



Goliath: Life and Loathing in Greater Israel

Max Blumenthal

[Download now](#)

[Read Online](#) 

Goliath: Life and Loathing in Greater Israel

Max Blumenthal

Goliath: Life and Loathing in Greater Israel Max Blumenthal

In Goliath, New York Times bestselling author Max Blumenthal takes us on a journey through the badlands and high roads of Israel-Palestine, painting a startling portrait of Israeli society under the siege of increasingly authoritarian politics as the occupation of the Palestinians deepens.

Beginning with the national elections carried out during Israel's war on Gaza in 2008-09, which brought into power the country's most right-wing government to date, Blumenthal tells the story of Israel in the wake of the collapse of the Oslo peace process.

As Blumenthal reveals, Israel has become a country where right-wing leaders like Avigdor Lieberman and Bibi Netanyahu are sacrificing democracy on the altar of their power politics; where the loyal opposition largely and passively stands aside and watches the organized assault on civil liberties; where state-funded Orthodox rabbis publish books that provide instructions on how and when to kill Gentiles; where half of Jewish youth declare their refusal to sit in a classroom with an Arab; and where mob violence targets Palestinians and African asylum seekers scapegoated by leading government officials as "demographic threats."

Immersing himself like few other journalists inside the world of hardline political leaders and movements, Blumenthal interviews the demagogues and divas in their homes, in the Knesset, and in the watering holes where their young acolytes hang out, and speaks with those political leaders behind the organized assault on civil liberties. As his journey deepens, he painstakingly reports on the occupied Palestinians challenging schemes of demographic separation through unarmed protest. He talks at length to the leaders and youth of Palestinian society inside Israel now targeted by security service dragnets and legislation suppressing their speech, and provides in-depth reporting on the small band of Jewish Israeli dissidents who have shaken off a conformist mindset that permeates the media, schools, and the military.

Through his far-ranging travels, Blumenthal illuminates the present by uncovering the ghosts of the past—the histories of Palestinian neighborhoods and villages now gone and forgotten; how that history has set the stage for the current crisis of Israeli society; and how the Holocaust has been turned into justification for occupation.

A brave and unflinching account of the real facts on the ground, Goliath is an unprecedented and compelling work of journalism.

Goliath: Life and Loathing in Greater Israel Details

Date : Published October 1st 2013 by Nation Books (first published November 27th 2012)

ISBN : 9781568589725

Author : Max Blumenthal

Format : ebook 412 pages

Genre : History, Politics, Nonfiction, Cultural, Israel

 [Download Goliath: Life and Loathing in Greater Israel ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online Goliath: Life and Loathing in Greater Israel ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online Goliath: Life and Loathing in Greater Israel Max Blumenthal

From Reader Review Goliath: Life and Loathing in Greater Israel for online ebook

Kara says

Max Blumenthal's *Goliath* is a brave and important book. Blumenthal raises the alarm on a rising tide of racism and close-mindedness in modern Israel that is increasingly based in the ideology and policy supported by the country's youth. To draw attention to this cultural crisis and stimulate action the book features examples of some of the most disgusting manifestations of the shift in national attitude including an apparent paranoia concerning the prospect of Arab men gaining sexual access to Israeli Jewish women.

It is the more widespread and more prosaic fears among Israelis that are the most disturbing, however. Among observant Jews who are otherwise demographically aligned with the country's right wing base, the vast majority would have a problem with an Arab for a next-door neighbor. Moreover, traditionally more leftist secular Jews report that same segregationist view at a rate of about 47% (according to my best recollection).

Blumenthal considerably enhances the impact of his message by moving beyond disturbing poll data as well as poignant stories of these ideas in action in particular newsworthy incidents. In particular, he wisely showcases a primary source from an Israeli teachers' association expressing the widespread racist ideas among their students and worse still, the difficulty they are experiencing in opening their students' minds to different perspectives on such politically charged topics.

When as a culture you are losing the ability to think independently, consider diverse points of view, and consider the situations of people different from yourself with sympathy, your culture is in decline. Anyone who cares about modern Israel and Jewish culture could benefit from reading this book as a first step in actively trying to improve the current Israeli discourse on Palestinians and the Arab world.

Please be advised I read a free electronic copy of this book on NetGalley through gracious permission of the publisher.

Kelly says

This is an eye-opener; at least it was for me. I was familiar with much of the political debate in America about the U.S.-Israel relationship, but never really understood how the right-wing worked inside Israel (and the surrounding Palestinian areas). Max Blumenthal has cut his teeth covering conservative movements and how they can metastasize from academic philosophies into cultural (and military) battles. In "Goliath" he applies the focus of his previous book, "Republican Gomorrah" (an expose of the right wing in the U.S.), to the post-1967 landscape of Israel-Palestine; this is an in-depth look at militant Zionism and the struggle to create an ethnically homogeneous, theocratic state, while simultaneously paying lip-service to democratic values.

Some reader reviews are harshly critical of Blumenthal personally, which seems predictable given the politically charged nature of his subject, but ad hominem attacks do nothing to address the realities that he describes. The most troubling indicators of proto-fascism in Israeli political life are not subject to opinion: they're right there in the laws themselves. They're also evident in videos posted online for all to see.

