

From Beirut to Jerusalem Study Guide

From Beirut to Jerusalem by Thomas Friedman

(c)2015 BookRags, Inc. All rights reserved.



Contents

From Beirut to Jerusalem Study Guide.....	1
Contents.....	2
Plot Summary.....	4
Prelude: From Minneapolis to Beirut.....	5
Would You Like to Eat Now or Wait for the Cease-fire?.....	7
Beirut: City of Versions.....	9
Hama Rules.....	11
The Teflon Guerrilla.....	13
Inside the Kaleidoscope: The Israeli Invasion of Lebanon.....	14
Poker, Beirut-Style.....	16
Betty Crocker in Dante's Inferno.....	18
The End of Something.....	20
Time to Go.....	22
Crosswinds.....	23
Whose Country is This, Anyway?.....	25
The Fault Line.....	27
The Earthquake.....	29
Under the Spotlight.....	32
Israel and American Jews: Who is Dreaming about Whom?.....	33
Conclusion: From Beirut to Jerusalem to Washington.....	35
Epilogue.....	36
Characters.....	38
Objects/Places.....	42
Themes.....	44
Style.....	46



Quotes.....48

Topics for Discussion.....54



Plot Summary

From Beirut to Jerusalem is the story of Thomas Friedman's time as a news correspondent first in Beirut and then in Jerusalem. Friedman learns a great deal serving in both locations. When he takes the job in Jerusalem, he drives from Beirut to Jerusalem. In many ways the two cities are worlds apart but in many ways they are very similar. Friedman says this book describes his journey between these two worlds and the problems and experiences that he has in each.

Friedman is not a journalist by training. He majors in Middle Eastern studies and takes a masters degree from Oxford. While there he writes some articles that eventually land him a job with United Press International after graduation. Friedman becomes interested in the Middle East as a student. He is extremely impressed with Israel after the Six Day War and spends his high school summers on a kibbutz south of Haifa. He jumps at the chance of being the Beirut correspondent when the job opens up after a few months at UPI. After two years he becomes the Beirut correspondent for The New York Times. He remains in Beirut until June 1984 when he is sent to Jerusalem where he will stay until 1987.

Friedman is the first Jew to serve in Lebanon and he never really has problems there because of his Jewishness. He is objective in his covering of news stories and the Arabs expect that of him and respect him for it. If they do not think he is objective enough, they let him know. Friedman is quite candid about his experiences in Beirut, from his apartment building being blown up soon after his arrival to the use of fixers. His story lets people know how the news is covered in Beirut when there is no official government for confirmation of facts and how the news gets out when there is fighting and power failures. Friedman is actually taking the reader behind the scenes with him in covering the various news stories and in letting the reader know who the various characters are and how they think.

When Friedman is transferred to Jerusalem, he expects Israel to be the Israel he remembers from high school. He finds this is not the case and that the country is much more Americanized than he remembered it. Friedman becomes entangled in what it means to be Jewish in Israel and how it differs from being Jewish in the United States. Friedman seems to be somewhat disappointed in the situation in Israel especially once the intifada begins and he watches the reactions of the Israeli soldiers.

Friedman uses his decade in the Middle East to give his own evaluation of the problems that exist there and what it will take to solve them. Somebody has to talk to all of the participants in their own language, so to speak, and no one has been willing to do that. He also has his own proposal for a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian problem that he presents in the form of a speech in the Epilogue.



Prelude: From Minneapolis to Beirut

Prelude: From Minneapolis to Beirut Summary and Analysis

The book opens with Friedman and his wife Ann boarding a flight to Beirut from Geneva in June 1979. This is the beginning of their ten year stay in the Middle East. They are afraid when they land in Beirut even though Friedman has wanted this assignment as a Middle East correspondent for several years. He has been to the Middle East before as a teen, when he and his family go to Tel Aviv to visit his sister attending school there. This is during Christmas of 1968 and Friedman is fifteen at the time. Thomas is totally fascinated with the Middle East and the people from that time onward. He feels at home in Jerusalem from his first day there. He feels he is more Middle Eastern than Minnesotan.

When he returns home to Minnesota, he begins to learn as much as he can about Israel and the Middle East, he is so fascinated with the region. He works for Israel's Jewish Agency's shaliach, helping to organize fairs, demonstrations and anything else he is asked to do. In return, they arrange for his high school summers to be spent on the Kibbutz Hahotrim, a place south of Haifa on the coast. Friedman is very pro-Israel throughout high school which includes the period of the Six-Day War. He is also a journalist for his high school newspaper. His first story is about an Israeli general who lectures at the University of Minnesota. The general, then an unknown, is Ariel Sharon.

He attends college and learns Arabic. He spends a semester studying at Hebrew University in Jerusalem in 1972 and spends two weeks in Cairo. He finds that he loves Cairo. In the summer of 1974, he spends a summer studying Arabic at American University in Cairo. Before he graduates from Brandeis, he gives a lecture and slide show presentation about his time in Cairo and faces heckling from a Jewish student in the audience. This is an experience that he learns from. To publicly discuss the Middle East, one must be very knowledgeable and, if Jewish, prepared to not be trusted by both the Arabs and the Jews.

Friedman graduates from Brandeis in 1975 and goes to graduate school at St. Antony's college at Oxford in England. His masters is in Middle Eastern history and politics from one of the best schools in the subject. During his time at Oxford, the Lebanese civil war begins and he enjoys listening to his Middle Eastern friends and classmates discuss the situation. He learns from them that Arab and Jew are only part of the Middle East. His career in journalism also begins at this time when he writes an article on Henry Kissinger that his future wife helps him get published in the Des Moines Register. He publishes several more Op Ed pieces while he is in graduate school so he has a small portfolio by the time of his graduation. He graduates from Oxford in June 1978 and takes a job with United Press International in the London Bureau.



Soon after he begins at UPI, the Iranian Revolution occurs as does the oil crisis. Friedman, who knows nothing about oil, becomes the oil expert for the UPI London Bureau by doing a lot of hard work and learning the material. In 1979 he gets his chance as a correspondent at the Beirut bureau office and he and Ann go to Beirut for the assignment. The country they arrive in has been fighting a civil war for four years, at the time. They find an apartment in West Beirut and Ann takes a job working at a local bank. They remain there for two years.

In 1981, Friedman is offered a position with The New York Times and he and Ann move to New York for eleven months. They return to Beirut in April 1982 with Friedman now the Beirut correspondent for the paper. Two things happen immediately upon his return to Beirut. There is a rebellion in Hama, Syria in which the government kills twenty thousand people. There is a deal in Israel between Bashir Gemayel and Menachem Begin to force the Syrians and PLO out of Lebanon. These are the topics of most of Friedman's reports for the next twenty-six months along with the bombing of the U.S. embassy in Beirut.

The Times transfers Friedman to Jerusalem in June 1984. They drive to Israel by taxi with the trip taking six hours. "This book is about my journey between these two worlds, and how I understood the events and the people whom I met along the way" (Chapter 1, pg. 10). Friedman comments that even though the trip only takes six hours, they travel between two different worlds and these are the two worlds that Friedman feels he has been traveling between during his entire adult life.

The first half of the book takes place in Lebanon which comes into being as a result of the Sunni Muslims and the Maronite Christians of the Eastern Syrian Christian Church. These two groups form the country and get along together for hundreds of years. Following World War I, the new Lebanon is formed under France and includes the Shiite areas of the south, along with the Sunni coast which makes the country economically viable. The Shiites and Sunnis are not consulted about their inclusion in this new country. The Shiites and Sunnis have their differences, which Friedman discusses but they manage to put them aside to win the nation's independence from France in 1943.

After World War II the United Nations votes for partition and the area of Palestine is divided into what is now Israel and the Palestinian lands of the West Bank, Gaza, Galilee and Jaffa. Jerusalem is an international city under the UN trusteeship. The Zionists accept this plan, but the Arabs do not. In the war following partition, Egypt takes Gaza, and Jordan takes the West Bank and Israel wins the remainder of the territory. Israel signs separate armistices with each of the countries after partition but in 1964, the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) is formed. The 1967 war ends with Israel capturing the Sinai Peninsula, Golan Heights and West Bank. This eventually leads to the formation of radical Arab groups in the area. Yasir Arafat, who comes to head the PLO, can never control all of its many different guerilla organizations and is eventually forced from Jordan. They go to Lebanon for a while and in 1975 civil war begins in Lebanon. This is the Beirut that Friedman arrives in in 1979.



Would You Like to Eat Now or Wait for the Cease-fire?

