



Fateful Triangle: The United States, Israel and the Palestinians

Noam Chomsky

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The Fateful Triangle: The United States, Israel and the Palestinians is a 1983 book by Noam Chomsky about the relationship among the U.S., Israel and the Arab Palestinians. Chomsky examines the origins of this relationship and its meaningful consequences for the Palestinians and other Arabs. The book mainly concentrates on the 1982 Lebanon War and the "pro-Zionist" bias of most U.S. media and intellectuals, as Chomsky puts it.

Fateful Triangle: The United States, Israel and the Palestinians Details

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From Reader Review Fateful Triangle: The United States, Israel and the Palestinians for online ebook

Orestes says

A jaw-dropping eye-opening collection of facts. if you ever wanted to know anything about the relationship between the United States and Israel and Palestine this is the go to book. Needless to say when you hear in Western media cannot be trusted.

Bryan Williams says

Very informative but dated. I wish I knew that the book would focus primarily on events that took place during the 1982 Lebanon invasion prior to reading. There is enough exploration of the origins of these age-old conflicts, and insights into the mentality of key figures and future consequences of then current events (many of which we are experiencing now) that could make it a worthwhile read to anyone interested in the topic though.

Paul says

Makes a fascinating subject extremely dull. Poorly written - don't bother.

Mack Hayden says

Chomsky's in top form here. Throughout, I was in awe at the depth of his research and analysis into the Israel-Palestine situation and the US's hand in it all. It should come as no surprise that Chomsky spends most of his time critiquing Israel and the US, although he gets a few jabs in at the PLO. This may lead some to consider him biased, but as he repeats again and again, the pro-Israeli narrative is embedded in the cultural zeitgeist so firmly that it would feel like overkill to just rehash it again here. He cites a gargantuan amount of sources (government heads, newspapers of all political biases and nations, those on the ground in the region, etc.) to ground his arguments in favor of Palestinian liberation and against Israel's 1980s invasion of Lebanon in particular. The atrocities chronicled here will make your stomach churn, but it's to Chomsky's credit that he doesn't flinch from evil perpetrated by anyone, especially the ostensible "good guys." While this book is pretty focused on the invasion of Lebanon and a lot's changed in the region since then between all parties, the depressing thing is how much things have stayed the same. This is a great primer both on a specific time in Middle Eastern history as well as the reasons so much injustice and oppression seems to exist over there in perpetuity.

Kent says

Reading this book will make you laugh -- or vomit -- any time you hear the words "U.S." and "peace

process" in the same sentence. Actually, that would potentially make for a lot of vomit.

Paul Eccles says

It's an outstanding, and lengthy history of Israel, Palestine and US involvement. It's a lengthy and detailed book, dwelling particularly on the 1982 Lebanon war, academic in tone and carefully referenced (mostly Israeli and American). The level of evidence presented is truly impressive, with over 1500 references. The overall effect is a devastating indictment of Israeli actions and US support thereof.

Mutia says

reviewed by L.A. Rollins

The Fateful Triangle is a fact-filled, insightful look at the "special relationship" between the United States and Israel. Noam Chomsky, professor of linguistics at M.I.T., examines the origins of this "special relationship," its disastrous consequences for the Palestinian (and other) Arabs, and its danger for everyone.

Concentrating mainly on Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon, Chomsky provides a wealth of ideas and information in conflict with the Zionist mythology which pretty much predominates in the mass media and academia. The result is a devastating debunking of one-sided Zionist propaganda.