I have no doubt that there are other stories of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but Blumenthal is telling this

one—and it's certainly one that needs to be told. Additionally, the writing is unaffected, straightforward, and clear.

Greg Brown says

Cataloguing the current political situation in Israel, Blumenthal's *Goliath* is an important and damning work. Unlike most books on Israel-Palestine affairs, Blumenthal is less concerned with proving which ideology is right or wrong (or whether the definition of “apartheid” matches the situation), and more aimed at using the brute facts of the situation to illustrate the incredible devastation wrought by the Israeli right-wing. I regard myself as a pretty news-conscious guy of the Left, but so much of the book's events came as a shock to me; you do hear some about the plight of the Palestinians in publications such as the NY Times, but even then it's typically couched in what it means for US-Israeli relations. (The most famous book about Israel of the last two decades is specifically about the Israel lobby in US politics, side-stepping any discussion of the occupation itself.)

While Blumenthal isn't concerned with laying out a discrete comparison to apartheid, as mentioned earlier, the stories he tells makes it hard to not think of the parallels to a part of America's history that we're more familiar with: the Jim Crow-era South. Like then, Palestinians and Israeli Arabs face a mixture of both *de jure* and *de facto* structural racism, discrimination that not only depresses their economic futures but also exacts a deep personal cost such as police harassment, jail time, separation of families, and violent eviction from their homes.

Some of the stories are so stunning as to make me think of the Indonesian public in *The Act of Killing*: a sort of blasé indifference that's just as morally damning as if they were directly responsible. And in many cases, they *are* directly responsible through the universal conscription that makes many execute the practical roles of the occupation. Blumenthal especially indicts the Zionist Left in this aspect; they often willingly enter service as “change from within”, but whatever change they enact is impossible to see, and they often disengage afterwards from any sort of moral responsibility for their actions.

If the book has any flaws, it's in a messy structure. The book is a series of short chapters or episodes that illustrate aspects of the day-to-day reality in Israel and Palestine, sort of like *The Forever War* by Dexter Filkins. Unlike Filkins, though, Blumenthal isn't evocative enough (and succinct enough) to keep this technique from grinding the reader down. I had to take several breaks of a few days, since the book is so unremittently bleak. (It didn't help that I was concurrently reading a book on the AIDS crisis!) But under full consideration, the book is important in a way that excuses the flaws, determined to thoroughly catalogue the current Israeli state of affairs, and warn of how it's spiraling out of control.

Spencer says

Max Blumenthal gives a view of modern Israel that is alarming and eye-opening. He describes how the state has become radicalized under Benjamin Netanyahu. We learn about the events since 1948 that have had a tremendous impact on Israel, its people and its ideology. Though an Ashkenazi Jew himself, Blumenthal feels that Israel under Netanyahu has become an extremely racist and paranoid state obsessed with the idea that they are under siege by their enemies, and the differences between Jews and Palestinian Arabs are irreconcilable and non-negotiable.

The Jews see the current situation through the filter that says Israel has always belonged to the Jews, it has never been called Palestine, and Arabs have historically never had any claim to land in Israel. The subject of Palestinian rights is not debatable. The situation is exacerbated by the fact that Israel's position in the world is seen through the experience of the Holocaust. They feel they are hated by Palestinian Arabs who are subhuman and inspired by radical Islam ideology, and the next Holocaust is just around the corner.

The Jews of Israel believe that they possess western ideals and morals, which are not shared by the rest of the Middle East, therefore they must isolate themselves from the intellectually, genetically and morally inferior Arabs. Jews, under Netanyahu, have come to believe that their biggest challenge is that of becoming a demographic minority in a state that is supposed to be Jewish. To that end they have embarked on a strategy that isolates the 2M Palestinians in Israel into ghettos and islands, walled off from greater Israel. Efforts are under way to deport as many as possible to countries such as Turkey and Venezuela, and annexing areas in the West Bank that are currently occupied by Jews.

These inclinations have always been present in Jewish Israel, but Blumenthal maintains that it has become much more extreme under the leadership of Netanyahu. The author goes to great lengths in documenting the excesses of the Jews over the years.

The main idea I got from this book is that Blumenthal feels that Israel is heading in the wrong direction, and if current positions and ideology do not change, the very existence of the state is in jeopardy. Blumenthal also suggests that the US might be mistaken in accepting the idea that Israel is "just like us"—and is the only democracy in the Middle East. They are just like us if you are a racist, believe in apartheid, and are a right wing militarist. They are a democracy only if you believe in the tyranny of the majority, and that minorities and those marginalized have no rights.

Looking at current events in Gaza amplifies many of the points Blumenthal makes. The book is certainly controversial and I'm sure there will be much push-back from those who flat-out reject many of the lessons of history.

