



# The Unmaking of Israel

*Gershom Gorenberg*

[Download now](#)

[Read Online](#) ➔

# The Unmaking of Israel

*Gershom Gorenberg*

## **The Unmaking of Israel** Gershom Gorenberg

Prominent Israeli journalist Gershom Gorenberg offers a penetrating and provocative look at how the balance of power in Israel has shifted toward extremism, threatening the prospects for peace and democracy as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict intensifies. Informing his examination using interviews in Israel and the West Bank and with access to previously classified Israeli documents, Gorenberg delivers an incisive discussion of the causes and trends of extremism in Israel's government and society. Michael Chabon, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay*, writes, "until I read *The Unmaking of Israel*, I didn't think it could be possible to feel more despairing, and then more terribly hopeful, about Israel, a place that I began at last, under the spell of Gershom Gorenberg's lucid and dispassionate yet intensely personal writing, to understand."

## **The Unmaking of Israel Details**

Date : Published November 8th 2011 by Harper

ISBN : 9780061985089

Author : Gershom Gorenberg

Format : Hardcover 336 pages

Genre : Cultural, Israel, History, Politics, Religion, Judaism, Nonfiction

 [Download The Unmaking of Israel ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online The Unmaking of Israel ...pdf](#)

**Download and Read Free Online The Unmaking of Israel Gershom Gorenberg**

---

## From Reader Review The Unmaking of Israel for online ebook

### Karen Mead says

Very informative book about modern Israeli politics, and how they got that way. However, I think Gorenberg sometimes chooses to ignore facts he doesn't like. For example, one of his main points is that Israeli settlement in the occupied territories is both morally and legally wrong and is destroying Israel's legitimacy, but neglects to mention the fact that Israel couldn't give said territories back when they wanted to, since the Arab countries refused to negotiate. While I'm not sure how I feel about the legitimacy of the current settlements myself, I don't think it's fair to (repeatedly) say that Israel should just "give the territories back" without acknowledging that they couldn't do that when they wanted to. How long was Israel supposed to wait and do nothing with these tracts of land, given their tiny landmass, when the Arab countries literally *wouldn't take them back?*

However, based on my admittedly limited knowledge of the situation as an outside observer, I do think Gorenberg is probably correct in how the entanglement of extreme-orthodox Judaism and politics is causing major problems for Israel, which was meant to be a Democracy-with-a-Jewish-majority, but not a theocracy; that distinction gets thornier as the religious extremists get more and more political power.

---

### Patty says

*"I write from an Israel with a divided soul. It is not only defined by its contradictions; it is at risk of being torn apart by them. It is a country with uncertain borders and a government that ignores its own laws.*

Some one reminded me recently that, in May, Israel will be celebrating its 70th birthday. As he said, imagine what the United States was like in 1846. Our country was young once, too. Although this argument is interesting, ultimately, I believe that it takes us down the wrong path. Yes, Israel is young, but it has many examples to learn from. One would hope that the Israeli people and government could study what other countries have done well and poorly. Gorenberg is worried that Israel is not learning from other democracies or even from its own experiences.

Gorenberg's book looks at Israeli policies. He believes that the country is making some serious errors – ones that might lead to destruction. He examines the historical behaviors that brought Israel into existence and wonders if those same policies are going to ultimately hurt the country.

This is the second book I have read with these concerns. The first one I picked up was **My Promised Land** by Ari Shavit (<https://www.goodreads.com/review/show...>). That book I found on my own and this one was assigned for the classes that took me to Israel in January. Unfortunately, reading two books concerned about the success of Israel so close together means they are muddled together in my mind.

Israel, like most countries, is filled with inconsistencies. As an American, I can't throw stones at Israel's glass house. We still have issues with racism, sexism and violence. However, we are not located in the Middle East. Our country is not surrounded by countries that are our sworn enemies. I would like to see Israel learn from some of our mistakes. I would, just like Gorenberg, like to see Israel overcome its issues and succeed.

If you are interested in Israel and the politics of the Middle East, this book will give you some information to chew on. Gorenberg writes well. He cares about his subject and will make you care also.