Would You Like to Eat Now or Wait for the Cease-fire? Summary and Analysis

Friedman begins the chapter by relating the story of a taxi ride to the airport when the taxi is caught in traffic. He looks around and sees a man being kidnapped. The driver of his taxi never mentions the event and neither does Friedman. As soon as the traffic clears, the taxi continues the ride to the airport. Friedman describes this as exemplary of life in Beirut, a place where things nobody would ever imagine can happen. A friend of his, Amnon Shahak, who later becomes Chief of Military Intelligence in Israel, tells a story about when he first arrives in Shouf Mountains. The Druse elders want him to follow them to a hospital, and he does. There he finds boxes with body parts which they claim were carved by the Christians. When he goes to investigate he finds that the Druse were killed in a battle earlier in the day and were carved by the Druse who are using them to try to rile their own people and others, a game that Shahak says he does not understand.

Friedman covers the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in June 1982. He has an apartment overlooking the Mediterranean and a maid who is holding down the fort with refugees who are trying to break into the apartment. His wife has not arrived from New York yet. His driver's children come to stay in the apartment to fend off refugees while he stays at the Commodore Hotel. After a few days Friedman is told that the apartment house has been blown up. Friedman and his associates rush out to the apartment and find it blown apart. His driver Mohammed is crying because his wife and two daughters were in the blast. Their bodies are the next morning and buried the following day. One of the refugee families is found to have set the blast.

Friedman feels that Beirut is less important politically than psychologically as a news story. This is because people never know when or where they might die. They can be killed and just be a number without any name and they all know it. The minute the fighting stops, shopkeepers open up their shops and life is back to normal for the area. People also find ways to make money from the situation. The Summerland Hotel begins to cater to wealthy locals, selling them cabanas for the season, since the tourist trade all but dies. Currency speculation on the Lebanese pound also becomes popular. The level of stress in Beirut is unlike anywhere else with the length of the strife. Most people learn their own ways of coping with it. They do this by making up their own little mind games or by finding ways to separate themselves from the victims.

Many of the local Beirutis think that Friedman is privy to information because he is a news correspondent. Because of this they think that he knows when fighting will break out and which areas will and will not be safe. Friedman also learns to cope with life in Beirut. This means not involving himself in and ignoring things that do not involve him,

like most Beirutis do. Their society functions on the basis of neighborhoods during the crises. These form a series of microsocieties. People, like Elizabeth Zaroubi, say that people get to know their family and neighbors during the civil war since they all begin to spend so much time together. Beirutis learn to take care of themselves and each other at this level which is why they never develop a strong national government.



Beirut: City of Versions

Beirut: City of Versions Summary and Analysis

"But being a reporter in Beirut, I quickly discovered, required something more than an appreciation of life's absurdities. Since I was sent to Beirut by UPI only eleven months after being hired, it was on the job there that I really learned how to be a journalist. In some ways, Beirut was the ideal place to practice journalism, in other ways the most frustrating, but in all ways it was unforgettable" (Chapter 3, p. 50). Friedman learns how to be a journalist in Beirut. He really has no formal training and Beirut is not the typical town when he is there. There is literally no government that functions as a unified force or a central place for announcements or fact checking. This places an extra burden on journalists who try to document truth. They use terms such as Beirut police spokesperson or leftist sources to try to make their stories sound more official. Friedman feels that all of this makes being a correspondent in Beirut more exciting. The usual rules do not apply to the situation in Beirut and is really no one to enforce any rules even if there are any.

News correspondents also have to be sure to have the proper credentials. In many cases each of the different militia issue their own and reporters have to be sure not to get them mixed up and present the wrong ones. As Beirut correspondent, Friedman and the other reporters travel around Lebanon covering the fighting. At this time, Friedman is the only Jewish correspondent there. He does not flaunt the fact that he is Jewish, but he does not always hide the fact either. He tries to steer any conversation away from the subject of religion to avoid the issue. Most Lebanese never think that he is Jewish and do not recognize his name as a Jewish name. His Lebanese friends do not care that he is Jewish and it does not matter to the PLO officials and guerrillas that he knows. The only time his Jewishness affects anything is when he applies for an interview with Arafat, but the PLO group eventually allows Friedman to do the interview.

Friedman does not naïvely thinking that religion does not enter into the Arab Israeli problems because their conflicts are clashes of religious communities and lifestyles. His being Jewish does not enter into most of his relationships with others, but he is still aware of the fact. He does not flaunt the fact that he is Jewish. He tries to avoid the issue, but he is honest with people who ask.

The Lebanese "fixer" is essential in Beirut. This is a local individual who knows how to take care of things. The fixer knows who to approach and who to bribe and for how much. Friedman does not hire an individual as a fixer. He basically uses Mohammed for this purpose when it is necessary and Mohammed is very good at it. One of the most famous fixers in Beirut is Abdul Wadud Hajjaj, who functions as a fixer for both UPI Television News and Newsweek. He functions this way until a new group arrives at UPI that do not understand fully the way things are done in Beirut.