Ob-jonny says

This book was ridiculously informative about an issue that I knew very little about. Every time I learned something absolutely astonishing I thought that there was nothing else that could be that bad. Then I learned something new that was equally crazy. There are so many topics and I can't list them all here. But the background is that Max Blumenthal wrote about what he saw when he traveled to Israel in 2009-2011. It started when he interviewed young Israelis during Obama's visit to Egypt in 2009. They called Obama all

kinds of horrifically disrespectful names and said he didn't care about Israel just for visiting a Muslim country despite how the US props up their country by supporting their military. Obama has been very gentle and submissive with Netanyahu and so it was amazing to learn about how Israelis spoke about him. It just showed that something really crazy is going on there and the conservative majority are in kind of a state of madness. You can see the video of the Israelis cussing out Obama if you look hard and it is called "Feeling the Hate in Jerusalem". Blumenthal interviews Israelis and Palestinians all over and describes what life is really like there. Even Israeli citizens cannot protest against their government there without getting into trouble and sometimes losing their jobs or even being kicked out of the country. The protest movement is very underground and small and I just could not believe that free-thinkers would live in such fear. They talk about the history of Palestine and what happened during the establishment of Israel in the 40s. I had been taught that Palestine had been a desert that Israel turned into a land of plenty. But Palestinian cities like Haifa and Jaffa were once booming with all types of commerce before being nearly destroyed by the Israeli army. I just could not believe that it was allowed to happen in the modern era! Other topics are discussed like the Flotilla incident where Turkey tried to bring in aid to the Gaza Strip, and you'll learn in detail what really happened. Another fascinating but vile aspect of Israeli society is the multi-tiered racism. At the top you have the white Ashkenazi Jews, then lower you have Russian Jews, then brown-skinned Middle-Eastern Jews, the Sephardic Jews from Africa, then Palestinians in Israel, then at the bottom are Palestinians in the West Bank or Gaza strip. Israeli left-wing protesters are somewhere near the bottom of the ladder. You'd think that all Jews would be treated equal but in general the Ashkenazi elites consider the rest of the Jews "brown trash" and are usually given lower positions in the military. I just can't believe that they are so racist even against other Israelis given the history of the Jews. This is a must read if you want to understand the situation in Israel. Look up videos by Max Blumenthal and it should get you more interested what is happening out there.

Yonis Gure says

Very disturbing read. This book rips through the veneer of propaganda in Israel and reveals the Jim Crow like racism at the core of the Zionist ideology. I truly believe that Israel needs to be the target of the next global movement that helped put an end to apartheid South Africa.

Free Palestine!

Gary says

Yet again another trendy left non-Israeli Jew decides to jump on the 'burn Israel' bandwagon hoping to get ahead with his champagne socialist friends in the media and academia by writing hate-filled agitprop against Israel.

Now erroneously comparing Israel to South African Apartheid is not strong enough for the genocidal agenda of the Islamists and their hard left allies. Now all Israelis are labeled Nazis. The descendants of the Holocaust survivors are now to be in the popular mind no longer Jews but Nazis and the Palestinian terrorists who want to kill every Jewish man, woman and child in the Land of Israel, are the new Jews!

Orwellian to say the least!

160 000 murdered by Assad in Syria in two years, tens of thousands of women and girls executed for 'sexual immorality' in Iran, Regimes that starve out their entire populations like North Korea and Zimbabwe. These do not prick the consciences of these obsessive maniacs with their bottomless hatred of anything and everyone Israeli.

But once the likes of Max Blumenthal, Noam Chomsky or Norman Finkelstein can identify all Israelis as

Nazis, the stage is set for the genocide of Israel's Jews down to the last child. Ironically the real Nazis set up Europe for the Holocaust of Jews by demonizing them to such an extent that their mass murder was seen as a rightful act of justice. The BDS supporters, and pro-Palestine propagandists are doing exactly the same thing. Israelis are not to be regarded as human. Their slaughter is an act of justice and a fashionable process of progressive liberation.

The enemies of Israel want the physical elimination of the Jewish people from the Land of Israel. This constitutes anti-Semitism. The point is that they want a Judenrein "Palestine" the same way that Hitler wanted a Judenrein Europe. The anti-Zionists claim that they are not anti-Semites but that think the only country on the earth that must be annihilated is Israel. The anti-Zionists claim that they are not anti-Semites but that think the only country on the earth that must be annihilated is Israel. The anti-Zionists claim that they are not anti-Semites but that the only children on earth whose being blown up is okay if it serves a good cause are Jewish children. As regards the so-called 1 state solution favoured by so many sophisticated leftwing intellectuals today, we can discuss this all day and all night, but dismembering Israel into a single Arab dominated state means a second holocaust. It means methodical massacre of millions of Jews, of hundreds of thousands of Jewish children. Anyone who pushes for this '1 state solution' is actually pushing for a second holocaust. Denying a nation's right to exist is genocidal racism, akin to Nazism, hence in my opinion, Anti-Zionism is Nazism. Only the hard-hearted, hate-filled and cowardly will deny Israel the right to exist and defend herself. One must always continue to ask why the powerful organizations, unions, church groups, academics, governments etc advocate a boycott of Israel and only Israel, while not advocating any boycott or censure of States that do engage in genocide or severe repression and persecution like China, North Korea, Zimbabwe, Syria, Iran or Sudan. THEY NEVER have an answer!

And where is the mention made of the thousands of Israeli victims of the terror war by the 'Palestinians' on the Israeli people. In March 2008 Arab terrorists murdered eight young Jewish seminary students at study of the Torah.

Shortly after this a survey by the Palestinian Center for Policy and Media Research revealed that 84% of Palestinians supported the attack!

Itamar Marcus of Palestinian Media Watch points out that the leaders of the propaganda for Hamas and Palestinian Authority TV (with their televised sermons, cartoons, comic books and school books) have constructed a machine to incite mass murder similar to that of the Hutu journalists who spearheaded the genocide of Tutsis in Rwanda. "The Islamic refers to Jews as the sons of pigs and monkeys to be exterminated just as Hutu supremacists spoke of Tutsis as 'serpents' to be crushed.

Hamas and Hezbollah, two of the terrorist organizations that work for the physical annihilation of Israel describe Jews as 'pigs', 'cancer', 'garbage', 'germs', 'parasites' and 'microbes'.

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, in continually vowing to "wipe Israel off the map" for which he is building a vast nuclear arsenal without the world or the Obama administration lifting a finger to stop him, uses the expression 'dead rats'

Not only do the rabid anti-Zionists who boycott and demonize Israel display gross and racist anti-Semitism, but they also responsible to a large extent for terror against Israeli women and children.

This is because Moral denigration encourages physical elimination

It is entirely in keeping in the character of Islamists or rabidly leftist anti-Zionists that they should carry a rabid hatred of Israel to the point of defending the killers of Israeli children.

There is certainly.

The mainstream and left-wing world media are also extremely culpable for fomenting mass killing of Jewish men, women and children in Israel.

As Claude Lanzmann director of the monumental film Shoah wrote "When 'settlers' were killed it was intolerable to read in the newspapers stuck in a corner of the page 'settler women killed' or worse 'settler child strangled' as if the twofold stigma of Jew and settler made the murder understandable, justified it and dismissed it from our attention".

Thousands of Israeli Jewish men, women and children have died from bombs, bullets or knife attacks, and thousands of others have been maimed, blinded, orphaned, widowed and terrorized.

In 2003 on the Eve of the Jewish New Year, seven month old Shaked Abraham was shot dead in her crib by an Arab murderer who forced his way into her parent's house as the family was celebrating the New Year.

A ten-month-old Jewish baby, Shalhevet Pass, was shot in her father's arms by an Arab sniper in 2001.

The following year, a five-year-old girl, Danielle Shefi, was shot to death at point blank range by an Arab killer, while cowering under her parents' bed.

That same year, two boys, four- and five-years old, Matan and Noam Ohayon were shot dead together with their mother as she read them a bedtime story, in a kibbutz, by Arab terrorists.

In the summer of 2005 pregnant Jewish women Tali Hatuel and her four terrified little daughters were executed at point blank range by terrorists of the Popular Resistance Committees, one after the other after Tali's car had been spun off the road by gunfire.

Then there are the thousands of suicide bombing perpetrated by Arab terrorists in malls, restaurants, schools, buses and everywhere else where Jewish men, women and children in Israel gathered. Victims were killed, burned, maimed and shards of metal infected with rat poison lodged into their bodies.

Unlike a traditional war zone, the victims are often riding, sitting in schools or enjoying a meal.

So far 128 Jewish children have been killed, 9 of them less than a year old, 9 pregnant women have been murdered, 886 children have lost one parent and 31 have lost both. The youngest victim of terror was just one day old. At the Dolphinarium Disco on June 1, 2001, 21 Israeli teenagers were killed and 132 wounded, many maimed for life, after a suicide bomber blew himself up in their midst

Hamas claimed responsibility and celebrated the attack.

Meanwhile the Islamists and their hard left allies will attempt to silence us who speak up for Israel as a 'Fascist' or 'reactionary', classic Stalinist language. And try to physically prevent Israelis from speaking or even performing music on university campuses

Joe Sherman says

You owe it to yourself to take a fair look at the reality of Israel. The author is an American Jew who lived in Israel during the three years he worked on this book. It is not a pretty picture of modern Israel. Support of Israel is widely accepted as an unquestioned imperative by Americans and American politicians of both parties. This book will shake their assumptions. Rosenthal also offers a critical perspective on the history of Israel going back to 1948. It is a major ongoing tragedy leading to inexorable disaster. These are hard truths to face, but you must.

Adam Heffelfinger says

There is likely no rule in internet debate as well known as Godwin's Law. The semi-satirical law coined in 1990 by author/attorney Mike Godwin states (essentially) that the invoking of Hitler or the Nazis by any participant in a debate causes the participant doing so to lose the debate. But Godwin's Law is not without its detractors. Kevin Drum of Mother Jones and liberal firebrand Glenn Greenwald have each argued for its repeal. Noting rightly, that since WWII analogies are so universally known they can be extremely useful. So as the acts of the Nazis are universally condemned, and universally considered atrocities of the absolute worst kind, it becomes important that any use of a Nazi analogy had better be apt.