The pro-Zionist bias of most American journalists and scholars is one particularly obvious aspect of the aforementioned "special relationship." As Chomsky puts it, "The truth of the matter is that Israel has been granted a unique immunity from criticism in mainstream journalism and scholarship, consistent with its unique role as a beneficiary of other forms of American support" (p. 31). He cites numerous examples of this immunity from criticism, including the silence and/or misrepresentation about Israel's terrorist attacks on U.S. facilities in Egypt (the Lavon affair) and the "clearly premeditated" attack on the "unmistakably identified" U.S.S. Liberty, an attack which, according to Chomsky's count, left 34 American crewmen dead and another 75 wounded. Chomsky asks, "Can one imagine that any other country could carry out terrorist bombings of U.S. installations or attack a U.S. ship killing or wounding 100 men with complete impunity, without even critical comment for many years?" (p. 32)

Of course, as Chomsky acknowledges, Israel did come in for an unprecedented amount of criticism because of "Operation Peace for Galilee," the 1982 invasion of Lebanon. But he debunks the attempt by some die-hard Zionist apologists to blame such criticism on-get this-media bias against Israel! As Chomsky shows, there was (and is) no widespread anti-Israel bias in the American mass media, although there was, temporarily at least, a reduction in the usual degree of pro-Israel bias. As Chomsky writes:

The charge that the American media were "pro-PLO" or "anti-Israel" during the Lebanon war-or before-is easily unmasked, and is in fact absurd. It suffices to compare their coverage of the occupied territories, the war, the treatment of prisoners, and other topics, with what we find in the Hebrew press in Israel, a comparison always avoided by those who produce these ridiculous charges. Again, the annals of Stalinism come to mind, with the outrage over Trotskyite "critical support" for the "workers' state." Any deviation from total obedience is intolerable to the totalitarian mentality, and is interpreted as reflecting a "double standard," or worse. (p. 289)

Among those accusing the media of anti-Israel bias was the self- styled Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, which, as Chomsky points out, " ... specializes in trying to prevent critical discussion of policies of Israel by such techniques as maligning critics, including Israelis who do not pass its test of loyalty" (p. 14). Chomsky has himself been a victim of defamation by the Anti- Defamation League and knows whereof he speaks.

It is somewhat unusual for an American author, especially a Jewish ones to blow the whistle on the ADL's propaganda antics.

But it is even more unusual to see public criticism of bigfime "Holocaust" survivor and pseudo-saint Elie Wiesel and his Wiesel words regarding Israel's less lovely activities.

Regarding Israeli policies in the occupied territories, for example, Wiesel has said:

What to do and how to do it, I really don't know because I lack the elements of information and knowledge ... You must be in a position of power to possess all the information ... I don't have that information, so I don't know ... [D. 161:]

Similarly, after the Sabra and Shatila massacres, Wiesel said, "I don't think we should even comment [on the massacre in the refugee camps:] since the [Israeli judicial:] investigation is still on We should not pass judgment until the investigation takes place." (p. 386)

Wiesel, of course, is well known for passing judgment on the actions of other governments, but when it comes to the State of Israel he whistles a different tune. In fact, Wiesel has said, "I support Israel-period. I identify with Israel-period. I never attack, I never criticize Israel when I am not in Israel." (p. 16)

Chomsky points up Wiesel's hypocrisy in the following passage:

Recall Wiesel's unwillingness to criticize Israel beyond its borders, or to comment on what happens in the occupied territories, because "You must be in a position of power to possess all the information." Generalizing the principle beyond the single state to which it applies for this saintly figure, as we should if it is valid, we reach some interesting conclusions: it follows, for example, that critics of the Holocaust while it was in progress were engaged in an illegitimate act, since not being in a position of power in Nazi Germany, they "did not possess all the information." (D. 3871)

Of course, one of Wiesel's repeated accusations against "the world" is that it did not say (or do) enough about "the Holocaust" while it was in progress. One wonders how Wiesel will weasel out of this contradiction in his position.

In any case, as you may have noticed, Chomsky does not dispute the historical reality of "the Holocaust." But even so, I think that anyone who will publicly criticize the hypocrisy of such a sacred cow (or should I say, sacred weasel?) as Elie Wiesel, merits the attention of revisionists.

It should be noted that while Chomsky is highly critical of Israeli policies and actions, he is not fundamentally anti-Israel. He supports "a two-state political settlement that would include recognized borders, security guarantees, and reasonable prospects for a peaceful resolution of the conflict." (p. 3) From this position, he criticizes Israel's consistent "rejectionism"-the rejection of any political settlement accomodating the "national rights" of the Palestinian Arabs.