## Jennifer says

Consideration for the Helen Bernstein Book Award for Excellence in Journalism

---

## Sean says

A very thorough analysis of the weak points in the foundation of Israeli democracy from an author who loves his country. If the people of Israel can bring their state to enact the reforms advised by Gorenberg, I may see peace in the Middle East in my lifetime. He's hopeful, but does little to leave the reader the impression that there's a real chance to overcome the massive obstacles. Hard to see anything but further tragedy ahead.

---

## Mbogo J says

It's that time of year to do a cleaning of my *To Read* shelf. This book has been gathering dust on it for more than 4 years now, I was even worried it would be woefully dated by the time I got to it. That turned out to be a false fear and its dust gathering should speak to how the Israel- Palestine conflict has fallen a few ranks in global geopolitics' hot issues.

Gershon had an interesting take on Israel. He wrote a narrative history, the kind you find in oral narratives. There were no GDP figures or connections between this and that general and how history depended on their decisions or non decisions... This book was more of a fire place story you tell among close family members or friends. That did not diminish its insightful comments nor churn out homespun solutions, if Gershom's ideas are to be implemented (the chance is very minimal) they will radically change the Israeli society. He talked about the usual suspects; illegal settlements in Palestinian land, discrimination of Arabs, the outsized influence of extremist religions on government views and the usual cast of accompanying injustices.

This book shows that Israel is a society like any other with complex undertones and rather than the false image sold to us by the media of a well disciplined flotilla sailing under the star of David, it showed it to be more like a pirate ship with quarreling factions who are trying to figure out the best way to divide the loot.

I wouldn't be too harsh on Israel the way Gershom was, let us never forget that hindsight is 20/20, most of the parties singled out for blame were acting in their best interests and despite how cynical it sounds sometimes the maxim *the strong do as they can and the weak suffer what they must* holds true more times than we would like to admit.

---

## Marcel says

Israel passou por transformações ao longo de sua história. Atualmente, ainda está mudando. Nós, judeus, não gostamos de saber - ou admitir - que essas mudanças foram, às vezes, profundamente negativas. Esse livro aponta os graves problemas para um Estado de Israel judeu e democrático. A parte objetiva, que me anima a recomendá-lo enfaticamente a outros leitores, é que Gershom indica o caminho que Israel deve seguir para corrigir sua rota. Uma obra necessária e reflexiva.

## Neal Hugh Hurwitz says

Very important!, esp for humanist Zionists!

Am Israel Chai!

Gershom and I are also Friends on Facebook... Neal H. Hurwitz and Neal Hugh Hurwitz there, and LinkedIn.  
:)

Shalom. Pax vobiscum.

---

## Channing says

I've had a strong interest in Israel since my childhood. Now that I've married into a Jewish family and I have friends and family members who live in Israel, the issues facing Israel and its people have taken on a heightened and much more personal sense of importance to me.

I can't remember for sure how I first heard about Gershom Gorenberg. It may have been from a radio interview or it may have been from my dad (who is also a big fan of his). Since then, I've taken to reading his blog posts regularly and reading "The Accidental Empire" and now "The Unmaking of Israel." He never fails to address difficult issues with Israel and its neighbors in an engaging and refreshing manner.

This is an important work. It is the impassioned writing of a man who is stridently fighting to restore a vision of Israel that is fast disappearing, yet he also has a thorough religious education, and he understands the arguments of his ideological opponents to a degree that few other commentators do. Grounding his commentary in the Altalena Incident, Gorenberg carefully reveals layer upon layer of recent history to show how the results of that infamous event are in danger of being completely upended. While I don't necessarily agree with all of the suggestions Gorenberg lays out at the end of the book or find many of them very easy to implement, the dangers he warns of and the proposals he makes to head them off deserve to be thoroughly discussed and thoughtfully considered by anyone who cares about Israel and takes an interest in the immense societal and diplomatic challenges facing the modern Middle East.