The power of Goliath: Life And Loathing in Greater Israel, by Max Blumenthal, comes in the slow realization that his provocatively chosen chapter headings (The Night of Broken Glass, The Concentration

Camp) utilize Nazi analogies that are useful and apt. Blumenthal's book is a thoroughly reported look at the way in which modern Israel has devolved into a fascistic, racist apartheid state. Blumenthal spends years in Israel and Palestine, speaks to men on the street and men in the halls of power, and comes away with a portrait of a country in an identity crisis of its own making.

As Blumenthal explains it, the State of Israel was founded to be both democratic and Jewish. Yet as it annexed more land, and as its native and immigrant populations grew, it became clear that these two tenets were in tension. If Jewish Israelis failed to maintain a demographic majority in the country, then the Jewish identity of the country could be dissolved in a popular vote. This idea that indigenous (or immigrant) populations constitute a demographic threat, and thus an existential threat, to the country results in these populations being subjected to both public and private forces aimed at pushing them out of Israel's borders.

Goliath then argues that as the official, legislative, and policy efforts to disenfranchise Israel's Arab population came into maturity, living amongst state-sanctioned discrimination led Israel's Jewish population to cease to see Arab-Israelis as anything other than threats. Government acts of otherizing gave way to a universal acceptance as the Arab as the other. A reality that plays itself out in sobering public opinion polls that show majorities of Jewish Israelis unwilling to share apartment buildings with Arabs, for example.

Working hand in hand with these discriminatory policies, is a PR campaign built to show Israel and its allies that it is engaged at all times in an existential struggle. Far from being an occupation, or apartheid, the actions of Israel are necessary to prevent a "second holocaust" and to prevent the Arabs who would destroy Israel from gaining the power to do so. Goliath stands out because it cuts through so much of this hasbara spin and shows a Western audience what public life in the region looks like.

Though Blumenthal has been cast as an anti-semitic, or a self-hating Jew by some for having the audacity to criticize the Jewish state, I think that the cold, hard facts of this book stand on their own. This is a familiar story of a people whipped into a nationalistic fervor, and told their entire lives that the problems of their country are the result of another group. Though it is a great, tragic irony that the perpetrators of this fascism are a people who were once victims of a starkly similar chain of events, that simply does not make the reality of this situation any less true.

Goliath is a dark, depressing, troubling, and lengthy look at the increasingly dire reality of Israel/Palestine. It's a region and a conflict that I knew very little more than the headlines about. I recommend the book, but I acknowledge that it may be controversial for some, triggering for others, and certainly a difficult read for many. But Goliath needs to be difficult, because the truth the book shares is a difficult one as well. And tragically, Godwin's Law does not apply.

Murtaza says

In this book Blumenthal makes what seems to be a pretty compelling case that Israel is descending (or has already descended) into a form of fascism, driven in part by the occupation of the West Bank but also as a natural result of the states' founding ideology. The book is basically a series of vignettes, but there is a ton of research in here, both contemporary on-the-ground and looking through history. As he tells it Israel is becoming an increasingly racist and militarized state, intolerant of minorities and increasingly intolerant of any form of left-wing dissent. Racist laws, lynch mobs, state-sanctioned colonialism in the West Bank; the book does not paint a pretty picture at all.

Israel is interesting to me as a person born in Pakistan as it is the only other country in the world founded as an ideological state. The trends that Blumenthal documents in Israel also manifested slowly over time in

Pakistan until it reached its present state of ultranationalism mixed with religious chauvinism.

Although Israel's path down this route may have been slowed by its economic success (no small part of which consists of American largesse), I feel like it's inevitable that it will end up as a Jewish version of Pakistan. It's just hardwired into the creation of the country; the idea of exclusionism and ethno-religious supremacy, even if - as in Pakistan - the founders of the country stressed the need for tolerating minorities within their own borders. Even worse, Israel was founded as a settler colonial project in a region which understandably has never accepted it and which it remains constantly in conflict with. These are not circumstances conducive to the development of a healthy, functioning society.

While I was pretty compelled by this book due to the sheer volume of research and the strength of the facts marshalled for his argument; I'll still keep my powder dry in making a decision about what Israel is until I can visit one day. I'm not sure if it'd even be possible given my ethnic background, work and past travels (In a way that itself is a bit of an indictment of the state), but I can't write off a place completely without experiencing it on my first and challenging my biases.

This is a good book, a lot of it will already be familiar to people who follow the issue closely but it is nonetheless worthwhile and might perhaps even be revelatory to those who usually have just a passing interest.

Pam says

This is primarily a collection of short "stories" -- Blumenthal's impressions and experiences as he travels around Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, talking to right-wing politicians, settlers and other crazies as well as brave leftist Israelis who fight back alongside Palestinians. It is both engaging and highly informational. My only two complaints is that the book seems a bit disjointed (there is no particular pattern to the order of his chapters) and I would sort of like to have heard from the "middle" in Israel -- who may be right wing, but only because of the lies and distortions they've been fed; they are like the relatively acquiescent masses in the United States, and it's them we need to try to target somehow.

I found the end of Goliath particularly poignant...the stories of the leftist activist Israelis who are finally worn down by the exhausting (and so far unproductive) fight from within, and leave Israel altogether.

