recalled from chapter four, was trapped on the eastern bank of the Suez Canal, but it still had open supply lines with the rear at the time of the October 22 cease-fire. When the fighting finally ended on October 25, however, the Third Army was completely encircled by Israeli troops. This is what Khoury is referring to when he says that Israel sought to destroy the army group.

Khoury is quite clear which side is to blame for why the war was fought in the first place:

Fully convinced now that all paths to a peaceful return of occupied Arab lands had been blocked by Israeli intransigence and American and Soviet unwillingness to act, the leaders of Egypt, Syria, and Saudi Arabia concluded that they were left with no alternative to war.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Khoury 1985, p. 365.

<sup>33</sup> This section is based on Khoury 1985, pp. 356-72.

<sup>34</sup> Khoury 1985, p. 369f.



Although the Egypt and Syria, with Saudi backing, fired the first shot, the blame clearly rests on the shoulders of Israel. The war would not have taken place had the Arab states felt that there was a viable and realistic way of getting their lost territories back. And, the chief reason for why there was no perceived option for the Arab states to peacefully regain their lost lands was Israeli intransigence.

### The rise of the PLO

The rise of the PLO in the late 1960s and early 1970s does not receive a great deal of attention from Khouri.<sup>35</sup> Despite that, however, Khouri gives a fairly comprehensive rundown of the events and processes pertaining to this organization during the time period in question. On the policy of a "democratic, secular state for all its citizens" he says that the common and accepted goal of all member groups of the PLO was to dismantle the Zionist state of Israel, and to replace it with a secular and democratic state for both Jews and Palestinians. This policy, Khouri seems to argue, was a sincere attempt to settle the conflict.

When Khouri discusses the Palestinian use of international terrorism, he says that it was the more radical groups like the PFLP that embarked on this strategy. The more moderate Palestinians as well as moderate Arabs in general came to strongly criticize these actions as they were seen to discredit the Palestinian and Arab causes in the eyes of the rest of the world. Although Khouri does not say so specifically, he seems to agree with this view. Khouri furthermore does not mention the Black September Organization at all in his book.

Contrary to the view discussed above on international terrorism having been undertaken by the more radical groups like the PFLP, when discussing the confrontation that took place in Jordan in 1970 Khouri does not make any distinction between the various member

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<sup>35</sup> This section is based on Khouri 1985, pp. 356-61.

groups of the PLO. Instead, he describes it as the guerrilla movement gaining so much in influence and power as to more or less becoming a state within the state. The violent confrontation that eventually took place is then portrayed as having been virtually inevitable.

### Conclusion

If Martin Gilbert is to be said to have been mostly pro-Israeli in his outlook, then Khouri's perspective is equally visibly pro-Arab. The War of 1967 is presented as mostly being Israel's fault. Likewise, Israel is also to blame for why there was no peaceful settlement in the interwar years and for why the War of 1973 broke out. The Palestinian aspect of the conflict, although only discussed briefly by Khouri, is also presented from a pro-Arab perspective.

Just like Gilbert assigns the status of victims to the Israelis, so does Khouri when he views the Arab side as being the victim in the conflict. One major difference, however, is that whereas Gilbert portrays the Israelis as being the victims of Arab aggression and non-acceptance of Israel as a whole, Khouri paints a picture of the Arabs being the victims—not so much of sheer naked Israeli aggression—but rather of Israeli arrogance and narrow-mindedness. In a sense, Khouri's designation of victimhood is quite a bit softer than that of Gilbert.

### *Conclusion*

From the overview above, it is quite clear that how the author positions him- or herself in relation to the main themes has great bearing on how the different actors in the conflict are portrayed. There is a distinct difference between Gilbert and Khouri, but also between, for example, Khouri and Morris. What the above overview perhaps shows most clearly is that although all the sources above are

biased in the sense that they in the majority of cases position themselves in relation to the main themes, they are also individual works that are quite different.

That Gilbert and Khouri quite clearly are pro-Israeli and pro-Arab respectively is more or less clear from above. But what about Tessler and Morris? Are they pro-Arab or pro-Israeli? These two sources are harder to pin down conclusively how they are to be deemed, as they have both pro-Israeli and pro-Arab attributes as seen through the use of the methodology of themes. In that sense, they are more even-handed than Gilbert and Khouri, but that is not to say that they necessarily are more objective. Whether even-handedness, or not clearly being either pro-Israeli or pro-Arab, is to be construed as being objective, or at least more objective than clearly taking sides, is discussed in the concluding chapter of this thesis. And, this is where we now turn.

## 7. Conclusion

Almost anyone even vaguely familiar with the Arab-Israeli conflict would probably agree with the statement that the conflict is very current—and has been so for a long time—and that it is also politicized to a large degree. Besides those directly involved in the conflict, whose interest is self-evident, the conflict also has its adversaries in places not directly affected by it. There are many in both Europe as well as in the United States who have strong feelings regarding the conflict and in a lot of cases for or against its antagonists. And, besides the fact that the conflict generates much emotion, it also generates a great amount of reporting and interest due to it being so ever-present.

Besides generating a vast amount of reporting and commentary, the Arab-Israeli conflict has also resulted in a substantial amount of historical studies: both regarding more specific events and aspects as well as more general surveys. However, though, there has only been a small amount of studies written on the historiography of the conflict, and a more thorough study on the question of bias with regard to this highly politicized conflict has never been published.

As discussed in the introductory chapter of this thesis, there are some major questions that are to be discussed in this thesis:

- (1) Is the methodology used reliable and useful for detecting bias?
- (2) What is the nature of the established bias? What kinds of classifications can be made? How can bias be seen in the sources analyzed?

- (3) What is to be considered propaganda, and what is to be considered more as differences of opinion?
- (4) Is it possible to write objectively on a highly politicized topic such as the Arab-Israeli conflict?

These questions are all dealt with below, in addition to some concluding remarks on possible future research. We first, however, turn to the question of methodology.

### *Evaluating the methodology*

Part of this undertaking in examining the nature of bias in relation to the Arab-Israeli conflict was the development of a methodology suited for this task. Compared with other disciplines, the study of history in general would at first sight perhaps come off as not being too concerned with issues of methodology. This is true in some respects, but in some it is not. Ever since the rise of the more scientific approach to the study of history in the nineteenth century, historians have been more critical and analytical regarding the use of sources. Is the source authentic? Who wrote it and why? How reliable is this source? This critical approach to sources is not only crucial in the writing of history, but it has also become so commonplace that its use is usually not problematized.

In some more specialized forms of history, there are indeed really quite clear-cut methodologies. Economic or social history, for instance, which often rely on different numerical results frequently use various statistical and quantitative methods.

Studying historiography, or the writing of history, has become more and more popular in the last decade or so. Here, the methodology used is most often quite commonsensical and frequently not delved into. The methodology used is often part of the

major question. If, for instance, you are looking at how the area of Kosovo is described in Serbian historiography over time, what you would have to do is basically to decide which sources to use and then see how Kosovo is dealt with. Maybe you would want to make different classifications/subdivisions depending on the subject matter—for example the role of the Turks and Islam, or the nature of the Serbian claim to the area—but the methodology is still guided by the major question at hand. Studying historiography, as compared with other branches of history, is probably the specialization that involves the most back-and-forth play between the historian and the sources he or she uses. Studying historiography, in other words, is arguably the most subjective of all specializations in the field of history.

Looking at what has previously been written on the historiography of the Arab-Israeli conflict (see the introductory chapter), it is quite clear that there is a need for moving away from just reading the sources and giving your view on them. Especially when it comes to examining the question of bias, when it is probably easy for almost anyone to fall into the trap of “I know it when I see it.” And, as the major question in this thesis was to examine bias, it was decided quite early on that there was a need for a more forthright methodology.

The methodology that has been used throughout is based on controversy: when there is significant disagreement in the sources how a certain event or situation is described or interpreted this is labeled a main theme. This initial labeling is done through the use of sampling, where a number of sources are used to establish these major differences. The themes are then analyzed and the different views classified as being either pro-Israeli or pro-Arab, depending on how they depict the adversaries. Outlooks where either Israel is described in positive terms or the Arab side described in a negative light are deemed pro-Israeli and *vice versa*. A major aspect in helping

to decide whether or not a particular view is to be considered pro-Arab or pro-Israeli is looking at which side is mostly blamed for escalating or perpetuating the conflict in the various instances.

Before we can evaluate the usefulness of this methodology in more general terms, it is first necessary to delve into the difficulties with using said methodology that have surfaced throughout this investigation.

### Difficulties with the methodology

One problem that became apparent was when there clearly were different views on an aspect of the conflict, but where the meaning of these views was not as clear. In the chapter on the rise of the PLO, a theme was identified which dealt with the battle at the Jordanian town of Karamah. In most instances, the battle is described as an Israeli defeat and, as can be recalled, there are two different views for why that was the case: (1) that it was the Palestinians that beat off the Israelis; and (2) that the battle was won by the Jordanian army, which came to the assistance of the Palestinians. These different outlooks presented themselves quite clearly in the sources. The problem, however, is that the two views do not clearly situate themselves on the pro-Israeli/pro-Arab axis. Is it to be construed as pro-Arab to say that it was the Palestinians who made the Israeli army retreat, or is it the other way around? This is not possible to say and this was the reason for why this theme was not used further in the analysis.

