



# THE FALL OF ISRAEL

THE DEGRADATION OF ISRAEL'S  
POLITICS, ECONOMY & MILITARY



DAN STEINBOCK



*“The Fall of Israel attempts the gigantic task of making sense out of the current situation in Israel/Palestine. It is ambitious in its scope and breadth, yet it successfully creates a context in which we can understand the rapidly shifting and moving events in the Middle East. Vital reading for anyone concerned with this issue and provides perceptive insight that is sorely needed.”*

JONATHAN KUTTAB, international human rights attorney,  
Co-founder of Nonviolence International and Al-Haq for Palestinian human rights,  
Author, *Beyond the Two-State Solution* and *The Truth Shall Set You Free*

*“Dr. Steinbock’s research illuminates what the public is reluctant to digest: Namely that Israel operates in open rebellion against international law, refusing to live in peace with Palestine’s native population and with neighbouring states including Lebanon and Syria. Israel’s apartheid and genocidal policies have made it a pariah on the international stage, as manifested in countless UN Resolutions and in the International Court of Justice’s Orders and two Advisory Opinions, which Israel has ignored, hitherto with impunity, thanks to the connivance of the U.S., UK and EU, and the complicity of the media. The concept known as Zionism was already obsolete when formulated in the 19th century and the attempt to implement it has led to countless wars in the Middle East. Not without reason, the UN General Assembly called Zionism “a form of racism” in its Resolution 3379 of 10 November 1975. Whereas the resolution was withdrawn in 1991, when it seemed that Israel was ready to negotiate in good faith to allow a Palestinian state to emerge, the human rights situation has worsened significantly with the illegal blockade and bombardment of Gaza, the ongoing theft of Palestinian lands and relentless construction of ‘settlements.’ In a very real sense, Israel is a failed state, but one that through its hubris and lack of control could embroil the entire world in a nuclear confrontation.”*

ALFRED-MAURICE DE ZAYAS is UN Independent Expert on the Promotion of a  
Democratic and Equitable International Order,  
international expert on human rights and ethnic expulsions

*“Dr Steinbock’s book *The Fall of Israel*, is an illuminating and intelligent contribution to our understanding of the events in the Middle East. It makes clear the long roots of the conflict in which the atrocious attacks in October 2023 were a predictable consequence of decisions taken and policies implemented by Israel during many decades. Only through an honest and open recognition of this history will peace in the region become possible.”*

DR. ERKKI TUOMIOJA is a historian and the longest serving Minister for Foreign Affairs, Finland, who also had a prominent role as the spokesman of European foreign policy

*“The Fall of Israel explains excellently how 76 years of repression and suffering for the Palestinians has been facilitated by the unconditional American support for Israel. The response from the extremist Israeli government to the terror of October 2023 has caused total destruction of Gaza, mass-killing of civilians and an accelerating, violent colonization of the West Bank. This further destabilizes the whole Middle East Region and can lead to implosion of Israel itself.”*

MOGENS LYKKETOFT is former Danish Foreign Minister and  
President of the United Nations General Assembly 2015–2016

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5 . 42

# PREFACE



Not so long ago, Rimal, a coastal neighborhood in Gaza City, was considered one of the more prosperous neighborhoods in the Strip. When several Palestinian militant groups led by Hamas launched a coordinated offensive against the nearby Israeli towns and settlements, Gaza border crossings and adjacent military installations on October 7, 2023, it triggered Israel's mass mobilization and a lethal ground assault. In just four days, Israeli bombs pummeled the neighborhood into nothingness. Today Rimal remains on the map, but most of the built environment has been reduced to rubble and ruin. As this book's top cover photo attests, Rimal is just one of the many neighborhoods in the Gaza Strip that has been leveled into oblivion.

How could this happen? Why would Israel impose collective punishment on the Palestinian people for the offensive of a few? Why would such a sentence be allowed to unfold, day after day and night after night, by the international community? Why would tens of thousands of women, children and elderly have to die for the attack by the militants? Why would the United States, Israel's powerful military ally, not intervene to ensure at least a semblance of proportionality? Why would the European Union, so proud of upholding "human rights" elsewhere, tacitly permit the carnage? And why would the international community proclaim, "the whole world is watching," while looking the other way?

Not so long ago, the state of Israel was established as a "Jewish and democratic state." And yet, the months leading to October 7 were characterized by massive Israeli demonstrations, the largest in Israel's history, against the proposed judicial reforms by the Netanyahu cabinet, as the book's lower cover photo attests. Aiming to turn a secular democracy into a Jewish autocracy – while some of its extreme members would prefer a theocracy – the most far-right government in the history of Israel has continued to push this judicial coup amid the fog of war. These cleavages in the Israeli society figure large in its political disintegration.

These are some of the haunting questions that led to title of this book, *The Fall of Israel*. The common denominator of the destruction of the Gaza Strip and the mass protests against Jewish autocracy is the fall of Israel. Today, it pervades the Israeli economy, politics, society and the military and thereby its very moral fiber.



The path to the obliteration of Gaza was paved by the confluence of a set of longstanding forces. It is this great conjuncture that has transformed Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories while driving the region to the edge.

*The Fall of Israel* connects the dots among these lethal headwinds. It outlines the central drivers of this simmering tinderbox: the successive expulsions of Palestinians, the aggressive expansion of Jewish settlements in the occupied territories, a half century of failed U.S. diplomacy in the Middle East, and Israel's militarization, enabled by the symbiotic bilateral ties with Washington and massive U.S. military aid. In the Gaza War, these ties fostered paradigms of devastation, such as the Dahiya doctrine, the Hannibal Directive and mass assassination factories, backed by pioneering artificial intelligence.

What makes the book unique is its comprehensive scope. It addresses the efforts to institute a Jewish rather than a secular state. It shows how the postwar labor alignments fueled by labor Zionism were replaced by the hard-right coalitions driven by revisionist Zionism, thanks to U.S. neoliberal economic policies, assertive neoconservatism and Jewish-American donors. It also explains the causes behind the rise of the Messianic far-right, centrist parties, and the failure of the Left.

*The Fall of Israel* covers the country's political and ethnic divides, economic polarization, social and military changes, the shifts in the Palestinian struggle for sovereignty, the apartheid regime in the occupied territories and the genocidal atrocities, the regional and global reverberations, and the ensuing human and economic costs, both prior and subsequent to Israel's fatal war on Gaza. There, the nightmarish Israeli actions have led to the engagement of the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court, international calls for international boycotts, and massive domestic and international protests. In the long view, the ethnic expulsions and the settlements have contributed to the destabilization of the broader region since the early 1970s and are now compounding its politico-economic and geopolitical crisis.

The corrosion of Israeli society and politics was already reflected in and constrained by extraordinary economic polarization, as reflected by the liabilities of its high-tech cluster, the talent "brain drain," the undermined welfare state, rising poverty and the subsidized religious sector. But now, the already evident political, economic and military costs to Israel of the Gaza war have set the stage for extraordinary uncertainty in the foreseeable future. Should Israel continue its present trajectory, it will bankrupt its economy.



In a 1968 essay titled “The Territories,” Yeshayahu Leibowitz, an Israeli Orthodox Jew, polymath and public intellectual, envisioned a nightmarish future. What the West puffed up as Israel’s glorious triumph in the 1967 Six-Day War, Leibowitz saw as a dark prelude to endless colonial wars that could turn Israel into a police state, subvert democratic institutions, foster corruption, transform Palestinians into an exploited underclass and the Israeli military into suffering from the kind of colonial demoralization seen previously in Algeria and Vietnam (and more recently in Iraq and Afghanistan).

Despite his stunning prevision, even Leibowitz failed to see the occupation as an effect of the prior Palestinian expulsions since the 1940s. Until recently, many attributed the fall of Israel mainly to the occupation of the Palestinian territories in the 1967 War and the subsequent expansion of Jewish settlements. Even though colonization and the settlements have played a central role in the conflict, they are its proximate effect. It is the ethnic expulsions of the Palestinian Arabs that is the modus operandi of the conflict – from the late 1940s to contemporary Gaza and the West Bank.

Against the prevailing conventional wisdom, *The Fall of Israel* shows why the rise and fall of the two-state solution between the Israeli Jews and Palestinian Arabs is not a recent phenomenon, and how it actually had already unfolded in the mid-1950s – hence the eight decades of missed opportunities, lost peace prospects, and unwarranted “forever wars.”



Due to its military might and catastrophic complicity, the United States is today both a part of the solution and the problem. Conversely, Chinese efforts to counter military force with diplomacy and economic development reflect a ray of hope after decades of wasted opportunities and generations of lost lives.

In the region, an equitable and enduring solution can no longer come from within. It must come from without. What is needed is international cooperation – not by the prosperous West alone, but by both the leading advanced economies led by Washington and Brussels, and by the largest emerging economies, spearheaded by Beijing. Unipolar solutions are doomed in the increasingly multipolar world economy.

On October 24, 2023, in the wake of weeks of genocidal atrocities in the Gaza Strip, UN Secretary-General António Guterres condemned the Hamas offensive while pointing out that “Hamas did not happen in a vacuum.”

What follows is the story of this dark vacuum.

# CONTENTS

Preface .....	v
---------------	---

## **Part I THE GREAT CONJUNCTURE**

<b>Chapter 1 Legacies of Ethnic Expulsions .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>ETHNIC CLEANSING .....</b>	<b>4</b>
Elusive Legal Status of Ethnic Cleansing .....	4
Furor over Rabin's Memoirs .....	6
Deir Yassin and Restricted Archives .....	7
<b>ONE COIN, TWO SIDES .....</b>	<b>8</b>
Two Historical Narratives .....	8
Transfers and Partitions as Imperial Legacies .....	10
Father of the Forests, Architect of the Transfer .....	11
Plan <i>Dalet</i> .....	13
<b>SEPARATE AND UNEQUAL .....</b>	<b>14</b>
Decades of Palestinian Expulsions .....	15
The Long Emergency .....	17
Rabbi Meir Kahane's Legacy of Hate .....	19
The Long Displacement, .....	21
<b>THE QUEST FOR UNTAPPED ENERGY RESERVES .....</b>	<b>24</b>
Gaza's Blockade, Offshore Gas, Inflated Hopes .....	24
An Alternative to the Suez Canal .....	26
Denying Palestinians Their Energy Wealth .....	29
<b>ISRAEL'S SECRET MEMORANDUM .....</b>	<b>30</b>
Gaza's Population Transfer .....	30
Investing in the Cleansed Gaza Beachfronts .....	32
"Settlement Brings Security" .....	33
The Compensation Challenge .....	35

<b>Chapter 2 Settlement Expansion</b> .....	<b>38</b>
<b>RISE OF THE SETTLEMENTS</b> .....	<b>38</b>
Labor’s Allon Plan.....	39
A Covert Military Plan to Confiscate Land for Settlements .....	40
First Wave of Settlement Expansion .....	43
<b>THE WAR ON PEACE</b> .....	<b>45</b>
The Turn to the (Hard) Right.....	45
Booming “Lifestyle” Settlements .....	47
The Irreversibility Thesis.....	49
<b>SETTLEMENTS FOR NATIONAL REDEMPTION</b> .....	<b>50</b>
Jewish Underground, Gush Emunim and American Donors .....	50
Rabbi Kook’s Apocalyptic Jewish Redemption.....	52
Networks of Hate .....	53
Financial Proxy Revisionism.....	55
<b>SETTLEMENT ESCALATION</b> .....	<b>57</b>
The Third Wave of Settlement Expansion .....	57
U.S. Charities and Settler Funding.....	59
The Rise of the Settlements .....	60
Settler Violence .....	64
Settlements as a Security Burden.....	67
<b>JUDEOCIZING PALESTINE</b> .....	<b>69</b>
The Israeli Legal Simulacrum to Legitimize the Occupation .....	69
The Extra-Legal Effort to Annex the West Bank .....	70
From a Buffer Zone to Smotrich’s “Decisive Plan” in Gaza .....	72

<b>Chapter 3 The Ties That Blind</b> .....	<b>74</b>
<b>HEDGING BETS</b> .....	<b>75</b>
Toward the UN Partition Plan .....	75
From Recognition to Trusteeship to Recognition .....	77
<b>CHOOSING SIDES</b> .....	<b>78</b>
Reverse Course and the Cold War .....	78
Palestinians as a “Refugee Problem” .....	79
Origins of the U.S.-Israel “Special Relationship” .....	80
Oil-for-Protection and the Petrodollar .....	81
<b>DEEPENING TIES</b> .....	<b>82</b>
Yom Kippur War: At the Edge of a Nuclear War .....	82
An Emerging U.S.-Palestinian Dialogue .....	83
With Reagan, Strategic Military Partnership .....	84
Toward the Oslo Accords .....	85
Rabin’s Assassination .....	86
<b>SYMBIOSIS</b> .....	<b>90</b>
The George W. Bush Mobilization .....	90
Obama Diplomatic Caution .....	92
Iron Dome Interceptor: Developed by Israel, Co-produced in America .....	93
The Trump Reversal .....	94
Biden “Iron-Clad Ties” .....	96
<b>MILITARY DIPLOMACY</b> .....	<b>97</b>
The Militarization of U.S. Foreign Policy .....	97
The Rise of U.S. Military Aid to Israel—and in Israel .....	99