Clif says

I'm a typical American in that I accepted "The Story of Israel" and cheered the Israelis on in the 1967 war without having the slightest idea of the situation in the Middle East. As far as I was concerned, Israelis were "just like us" and therefore worth supporting.

I accepted that there were two equally legitimate parties contending for land and that there was a drive to divide that land justly: the endless peace talks. But as Israeli settlers unilaterally took more and more land, I began to wonder what was going on. I also wondered why the entire world with the exception of the U.S. joined in condemning Israeli actions yet Israel simply ignored the world and under the protection of a reliable U.S. veto in the U.N., did as it wished even as it continually claimed to be a victim.

About four years ago I began a comprehensive study of Israel and its occupation of the lands that supposedly would go to the Palestinians. I discovered an eye opening map of the area created by the Israeli NGO, B'Tselem that astounded me. In fact, Israeli settlements peppered the occupied territory and it was obvious there was no remaining contiguous land that could provide a Palestinian state. See for yourself at <http://www.btselem.org/map> remembering that blue is Israeli and brown is Palestinian. By all means zoom in to see the saturation of brown areas with blue areas.

The map makes clear that the so-called peace talks have been a fraud, a cover for Israel to seize as much land as it can while claiming to be yearning for coexistence. Not only that, Zionism, the movement to create a Jewish state in Palestine, has never been anything else but an ethnic cleansing process. How in the world can the U.S., proclaiming liberty and justice for all, be covering for this outrage?

As a result of my research, I started a blog about ending the occupation, directed at non-Jewish Americans like myself, and I have actively contributed to demonstrations against Israel. I subscribe to the Israeli newspaper Ha'aretz to stay up on what is happening over there.

I provide this lengthy introduction to let you know that I approached Max Blumenthal's book not as a naif, but as someone acquainted with the political personalities, the operations of the Israel Defense Forces and the social situation in Israel. With this education in things Israeli, I was very impressed with the breadth and depth of Blumenthal's account; he unzips Israel to reveal all and covers every single significant event, political and social movement, act of war and daily practice of Israelis regarding the Palestinians.

Without hesitation I can say that this single book would give anyone with an interest in the topic just as much knowledge as I have accumulated in my attempt to gather information over several years. Blumenthal not only writes from a careful study of the facts, he writes with the benefit of swimming in the stream, going into the country and interviewing Israelis and Palestinians of all opinions.

The result is a condemnation based on fact. The fact is Israel does not have a right to exist as a state exclusively for Jews. Prime Minister Netanyahu rails against the movement to deligitimize Israel, but his lament is futile as the project of Zionism to expel native people in order to replace them never was legitimate. Yes, the U.S. expelled the natives but the descendants of those natives are full citizens of the U.S. who may live anywhere they wish. Israel wants no citizens who are not Jewish and holds in the citizenry many American Jews who have moved to Israel to immediately pronounce it theirs exclusively, at the expense of the indigenous people who daily suffer every humiliation, beatings, imprisonment, attack by armed settlers, restriction upon restriction, prisoners in their own land.

Like a surgeon, Blumenthal deconstructs the elaborate propaganda that promotes Israel as both Jewish and democratic, making it clear that The Jewish State is on a road to ruin as it attempts to practice the apartheid that civilization no longer accepts, riding nationalism to new extremes under the protection of holocaust guilt, the financial and political backing of wealthy Jewish Americans such as Sheldon Adelson and the clout of the Israel Lobby in the United States.

The safe haven longed for by the Jews who first came up with Zionism has long since been provided by the United States, where any and all walks of life are open to Jews without limit. Israel, by contrast, only shows the abuse that comes with unlimited power over others, demonstrating Jews behaving badly, steadily eroding the sympathy they rightly inherited from the actions of the Third Reich. Israel marches daily toward greater emulation of the totalitarianism/racism for which it was to be an antidote.

The most worrisome thing is that Israelis have swallowed the fear mongering/"second holocaust" idea and truly believe that, even armed as they are with nuclear warheads and every kind of state-of-the-art weaponry from the U.S., they are victims and in danger from the impoverished and powerless Palestinians they oppress. That the U.S. has supported this outlaw state is shameful and proof that money and power far

overshadow any lesson learned about injustice from the Indian Wars.

Any American would do well to be educated by this book that doesn't turn aside from the ugliness that Israel, try as it might, is failing to conceal. As the author states in the forward, his object is to show Americans what they are paying for. Read, and then write your people in Congress who, unless they hear from you, will continue to do the bidding of the Israel Lobby.

Jews have every right to live in Palestine, they do not have the right to it exclusively. The Jewish State has no long-term future, it is an anachronism. But extremism doesn't depart quietly. I shudder at what is to come.

Mary says

Brilliant, infuriating, troubling, illuminating, depressing, inspiring - this book provoked so many feelings in me! It is excellent journalism; as another reviewer has said, even those who think they know a fair bit about the situation will find themselves learning a lot. Blumenthal narrates his experiences in Israel between 2009 and 2013, including interviews with people on all sides and all walks of life. What he ends up witnessing is a rather shaky democracy's plunge into unabashed, racist fascism. I had to stop reading this book frequently because it shook and upset me so much. But I am very, very glad I read it. I feel that I have a better understanding of the real facts in this sad situation - and also of the only possible way forward. Every politician, and every adult citizen, in America should read this book. We should know what we are supporting.

