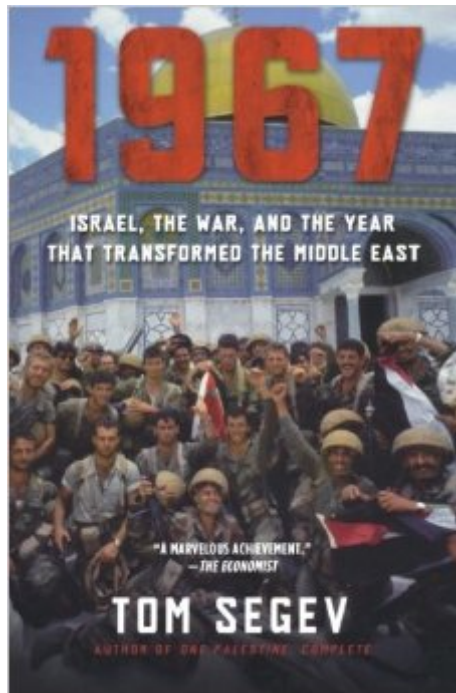


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1967: Israel, The War, And The Year That Transformed The Middle East



Synopsis

"A marvelous achievement . . . Anyone curious about the extraordinary six days of Arab-Israeli war will learn much from it." •The Economist

Tom Segev's acclaimed *One Palestine, Complete* and *The Seventh Million* overturned accepted views of the history of Israel. Now, in 1967, he brings his masterful skills to the watershed year when six days of war reshaped the country and the entire region. Going far beyond a military account, Segev re-creates the apocalyptic climate in Israel before the war as well as the country's bravado after its victory. He introduces the legendary figures •Moshe Dayan, Golda Meir, Gamal Abdel Nasser, and Lyndon Johnson• and an epic cast of soldiers, lobbyists, refugees, and settlers. He reveals as never before Israel's intimacy with the White House, and the political rivalries that sabotaged any chance of peace. Above all, Segev challenges the view that the war was inevitable, showing that behind the bloodshed was a series of disastrous miscalculations. Vibrant and original, *1967* is sure to stand as the definitive account of that pivotal year.

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Customer Reviews

This good book is a combined political and social history of Israel before, during, and after the Six Day War. Segev presents a detailed portrait of Israeli society and politics as being in the throes of a major transition. In 1966, Israel was in something of a funk. A major recession caused considerable distress, immigration had slowed, Israeli society was having difficulty assimilating Middle Eastern immigrants, and the Ashkenazi political elite was aging. Against this background, Segev describes the crisis with the Arab states primarily in terms of internal Israeli politics and the difficult decision to

take preemptive action. Segev does well in describing the complex political dynamics of politics leading up to the war and the decision to go to war. Segev sees internal Israeli politics as the major driver of the decision to go to war. He asserts that the war was avoidable and clearly sees the Israelis as the major decision makers. These views, however, are only assertions. Segev presents no real discussion of this contentious issue. A major problem with his assertion is that there is no discussion of the war from the Arab point of view or any documentation about Arab decision making. The issue of whether or not the war was avoidable, however, is not really the focus of the book. Segev's recurrent theme, which runs throughout the whole book and emerges most strongly in the final sections, is the internal contradictions of the Zionist ideal. The Zionists exhibited a quasi-mystical desire to possess Palestine but also wished to establish a European style democratic state. This second goal, however, conflicted with the reality that fulfillment of the Zionist project meant the involuntary displacement of Palestinian Arabs.

Mr. Segev has given readers another look into Israeli society and history. What I really liked about this book is how the author tackles the topic from all facets of Israeli society. He doesn't simply chronicle the decision making process among the leaders of Israeli society, but instead attempts to chronicle the story as seen by all Israelis. In doing so the author has written a psychological history as much as anything else. By going through letters, diaries, newspaper headlines and combing through government archives Mr. Segev attempts to give the reader an inside look at what was happening with Israeli society before, during and immediately after the Six Day War. He uses soldiers diaries to give the reader a sense of what they were fighting for and what they thought. He uses correspondence between relatives in Israel and abroad to show the mood of the Israeli people. He writes of the elitism of Ashkenazi and the impoverishment of the Mizrahi Jews. The feeling of gloom and failure of the Zionist dream seems almost palpable. The Zionist dream seems to have stalled after hitting the harsh realities. Israel's great leaders had gone into semi-retirement (although never really far from center stage). The recession on top of all the other real problems created a depressing mood on the eve of Israel's most resounding triumph. Mr. Segev does a great job detailing all of this, and he goes deep into the elites feelings and decision making process in the lead up to the war. But I had some serious problems with some of the history presented here. During the lead up to war Segev paints a picture of indecision and fear among the ministers. He writes about all night ministerial sessions discussing the dangers of war.

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