A reason for why it was not possible to determine bias in relation to the different outlooks *vis-à-vis* the battle of Karamah is that it is not possible to say that either view clearly assigns blame or vindicate either party. It was argued in the introduction to this thesis that an important part of bias in relation to conflicts such as the Arab-Israeli conflict is the question of blame and innocence.

The theme regarding the battle of Karamah does however illustrate a limitation with the methodology used in this thesis. Or

## *Conclusion*

perhaps not even a limitation, but rather an aspect that needs to be taken into consideration; namely that the individual themes need to be studied thoroughly to see which are just academic differences of opinion and which are instances of bias.

Another issue regarding the use of the methodology as employed in this thesis is with regard to the themes where it is said that ignoring a certain aspect is to be construed as bias. In the chapter on the time period of 1967-73, there was a theme regarding the secret Israeli cabinet decision made just after the War of 1967. This decision, as described above, stated that Israel was willing to return the Sinai and the Golan Heights to Egypt and Syria respectively in return for full peace. As discussing this decision does paint Israel in a positive light—especially considering it was made barely a week after the war—it was initially decided in the sampling phase that to mention the decision was to be construed as pro-Israeli. Conversely, not mentioning the decision was deemed to be the pro-Arab view.

A problem with this initial judgment call was that it assumed that the authors who did not discuss the decision were aware of its existence, but chose not to include any mention of it. This judgment call, however, proved to be more tenuous than initially foreseen. The decision was after all made in secret and it is only certain that it was transmitted to the United States (it is in other words not clear whether or not Egypt and Syria were made privy to the decision). The decision is furthermore only mentioned in a few primary sources.<sup>1</sup> Due to these factors, the assumption was made that it could not be expected that everyone writing on this time period would be aware of the secret decision and that failing to mention it would be a clear instance of bias.

In the same chapter, the initiatives of UN mediator Gunnar Jarring and President Anwar Sadat of Egypt were also discussed.

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<sup>1</sup> See chapter three.



## *Conclusion*

Here, on the other hand, it was decided that not including any mention of either of these plans was to be construed as pro-Israeli. The reason for this was that the two plans in a number of instances are described as being both viable and that they could possibly have led to peace between Israel and Egypt. As it is claimed in a number of sources that the plans were rejected by Israel, not mentioning the plans could be said to not paint Israel in as bad of a light as discussing the initiatives.<sup>2</sup>

In this instance, in contrast to the secret Israeli cabinet decision, it was decided that not including mention of the two plans was to be construed as bias. The difference between these two themes and the theme regarding the secret cabinet decision is that it has been assumed that anyone writing on the time period would at least be aware of the two plans. So, in other words, two judgment calls were made: one regarding the secret cabinet decision, where it was decided that it should not be construed as common knowledge, and one regarding the Jarring and Sadat plans, where it was decided that not mentioning the plans are to be considered bias.

Even if these judgment calls arguably should not to be seen as instances of "I know it when I see it," they still are not objective and scientific in the strictest sense of the word. Using the methodology employed in this thesis does necessitate making judgment calls, but this is in all likelihood the case with any method of examining the question of bias.

The last main issue regarding the methodology used in this thesis is the problem of classification that surfaced with regard to the theme on Arab war aims in the War of 1973. The specific difficulties surrounding this theme are evaluated in chapter four above, but the crux of the matter was the problem presented by the fact that the two Arab states in question (Egypt and Syria) in a number of cases were

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<sup>2</sup> See chapter three for a more comprehensive discussion regarding both the Jarring initiative and the Sadat plan.

## *Conclusion*

described as having different goals with the war. It was at this point decided that the binary designation of pro-Israeli/pro-Arab was not sufficient in this particular instance. In addition, an intermediate pro-Arab position had to be established with regard to this theme. There were in other words two distinct views—one pro-Israeli and one pro-Arab—that had to be complemented by a third.

The difficulties relating to this theme illustrate that the binary designation used throughout this thesis in some cases need to be further expanded to include more than two perspectives. This is perhaps also true in other cases than the issue with the Arab war aims in 1973, but this was the only case where it was decided to add another classification.<sup>3</sup> In the other cases where other designations beside the familiar pro-Israeli/pro-Arab pair could have been added, it was decided against for the simple reason that it is important when using this methodology not to emphasize individual differences between the sources under scrutiny. All sources used are of course individual works with individual outlooks in a number of cases, but when using the methodology employed in this thesis it is crucial not to emphasize the more minor differences. As is always the case when dealing with a greater number of data or sources, it is necessary to find the right balance between generalization and detail.

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<sup>3</sup> For example, theme five in the chapter on the rise of the PLO could have been classified in a number of manners. This theme, as discussed in chapter five above, deals with the organizational affiliation of the Black September Organization (or the BSO). In some accounts, the BSO is said to have been completely independent from the mainstream organization of Fatah and in some accounts it is said to have been a clandestine arm of this organization. The middle road, so to say, or intermediate position could have been the sources that argued that there was a Fatah-BSO connection on the highest levels, but that Arafat and the circle around him are in the clear. In chapter five above, this view was presented as being pro-Israeli, but could easily have been termed a more intermediate pro-Israeli view. Intermediate in the sense that it is not as damning of Fatah as simply saying that there was a Fatah-BSO connection but also because it still cannot be regarded as painting Fatah in a particularly good light. This of course is in contrast to the pro-Arab view where it is said that there was no connection between the two organizations.

Evaluating the methodology: conclusion

The methodology used in this thesis is an attempt to move away from the “I know it when I see it”-approach that has traditionally been used when looking at the question of bias in historiography. Bias is a difficult topic to evaluate, and the most difficult thing when analyzing bias is to not letting your own biases and outlooks shine through. No one, I am quite certain, is completely free from opinion.

So, when finding a method for analyzing bias it is important to find one that involves as few judgment calls as possible. Or, putting it more correctly, finding a methodology where the judgment calls that inevitably have to be made are more practical in nature as compared to judgment calls that are biased *vis-à-vis* either the authors whose works are being analyzed or the parties involved (e.g. Israel or Syria).

All in all—and the difficulties discussed above notwithstanding—the methodology used in this thesis works well when it comes to the issue at hand: finding a more neutral or detached way of establishing bias. The methodology used here is perhaps not as, so to say, scientific as using some of the methods used in the natural sciences but at the same time, it does present us with some solid and tangible results.

Of course, it could be argued that the methodology only produces results that are tangible and real under its own premises. If, for instance, one does not accept the premise that Israel facing a mortal danger prior to the outbreak of war in 1967 is a more pro-Israeli perspective than saying the opposite, then the methodology is indeed not particularly useful. Studying bias does involve making judgment calls and as such they are always open to discussion. The main difference, however, between the methodology used here and the more laidback “I know it when I see it”-approach is that it is here possible to evaluate the ways the decisions regarding how to position the sources have been made.

A large part of academia and scholarship in general is of course the evaluating, re-evaluating and re-evaluating again of the same

material, theory, etc. This is how knowledge is gained and improved. In order to facilitate this, however, it is imperative that the process is as transparent as possible so that the reasoning and techniques of one's predecessors can be seen as clearly as possible.

### *Nature and classification of main themes*

The basic premise of this thesis—as it was discussed in the introductory chapter—is that bias is here not looked upon as being deviations from a supposedly objective center, but rather as differences in outlook as compared with others. Saying, for instance, that Ronald Reagan was the greatest American president of the twentieth century is not biased in the sense that it expresses an opinion that is not objective, but because it differs from the view that Reagan was a poor president.

In this thesis, a number of main themes (or instances of bias) have been identified, discussed and classified. These are the different classifications, and they are dealt with below:

- (1) Themes where a certain event or aspect does not paint a favorable picture of one of the actors, and is hence left out in a number of sources;
- (2) Themes where the intentions of a certain actor or actors are under dispute;
- (3) Themes where the meaning and implications of a certain policy or declaration is disputed;
- (4) Themes where a larger historical event or process is interpreted in different manners;
- (5) Themes where the actual historical reality is disputed;
- (6) Themes where the same historical reality can be described in different ways and with different results.

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In the chapter on the War of 1967, two themes (number 1 and 4) were identified as being instances of where a certain aspect was left out in a number of sources. These two aspects were the Israeli threats made against Syria prior to the war and the Israeli non-acceptance of the United Nations peacekeepers (UNEF) on its side of the border with Egypt. These two aspects were said to have painted Israel in an unfavorable light and their exclusion to have been an instance of pro-Israeli bias. What this means, in other words, is that mentioning Israel having made threats towards Syria and having rejected UNEF on its territory is a more negative manner in which to describe Israel than leaving out mention of these aspects altogether. Furthermore, these two themes have also been said to arguably be closer to being propaganda than other themes analyzed in this thesis (see below).

In both the chapter on the War of 1967 (themes 3 and 5) as well as in the chapter on the time between 1967-73 (theme 3), the intentions of Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser are under dispute. The instances relate to Nasser's reasons for having UNEF removed, for closing the Straits of Tiran in 1967 and for starting the so-called War of Attrition in 1969. The intentions and objectives of Egypt and Syria for waging war in 1973 are also delved into (theme 1 in the chapter on the War of 1973). In all these instances, there are different views on why the actors chose the course of action they did and these views paint the participants in different lights.

In general, one can say that the pro-Israeli view in relation to the above classification of themes would be an emphasis on Arab hostile intentions. The objective for choosing the course of action that was undertaken was aggressive in nature. Conversely, the pro-Arab view in relation to the above classification in general would be to highlight the political aspects of said action.

