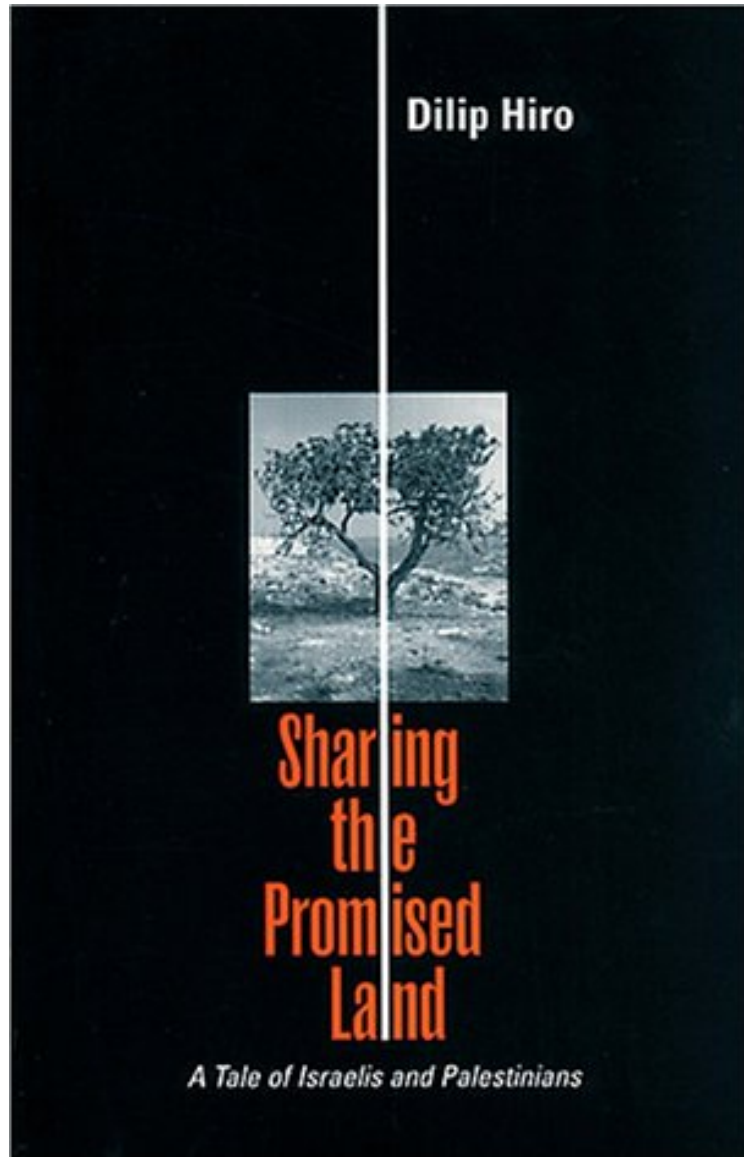


# Sharing the Promised Land: A Tale of Israelis and Palestinians

*Dilip Hiro*

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**Dilip Hiro : Sharing the Promised Land: A Tale of Israelis and Palestinians** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Sharing the Promised Land: A Tale of Israelis and Palestinians:

14 of 21 people found the following review helpful. A Real Eye-Opener!By Kay KellyI was a supporter of the Palestinian cause before I read this well-footnoted book, but I still found it an eye-opener. A sampling of details new to me:1. I already knew Jews were a small minority in modern Palestine until an occupying power, Britain, allowed

heavy Zionist immigration beginning in the 1920s. What I didn't know: most of that minority was descended from Jews who'd been expelled from Spain in the years after 1492. Not even they could claim thousands of years' unbroken residence in Palestine.<sup>2</sup> One reason Israel was able to defeat the armed forces of five Arab countries in 1948-49 was that the U.N. had imposed an embargo on arms shipments to the combatants, and the Arab states were unable to obtain more arms--while the Israelis kept smuggling them in, mostly from Czechoslovakia, in violation of the embargo.<sup>3</sup> In 1950-54, Israel experienced heavy Jewish immigration--but not the kind its founders wanted. The new arrivals were Jews from the Middle East and North Africa, many descended from those Jews expelled from Spain. Most of them had been content where they were, secure in their identity and proud of their culture. The Zionist takeover of Palestine spawned hostility toward Jews throughout the region, and the "Arab Jews" were forced to seek refuge in Israel--where the Zionists treated them like racial inferiors.<sup>4</sup> Two prime ministers of Israel, Menachem Begin and Yitzhak Shamir, had headed Zionist terrorist groups in the 1940s.<sup>5</sup> To avoid outright defeat in the Ramadan/Yom Kippur War in 1973, Israel obtained massive conventional arms shipments from the U.S.--by threatening to use nuclear weapons against Egypt and Syria if the U.S. didn't come through.<sup>6</sup> A not-insignificant Israeli minority believes God has promised them all the land between the Nile and the Euphrates. There are some points on which I wish Hiro had gone into more detail. For example, he mentions that in addition to smuggling in arms during the 1948-49 war, Israel--unlike the Arab states--had its own weapons manufacturing capability. That must have been developed under British rule, and I'd like to know how and why the British let it happen. I'd also like to know more about Israel's influx of Jews from the former Soviet Union after its collapse: why did they leave their home region when it had ceased to be officially atheistic? I have reason to believe a map Hiro reproduces, purporting to show the 1947 partition plan, is inaccurate. It makes what was being offered the Arabs look even worse than it was. Otherwise, the only caveat I have about this book is that readers should be aware it was written in 1999. I hope the author will write another one about the horrors we've seen since then.

Dilip Hiro, one of the most experienced of Middle East hands, provides readers with a comprehensive chronicle of Israeli and Palestinian lives, shaped by negotiation and confrontation, right up to the present.

From Library Journal This is a highly readable book about the trials and tribulations of Arabs and Jews in Israel today. Hiro, an Indian-born veteran journalist who has written extensively on the contemporary Middle East, provides a fascinating tale of hopes and shattered dreams among Palestinians and Israelis. Furthermore, the author goes beyond the headlines to reveal the contours of everyday struggles by ordinary people and their leaders. The book profiles the main players in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and describes the competing claims of both sides to the "Promised Land." The conflict between secular and religious groups in both Jewish and Arab communities is described in detail, as is the increasingly important role of the Israeli Arabs in consolidating the peace process. The author also describes, in a balanced and objective fashion, internal contradictions within Palestinian and Israeli societies. This engaging book is highly recommended for both lay readers and students of the Arab-Israeli conflict. ANader Entessar, Spring Hill Coll., Mobile, AL Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc.