

# The Long Armistice: UN Peacekeeping And The Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1948-1960

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insights into the minds of the British officials who for more than half a century dominated the Sudanese political arena.

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**The Long Armistice, UN Peacekeeping and the Arab Israeli Conflict: 1948-1960**, by NATHAN A. PELCOVITS. Foreword by Samuel W. Lewis. 264 pages, maps, notes, index. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1993. \$59.95 (Cloth) ISBN 0-8133-8483-4

In *The Long Armistice*, Pelcovits, a noted expert in peacekeeping and former director of the UN planning office at the Department of State, attempts to present a multi-dimensional study of why the UN shifted its focus "from securing a peace settlement to 'keeping' the peace of a long armistice" (p. 2). This book of seven chapters examines in minute detail not only the Arab-Israeli problem but also aspects of Israeli, US and UN ambitions and their relationships to world order. For a small monograph of 264 pages, this is no simple task.

Dr. Pelcovits is to be commended for his scholarship: there are over 475 references, 3 different archives with over 30 separate entries and other useful data supplied. Many of these are new sources which help illustrate the changing nature of the Israeli-Palestinian-UN problem. The reader is guided from early 1948 with Resolution 181 to 1963, while the UN acted as a guardian of a frozen Arab-Israeli stalemate when peacemaking efforts were abandoned in favor of peacekeeping. In the course of the 14-year period covered by the author, the reader sees why the Israelis came to distrust the UN and its varied agencies and to feel that Israel must stand alone to survive.

What is lacking in this book, and is needed, is a sense of balance. We are given explicit details of Israeli policies and thinking, yet most often in this work the Palestinian or Arab side of the issues is slighted. He utilizes more than 40 different "Israeli" sources, yet less than 5 "Arab" sources emerge to help clarify the problems. This omission is regrettable, for the title of the book leads one to expect that differing sides within the UN membership will be considered, and much new Arab scholarship has recently been published.

More disappointing is the reportorial nature of the work which leaves complex questions unanswered. Why is the Gaza National Conference of October 1948 and its subsequent demise never mentioned? What effect did the acts of King Abdullah have on the abilities of the UN to make peace? What impact did the US and its policy-makers have on maintaining this Arab-Israeli stalemate? Pelcovits might have told us why the US never firmly led the UN to become a peacemaker and why it went outside the UN so often to attempt peace. Did the US string Israel along to keep the newly emerging Arab nations (and Palestinians) dangling? Was it more in the US's interest to support temporary armistices rather than full peace? Pelcovits' latest work sheds partial light on an important issue. Perhaps it will inspire more work to fill the remaining void.

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