How to interpret a certain policy or declaration is disputed in the chapter on the time period of 1967-73 (theme 2) and in the chapter on the rise of the PLO (theme 1). In the former chapter, the dispute is

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how to look upon the declaration of the Arab League in Khartoum 1967, and in the latter chapter the dispute is how to relate oneself to the PLO policy of a "democratic, secular state for all its citizens" that was formulated in the late 1960s. The various outlooks on these policies and declarations present the actors in either positive or negative manners. With regard to the Khartoum Declaration, the pro-Israeli view sees it as being aggressive and inflexible in nature whereas the pro-Arab side sees it as in fact being moderate. On the PLO policy of a "democratic, secular state for all its citizens," the pro-Arab view sees it as a sincere attempt at solving the conflict peacefully, whereas the pro-Israeli outlook is that it is to be seen as having been a euphemism for the destruction of Israel.

History is made up of both small and large events and processes. In relation to classifying the themes that have been identified, there are some that deal with quite small events (for instance, the nature of Egypt's initial demand for having UNEF removed from its territory) and some that deal with larger events. There are three themes in relation to the War of 1967 (themes 6, 7 and 8) that deal with how to interpret a larger historical event, two in relation to the time period of 1967-73 (themes 4 and 5) and one in relation to the War of 1973 (theme 3). The themes concerned with the War of 1967 deal with the situation for Israel after the Jordanian-Egyptian mutual defense pact that was signed prior to the war, the general nature of Israel's situation at the outset of the war and the reasons for Israel's quick and decisive victory.

In the chapter on the time between the 1967-73, the two themes that deal with how to interpret a larger historical event deal with the peace initiatives of United Nations mediator Gunnar Jarring and Egyptian President Anwar Sadat. Here, the question is not only how the initiatives are presented and the question of why they did not produce any results discussed, but also to what degree these initiatives are emphasized.

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In relation to the War of 1973, the larger historical event under dispute deals with the reasons for why this war was fought in the first place, and which side is to be regarded as being ultimately responsible (although there is no dispute that Egypt and Syria fired the first shots). What these themes all have in common is that they deal with aspects that are more difficult to pin down precisely, but where there are nevertheless clearly quite different outlooks and interpretations present in the sources. How you interpret these events, in other words, has definite results on how the adversaries are portrayed.

In addition to the various ways in which to interpret a certain historical event, there are also themes where the dispute is concerning what actually happened on a more empirical level. In the chapter on the War of 1967 (theme 2), both the view that Nasser initially sought the complete withdrawal of UNEF from Egyptian soil and the view that he initially only wanted a limited removal are present in sources. Likewise, in the chapter on the War of 1973 (theme 2), there are two contesting views on the broken cease-fire: one that sees it as having been broken by both warring parties, and one that sees it as having been broken primarily and deliberately by Israel. There is also a theme in the chapter on the rise of the PLO (theme 5) where the empirical historical reality is under dispute. Was or was not the Black September Organization a part of Fatah? These themes are all similar in the sense that the historical reality they describe differently could, in theory at least, be settled conclusively. The empirical historical reality may never be decisively decided upon, of course, but it is clear that the different outlooks on what actually happened has different implications on how the antagonists in the conflict are portrayed.

Lastly, there are two themes present in the chapter on the rise of the PLO (themes 3 and 4) where the historical reality is not in dispute. The dispute is rather how this historical reality is presented.

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In the first of these themes, the difference in outlook is whether or not it can be said that the PLO was behind the international terror committed by Palestinians in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The issue at hand is that it seems to be the almost universal consensus that it was the smaller groups of the PLO (like the PFLP), but not the mainstream Fatah, that were behind these plane hijackings and the like. But, the crux of the matter is that these groups were members of the PLO, which is an umbrella organization. It would be correct, in other words, to describe the Palestinian terrorism of the late 1960s/early 1970s as having been undertaken either by the smaller groups or by the PLO in general. Both ways of presenting the issue are to some degree accurate. They do, however, have quite different implications for how the PLO and the Palestinian cause are described. The same goes for the other similar theme in the chapter on the rise of the PLO: here, the issue at hand is whether one can say that it was the smaller, more radical groups that challenged the authority of Jordan's King Hussein or whether it was the PLO at large.

With the exception of the first category of themes—the category of themes where it is said to be biased to exclude mention of a certain aspect—all other themes are quite clear examples of differences of opinion. When it comes to the question of bias and propaganda as the terms are used in this thesis, the two themes belonging to the first category consist of views that lean more towards being propaganda. That, of course, makes the assumption that the events in question were known to the authors but that they chose to ignore them as they painted one of the parties to the conflict in an unfavorable light.

Going back to the example of Ronald Reagan will illustrate the point I am trying to make: writing a biography over the former president without mentioning the controversial Iran-Contra affair would probably teeter the line of being propaganda, whereas writing a work where it is argued that Reagan had nothing to do with that



chain of events would not be. Arguing about Reagan's role in relation to the Iran-Contra affair, from either a sympathetic or unsympathetic perspective, would in the framework of this thesis be construed as bias, as it involves some kind of value judgment. It is lastly up to the reader to decide for him- or herself what he or she believes Reagan's role to have been. Excluding any mention, however, of the affair would be propaganda of sorts as the reader is not even given the option of evaluating the event.<sup>4</sup>

Be that as it may, the fact of the matter is that the majority of different views as expressed through the main themes analyzed in this thesis are not to be considered examples of propaganda. Although some of the authors have quite staunchly held views, the themes and their different views have more of the characteristics of differences of opinion than anything else. But, of course, the majority of sources in the majority of instances *do* situate themselves according to one or the other views on the pro-Arab/pro-Israeli axis. They are not objective in the sense that they do not deviate from a supposedly objective center. They are biased in the sense the term has been used throughout this thesis—that they align themselves *vis-à-vis* one of the adversaries of the conflict—but at the same time they are not examples of propaganda.

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<sup>4</sup> Simply stating, however, either that Reagan was or was not involved in the affair without delving into the intricacies of the whole issue would not constitute propaganda as the term is used in this thesis. For an opinion to be tantamount to propaganda in this framework it has to constitute a willful manipulation of a documented historical reality (i.e. in this instance not mentioning that the affair took place at all.) The discussion surrounding the Iran-Contra affair is not whether or not it took place (it did), whether or not it was to play a large part in Reagan's presidency (it did) or whether or not Reagan himself was accused in some quarters of being guilty of breaking the law (he was). The issue at hand in this context is the issue of culpability and not the historical reality of the affair. So, in other words, plainly stating that Reagan did or did not have anything to do with the Iran-Contra affair without any sort of evidence in support of your view is arguably an example of poor scholarship/debating skills, but it is in the context of this thesis to be construed as nothing but an opinion (i.e. bias).

### *The nature of bias in the sources*

It has already been mentioned above that the majority of sources in the majority of instances do position themselves in relation to either a pro-Arab or pro-Israeli perspective. Sometimes, sources may be considered ambiguous in relation to individual themes, and this is either due to the source in question not dealing with the subject matter in the first place or simply because it does not position itself. Nevertheless, however, in most instances the sources do position themselves.

Placing a source on the pro-Arab/pro-Israeli axis in relation to a particular theme can be looked upon as deeming that same source to be biased. One of the two sides is described in a more flattering (or not as unfavorable) manner. So, in the majority of cases the majority of sources are indeed biased. This is an important and tangible result of this thesis. But, if the sources in most cases do “take sides” as far as the individual themes are concerned, is the same the case when looking at each source as a unit? Is it, in other words, possible to establish whether an individual source is to be looked at as being pro-Israeli or pro-Arab?

As already discussed in the chapters above, and also illustrated through the examples in the previous chapter, a perhaps surprising result of this thesis has been the fact that there are not as many so-called standard narratives as one would perhaps expect. A standard narrative, in this framework, would be telling and interpreting the story along very clearly discernable pro-Arab or pro-Israeli lines. Examples of how these standard narratives would look have been given in the chapters above.

It was halfway assumed that there would be a preponderance of sources that were quite clearly pro-Israeli or *vice versa*. But, as can be seen in the results as discussed in the chapters above and shown in appendix 1, the distribution of views is more spread out than that. There are of course sources that clearly are pro-Israeli or pro-Arab in

almost every respect (like Martin Gilbert and Fred Khouri discussed in the previous chapter). This is to be expected given the politicized debate surrounding the Arab-Israeli conflict. It is, however, surprising that there are not more sources like this.

One plausible explanation for why there are not more standard narratives could be that the authors are not as ideologically motivated as one would perhaps assume. The authors, in other words, do not initially position themselves in the typical pro-Arab/pro-Israeli mold. They are so to say more free how they position themselves *vis-à-vis* each individual theme. In the works where there are more standard narratives, on the other hand, it could be said that the authors are more guided in how to position themselves. Writing, for instance, from a clear pro-Israeli perspective in some ways “forces” the author to position him- or herself in a pro-Israeli manner in relation to each theme. This point brings us to the next section in this concluding chapter: namely the whole issue of what is propaganda and what is not.

### *Bias and propaganda*

In the introduction, an article in a journal specializing on the Middle East was mentioned and briefly discussed.<sup>5</sup> The main reason why it was introduced was its title, where the question the author (Neill Lochery) posed was whether works on the Arab-Israeli conflict were to be considered scholarship or propaganda. This is an interesting question and of course to some degree at the core of this thesis.