Chomsky also criticizes the American policies which make Israeli rejectionism possible. And he points out the hypocrisy involved in criticizing Israeli policies while supporting their subsidization with billions of dollars of American aid each year. As Chomsky puts it:

Clearly, as long as the United States provides the wherewithal, Israel will use it for its purposes. These purposes are clear enough today, and have been clear to those who chose to understand for many years: to integrate the bulk of the occupied territories within Israel in some fashion while finding a way to reduce the Arab population; to disperse the scattered refugees and crush any manifestation of Palestinian nationalism or Palestinian culture; to gain control over Southern Lebanon. Since these goals have long been obvious and have been shared in fundamental respects by the two major political groupings in Israel, there is little basis for condemning Israel when it exploits the position of regional power afforded it by the phenomenal quantities of U.S. aid in exactly the ways that would be anticipated by any person whose head is not buried in the sand. Complaints and accusations are indeed hypocritical as long as material assistance is provided in an unending and ever-expanding flow, along with diplomatic and ideological support, the latter, by shaping the facts of history in a convenient form. Even if the occasional tempered criticisms from Washington or in editorial commentary are seriously intended, there is little reason for any Israeli government to pay any attention to them. The historical practice over many years has trained Israeli leaders to assume that U.S. "opinion makers" and political elites will stand behind them whatever they do, and that even if direct reporting is accurate, as it generally is, its import will gradually be lost as the custodians of history carry out their tasks. (p. 2)

Chomsky's got a point here, and it's an important one. What better way would there be to moderate Israeli policies than to cut off (or at least drastically reduce) American aid to Israel? But even if so, how is such an aid cut-off for reduction) to be accomplished? That is the question. Unfortunately, I don't know the answer. And, as far as I can see, neither does Chomsky.

Of course, there is much more to The Fateful Triangle than I have been able to indicate in this review. To mention just one more subject, those who are interested in some of the more extreme examples of Zionist thinking will find them here, especially in the section on "The Rise of Religious-Chauvinist Fanaticism." In this section, Chomsky quotes the following notable statement:

We will certainly establish order in the Middle East and in the world. And if we do not take this responsibility upon ourselves, we are sinners, not just towards ourselves but towards the entire world.

For who can establish order in the world? All of those western leaders of weak character? (p. 155)

No, this is not a passage from the plagiaristic Protocols of the Elders of Zion. The statement was made by Rabbi Elazar Valdmann of Gush Emunim in the pages of Nekudah, the journal of the religious-chauvinist West Bank settlers. There is a pop song on the radio these days which says, "Everybody wants to rule the world." I don't know if everybody wants to rule the world, but obviously the good rabbi wants to do so. I wish him the worst luck possible in getting what he wants.

Despite some shortcomings, The Fateful Triangle is one of the best exposes of Zionist mythology now available. Even those who have read Alfred Lilienthal's The Zionist Connection will probably find Chomsky's book an excellent supplement. It is, in any case, a worthy example of what James J. Martin has dubbed "inconvenient history."

Yonis Gure says

Sadly, this book remains as relevant now as it did during Begin's disastrous invasion of Lebanon. His invasion in 1978 was more or less precipitated, as Walid Khalidi points out, by the desire to disrupt the Shtaura Accord, that would've seen a Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon, and an imposed freeze on Palestinian cross-border operations, which would've offered a possibility of a settlement between the Lebanese government and the PLO. But of course Israel wants its enemies in conflict. Nothing motivated the attack on Gaza last summer more than the unity deal struck by Fatah and Hamas. The same tactics are even used - provoke the enemies; ramp-up the fear-mongering among the citizenry with references to the Shoah; and anthropomorphize the place you're bombing so as to make it seem no civilians are being killed, and insofar as they are, they're subhumans or defenders of the "Terrorists". The Future looks bleak, to put it mildly. Now I'm skeptical at the possibility of a peaceful one-state solution, but if Israel carries on in this vein and isn't pressured by any outside force to withdraw and cease its criminal occupation, there will indeed be one-state between the river and the sea - it'll be called Israel!

