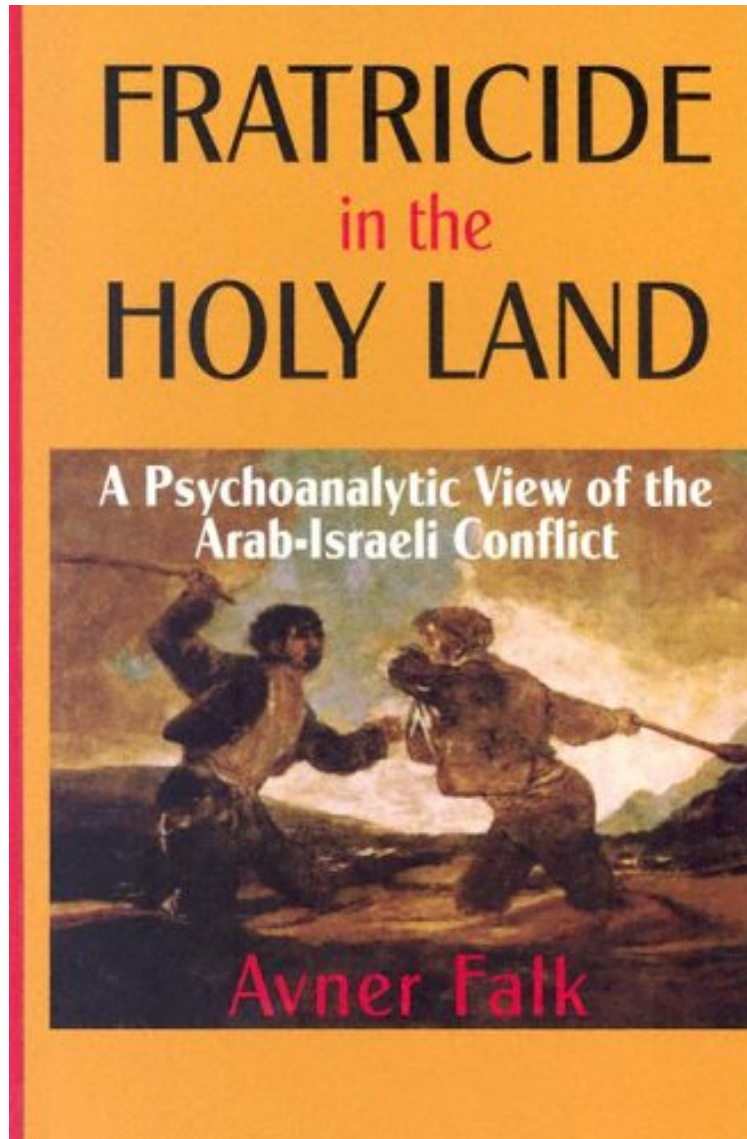


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FRATRICIDE IN THE HOLY LAND: A PSYCHOANALYTIC VIEW OF THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT

Avner Falk

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Avner Falk : Fratricide in the Holy Land: A Psychoanalytic View of the Arab-Israeli Conflict before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Fratricide in the Holy Land: A Psychoanalytic View of the Arab-Israeli Conflict:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Israel - Palestine Conflict Psychology (2000)By William Garrison

Jr. This Israeli author gives a very balanced overview of the Palestine/Arab-Israel dispute as interpreted by various psychological theories. He presents the conflicting ideas from Arab, Israeli and other psychologists, whether they be pro- or anti-Israel, or pro- or anti-Arab. He even offers the opinions of those who argue that there are no sound psychological theories for the dispute. Along with the other views, he offers his own: that both sides cannot find peace with one another until both acknowledge that they suffer from failing in getting over their grieving for past losses (while he makes the assertion, he offers few concrete 'findings' for his contention). The author also reviews different theories as to how the suicide-bombers justify their actions. Despite his extensive review of many psychological issues, and even if all antagonists were to acknowledge his theory, the author does not present anything like a "12-step program" as to how the antagonists can achieve "peace." The author offers no 'solutions' as to who is going to 'own' the Temple Mount, where Jerusalem's city borders are to be drawn, or where the 'Barrier Wall' is to be finalized. Nonetheless, this book makes for an informative read, but leaves the reader still searching for a book/study that seems "convincing" that psychoanalysis has something to offer in resolving this dispute. Also see: "Counseling and Psychotherapy with Arabs and Muslims" by Marwan Dwairy.

2 of 3 people found the following review helpful. deeper understanding of Arab-Israeli struggle

By Henry Berry Falk opens by surveying the "large body of scholarly literature on the Arab-Israeli conflict." The bulk of this scholarship is contained in the bibliography of about 50 pages. Yet the psychology of either side as accounting for the origins of the conflict or as a basic factor in sustaining it is not dealt with as a particular subject in any book; and is rarely even referred to in the volumes literature. Falk is an Israeli psychologist concentrating in political psychology and psychohistory who goes into this ignored psychological factor in depth. The psychology of the opposing sides as formed by their histories, ethnicity, and ties to the land is analyzed, as well as the psychology of leaders of each side, particularly Ariel Sharon and Yassir Arafat. "Psychogeography" is used to clarify the fierce competing visions for the same relatively small area of the Middle East the Palestinians and Israelis have been fighting over for decades. Falk's chapter on "The Psychology of Suicide Bombers" is especially timely and informative considering 9/11 and current events in Iraq.