Propaganda is a negative word, and implied in its use is the attempt to manipulate its recipients (often through not painting the

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<sup>5</sup> Neill Lochery, “Scholarship or Propaganda: Works on Israel and the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 2001,” *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 37 No. 4 (2001).

whole picture). Scholarship, on the other hand, is a word with positive connotations, which indicates an open and transparent pursuit of an objective truth. Both words are value-laden and by asking the question of whether works on the conflict are to be considered propaganda or scholarship, the article's author indicates that he wants to evaluate upon the value of said works.

In the present analysis, one of the major results has been that outright propaganda is not particularly frequent. It is only with regard to two main themes (see discussion above) that the case has been made that there could be instances of propaganda. That is not to say that there are no instances of bias. On the contrary, the majority of sources in the majority of instances show examples of bias. But they are not propaganda in the strictest sense of the word, as they do not clearly and overtly attempt to manipulate their readers.

Or, perhaps putting it more accurately, of course authors of every stripe and color want their readers to take whatever they write to heart or at least give it a fair amount of consideration. That is more or less self-evident and probably one of the greatest motivators for writing in the first place. What this thesis has shown, however, is that it is not possible to say conclusively that there are that many instances of willful manipulation. Nevertheless, it can safely be assumed that there are authors who would very much like their readers to adopt the same positions they have.

So, if it cannot be said that the analyzed works are to be looked upon as propaganda, can they be said to be scholarship? In all actuality not in the sense Lochery probably sees it: as objective and absolutely non-biased accounts. Most works do position themselves in relation to most main themes. And, as positioning a work in relation to a certain main theme positions the same work in relation to the actors in the conflict, most works are biased in the majority of instances.

But does a work being biased preclude it from being scholarship in the larger sense of the word? Here, every individual source

probably needs to be looked upon separately, but it is safe to say that there are many of the works analyzed that are to be regarded as scholarly (or objective which is the term used in this thesis). Objective in the sense that they represent an open and transparent search for an empirical and attestable historical truth, but not in the sense that they are free of bias and opinion. This question is now delved into further as we go into the perhaps more abstract question of whether it is indeed possible to write an objective history of a conflict that is politicized to as large a degree as the Arab-Israeli conflict.

### *Objective accounts on the Arab-Israeli conflict?*

In answering this question, it is almost necessary to define more precisely what it means to say that an account is objective. It could mean an account that is completely free of bias or it could mean an account that, although it does consist of bias, is open-ended enough to be construed as an sincere attempt to further our knowledge.

If one speaks of accounts that are completely free of bias, then it is probably not possible to write objective accounts. The reason for this is quite obvious: in order to fully give an account of the conflict it is in a number of instances necessary to interpret and evaluate particular events or aspects. And, as has been shown in this thesis, many of these interpretations and evaluations are in fact value judgments of sorts, as choosing one interpretation over another often positions the source on the pro-Arab/pro-Israeli axis.

The reason why it is often essential to give an interpretation is because that is what the writing of history is all about. Without interpretation, a historical account is just a collection of facts. It is certainly quite possible to simply write that the War of 1967 began on June 5 that year, but what the reader ultimately wants to know—and

this is why anyone writing more extensively on this has to deal with the question in one way or another—is *why* the war broke out.

That history to a large degree means interpretation is nothing new and it has been brought up by E.H. Carr and those following in his footsteps for decades.<sup>6</sup> The postmodern approach to the study of history is in some ways just taking this approach one step further. What the results in this thesis have shown is the degree of how much interpretation also means bias. Interpretation is of course always bias, as choosing one interpretation over another is biased. What this thesis has shown, however, is that at least with regard to a politicized and “hot” conflict such as the Arab-Israeli conflict, the interpretations employed are to a large degree biased in the traditional sense of the word. The interpretations used, in other words, often clearly position the source as being either pro-Arab or pro-Israeli in the relation to the issue at hand.

One could here bring up the example of the rejected theme on the battle of Karameh discussed above. As can be recalled, the issue at stake with reference to this event is how the Israeli defeat is to be interpreted: as a result of Palestinian valor, or as a result of the Jordanian army coming to the assistance of the Palestinian fighters. Here, there are clearly two different interpretations present in the sources but, in contrast to the main themes discussed in this thesis, the two interpretations do not represent a clear pro-Israeli or pro-Arab perspective. This is perhaps how differences in interpretation usually manifest themselves in the histories of less delicate historical processes, but not when it comes to a heavily contested issue such as the Arab-Israeli conflict. In relation to the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict, interpretation often, or even typically, means taking sides.

So, if it is perhaps not possible to write an objective account of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the sense that it is completely free of bias, is it

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<sup>6</sup> See the section on theory in chapter one.

possible to write an account that is objective in the sense that is an *attempt* to be objective? Once again going back to the discussion presented in the introductory chapter, it is clear that the more radical postmodern perspective on the writing of history makes even the attempt at writing objectively a waste of effort. The concept of an objective truth is an unattainable pipedream. Again according to Carr, and this is perhaps the view many or most historians today would agree with, a totally objective history is perhaps not possible, but it definitely can be attempted.

In view of the results of this thesis, I would have to agree with this notion. The majority of main themes in this thesis where bias was frequently detected are, as already discussed above, judgment calls. Did Israel face a mortal danger in June 1967? Were the peace initiatives presented by Gunnar Jarring and Anwar Sadat viable or not? Did Egypt and Syria have maximalist and exclusively military goals in the War of 1973? Was the PLO policy of a "democratic, secular state for all its citizens" a sincere attempt at solving the conflict or was it just a euphemism for the destruction of Israel? These questions could in theory at least be answered with the same objective certainty as, for example, the question of whether there was snow on the ground at noon local time on Trafalgar Square in London on January 1, 1900. This question could be answered with certainty and without a shadow of a doubt, and the same could be argued goes for the examples above. The difference, however, with answering the questions of snow on Trafalgar Square as compared to Israel's situation in 1967 is of course that the latter is most likely never going to be settled in the same manner as is possible with the former. The question regarding the War of 1967 is in all actuality probably too complex and the available sources too vague.

Not ever being able to answer questions conclusively and without any doubt or ambiguity is an inevitable and self-evident part of doing history. As a matter of fact, it seems to be almost universal that one of the first things taught to undergraduate history students is that there

is almost always more than one perspective or answer to any historical problem. Studying history not only gives students another perspective on the world that surrounds them, but it also makes them more critical and skeptical when presented with various views. There is almost always more than one view of everything, and this has to be taken into consideration when attempting to answer a question more conclusively

So, in light of the question of whether it is possible to write objectively on the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict even though it is not possible to write without bias, I would have to say that to some degree it is. If one makes an honest attempt that by weighing the different views that others have presented prior to yours and by critically going through the relevant sources to reach an independent and empirical truth, then this could be construed as being a more objective account.<sup>7</sup> Even, of course, if the end-result consists of bias in the sense as problematized in this thesis. In all actuality, whatever the possibly unattainable end-all-be-all answer may be in each case, it will be biased in the sense of the word as used in this thesis: for, at the end of the day, Israel either did face a mortal threat to its existence prior to the war in 1967 or it did not.

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<sup>7</sup> Going back to the discussion on the Iran-Contra affair above in relation to this, it is possible to say that an account where it is simply said that Ronald Reagan did not have anything to do with the whole thing and then leaving it at that would be less objective than an account where Reagan's innocence is maintained, but only after discussing factors A, B and C that would seem to exonerate him even due to the incriminating nature of factors X, Y and Z. Both accounts would be biased as the term is used in this thesis as they "choose sides", but the latter source could be said to be more objective as it is more open-ended and, seemingly at least, more genuine in its attempt at examining the question of Reagan's role in the affair.



## *Conclusion*

As already mentioned previously in this work, this is probably the first attempt made to look upon the issues of bias and objectivity in relation to the historiography of the Arab-Israeli conflict from a more analytical point of view. The previous works written on the topic of the historiography of the Arab-Israeli conflict have largely been characterized by a "I know it when I see it"-approach when it comes to the question of bias. In order to move away from this tendency, a methodology has been introduced to make the task of establishing and evaluating bias more easily performed and the results more reliable. This method has been shown to work well, but its greatest appeal is probably the fact that it is transparent. It is in other words possible for anyone to go back and see how it has been used and what judgment calls have been made. Looking at a potentially touchy subject such as bias, and especially with regard to something as delicate as the Arab-Israeli conflict, it is essential that the methodology employed is as transparent as possible.

By using the methodology discussed above, it has been shown clearly that the majority of sources indeed are biased in the majority of cases. It needs to be pointed out, however, that although they are biased in the majority of cases, the majority of sources are not clearly pro-Israeli or pro-Arab. What this means is that there is a great gray area in-between the two ends of the spectrum, and that there are many possible manners in which to present the same events. It also needs to be pointed out here that the majority of cases of bias as presented in this work are not to be considered propaganda, but rather more differences of opinion or value judgments. Propaganda, within the framework of this thesis, is the conscious act of actively trying to deceive one's readers by for instance excluding mention of an attestable historical fact that paints one of the protagonists in an unfavorable light.

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What this means is that the traditional view of accounts on the Arab-Israeli conflict as being riddled with bias needs to be altered. The tangible and solid results of this undertaking have shown the picture to be more complex than that. Yes, bias is of course very prevalent, but more often than not more in the shape of differences of opinion than inflexible and staunchly held views. The results of this investigation make the case that works on the Arab-Israeli conflict in most cases are not as ideologically motivated as they are usually made out to be, and that their authors in many cases display a fair amount of integrity and independence from the standard pro-Israeli or pro-Arabs ways of representation. To further complicate the matter, however, there are also a number of authors who are ideologically guided in how they see the conflict and how they want the conflict to be looked upon.