<b>Chapter 4 Perils of Militarization</b> .....	104
<b>SOURCES OF ISRAEL'S MILITARY SUPREMACY</b> .....	105
Israel's National Security .....	105
Israel's Qualitative Military Edge .....	108
The Costs of Military Supremacy .....	109
The Burden of Israel-U.S. Military Ties .....	112
<b>EXPORTING WEAPONS AND SURVEILLANCE</b> .....	113
From Agricultural Aid to Arms Transfers and South Africa .....	113
Israeli Arms Suppliers and the Periphery Doctrine .....	114
Military Ties with Autocratic Democracies .....	115
International Arms Transfers .....	118
<b>THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES AS TEST LABORATORIES</b> .....	120
Israeli Drone Hegemony .....	120
"World's Most Powerful Cyberweapon": NSO's Pegasus .....	122
Algocide: Artificial Intelligence, Human Atrocities .....	123
<b>DOCTRINES OF DEVASTATION</b> .....	126
Varieties of Necrotization .....	126
The Dahiya Doctrine: From Beirut to Gaza .....	127
The Hannibal Directive .....	130
Mass Assassination Factories .....	133
<b>WAS OCTOBER 7 AVOIDABLE?</b> .....	135
The Neglected Gaza Envelope .....	135
Abandoned Hostages .....	137
Ignored Intelligence .....	138
Convenient Narratives and Inconvenient Truths .....	140

## **Part II THE TRANSFORMATION OF ISRAEL**

---

<b>Chapter 5 Zionism, Democracy and a Jewish Nation</b> .....	145
<b>BUILDING A NATION</b> .....	146
The Pre-State Waves of Jewish Immigration .....	146
Ashkenazi Elite, Sephardi/Mizrahi Majority .....	148
Contradictions of Zionism .....	151
The Rise of Labor Zionism .....	153
<b>CONSOLIDATING THE JEWISH NATION</b> .....	155
From Class to Nation .....	155
Revisionist Zionism, Fascism and Liberalism .....	156
Americanizing Zionism .....	159
<b>WHAT IS ISRAEL?</b> .....	161
The Failure of the <i>Judenstaat</i> .....	161
Universalist Diaspora, Nationalist Israel .....	163
The Zionist Cultural Wars .....	164
The Struggle over a <i>Jewish</i> Nation-State .....	166
<b>FROM DEMOCRACY TO AUTOCRACY</b> .....	168
The Quest for “Judicial Reforms” .....	168
Ben-Gurion’s Concern with an Official Constitution .....	169
Toward Constitutional Counter-Revolution .....	170
Mass Protests Against Judicial Reforms .....	172
<b>SUBVERSION OF THE JEWISH-DEMOCRATIC STATE</b> .....	175
Emergence of the Dual State .....	175
From Weimar Germany to Israel .....	176