---

## Alex says

Everyone should read this right now while Gaza is burning and the stakes for further negligent drift are bright in all minds. Gorenberg, an American born Jew who made Aliyah to Israel, explains the rise of the illegal settlements in occupied Palestinian land, the entanglement of synagogue with state and military, and the corruption of Judaism and Zionist principles that have been the initially unintended but by no means accidental consequences of Israel's astonishing victory in the 1967 Six Days War. In, naturally, considerably less detail Gorenberg also explains the difficult steps that must be taken to restore Israel's status as a nation and a democracy, qualities that have bled away with the conquest of empire over the Palestinians and the rise of militant, chauvinistic, and state sponsored yet disloyal Jewish extremism.

---

## Sarah Bringhurst says

This is a valuable book for anyone seeking deeper insight into what makes Israel tick. The author, an Israeli by choice who immigrated there from the U.S. at the age of thirty, gives us a well-researched and cogent explanation of how Israeli policy vis-a-vis the Palestinians and Occupied Territories developed. Even more valuable, he helps the reader understand how this crucial and contentious issue overshadows and shapes internal policy, leading to unintended and disastrous consequences in many areas of Israeli civil life.

Gorenberg contends that Israel's current situation arises from decades of short-sighted solutions to immediate problems, and the inability of the State to convert itself from a struggling movement into a fully-functioning government where rule of law obtains.

Most of the book centers on the problem: how covert funding of illegal settlements, massive government subsidies for extremist religious groups, mass radicalization of the army, and the blatant unwillingness of the parliamentary branch of the government to respect judicial rulings have created and compounded the current crisis.

The author does present his version of a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict during the final chapter. What primarily distinguishes it from the many other solutions that have been proposed is his assertion that the Israeli government as it presently operates is seriously flawed, and must be internally reformed before resolution is possible.

I found the book very illuminating, since I had never really had a glimpse inside of Israeli politics and policy. I certainly agree with another reviewer, that *The Unmaking of Israel* should be required reading for all U.S. presidential candidates. And indeed anyone else interested in a successful resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

---

### **Holly says**

"For Israel to establish itself again as a liberal democracy, it must make three changes. First, it must end the settlement enterprise, end the occupation, and find a peaceful way to partition the land between the Jordan and the Mediterranean. Second, it must divorce state and synagogue -- freeing the state from clericalism, and religion from the state. Third and most basically, it must graduate from being an ethnic movement to being a democratic state in which all citizens enjoy equality."

---

### **Andy Oram says**

Gorenberg has achieved a remarkable journalistic goal: he describes very shocking ideas and activities while showing the logic behind all sides and keeping the humanity of all participants in mind. Although many of the government and settler activities he describes are outrageous, and he let's us know his own outrage, he also lets his opponents speak and helps us to show why they think and act as they do. The history and political analysis leads up to the final chapter, which requires the background of the previous chapters to bolster his remedies.

---

### **The American Conservative says**

"This exceptional man has written a book, *The Unmaking of Israel*, about that exceptional state and its

protracted and deepening crisis. And it is, appropriately enough, an exceptional contribution to the genre.'

Read the full review, "Is Israel a Failed State?" on our website:  
<http://www.theamericanconservative.co...>

---

### **Tobias says**

A truly superb, well-researched account of how colonization and the settler movement have gravely undermined Israeli democracy. He calls for an end to occupation for Israel's own good and considers how a two-state solution can promote individual rights on both sides of the Green Line, while still preserving Israel's identity as a Jewish state. He has no illusions about the difficulty of realizing his vision, but it is a vision worth considering.

---

### **Joel says**

This was an extremely interesting book. I wouldn't recommend it to anyone without a pre-existing firm grasp of the Israel-Palestine conflict, but it is a great supplement to those who already have a pretty good understanding of what is happening there now and the history. His analysis is completely from an internal Israeli perspective.

While his focus is ultimately on ending the Israel-Palestine conflict peacefully, he rarely talks about Palestinians. The book is great for understanding the dynamics within Israel that affect the country's policies toward the Palestinians.

He is mainly concerned with ending racist practices in Israel and bringing about a just resolution to the Israel-Palestine conflict. Some of his concluding recommendations for Israel are problematic, in my view, but they don't negate the valuable information in the rest of the book.

Overall, this book was a great read. It was very readable and informative.

---