Furthermore, what this work has shown is that it is in all likelihood not possible to write a more comprehensive account on the Arab-Israeli conflict that is absolutely objective. A major result of this thesis is that E.H. Carr's belief that history means interpretation and that interpretation often means bias has been shown to be correct (or at least within the framework of this investigation). Most of the different views on certain aspects of the conflict usually have a clear view on which side it portrays in a favorable or unfavorable light. Most interpretations are in other words biased. When it comes to a delicate subject matter like that of the Arab-Israeli conflict, what in other cases are simply scholarly differences of opinion are here biased in the sense that using different interpretations in most cases means "choosing sides."

Even though it may not be possible to write a history of the Arab-Israeli conflict that is objective and free of bias—as that has been shown to be an inevitable component—it is possible to *try* to be as objective as possible. By being as open as possible to other interpretations and how you have come to reach your conclusions, it is possible to write an account that is more objective. More objective,

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that is, in the sense of being a more sincere and genuine attempt at furthering our knowledge—not more objective in the sense of being free of bias.

## *Further research*

The purpose of this thesis has been to analyze the question of bias in relation to the Arab-Israeli conflict over the years 1967-74. As a large part of the methodology focused on comparison, it was necessary that the themes identified were as similar as possible, in addition to dealing with a more narrow time period. As such, the themes identified were more narrative in nature. It is, however, quite possible to focus on more analytical themes instead, that possibly deal with a longer or less defined time period.

The historical accounts of the Arab-Israeli not only deal with events in the strictest sense of the word, but also with more analytical questions. Evaluating Zionism, for instance, or analyzing the nature of Palestinian national identity are more analytical questions that most likely present equally biased views. So is looking upon the tough questions of the right of return for the Palestinian refugees, or indeed attempting to judge which side has the most valid claim to the land.

These more analytical questions, which there are more of than the examples given above, would probably be interesting to analyze from the same point of view as presented in this thesis.

Another perspective looking at the question of bias in relation to the Arab-Israeli conflict would be to track changes over time. The conflict has been ongoing for a long period of time, and it is probably possible to see a shift in the debate from being more pro-Israeli to becoming more pro-Arab or *vice versa*. In the introductory chapter—where the previous literature on the historiography of the Arab-Israeli conflict

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was analyzed—it was argued in a number of texts that the debate surrounding the conflict had shifted over time.

As this thesis focused on a particular time period, where most works were published around the time of the events in question, it was not possible to detect any particular trends over time. If one is to look at changes over time, it is crucial that (1) one is analyzing enough works to be able to draw definite conclusions; and (2) that the works under scrutiny are distributed fairly evenly over time when they were published. Due to the focus on a specific time period, it was not possible to conduct this kind of study.

But, nevertheless, analyzing changes over time is most likely an interesting undertaking. If at all possible, it would be intriguing to see to what degree the different stages and events the conflict itself has gone through has led to changes in outlook *vis-à-vis* the actors. It has been said, for example, by some of Israel's so-called new historians that one of the aspects that led them to approach Israeli history with more critical eyes was the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon (see chapter one). It would also be interesting (if this is indeed possible) to analyze how societal changes in general has influenced the writing of the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Needless to say, our society has changed immensely since the beginnings of the Arab-Israeli conflict a hundred or so years ago.

The historian never works in a vacuum and what happens in his or her own time obviously colors the way he or she writes history. That is self-evident and of course one of the more intriguing aspects in the study of historiography. Sometimes, however, the historian writing on a particular topic finds him- or herself caught in the makings of history.

The day after I registered for the PhD program that this thesis is a part of—on September 28, 2000—Israeli politician Ariel Sharon, who at the time was in opposition, made a publicized visit to the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. To what degree or not this directly led to the

violence that soon erupted or whether Sharon's visit simply was the spark that lit a flame that had been smoldering for some time, but would have been lit anyway, is difficult to say and is not dealt with here. It is sufficient to say that the violence that began on the West Bank and Gaza in September 2000 proved to be quite enduring and arguably spelt the end (or at least suspension) of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process that begun in the early 1990s. At the time of writing (winter 2006), the prospects of resolving the conflict peacefully still seem quite bleak.

Not even a year later, on September 11, 2001, another series of events took place that came to have great repercussions. The terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington DC have had large ramifications on global affairs generally and it is quite possible to speak of a pre-September 11 world as well as a post-September 11 global environment.

These two events, the second *Intifada* that begun in 2000 and the September 11 attacks, have had great effects on both the debate over the Arab-Israeli conflict as well as regarding the Middle East, or even the Muslim world, in general. Why did the peace process between the Israelis and Palestinians brake down? Who is to blame? Why did the September 11 attacks take place? Could they have been prevented? How does one prevent attacks like that from happening in the future? Is the world facing something like a clash of civilizations?

These are some of the questions raised by academics, politicians, journalists and so on in the last few years. And, as the possible answers to these questions have quite different outcomes, the views presented are in a number of instances rather entrenched. The debate over present Israeli-Palestinian relations or the September 11 attacks is often very partisan and conducted in perhaps a more aggressive manner than other debates.

One example of the increasingly harsh debating environment that has received a fair bit of attention is the American organization

known as Campus Watch. This organization has declared that it aims to review and critique Middle Eastern studies in the US and to improve them. However, the organization has been charged to be pursuing its own brand of McCarthyism by a number of participants in the debate. The charge is that Campus Watch desperately wants to impose its own right-wing agenda on the debate and to silence its opponents. Campus Watch, on the other hand, has defended itself by saying that it welcomes an open debate and freedom of speech, and that it only wants to move the debate away from the extreme left-wing views that currently hold sway amongst American scholars of the Middle East.

What is happening in the debate surrounding the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Middle East presently is perhaps frightening in that it seems as if the different sides of the debate are becoming more entrenched in their positions. This is a process that is presently taking place. Besides the perhaps greater affinity with theory and statistics of the former, one major difference between political scientists and historians is that the former mostly deal with the present, whereas that latter deals with the past. Due to this, political scientists and historians often have different perspectives on things but the most crucial difference is of course that political scientists often have an effect on the topic of their inquiry. The so-called Sovietologists, for instance, who analyzed the USSR during the Cold War obviously had an influence on US policy which in turn had a result on the Soviet Union; the object of research for the Sovietologists. Historians never influence their objects of inquiry in this manner, although they of course often influence the way their objects of inquiry are looked upon. There always has to be a certain amount of distance in time for an inquiry to be called historical research.

But, when enough time has passed for the debate that is presently taking place to be studied as an historical event, the results will most

likely be intriguing. The current debate will most likely prove to be an instance where actual events influence how a debate unfolds, but perhaps also how a debate influences real events. A public debate never exists in a vacuum and—although it sometimes would seem otherwise—academics, journalists, intellectuals and the like often do have a real influence over policy and actual events.

Whenever the time is ready to look upon the current events through the eyes of an historian, one of the more interesting questions will be to see how the debate has taken place in view of the question of bias *vis-à-vis* the various actors; be they the Israelis and Palestinians or the United States and the Islamist movement. Hopefully, the methodology and general framework as presented in this thesis will then be of some use.

# Appendices

## *Appendix I: Distribution of views as present in the sources*

In this appendix, the tabulated results of the research for this thesis are presented. This is done in accordance with the different chapters above (i.e. the War of 1967, the time of 1967-73, the War of 1973 and the rise of the PLO), and through the classification of specific and general sources.

In order for this appendix not to be longer than necessary, the results are presented according to the surname of the author(s) of the book in question and the year of its publication. As the bibliography is organized in roughly the same manner, it should be easy enough to locate a specific book. Following the name of the author is a list of the themes as they are presented in the chapters above. And, next to the number of the theme in question is one of the three following symbols: ?, ☆ and ☪. The question mark is to indicate that the source in question has been deemed to be ambiguous with regard to that specific theme. The Star of David (☆) is to indicate that the source is pro-Israeli in this instance, whereas the crescent and star (☪) is to signify that the work in question has been deemed pro-Arab with regard to that specific theme.

Using the Star of David to illustrate a source being pro-Israeli is not particularly problematic, as it is a part of the Israeli flag and a well-known symbol of the Jewish people. Using the crescent and star, on the other hand, is a bit more problematic. This symbol is of course Muslim in nature and although many Arabs are Muslims, there are



many that are not. Nevertheless, the symbol is present in the flags of a number of Arab states and due to the lack of a more clear Arab symbol it is here used. It could have been possible, of course, to use a letters (A for pro-Arab and I for pro-Israeli) instead of symbols, but the use of symbols was decided upon for the simple reason that it is visually much more unambiguous and clear-cut than using letters.

The numbers in parenthesis following the symbol chosen refer to the page numbers where the view as indicated through the symbol is found. In some instances, there are no references to page numbers present, and this is either due to the view excluding the usefulness of specific references (e.g. when the point of a certain view is to exclude mention of something) or when it is not possible to pin down a specific page or pages where a particular view is transmitted. Where it is possible, however, specific references have been included.

The following example shows how the results in this appendix are to be interpreted:

Badeau 1968  
(1) ☪ (106)

Here, the source written by Badeau [John S Badeau., "The Arabs, 1967," in Majdia D. Khadduri (ed.), *The Arab-Israeli Impasse: Expressions of Moderate Viewpoints on the Arab-Israeli Conflict by Well Known Western Writers* (Washington, D.C.: Robert B. Luce, 1968), pp. 97-113] has been said to convey a pro-Arab perspective in relation to theme 1. One could find where Badeau commits himself to this view on page 106 in the book.

