Arab Israeli Relations 1950 1979 (The Making Of The Middle East)

A Prelude to Conflict

The roots of Arab-Israeli relations stretch back centuries, marked by a complex interplay of religious, ethnic, and political tensions. However, the period between 1950 and 1979 witnessed a particularly tumultuous chapter, shaping the contours of the modern Middle East.

Following Israel's independence in 1948, the newly established Jewish state faced hostility from its Arab neighbors. The Arab League, formed in 1945, refused to recognize Israel's existence and declared a state of war with the young nation.



Arab-Israeli Relations, 1950-1979 (The Making of the Middle East) by Brian Baughan

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The 1956 Suez Crisis

One of the defining moments in Arab-Israeli relations was the 1956 Suez Crisis. Egypt under President Gamal Abdel Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal, prompting an invasion by Israel, Britain, and France. The crisis highlighted the region's volatility and the superpowers' involvement in its affairs.

The 1967 Six-Day War

The Arab-Israeli conflict erupted again in 1967 during the Six-Day War. Israel launched a preemptive strike against Egypt, Jordan, and Syria, ultimately expanding its territory by seizing the Sinai Peninsula, the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, and the Golan Heights. The war marked a turning point in Arab-Israeli relations, with Israel emerging as the dominant military power in the region.

The Yom Kippur War of 1973

In 1973, Egypt and Syria launched a surprise attack on Israel on Yom Kippur, the Jewish holy day. Israel initially struggled to repel the invasion but eventually regained its lost territories. The war highlighted the continued fragility of Arab-Israeli relations and the need for a diplomatic solution.

Diplomacy and the Camp David Accords

Following the Yom Kippur War, US President Jimmy Carter brokered a peace agreement between Israel and Egypt. The Camp David Accords, signed in 1979, represented a significant breakthrough in Arab-Israeli relations. Israel agreed to withdraw from the Sinai Peninsula, while Egypt recognized Israel's right to exist.

The Role of Superpowers

Throughout this period, the United States and the Soviet Union played pivotal roles in shaping Arab-Israeli relations. The US provided military aid to Israel, while the Soviet Union supported Arab regimes. The Cold War rivalry between the superpowers influenced the dynamics of the conflict.

Consequences and Legacy

The Arab-Israeli conflict of 1950-1979 had profound consequences for the Middle East. The wars displaced millions of people and created ongoing tensions between Israelis and Palestinians. The region became a hotbed of terrorism and instability.

The Camp David Accords marked a step towards reconciliation but failed to resolve the underlying issues of the conflict. The Palestinian question remained a key stumbling block, and subsequent peace initiatives struggled to find a just and lasting solution.

Timeline of Key Events

1948: Establishment of the State of Israel

• **1956:** Suez Crisis

1967: Six-Day War

1973: Yom Kippur War

1979: Camp David Accords

Image (alt attribute):

Historic handshake at the signing of the Camp David Accords, with President Carter, President Sadat, and Prime Minister Begin.

The Arab-Israeli conflict of 1950-1979 was a complex and transformative epoch in the history of the Middle East. It shaped the region's political landscape, fostered tensions, and created the conditions for ongoing instability. Despite the Camp David Accords, the conflict continues to impact the lives of millions of people in the region and beyond. Understanding this period is essential for comprehending the complexities of the modern Middle East.



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