**Chapter 6 The Fall of Israeli Politics . . . . . 179**

**CLASSES AND CLEAVAGES . . . . . 180**

Complexities of Israeli Politics . . . . . 180

Postwar Labor Governments' Versions of Socialism . . . . . 182

How the Occupation Undermined Labor Governments . . . . . 183

**RISE OF THE RIGHT, FAR-RIGHT AND CENTER . . . . . 184**

The Rise of the Right . . . . . 184

Israeli Kahanism, American Money . . . . . 186

The Romance with the Center . . . . . 188

**U.S. NEOCONSERVATISM, JEWISH-AMERICAN FUNDS . . . . . 190**

The Netanyahu's Revisionist Roots . . . . . 190

Netanyahu and Israel's Hard Right . . . . . 191

Likud's "Clean Break" from the Oslo Accords . . . . . 194

The Agenda of Casino Mogul Sheldon Adelson . . . . . 196

Kohelet Policy Forum: U.S. Funds, Israeli Neoconservatism . . . . . 198

**TOWARD THE MESSIANIC FAR-RIGHT . . . . . 202**

Rise of the Far-Right and Ultra-Orthodox . . . . . 202

From the Fringes to the Cabinet . . . . . 203

A Center-Right Alternative . . . . . 206

Toward a Resuscitated Left? . . . . . 207

The Diminished Peace Prospects . . . . . 208

<b>Chapter 7 Israel’s Economic Erosion</b> . . . . .	<b>211</b>
<b>ECONOMIC RESILIENCY TESTED, AGAIN</b> . . . . .	<b>212</b>
Structural Transformation . . . . .	212
Rapid, Postwar Catch-Up Growth . . . . .	213
From Shock Therapy to Stabilization . . . . .	214
Neoliberalism and Globalization . . . . .	215
2011 Cost-of-Living Crisis and Its Aftermath . . . . .	216
Rising Income and Wealth Inequality . . . . .	218
<b>THE DISCONTENTS OF THE ISRAELI ECONOMY</b> . . . . .	<b>220</b>
Assets and Liabilities of Israeli High-Tech . . . . .	220
Intel’s Second Thoughts . . . . .	222
From “Brain Gain” to “Brain Drain” . . . . .	223
The Welfare State Under Threat . . . . .	226
<b>THE HAREDI CHALLENGE</b> . . . . .	<b>228</b>
Secular Versus Orthodox and Haredi Israel . . . . .	228
Secular Jews, Haredim and Fiscal Nightmares . . . . .	229
<b>THE GAZA WAR AND ISRAEL’S ECONOMY</b> . . . . .	<b>232</b>
October 6, 1973 Versus October 7, 2023 . . . . .	232
Corporate Warfare, Civilian Nightmare . . . . .	233
The Costs of the War . . . . .	237
Neoliberal and Alternative Narratives . . . . .	238
The End of the Road . . . . .	240

## **Part III REPERCUSSIONS IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND BEYOND**

---

### **Chapter 8 The Struggle for a Sovereign Palestine. . 245**

<b>UNEVEN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</b> .....	246
Golda's Hesitation .....	246
Palestine's Dual Economy. ....	247
Israeli Occupation and Partial Integration. ....	249
<b>MODERNIZATION AND ISLAMISM</b> .....	251
Al-Banna's Islamic Modernization .....	252
Qutb's Islamism. ....	253
<b>FROM ARMED STRUGGLE AND PEACE TALKS TO WAR</b> .....	254
Rise of Arafat's PLO .....	254
Rise of Hamas. ....	255
From Interim Peace to Provisional War .....	256
Netanyahu, Hamas and Divide-and-Rule. ....	259
<b>TOWARD THE ENDGAME.</b> .....	260
Democracy Under Attack .....	260
The West Bank: Isolation and Fragmentation. ....	262
The Gaza Strip: From Economic Blockade to Devastation .....	264
Hamas's Armed Struggle, Tunnels and Missiles. ....	266
Calm Before the Storm: The 2018–2019 Gaza Border Protests ...	268
<b>PALESTINIAN ECONOMIC DEVASTATION</b> .....	270
The Fall of Gaza, Stagnation of the West Bank. ....	270
Struggle for Palestinian Leadership: Barghouti, Abbas, Haniyeh and Sinwar. ....	272
The Beijing Declaration: Unifying the Palestinian Front .....	275
The Costs of Occupation .....	277
<b>FANTASIES AND REALITIES</b> .....	279
The Gaza 2035 Plan: A Hard Sell of Historical Magnitude .....	279
The Realities of Gaza .....	282

## **Chapter 9 From Ultra-Apartheid to Genocide . . . . 286**

<b>THE GENESIS OF ULTRA-APARTHEID IN PALESTINE . . . . .</b>	<b>287</b>
Apartheid South Africa and Zionism . . . . .	287
Ultra-Apartheid in Israel . . . . .	289
Segregation: From South Africa to Israel . . . . .	291
<b>INTERNATIONAL BOYCOTT EFFORTS . . . . .</b>	<b>294</b>
From Pre-State Boycotts to the Arab League . . . . .	294
Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) Movement . . . . .	296
International University Protests against the Gaza War . . . . .	299
Israeli and International Companies in Occupied Territories . . . . .	301
<b>THE CASE FOR GENOCIDE . . . . .</b>	<b>303</b>
South Africa's Genocide Case Against Israel . . . . .	303
Lemkin's Mission, Politics, and Genocide Convention . . . . .	305
Suppression of the Holocaust . . . . .	306
Weaponization of the Holocaust . . . . .	307
Mossad's ICC Meltdown . . . . .	309
<b>STARVATION SCHEMES . . . . .</b>	<b>311</b>
Israel's Red Line for Starvation . . . . .	311
Starvation in Historical Comparison . . . . .	313
<b>THE CONDITIONS OF GENOCIDE . . . . .</b>	<b>315</b>
Israel and Genocide Convention . . . . .	315
United States, the "Unnamed Co-Conspirator" . . . . .	317
The ICJ Condemnation of Israel's Occupation . . . . .	318