1967: Specific works

Badeau 1968

- (1) G (106)
- (2) ☆ (108)
- (3) G
- (4) ?
- (5) G
- (6) ?
- (7) ?
- (8) ?

Bar-Zohar 1970

- (1) G (12f.)
- (2) G (32ff.)
- (3) G (31ff.)
- (4) G (102)
- (5) ?
- (6) ☆ (155)
- (7) ?
- (8) ?

Bashan 1967

- (1) ☆
- (2) ☆ (9f.)
- (3) ☆ (9ff.)
- (4) ☆
- (5) ☆
- (6) ☆ (17)
- (7) ☆
- (8) ?

Bleaney & Lawless 1990

- (1) G (42f.)
- (2) G (43)
- (3) G
- (4) G (44)
- (5) G (44)
- (6) G (45)
- (7) G
- (8) ?

Byford-Jones 1967

- (1) ☆
- (2) G (18ff.)
- (3) G (18ff.)
- (4) ☆
- (5) G
- (6) ☆
- (7) ☆
- (8) ☆

Churchill & Churchill 1967

- (1) G (29)
- (2) G
- (3) G (29)
- (4) ☆
- (5) G (Ch. 2)
- (6) ☆ (52f.)
- (7) ☆ (66f.)
- (8) ☆ (177)

Dayan 1967

- (1) ☆
- (2) ☆ (7)
- (3) ☆ (7)
- (4) ☆
- (5) ☆ (7)
- (6) ☆ (8f.)
- (7) ☆ (3-12)
- (8) ☆ (131ff.)

Draper 1968

- (1) ☆
- (2) G (59)
- (3) ?
- (4) ☆
- (5) ☆ (26)
- (6) ☆ (97)
- (7) ?
- (8) ?

Fuldheim 1967

- (1) ☆
- (2) ?
- (3) ?
- (4) ☆
- (5) ?
- (6) ☆
- (7) ☆ (22)
- (8) ☆ (42, 61)

Gruber 1968

- (1) ☆
- (2) C (47)
- (3) ☆ (47)
- (4) ☆
- (5) ☆ (47)
- (6) ☆
- (7) ☆
- (8) ☆ (193ff.)

Hammel 1992

- (1) C (27)
- (2) C (30f.)
- (3) C (29ff.)
- (4) ☆
- (5) C (33f.)
- (6) C (38)
- (7) C (153)
- (8) C (139, 383)

Howard & Hunter 1967

- (1) C (14f.)
- (2) ☆ (18)
- (3) C (17)
- (4) ☆
- (5) C (17ff.)
- (6) ?
- (7) ?
- (8) ☆ (27ff.)

Kimche & Bawly 1968

- (1) C (88)
- (2) C (93)
- (3) C (92)
- (4) ☆
- (5) ☆ (178f.)
- (6) ☆ (153ff.)
- (7) ?
- (8) C

Kosut 1968

- (1) C (40f.)
- (2) ☆ (45f.)
- (3) ?
- (4) C (46)
- (5) ?
- (6) ?
- (7) ☆
- (8) ?

Landau 1968

- (1) ?
- (2) ?
- (3) ?
- (4) ?
- (5) ?
- (6) ?
- (7) ?
- (8) ?

Laqueur 1968

- (1) C (72ff.)
- (2) ☆ (85ff.)
- (3) C (231f.)
- (4) ☆
- (5) C (231f.)
- (6) ☆ (231f.)
- (7) ☆
- (8) C (228)

MacLeish 1967

- (1) ☆
- (2) ♣ (21)
- (3) ♣ (55)
- (4) ☆
- (5) ☆ (55f.)
- (6) ☆ (61ff.)
- (7) ☆ (130f.)
- (8) ?

Mutawi 1987

- (1) ♣ (92f.)
- (2) ☆ (93)
- (3) ♣ (93f.)
- (4) ♣ (99)
- (5) ♣ (93f.)
- (6) ♣ (101ff.)
- (7) ♣
- (8) ♣ (88f.)

Rabinovich 1987

- (1) ♣ (6)
- (2) ☆ (7)
- (3) ♣ (25)
- (4) ☆
- (5) ?
- (6) ?
- (7) ☆ (25)
- (8) ☆ (324f.)

Schleifer 1972

- (1) ♣ (99ff.)
- (2) ♣ (107ff.)
- (3) ♣ (107)
- (4) ♣ (113)
- (5) ♣ (113ff.)
- (6) ♣
- (7) ♣ (114, 121ff.)
- (8) ♣

Moskin 1982

- (1) ☆
- (2) ☆ (32)
- (3) ?
- (4) ☆
- (5) ?
- (6) ☆ (44f.)
- (7) ☆
- (8) ?

O'Ballance 1972

- (1) ♣ (23)
- (2) ♣ (24)
- (3) ?
- (4) ♣ (25)
- (5) ?
- (6) ?
- (7) ♣
- (8) ♣ (165ff., 220ff., 257f., 278)

Rosensaft 1969

- (1) ♣ (22f.)
- (2) ☆ (26)
- (3) ☆ (26f.)
- (4) ☆
- (5) ☆ (26f.)
- (6) ☆ (48)
- (7) ☆ (48f.)
- (8) ?

Sharabi 1970

- (1) ♣ (49f.)
- (2) ☆ (51)
- (3) ♣ (52ff.)
- (4) ☆
- (5) ♣ (52ff.)
- (6) ♣ (63)
- (7) ♣
- (8) ♣ (55)

Yost 1968

- (1) C\* (74f.)
- (2) ?
- (3) C\* (81f.)
- (4) C\* (81)
- (5) C\* (82)
- (6) ?
- (7) ?
- (8) ?

Young 1967

- (1) C\* (77)
- (2) ☆ (77)
- (3) C\* (77)
- (4) ☆
- (5) ☆ (141)
- (6) C\* (80)
- (7) ?
- (8) C\*

1967: General works

Bailey 1990

- (1) C\* (190)
- (2) ?
- (3) C\* (191f.)
- (4) C\* (195)
- (5) ☆ (198f.)
- (6) ?
- (7) ?
- (8) ?

Bard 1999

- (1) ☆
- (2) ☆ (225)
- (3) ☆ (225)
- (4) ☆
- (5) ☆ (226)
- (6) ☆ (226)
- (7) ☆ (226)
- (8) ☆ (226f.)

Bickerton & Klausner 1991

- (1) ☆
- (2) C\* (150)
- (3) ?
- (4) ☆
- (5) ?
- (6) ☆ (150)
- (7) ☆ (150f.)
- (8) ☆ (151f.)

Blumberg 1998

- (1) ☆
- (2) ☆ (105)
- (3) ?
- (4) ☆
- (5) ☆ (105)
- (6) ?
- (7) ?
- (8) ?

Bregman 2000

- (1) C\* (42f.)
- (2) C\* (46)
- (3) ?
- (4) ☆
- (5) ☆ (47f.)
- (6) ☆ (51)
- (7) ☆ (59)
- (8) ?

Bregman & El-Tahri 1998

- (1) C\* (64)
- (2) C\* (66)
- (3) C\* (66)
- (4) C\* (68)
- (5) ☆ (67f.)
- (6) ?
- (7) ?
- (8) ☆ (86)

Davis & Decter 1982

- (1) ☆
- (2) ☆ (31)
- (3) ☆ (31)
- (4) ☆
- (5) ☆ (30)
- (6) ☆ (33)
- (7) ☆ (33f.)
- (8) ?

Dolan 1991

- (1) ☆
- (2) ☆ (129)
- (3) ☆ (129)
- (4) ☆
- (5) ☆ (128)
- (6) ☆ (129f.)
- (7) ☆ (129)
- (8) ☆ (130)

Fraser 1995

- (1) ☆
- (2) G (82f.)
- (3) G (82)
- (4) ☆
- (5) ☆ (83)
- (6) ?
- (7) G
- (8) ☆ (84f.)

Gainsborough 1986

- (1) G (130)
- (2) ☆ (131)
- (3) G (133)
- (4) G (146f.)
- (5) G (126f., 132f.)
- (6) ?
- (7) ?
- (8) ?

Gerner 1994

- (1) ☆
- (2) G (111)
- (3) G (112)
- (4) ☆
- (5) G (112)
- (6) ?
- (7) G (113)
- (8) ?

Gilbert 1998

- (1) ☆
- (2) ☆ (366)
- (3) ☆ (366)
- (4) ☆
- (5) ☆ (368)
- (6) ☆ (377)
- (7) ☆
- (8) ☆ (384ff.)

Khoury 1985

- (1) G (244)
- (2) G (246)
- (3) G (245f.)
- (4) G (246, 282)
- (5) G (246f.)
- (6) G (249, 281)
- (7) G (281f.)
- (8) G (260f., 282)

Lesch & Tschirgi 1998

- (1) ☆
- (2) G (20)
- (3) G (20)
- (4) ☆
- (5) ?
- (6) ?
- (7) ?
- (8) ?

Morris 1999

- (1) G (304)
- (2) ☆ (305f.)
- (3) G (305f.)
- (4) ☆
- (5) G (306)
- (6) ?
- (7) G (311)
- (8) ☆ (311, 318)

Quigley 1990

- (1) G (158)
- (2) G (159)
- (3) G (162)
- (4) G (160)
- (5) G (162)
- (6) ?
- (7) G (164f.)
- (8) ?