8 of 14 people found the following review helpful. Crazy

By Jill Malter It is obvious that a big part of the problem in the Arab war against Israel is psychological. After all, consider the fact that the Arabs have an Empire of 5,500,000 square miles. Rather than try to defend this Empire or improve it in some way, they spend an inordinate amount of time trying to steal some or all of Israel's land. Israel is a nation with about 10,000 square miles. It is land-poor. Eventually, nations with several million people will wind up with well over 10,000 square miles. To risk an Empire of 5,500,000 square miles just to cheat a few people in an undersized neighboring nation is not merely unwise. It is insane. One can also consider the effect on Israel of Jews having been persecuted and mistreated for many centuries, and of having no authorities that were willing to defend their rights of life, liberty, or property. As well as the effect of Israel being surrounded by hostile neighbors, and needing peace so much that it is likely to be seduced by mere promises of peace, making it unnecessary for anyone to ever need to offer it the real thing. And I think one would do well to ask about the United Nations, which has exposed itself as counterproductive in dealing with such problems. It must have been so much fun for its members to cheat the Israelis with a barrage of dishonest anti-Israeli resolutions. But once again, was it really worth practically destroying the UN just to cheat a few Jews? Of course not. Those folks have a mental problem. Consider the academic departments around the world that deal with the Middle East. We see a huge amount of silly anti-Israeli propaganda taught as though it were truth. That very seriously violates academic standards. Is it worth it to get rid of academic standards just to cheat a few Jews? Again, no. Once again, there are some folks whose actions may need to be explained at least partially in psychological terms. Also, consider various media outlets around the world, as well as some traditionally liberal newspapers and magazines, many of which have sided with some extremely right-wing Arab anti-semites. They've abandoned any semblance of journalistic standards, and they have also betrayed any liberal principles they might have had. Why? Just to cheat a few Jews. They have some mental problems as well. Many Levantine Arabs appear to have adopted a philosophy of destruction, with a huge number of people willing to kill themselves....just to hurt a few Jews. That's a very counterproductive philosophy for a society to adopt. And it is a good idea to discuss the mental problems of those who do it. Yes, we do need a book on this topic. But this one is not it. This book just rambles on and on, sometimes even making good points, but showing no justification for anything in it. The author simply says anything that pops into his head. And even very natural events seem to merit some wild psychological reinterpretation from him. Even the title seems unjustified, given that the Arabs and Jews don't appear to have the rapport with each other that one would normally associate with brothers. I would be doing everyone a disservice to give this book anything but one star. Some fundamentals of the Arab war on Israel have little to do with leaders, or with psychology. Arabs have been demanding to get rid of Jewish rights in the region. These rights include life, liberty, and property. Israel protects those rights, and it exists as a response to threats against them. So Arabs have been demanding to get rid of Israel. For the Jews to fight back in defence of their rights is not mysterious. It demands no psychological explanation. And I think it's necessary for anyone writing on this topic to make it clear that many events in the Arab war on Israel are of such a nature. One of Falk's major points is that a big role in the conflict is a society's inability to mourn its losses. But I see no convincing evidence that this is the case, nor that it would be important if it were the case. Now, I have to admit that I did enjoy reading this book. I found it very entertaining. But

even though I found many of the statements to be quite interesting, I didn't feel that it had much content. I expected this book to be strongly political in nature. It isn't. To its credit, it is politically neutral. And some folks may want to read it just for that. Still, in the midst of all this neutrality were a few tiny statements that I did resent. For example, Falk says that "while some extreme right-wing Israeli Jews deny that their country is occupying another people's land..." Well! The West Bank is disputed land. One does not need to be right-wing, or Israeli, or Jewish, or extreme, or Wrong to notice that! One merely needs to be honest. Falk also mentions that Sharon "repeatedly humiliated" Yasser Arafat in his Ramallah compound! And he speculates as to why. But he ought to be speculating about why the rest of the world, let alone Sharon, was willing to let Arafat stay alive, rather than arrest him, try him for crimes against humanity, convict him, and execute him. That's a far better question. Still, these last two issues are truly minor, and they have little to do with the value of this book. Or, as I would put it, the lack of value of this book.

This is the first English-language book ever to apply psychoanalytic knowledge to the understanding of the most intractable international struggle in our world today—the Arab-Israeli conflict. Two ethnic groups fight over a single territory that both consider to be theirs by historical right—essentially a rational matter. But close historical examination shows that the two parties to this tragic conflict have missed innumerable opportunities for a rational partition of the territory between them and for a permanent state of peace and prosperity rather than perennial bloodshed and misery. Falk suggests that a way to understand and explain such irrational matters is to examine the unconscious aspects of the conflict. He examines large-group psychology, nationalism, group narcissism, psychogeography, the Arab and Israeli minds, and suicidal terrorism, and he offers psychobiographical studies of Ariel Sharon and Yasser Arafat, two key players in this tragic conflict today.

"Falk's command of many literatures and disciplines is at once awesome and necessary for the task of psychoanalytic interpretation he assigns himself." Howard F. Stein, Ph.D., professor of family and preventive medicine, University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center "I believe it is important that attempts be made to apply psychoanalytic ideas to public events. Dr. Falk is to be commended for the courage to do so." David A. Rothstein, M.D. From the Publisher Terrace Books About the Author Avner Falk is one of the foremost Israeli political psychologists and has been a clinical lecturer in psychiatry at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem School of Medicine. He is author of psychoanalytic biographies of Moshe Dayan, David Ben-Gurion, and Theodor Herzl, and of *A Psychoanalytic History of the Jews*.