## **Chapter 10 Prospects of Regional Escalation . . . 320**

<b>THE ECLIPSE OF AMERICAN HEGEMONY</b> . . . . .	320
The U.S.-Saudi Alliance . . . . .	320
Regime Change and Destabilization . . . . .	322
Economic and Human Costs of the Post-9/11 Wars. . . . .	323
<b>A REGION IN FLUX</b> . . . . .	324
Rise of the Global South . . . . .	324
China, Development and Multipolarity . . . . .	327
The Not-So-Grand Bargain. . . . .	329
<b>UNTENABLE STATUS QUO</b> . . . . .	331
U.S. Foreign Assistance in the Middle East . . . . .	331
Egypt: An Unsustainable Status Quo . . . . .	333
Jordan: Between a Rock and a Hard Place. . . . .	334
<b>THE AXIS OF RESISTANCE</b> . . . . .	336
Targeting Iran . . . . .	336
Syria: Lingering Proxy Wars . . . . .	339
Yemen: Houthi Strikes over the Red Sea . . . . .	340
<b>THE CHALLENGE FACING HEZBOLLAH</b> . . . . .	343
Lebanon: A Sectarian Balance at Risk. . . . .	343
The Power of the Party of God. . . . .	344
The Hezbollah Inter-Metro Tunnel Networks . . . . .	346
An Israel-Hezbollah War Scenario . . . . .	347
<b>THE ULTIMATE RISK</b> . . . . .	350
Nuclear Ambiguity . . . . .	350
The Begin Doctrine . . . . .	351
The Deterioration of Israel’s Military Sovereignty . . . . .	353
The U.S. War Games: A 2027 Israel-Iran Nuclear Confrontation . . . . .	354
Projected Human Costs of an Israel-Iran Nuclear Confrontation . . . . .	354
“Nuclear Winter” with Biblical Characteristics . . . . .	356
State of Regional Escalation . . . . .	357

<b>Chapter 11</b>	<b>What Is the Way Forward?</b>	<b>360</b>
<b>THE ELUSIVE PEACE PROCESS</b>		<b>361</b>
The Peace Process and U.S. Hegemony		361
<b>THE RISE AND FALL OF THE TWO-STATE SOLUTION</b>		<b>362</b>
Palestine, Partition and the First UN Mediation		362
The First Bernadotte Plan		363
The Second Bernadotte Proposal		365
<b>THE PRELUDE TO THE FOREVER WARS</b>		<b>367</b>
In the Valley of Hell		367
The Stern Assassins		370
False Flag Operation?		372
<b>TOWARD THE NEXT BIG WAR</b>		<b>373</b>
No Frontiers, No Peace		374
Reprisals for Expansion		375
The Missed Opportunity		378
The Vicious Repercussions		381
<b>A LETHAL IMPASSE</b>		<b>385</b>
One-State Models		385
Disguised Two-State Solutions		388
Two-State Veracities		390
<b>AVERTING “THE LONG-RANGE DISASTER”</b>		<b>392</b>
Eclipse of American Hegemony		392
Multipolar World, Multipolar Peace		395
<b>Endnotes</b>		<b>397</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b>		<b>450</b>
<b>About the Author</b>		<b>451</b>
<b>Index</b>		<b>452</b>