Samuel 1989

- (1) ☆
- (2) ☆ (121)
- (3) ☆ (121)
- (4) ☆
- (5) ☆ (121)
- (6) ☆ (121)
- (7) ☆
- (8) ☆ (122)

Shlaim 2000

- (1) G (236f.)
- (2) ☆ (237)
- (3) G (237)
- (4) ☆
- (5) G (237)
- (6) ?
- (7) G
- (8) ☆ (241)

O'Brien 1986

- (1) ☆
- (2) ☆ (409f.)
- (3) G (409f.)
- (4) ☆
- (5) ?
- (6) ?
- (7) ☆ (413)
- (8) ?

Sachar 1996

- (1) G (622)
- (2) G (623)
- (3) ☆ (623f.)
- (4) G (625)
- (5) ☆ (626)
- (6) ☆ (633)
- (7) ☆ (638)
- (8) ☆ (635f.)

Schulze 1999

- (1) ☆
- (2) G (36)
- (3) G (36)
- (4) G (36)
- (5) G (36)
- (6) ?
- (7) ?
- (8) ☆ (37ff.)

Smith 1992

- (1) G (195)
- (2) ?
- (3) G (196)
- (4) G (196)
- (5) G (196)
- (6) G (197)
- (7) G
- (8) ☆ (198)

Tessler 1994

- (1) G (382, 387)
- (2) G (391)
- (3) G (389f.)
- (4) G (389)
- (5) ☆ (391ff.)
- (6) ☆ (394)
- (7) ☆ (394)
- (8) ☆ (397)

Thomas 1999

- (1) G (155)
- (2) G (159)
- (3) G (159)
- (4) G (159)
- (5) G (160f.)
- (6) ?
- (7) ?
- (8) ☆ (173)

Viorst 1987

- (1) ☆
- (2) ?
- (3) G (191)
- (4) ☆
- (5) ☆ (191)
- (6) ☆ (193)
- (7) ☆ (99)
- (8) ?

1967-73: Specific works

Bailey 1985

- (2) G (174)
- (3) ?
- (4) G (181)
- (5) ☆

Bar-Siman-Tov 1980

- (2) ?
- (3) G (47ff., 56ff.)
- (4) ?
- (5) ?

Bentwich 1970

- (2) ?
- (3) ?
- (4) ?
- (5) ?

Gawrych 2000

- (2) ☆ (100)
- (3) ☆ (107, 110)
- (4) ☆
- (5) ☆ (129f.)

Gazit 1983

- (2) ?
- (3) ?
- (4) ☆ (66f., 72f., 124)
- (5) ☆ (94f.)

Korn 1992

- (2) ☆ (71)
- (3) ☆ (108)
- (4) G (273)
- (5) G (274)

O'Ballance 1974

- (2) ?
- (3) ☆ (57)
- (4) ?
- (5) ?

Quandt 1978

- (2) ?
- (3) ?
- (4) G (17)
- (5) G (18)



Whetten 1974

- (2) C (49f.)
- (3) C (82)
- (4) C (146ff.)
- (5) C (146ff.)

1967-73: General works

Bailey 1990

- (2) C (261f.)
- (3) C (288)
- (4) C (291)
- (5) C (292)

Bard 1999

- (2) ☆ (232)
- (3) ☆ (237)
- (4) ☆
- (5) ☆

Bickerton & Klausner 1991

- (2) ☆ (163)
- (3) ☆ (163)
- (4) ☆
- (5) ☆ (174)

Blumberg 1998

- (2) ☆ (115)
- (3) ☆ (117)
- (4) ☆
- (5) ☆

Bregman 2000

- (2) ?
- (3) C (62)
- (4) ☆
- (5) C (68)

Bregman & El-Tahri 1998

- (2) ?
- (3) ?
- (4) ☆
- (5) C (108)

Davis & Decter 1982

- (2) ☆ (37)
- (3) C (42)
- (4) ☆ (44)
- (5) ☆ (44)

Dolan 1991

- (2) ☆ (131)
- (3) ☆ (132)
- (4) ☆
- (5) ☆

Fraser 1995

- (2) C (88)
- (3) ☆ (92)
- (4) ☆ (89)
- (5) ☆

Gainsborough 1986

- (2) ?
- (3) C (181)
- (4) ☆ (181)
- (5) ☆ (184f.)

Gerner 1994

- (2) ?
- (3) ?
- (4) ☆ (114f.)
- (5) ☆

Gilbert 1998

- (2) ☆ (402)
- (3) ☆ (410)
- (4) ☆
- (5) ☆

Khoury 1985

- (2) G (313f.)
- (3) G (363)
- (4) G (366)
- (5) G (366)

Morris 1999

- (2) ☆ (345f.)
- (3) G (348)
- (4) G (389)
- (5) G (390)

Quigley 1990

- (2) ?
- (3) ?
- (4) ?
- (5) ?

Samuel 1989

- (2) ☆ (123)
- (3) ☆ (123)
- (4) ☆
- (5) ☆

Shlaim 2000

- (2) G (258)
- (3) G (289)
- (4) G (300f.)
- (5) G (308f.)

Tessler 1994

- (2) G (409f.)
- (3) G (445)
- (4) ☆ (422)
- (5) ☆

Viorst 1987

- (2) G (105f.)
- (3) ?
- (4) ☆ (142)
- (5) ☆ (142)

Lesch & Tschirgi 1998

- (2) G (22)
- (3) G (24)
- (4) ☆
- (5) G (24)

O'Brien 1986

- (2) ☆ (477, 491f.)
- (3) ?
- (4) ☆ (505)
- (5) G (510)

Sachar 1996

- (2) G (676)
- (3) G (690f.)
- (4) ☆ (695f.)
- (5) ☆ (696)

Schulze 1999

- (2) ☆ (40)
- (3) G (42)
- (4) ☆
- (5) G (45)

Smith 1992

- (2) G (211)
- (3) G (218)
- (4) G (226)
- (5) ☆

Thomas 1999

- (2) ?
- (3) G (193)
- (4) G (196)
- (5) G (195)

War of 1973: Specific works

Aker 1985

- (1) ☆ (19)
- (2) ☆ (120)
- (3) ?

al-Ayoubi 1975

- (1) G (84)
- (2) G (96)
- (3) G (65ff.)

Allen 1982

- (1) G (interm.) (20f., 83)
- (2) ☆ (224, 228f.)
- (3) ☆

Asher & Hammel 1987

- (1) G (interm.) (19f.)
- (2) ?
- (3) ☆ (21)

Barker 1974

- (1) ☆ (6, 97)
- (2) ☆ (137)
- (3) ☆

Eshel 1978

- (1) G (5)
- (2) ☆ (74f.)
- (3) ☆

Handel 1976

- (1) ☆
- (2) ?
- (3) ☆ (52)

Laqueur 1974

- (1) G (127)
- (2) G (112, 197)
- (3) G (254f.)

Neff 1988

- (1) G (306)
- (2) G (271-77)
- (3) ?

O'Ballance 1978

- (1) G (41)
- (2) G (256f.)
- (3) G (13)

Sela 2000

- (1) G (56)
- (2) ?
- (3) G

Sid-Ahmed 1976

- (1) G (27f.)
- (2) ?
- (3) G

Sobel 1974

- (1) ?
- (2) ☆ (112f.)
- (3) ?

War of 1973: General works

Bailey 1990

- (1) G (interm.) (310)
- (2) ☆ (328f.)
- (3) ?

Bard 1999

- (1) ☆ (246)
- (2) ☆ (253)
- (3) ☆ (246)

Bickerton & Klausner 1991

- (1) G (interm.) (175f.)
- (2) ☆ (178)
- (3) ?

Blumberg 1998

- (1) ☆ (120ff.)
- (2) ☆
- (3) ☆ (120ff.)

- |                          |                          |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Bregman 2000             | Bregman & El-Tahri 1998  |
| (1) G (interm.) (71, 83) | (1) G (interm.) (114ff.) |
| (2) G (92)               | (2) ☆                    |
| (3) G (68)               | (3) G                    |
| Davis & Decter 1982      | Dolan 1991               |
| (1) ☆                    | (1) ☆ (132)              |
| (2) ?                    | (2) ?                    |
| (3) ☆ (45ff.)            | (3) ☆ (132)              |
| Fraser 1995              | Gainsborough 1986        |
| (1) G (100ff.)           | (1) ☆                    |
| (2) G (103)              | (2) G (182)              |
| (3) ?                    | (3) G (183)              |
| Gerner 1994              | Gilbert 1998             |
| (1) G (116)              | (1) G (460)              |
| (2) G (116)              | (2) ☆ (458)              |
| (3) G (115)              | (3) ?                    |
| Khoury 1985              | Lesch & Tschirgi 1998    |
| (1) G (370)              | (1) ☆ (25)               |
| (2) G (370)              | (2) ☆ (26)               |
| (3) G (364f.)            | (3) G (25)               |
| Morris 1999              | O'Brien 1986             |
| (1) G (387)              | (1) G (512-21)           |
| (2) G (430, 435f.)       | (2) G (528)              |
| (3) G (388ff.)           | (3) G (505-10)           |
| Quigley 1990             | Sachar 1996              |
| (1) ?                    | (1) ☆ (748)              |
| (2) ?                    | (2) ☆ (781)              |
| (3) ?                    | (3) ?                    |
| Samuel 1989              | Schulze 1999             |
| (1) ☆                    | (1) G (interm.) (45f.)   |
| (2) ☆ (138ff.)           | (2) ☆ (49)               |
| (3) ?                    | (3) ?                    |
| Shlaim 2000              | Smith 1992               |
| (1) G (319f.)            | (1) G (229)              |
| (2) ?                    | (2) G (231)              |
| (3) G (309-19)           | (3) G                    |

Tessler 1994

- (1) G (479f.)
- (2) ☆ (476f.)
- (3) ?