Andrew says

I was very optimistic opening this book and was not very pleased. I find Chomsky's tone frustrating throughout the entire book. He writes not to convince, but simply to ridicule you if you have any shred of doubt in his argument. That being said, his citations are very disorganized, requiring that one spend a great deal of time in the library just to check their legitimacy. It is not that I don't agree with his final analysis, which I do with only minor reservations. I just find him to be a bad writer.

Lt says

It's Chomsky so it's complicated but fascinating. Have to admit, I'm having to reread pages because it's not easy to concentrate while reading on the subway.

???? (Tarek) says

After reading several of Chomsky's books, I have more and more respect for this author and thinker. He is a meticulous historian and political analyst, and his critics should read his works before attacking him.

This book is a compendium of facts, figures, quotes, and analysis that comprise the truth behind the complicated politics of the Middle East. Chomsky is an honorable follower to the likes of Orwell, and cuts through all the media campaigns, falsehoods, lies, and general misinformation pertaining to the Middle East and its conflicts.

The book is a tough read, and is more like a disgorgement of information from a mind that has researched the topic at hand for years with meticulous effort. Around half of the book follows general Israeli policy and politics, as well as Palestinian politics and American foreign policy. The other half is about these policies as they pertain to the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon, and Chomsky knows his stuff, there is no doubt about that. Every claim, every statement, every quote, and every fact is scrupulously cited. He is not in the business

of convincing or converting, he is distinctly in the business of telling the truth the best he can.

As for the people who question why they should read this book, as much of it is about an old war, and old politics? My answer is because it is important. Without this knowledge how can you possibly have an opinion regarding the on goings in the Middle East? These facts and the figures in the political scene were the same as they are now. To understand the conflicts, you must give this book a read. I cannot recommend it highly enough. This book should be required reading in all of the West.

Gary says

This is clearly a work of the most extreme and obnoxious hatred against all Israel's men , women and children and is filled with prejudices and untruths.

It is in fact an extreme form of incitement against the Jewish nation akin to Mein Kampf and the Elders of the Protocols of Zion

Alexander Kosoris says

Fateful Triangle is Noam Chomsky's analysis of the relationship among the US, Israel, and Palestine. While most of the book centres on the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, he talks about the history of conflict and subjugation within Israel, beginning with the country's origins, moving through the expansionist period post-1967, and even touching on the implications of the Oslo accords from the mid-'90s, showing the consistent monetary, military, and rhetorical support from the country's biggest sponsor that enables its destructive, racist policies. Most of the book's discussions focus on the concept of rejectionism, contrasting between the horribly outdated yet widely accepted notion of Arab rejection of the right of the existence of the state of Israel and the rarely discussed and demonstrably consistent US and Israeli rejection of basic rights of Palestinians.

Chomsky effectively breaks down and lays bare rhetoric employed by the US and Israel's propaganda machinery, along with what he shows to be a hugely pro-Zionist media and intellectual elite within the States. He unpacks disguised statements that appear reasonable at face value and helps readers to understand deeper, often sinister subtext and, almost as often, outright lies. Throughout, Chomsky dissembles opposing arguments piece by piece, even to the point that we can maintain nonsensical assumptions held by propagandists and still not justify the military incursions or perpetual, crushing colonialism, at least not with a clear conscience. And let it be said that the writing's at its best when the author gets sarcastic. During these moments, he really makes numerous commentators sound not only amoral but also silly.

So, I thought *Fateful Triangle* was well written and hugely informative. Chomsky convincingly demonstrates an alternate narrative of the "only democracy in the region": of a fascist regime that exploits the indigenous population for cheap labour and affords them fewer rights than blacks under Apartheid.

Beatrix says

This man is a genius!

Rifat Mana says

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