# LIST OF FIGURES

1-1	Depopulated Palestinian Locations in Israel	16
1-2	Intimidation by Terror: “Gas the Arabs”	20
1-3	Mapping a Century of Ethnic Cleansing	23
1-4	Eastern Mediterranean Gas Fields	26
1-5	Ben Gurion Canal Project	28
1-6	“Returning to Gaza”	34
2-1	The Allon Plan, 1967	41
2-2	The Temple Mount Tinderbox	50
2-3	Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Kook’s Acolyte Networks	55
2-4	How U.S. Charities Fund Israeli Settlements	61
2-5	Settlements and Expansion	62-63
2-6	Pogroms from Kishinev to Huwara	66
3-1	The Great Imbalance: U.S. Foreign Aid to Israel and Palestine	75
3-2	The 1993 Oslo Accords	87
3-3	U.S. Bilateral Aid to the Palestinians, 1988–2023	91
3-4	The Iron Dome	93
3-5	America’s Military Diplomacy	98
3-6	U.S. Aid to Israel, 1949–2023	100
4-1	Israel’s Military Expenditure	110
4-2	Israel’s Arms Exports and Imports, 1960–2022	118
4-3	Israeli Drones	121
4-4	Dahiya Doctrine: Gaza, 2023	129
4-5	Who Scorched the Cars?	132
5-1	Immigration to Israel by Country, 1948–Present	150
5-2	Greater Israel by Irgun in the Early 1930s	153
5-3	Jabotinsky and Mussolini, Revisionism and Fascism	157
5-4	Jewish Population in the United States and Israel	159
5-5	Neo-Zionist Im Tirtzu and U.S. Neoconservative Funding	165
5-6	Judicial Reforms and Ethnic Cleansing	172
5-7	Israeli Mass Protests against Judicial Reforms	173
6-1	Israeli Election Results, 1949–2022	181
6-2	Decline of Labor Dominance	184
6-3	Netanyahu’s Web of Revisionist Zionism	192
6-4	Moskowitz’s Money Networks	195
6-5	Kohelet and Some of Its Spinoffs	200
6-6	Messianic Far-Right	204
6-7	Israeli Politics, Prospects for Peace	209

7-1	Israel's Structural Transformation .....	213
7-2	Israeli Housing Protests .....	217
7-3	Rise of Israeli Inequality Since the 1980s .....	219
7-4	Talent Emigration from Israel.....	224–225
7-5	Israeli Population Forecast, by Population Groups .....	231
7-6	Gaza Profiteers.....	234
7-7	White Phosphorus Bombs from Vietnam to Gaza .....	236–237
8-1	West Bank After Oslo Accords .....	257
8-2	2006 Palestinian Legislative Election .....	261
8-3	Isolation and Fragmentation .....	263
8-4	Economic Divergence.....	271
8-5	Palestinian Leaders.....	274
8-6	Beijing Declaration: Palestinian Signatories .....	276
8-7	The Gaza 2035 Plan .....	280
8-8	The Gazan Domicide .....	283
9-1	Justice in the Hague .....	287
9-2	Segregation: From South Africa to Israel .....	291
9-3	Incomes of South African Blacks and Palestinians.....	293
9-4	Guide to BDS Campaigns.....	297
9-5	2024 Protests against the Gaza War on University Campuses .....	300
9-6	Israeli and International Companies in the Occupied Territories ...	302
9-7	Weaponizing the Holocaust in the UN .....	309
9-8	Daily Calorie Intake in Extreme Situations: Selected Examples ...	314
10-1	U.S.-Saudi Alliance .....	321
10-2	Refugees, People in Refugee-like Situations, by Country of Asylum .....	325
10-3	The 21st Century Silk Road.....	326
10-4	U.S. Foreign Assistance in the Middle East and North Africa .....	331
10-5	Axis of Resistance and Iran's Influence .....	337
10-6	World Nuclear Forces.....	350
11-1	Bernadotte Plan (1948) and Armistice Agreement (1949).....	367
11-2	Count Folke Bernadotte in Jerusalem .....	368
11-3	The Odd Couple: Former PM with Former Assassin .....	372
11-4	Israel's Military Dynamic: From Dayan to Sharon to Present .....	377
11-5	Moshe Sharett's Struggle for Peace .....	378
11-6	Total Casualties in Palestine-Israel Conflicts, 1948–2024 .....	384
11-7	Israel/Palestine: Four Generic One-State Models.....	386

# Part I

# THE GREAT CONJUNCTURE



"Israel is in deep trouble at home and abroad. It has become an apartheid state that is executing a genocide in Gaza. *The Fall of Israel* does an outstanding job explaining the causes and the evolution of the disastrous path that Israel is on. This book deserves to be widely read by anyone interested in understanding contemporary Israel."

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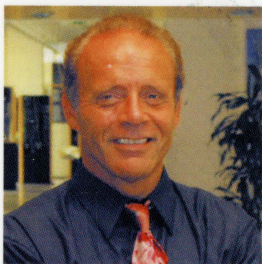
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