Addendum: I did say the book was illuminating and inspiring, not just depressing. I admire Israeli activist like Yonatan Shapira more than ever - and, as for the citizens of Bi'lin, Ni'lin and others peacefully protesting the wall and trying to go about their lives in its shadow, they are beyond praise.

David says

I don't like Max Blumenthal, although I've never met the man. He's a leftist convinced of his own moral superiority, and quick to judge any rube whose world view or manners don't conform to his standards. He's the sort of fellow who calls someone "racist," after which analysis stops.

However, he's written an important and fundamentally accurate, if flawed book about today's State of Israel. Composed of short, readable vignettes of interviews and slice-of-life observations, most of which seem accurate--and are confirmed by independent evidence in many cases--the book depicts a country increasingly dominated by open ethno-nationalism, and deformed by the oppressive and unpleasant consequences of enforcing that against a dominated Palestinian Arab population.

The book rips the mask off the propaganda line that Israel is "the only democracy in the Middle East," a trendy, feisty start-up unjustly targeted by irrationally resentful neighbors. Likewise, he tears up the distinction between the post-1967 occupation and the events of 1948. In both cases, Israel won wars, dispossessed some Arabs from their homes, and reduced others to subjects of one sort or another.

That said, the book is flawed, and limited. It is flawed by an excess of editorial adjectives and leftist assumptions, which in fact detract from its message because they cast some suspicion upon the author's objectivity. It is limited because it does not subject the Palestinian side to the same scrutiny as the Israelis, and certainly one can find hostility and incitement on that side as well. It is further limited because of what it

does not attempt--analysis as opposed to a series of journalistic vignettes.

That said, one cannot fault the author for his failure to write a different book. Someone else will have to do that.

Foxglove says

Facts are cherry picked, re-arranged and deceptively presented to make a point. Blumenthal interviews the most extreme Israelis and the most moderate Palestinians, making the Israelis look like monsters, when the majority are fairly normal people. I love what Eric Alterman wrote on it. "The Israeli author and champion of its peace movement soon thereafter ends the interview and asks Blumenthal to please tear up his phone number. Here, our author attributes the response he receives, yet again, to Israeli myopia and lack of understanding of the way the world really works."

Max Blumenthal apparently knows better than anyone. So, why doesn't he make aliyah and run for government?

Robert says

Goliath: Life and Loathing in Greater Israel by Max Blumenthal revisits the Israeli/Palestinian dilemma largely from the perspective of Israel's injustice to the Palestinians, both outside Israel's borders and within them.

This is an overwritten if heavily researched, personal account that undermines its principal thesis with an excess of one-sided reporting, all of which contains elements of truth but nonetheless raises questions on page after page about whether these elements of truth tell the whole truth and whether they develop into a solidly built analysis.

The principal thesis is that the Israelis displaced the Palestinian people, took most of their land, keep taking their land in the name of Israeli security, and have carried out their policies with substantial brutality.

Setting aside the brutalities that occurred within the context of establishing Israel and then defending it in the 1967 and 1973 wars because all wars are horrific and can be detailed in such a way as to make one side or the other appear inhuman, Blumenthal provides many, many instances of Israeli discrimination against Palestinians that have, over a period of decades, oppressed them to the point that there is almost no need for a "two-state solution" because there is already a "one-state solution," meaning an apartheid state, where the Israelis are on the top, the Palestinians, inside and outside Israel, are on the bottom.

Blumenthal traces a sharp move to the Zionist right in Israeli politics, culminating in the present government led by Benjamin Netanyahu, and portrays a boxed-in, demoralized, diminished Israeli left. He spends a good bit of time describing the ways in which Israel has battered and isolated the Gaza Strip, now governed by the anti-Israel Hamas party. He also spends a good bit of time presenting the Israeli right as utterly heartless, justifying itself by referring to what happened to the Jewish people in the Holocaust and vowing, "never again."

The tragedy in all this is that the Holocaust did happen, six million Jews died, and that the result was a

Jewish state that did in fact displace Palestinians, push them off their lands, and make them feel existentially wronged to this day, so many years later.

No one would want any of this to happen, but no one knows how to resolve it. Blumenthal presents an Israeli political class that has, in the interest of the Jewish state's survival, no sympathy for the Palestinians' plight. By the same token, many who have followed this conflict for a long time can point to instances of Palestinian aggression, or resistance, that have had ghastly consequences for Israelis.

Ultimately, this combination of stand-off and struggle has had negative impact on both Israelis and Palestinians. The circumstances of their existence have coarsened them both, and that's understandable.

The underlying purpose of Goliath is no doubt to inform the American people that their Israeli "friends" are not liberal democrats and a bastion of freedom and stability in the autocratic, violent Middle East. Many details here are fresh and disturbing, but the overall "narrative" to this effect has been emerging for a long time.