Thomas 1999

- (1) G (interm.) (198)
- (2) G (202)
- (3) G (198)

Viorst 1987

- (1) G (170)
- (2) G (166)
- (3) G (160f.)

The rise of PLO: Specific works

Aburish 1998

- (1) G (97ff.)
- (3) G (98)
- (4) G (103ff.)
- (5) ☆ (123f.)

Amos 1980

- (1) ?
- (3) G (76ff.)
- (4) ?
- (5) G (64, 221)

Becker 1984

- (1) ☆ (82)
- (3) ☆ (85)
- (4) ☆ (75f.)
- (5) ☆ (77, 107)

Brynen 1990

- (1) ?
- (3) G (42f.)
- (4) ☆
- (5) ?

Cobban 1984

- (1) ?
- (3) G (145ff.)
- (4) G (48f.)
- (5) ☆ (54f.)

Gowers & Walker 1990

- (1) ?
- (3) G (84)
- (4) G (75ff.)
- (5) ☆ (92, 97)

Gresh 1988

- (1) G (51)
- (3) ?
- (4) G (11)
- (5) G (111)

Hart 1989

- (1) G (275)
- (3) G (286)
- (4) G (284, 306f.)
- (5) G (337)

Jureidini & Hazen 1976

- (1) G (98)
- (3) G (88)
- (4) G (51)
- (5) G (84)

Livingstone & Halevy 1991

- (1) ?
- (3) ☆ (100ff.)
- (4) ☆ (81, 103)
- (5) ☆ (103ff.)

Nassar 1991

- (1) G (198f.)
- (3) G (88)
- (4) G (131)
- (5) G (97f.)

O'Neill 1978

- (1) ☆ (221f.)
- (3) ☆ (110)
- (4) G (165ff.)
- (5) ☆ (87, 110, 151, 188ff.)

Rubin 1994

- (1) ☆ (40)
- (3) C (24, 32)
- (4) ☆ (34f., 141)
- (5) ☆ (38)

Sayigh 1997

- (1) ?
- (3) C (213ff.)
- (4) C (244f., 258)
- (5) C (307ff.)

Wallach 1990

- (1) ☆ (233f.)
- (3) C (166, 232)
- (4) C (167, 312, 470)
- (5) ☆ (169, 328, 384)

Yodfat & Arnon-Ohanna 1981

- (1) ☆ (57)
- (3) C (26)
- (4) C (30)
- (5) ☆ (33)

The rise of the PLO: General works

Bailey 1990

- (1) ?
- (3) ☆ (295, 301, 343)
- (4) ☆ (290)
- (5) ?

Bard 1999

- (1) ?
- (3) ☆ (238ff., 244)
- (4) ☆ (240f.)
- (5) ☆ (241ff.)

Bickerton & Klausner 1991

- (1) ☆ (165)
- (3) C (168)
- (4) ☆ (168f.)
- (5) ☆ (169)

Blumberg 1998

- (1) ?
- (3) ☆ (113)
- (4) ☆ (113)
- (5) ☆ (119)

Bregman 2000

- (1) ?
- (3) ?
- (4) ?
- (5) ?

Bregman & El-Tahri 1998

- (1) ?
- (3) C (142)
- (4) C (142, 146f.)
- (5) ?

Davis & Decter 1982

- (1) ☆ (101)
- (3) ☆ (99ff.)
- (4) ?
- (5) ☆ (99)

Dolan 1991

- (1) ?
- (3) ?
- (4) ?
- (5) ?

Fraser 1995

- (1) ?
- (3) C (91)
- (4) ☆ (91ff.)
- (5) ☆ (95)

Gainsborough 1986

- (1) ?
- (3) ?
- (4) ?
- (5) ?

Gerner 1994

- (1) G (89f.)
- (3) G (86ff.)
- (4) ?
- (5) G (90)

Khoury 1985

- (1) G (358)
- (3) G (359)
- (4) ☆ (359)
- (5) ?

Morris 1999

- (1) ?
- (3) G (376ff.)
- (4) ☆ (373f.)
- (5) ☆ (378f., 386)

Quigley 1990

- (1) G (228)
- (3) G (195)
- (4) ?
- (5) G (198)

Samuel 1989

- (1) ?
- (3) ☆ (130)
- (4) ☆ (142)
- (5) ☆ (130)

Shlaim 2000

- (1) ?
- (3) ?
- (4) ?
- (5) ?

Tessler 1994

- (1) G (437f., 442)
- (3) ?
- (4) ☆ (460f.)
- (5) G (463f.)

Viorst 1987

- (1) ?
- (3) ☆ (135f.)
- (4) ☆ (135)
- (5) ?

Gilbert 1998

- (1) ?
- (3) ☆ (417ff.)
- (4) ☆ (417)
- (5) ?

Lesch & Tschirgi 1998

- (1) ?
- (3) G (75)
- (4) G (23)
- (5) ?

O'Brien 1986

- (1) ?
- (3) G (481)
- (4) G (480)
- (5) ☆ (481f.)

Sachar 1996

- (1) ☆ (810)
- (3) G (699ff.)
- (4) ☆ (685)
- (5) ☆ (701)

Schulze 1999

- (1) ?
- (3) ?
- (4) ☆ (44)
- (5) ?

Smith 1992

- (1) ?
- (3) G (225)
- (4) G (223)
- (5) ☆ (225)

Thomas 1999

- (1) G (191f.)
- (3) G (197)
- (4) G (195)
- (5) ☆ (197)

*Appendix II: UN Security Council Resolution no. 242  
(1967) of 22 November 1967*

*The Security Council,*

*Expressing* its continuing concern with the grave situation in the Middle East,

*Emphasizing* the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war and the need to work for a just and lasting peace in which every State in the area can live in security,

*Emphasizing further* that all Member States in their acceptance of the Charter of the United Nations have undertaken a commitment to act in accordance with Article 2 of the Charter,

1. *Affirms* that the fulfillment of Charter principles requires the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East which should include the application of both the following principles:

(i) Withdrawal of Israel armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict;

(ii) Termination of all claims or states of belligerency and respect for and acknowledgment of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every State in the area and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries free from threats or acts of force;

2. *Affirms further* the necessity

(a) For guaranteeing freedom of navigation through international waterways in the area;

(b) For achieving a just settlement of the refugee problem;

(c) For guaranteeing the territorial inviolability and political independence of every State in the area, through measures including the establishment of demilitarized zones;

3. *Requests* the Secretary-General to designate a Special Representative to proceed to the Middle East to establish and maintain contacts with the States concerned in order to promote



agreement and assist efforts to achieve a peaceful and accepted settlement in accordance with the provisions and principles in this resolution;

4. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the Security Council on the progress of the efforts of the Special Representative as soon as possible.

Source: United Nations website.

URL: <http://www.un.org/documents/sc/res/1967/scres67.htm>

*Appendix III: The Khartoum Resolution (September 1, 1967)*

1. The conference has affirmed the unity of Arab ranks, the unity of joint action and the need for coordination and for the elimination of all differences. The Kings, Presidents and representatives of the other Arab Heads of State at the conference have affirmed their countries' stand by and implementation of the Arab Solidarity Charter which was signed at the third Arab summit conference in Casablanca.
2. The conference has agreed on the need to consolidate all efforts to eliminate the effects of the aggression on the basis that the occupied lands are Arab lands and that the burden of regaining these lands falls on all the Arab States.
3. The Arab Heads of State have agreed to unite their political efforts at the international and diplomatic level to eliminate the effects of the aggression and to ensure the withdrawal of the aggressive Israeli forces from the Arab lands which have been occupied since the aggression of June 5. This will be done within the framework of the main principles by which the Arab States abide, namely, no peace with Israel, no recognition of Israel, no negotiations with it, and insistence on the rights of the Palestinian people in their own country.
4. The conference of Arab Ministers of Finance, Economy and Oil recommended that suspension of oil pumping be used as a weapon in the battle. However, after thoroughly studying the matter, the summit conference has come to the conclusion that the oil pumping can itself be used as a positive weapon, since oil is an Arab resource which can be used to strengthen the economy of the Arab States directly affected by the aggression, so that these States will be able to

stand firm in the battle. The conference has, therefore, decided to resume the pumping of oil, since oil is a positive Arab resource that can be used in the service of Arab goals. It can contribute to the efforts to enable those Arab States which were exposed to the aggression and thereby lost economic resources to stand firm and eliminate the effects of the aggression. The oil-producing States have, in fact, participated in the efforts to enable the States affected by the aggression to stand firm in the face of any economic pressure.

5. The participants in the conference have approved the plan proposed by Kuwait to set up an Arab Economic and Social Development Fund on the basis of the recommendation of the Baghdad conference of Arab Ministers of Finance, Economy and Oil.

6. The participants have agreed on the need to adopt the necessary measures to strengthen military preparation to face all eventualities.

7. The conference has decided to expedite the elimination of foreign bases in the Arab States.

Source: Avalon Project at Yale Law School

URL: <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/mideast/khartoum.htm>

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