The Israel-Arab Reader

A Documentary History of the Middle East Conflict

Seventh Revised and Updated Edition

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Penguin Books
unjustified interference with the rights of nations to navigate the seas and to trade freely with one another, including the Arab States and Israel;

10. Calls upon Egypt to terminate the restrictions on the passage of international commercial shipping and goods through the Suez Canal wherever bound and to cease all interference with such shipping beyond that essential to the safety of shipping in the Canal itself and to the observance of international conventions in force.

**Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser:**

**On Zionism and Israel (1960–1963)**

The following excerpts are from Nasser's "The Philosophy of the Revolution," and speeches on various occasions between 1960 and 1963. Nasser served as an army officer in the Palestine War of 1948. The liberation of Palestine has been one of the chief planks of his political program, but there have been conflicting statements as to whether there was a definitive plan for the liberation. On several occasions, he announced that his army would soon be ready to enter Palestine on "a carpet of blood," on others that the time was not ripe yet.

As far as I am concerned I remember that the first elements of Arab consciousness began to filter into my mind as a student in secondary schools, wherefrom I went out with my fellow schoolboys on strike on December 2nd of every year as a protest against the Balfour Declaration whereby England gave the Jews a national home usurped unjustly from its legal owners.

When I asked myself at that time why I left my school enthusiastically and why I was angry for this land which I never saw I could not find an answer except the echoes of sentiment. Later a form of comprehension of this subject began when I was a cadet in the Military College studying the Palestine campaigns in particular and the history and conditions of this region in general which rendered it, throughout the last century, an easy prey ravaged by the claws of a pack of hungry beasts.

My comprehension began to be clearer as the foundation of its facts stood out when I began to study, as a student in the Staff College, the Palestine campaign and the problems of the Mediterranean in greater detail.

And when the Palestine crisis loomed on the horizon I was firmly convinced that the fighting in Palestine was not fighting on foreign territory. Nor was it inspired by sentiment. It was a duty imposed by self-defense.
Address by President Gamal Abdel Nasser in Aleppo (February 17, 1960)

Yesterday, the elderly Foreign Minister of Israel threatened the U.A.R. and said that Israel would not tolerate the ban on Israeli ships transiting the Suez Canal.

I would like to tell her and her master, Ben Gurion, as well as the Israeli people, that Israeli ships and cargoes will not, under any circumstances, transit the Canal.

Once these cargoes arrive in Port-Said or in any other port in the U.A.R. they become the property of the people of Palestine against whom Zionism and imperialism have conspired.

Eleven years after this tragedy, the people of Palestine have not changed. They, and we, are working for the restoration of their rights in their homeland. The rights of the people of Palestine are Arab rights above all. We feel it is our sacred duty to regain those rights for the people of Palestine.

By this unity which is binding you and the power of Arab unity and Arab nationalism, we can march along the road of freedom and liberation in order to get back the usurped rights of the Palestine Arabs.

Speech by President Gamal Abdel Nasser at a Mass Rally of the Youth Organisations in Damascus (October 18, 1960)

Now for the Palestinian issue. Wherever I have been in this or the Southern Region I hear the strong call for the liberation of this Arab territory of Palestine, and I would like to tell you, Brethren, that all that we are now doing is just a part of the battle for Palestine. Once we are fully emancipated from the shackles of colonialism and the intrigues of colonialist agents, we shall take a further step forward towards the liberation of Palestine.

When we have brought our armed forces to full strength and made our own armaments we will take another step forward towards the liberation of Palestine, and when we have manufactured jet aircraft and tanks we will embark upon the final stage of this liberation.

Address by President Gamal Abdel Nasser on the 11th Anniversary of the Revolution at the Republican Square, Cairo (July 22, 1963)

Work and readiness are the only means to protect the Arab’s right in Palestine.

Arab unity is our hope of liberating Palestine and restoring the rights of the people of Palestine.

Arab unity is a sort of preparation, a human and national preparation as well as a preparation with weapons and plans in all fields. It is not enough
to deliver speeches declaring that we would liberate Palestine and liberate
it just on paper for political consumption. As I said before, we do not have
any defined plan for the liberation of Palestine. I mention this because I
find it my duty to say it. But we have a plan to be implemented in case of
any Israeli aggression against us or against any Arab country.

In this case, we know well what to do. We have to be prepared. We have
a plan for this preparation and for the unification of the Arab world which
is the only means to protect the Arab land and safeguard Arab Nationalism.

God be with you and may his peace and mercy be upon you.

Speech Delivered by President Gamal Abdel Nasser at Alexandria on the
Return of Another Contingent of U.A.R. Troops in Yemen
(August 11, 1963)

The Armed Forces are getting ready for the restoration of the rights of
the Palestine people because the Palestine battle was a smear on the entire
Arab nation. No one can forget the shame brought by the battle of 1948.
The rights of the Palestine people must be restored. Therefore, we must get
ready to face Israel and Zionism as well as Imperialism which stands be-
hind them.

United Arab Republic: Manifesto (April 1963)

The manifesto concerning the principles to govern the new Federal
State of the United Arab Republic was published in April 1963. It was
prepared in connection with an abortive attempt to establish federal
union in the Arab world. Signed by Gamal Abdel Nasser and the presi-
dents of Iraq and Syria, it is of interest mainly in view of the reference
to Palestine.

In the name of the Merciful Compassionate God,
In the name of the Almighty God,
The three delegations representing the United Arab Republic, Syria and
Iraq met in Cairo and in response to the will of the Arab people in the three re-
regions and the great Arab fatherland, brotherly talks began between the three
delегations on Saturday, April 6, and ended on Wednesday, April 17, 1963.
The delegations in all their discussions were inspired by faith that Arab
unity was an inevitable aim deriving its principles from the oneness of lan-
guage bearing culture and thought, common history-making sentiment and
conscience, common national struggle deciding and defining destiny, com-
mon spiritual values stemming from Divine messages and common social
and economic understanding based on liberty and socialism.