Currently Secretary of State John Kerry is expending a lot energy on the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. He would seem to have two overriding motivations: first, simply to settle things in a non-violent way that both sides can accept; second, to demonstrate to the Arab/Muslim world that supports the Palestinians' cause that the United States is an honest broker, a friend to Muslims as well as to Jews.

Kerry's chances are slim. He indicates that any time left for a "two-state solution" may be running out. In this he's probably right in one sense and wrong in another. If his efforts bear no fruit within nine months to a year, the Obama administration will have to take a step back and probably not readdress the question. That's the sense in which he's right. The sense in which he's wrong is that time will go on, the tragedy of competing claims will continue to fester, and the idea that the Palestinians might one day govern their own sovereign, internationally recognized state won't disappear any more than Israel's determination to survive will disappear.

Rambox says

As they say in Spanish "va sumando," or "it adds up." Blumenthal's landmark book is written in extremely accessible journalistic anecdotal style. There is no theory. But the anecdotes just keep adding up, forcing the reader to draw some of their own conclusions, unable to avert their gaze and dismiss each story as just an individual story. The fascist, racist nature of the Zionist system becomes undeniable. And as the book comes to a close, Blumenthal draws the reader to Germany, where the only place that young Jewish Israelis feel at home is within a pluralistic society. It is hard to avoid the conclusion that Max is arguing for ethnic pluralism everywhere over an (impossible) ethnic purity in Israel, a country stolen by force of arms, as the basis of the Jewish response to the Holocaust.

When Ian Lustick, the very liberal Zionist political scientist and friend of Blumenthal's father, received Max at UPenn, part of a friendly effort to break the media blackout around this book (in contrast to the wide coverage of his previous book on the Republican party), the reception was friendly but condemnatory. Lustick starts speaking at 22m50s and goes on at great length with his own anecdotal stories. These stories seem to lull the audience into a disarmed position, as the stories repeatedly reinforce Lustick's caring, considerate, anti-racist, liberal credentials. And then, all of a sudden, at the end of all this storytelling,

starting at minute 36, he does a few things. First, he accuses Blumenthal of being too anecdotal and not sufficiently serious. Second, he suggests that Blumenthal is making a mountain out of molehill and overreacting. Why can't we just give Israel a little more time? Thirdly, finally, and most importantly, he suddenly springs the anti-semitic label on Blumenthal, accusing him of willing 'the end of Jewish collective life in Israel,' which is probably an accurate accusation, but which deliberately sounds like he is willing the end of Jewish life itself - the complete opposite of what Blumenthal is advocating.

These two positions really sum up the divide inside the Jewish community. Should the response to the Holocaust be "never again, for us," or "never again, for anyone"? It is a divide between exclusionists and universalists, the two great strands of Jewish thinking through the ages. Max is clearly a universalist, as are most Palestinians. Lustick wants his ethnically pure enclave, notwithstanding the cost to the native Palestinian inhabitants of the land - a cost laid bare in page after page of Blumenthal's book. And while the Jewish community debates amongst itself, the Palestinians suffer under the Israeli jackboot and, as also becomes clear through Blumenthal, the soul of Judaism itself corrodes. To understand the panic of liberal Zionists like Ian Lustick, indeed to understand Israel itself, this important book is required reading.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=upv9K...>

Jacqueline says

This is less a book than a series of vignettes - it feels like a series of blog posts, really. Well researched and fascinating posts - but chronologically messed up and without any narrative structure. So, that was a struggle for me.

The book IS of course totally one sided, which makes it easy to be dismissive...but we get the other side all day every day, and this side is "technically accurate" according to even Blumenthal's harshest critics.

A worthy read.

Marcy says

What a truly engrossing read. Blumenthal does a tremendous job of showing the apartheid state of Israel in all its true colors. What I appreciate the most about this book is the way Blumenthal weaves together threads of Palestinian history and current events in context while simultaneously illustrating precisely how Israel has sunk deeper and deeper into a white supremacist state that targets African migrants with the same brutally racist means. I do wish there was a bit more skepticism about the role Israelis think they are playing in the unraveling of their state; if you look for this perspective it's there, but at times it's subtle enough that readers may not perceive it.

Robert says

Max Blumenthal does an excellent job documenting how the Israeli government is moving more and more towards one of the most right-wing governments among western nations. Western being how Israel has not always seen itself, but has always sold itself. Starting from the Israeli slaughter of Palestinians in Operation Cast Lead in December of 2008 to the present Blumenthal meticulously documents the progression of both

the government of Israel and the greater public are moving towards a completely fascist state. The comparisons to Apartheid South Africa are valid when one considers the restrictions put on Palestinian's movement within Gaza and the West Bank, and in Israel. How there are two sets of citizenship rights for Jewish citizens in Israel, and Arab citizens of Israel. How one of the most fiendish violations of the Israeli blockade of Gaza on human rights is where Israel calculates in order to regulate the daily caloric intake of the citizens of Gaza by how much food Israel allows in. Israel has continually violated International Law, and UN Resolutions and obligations since its inception. Blumenthal interviews current members of the Knesset and presents evidence from Israeli's own historical archives to show that Israel has been carrying out a systematic genocide against Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank for the past 44 years. This book is a must read for anyone who cares about human rights.