The Beirut press congregates at the Commodore Hotel. It survives where other luxury hotels have not. It also caters to journalists in that it keeps the communications equipment functioning. The Commodore keeps a functioning bar for the journalists even if it has to be hidden on an upper floor. They also function as a fixer, obtaining whatever the journalists need in terms of permits and credentials. When the Israelis invade Beirut, they use the hotel in the same way as the PLO.

Friedman says that part of being a reporter is knowing how to understand the subjects and how to negotiate within the environment. At the same time, the reporter must remain objective. This means that reporters feel intimidated and constrained at times. There is a big problem with the Syrians at the time. In spite of all of this, the reporters manage to report the news out of Beirut. Friedman, like the other journalists, learns to pay attention to the silence and to learn to want to talk to the people who will not accept him in their clubs. He learns this when the kidnapping of journalists begins.



Hama Rules

Hama Rules Summary and Analysis

Hama is the site of the bloody massacre in Syria and Friedman does not travel there for two months. What was once one of Syria's most beautiful cities is the site of the death of ten to twenty-five thousand people in February 1982. Friedman is only in the Middle East for a few weeks when the massacre takes place and eventually travels to Syria to see the Sunni city. The ruler, Hafez Assad, is a member of the Alawites, an Islamic splinter sect. Even though the Alawites are only about ten percent of the population, they control the military, the key power centers and the Baath Party. The Muslim Brotherhood are fighting the Alawites and trying to end their control. This leads to many battles and kidnappings on both sides.

The Muslim Brotherhood is being aided by groups centered in Hama and Aleppo in the fight against the ruling government. The Brotherhood wants an end to the state of emergency in Syria, free elections and the government to honor the Human Rights Charter. Assad's brother called for an all-out war against the Brotherhood and calls for such at the Baath Party Congress in 1979. The Brotherhood tries to assassinate Assad and Assad retaliates. Prisoners face torture and death in government prisons. Brotherhood plots in the air force become known. This is what leads to the massacre at Hama.

Friedman tries to piece together the story of what happened at Hama. His sources are diplomats from Damascus, Amnesty International, his visit to Hama, and Israeli report and a book called Hama: The Tragedy of our Time, which is published by the Muslim Brotherhood. Apparently, Assad sends his brother Rifaat to clean up the problem in Hama. Rifaat brings several thousand men to Hama with him. The massacre begins on February 2 when a group of five hundred men surround the Barudi district of Hama armed with lists of suspects and addresses of hideouts. The Muslim Brotherhood, tipped off about the operation, is waiting for the government troops. They open fire on the troops, driving them from the neighborhood. They call for a Jihad against Assad. Syrian troops begin to pour into Hama for the coming battle. The locals massacre the local Baath leaders in the city. Two days later a full armored tank and helicopter attack takes place as neighborhood after neighborhood is attacked. The fighting continues for more than two weeks and during this time journalists are not allowed in the city. Buildings are blown up and razed and the Brotherhood population eliminated. The city is cleaned before reporters are allowed to enter.

Friedman tries to analyze the events in Hama from different perspectives. First there is the tradition of the tribes. The tribe or clan or whatever they are called is a regional unit. These tribes are a moving force in the politics of the Middle East since most loyalty is at this level and not at the national level. The tribe is a manner of survival. People have to band together in groups in order to survive in the desert. Viewed from this perspective, Hama is a tribal clash between the Sunnis and the Alawites.



A second way in which to view Hama is through the form of the authority of one single ruler. The tribal level is the focus of loyalty, not the national level, and tribes do not like to be ruled by other tribes. Authoritarian rule exists for hundreds of years but most of these rulers do not retain power for long. In the Ottoman Empire many of them are professional soldiers. Most modern day rulers are popular with their subjects and do not have to be brutal. In places where they are not popular, then there are brutal governments. The nation state is a relatively new concept for Middle Easterners. Some come into existence through various tribes; others come into existence through the British and French. The tribe is still an important factor of solidarity here.

The Hama situation is the culmination of all of these factors.



The Teflon Guerrilla

The Teflon Guerrilla Summary and Analysis

The term Teflon guerrilla is used to refer to Yasir Arafat. "He is, in many ways, the Ronald Reagan of Palestinian politics - an agent of change for his nation, a great actor who understands the soul of his people and how to play out their greatest fantasies, and, most of all, the ultimate Teflon guerrilla. Nothing stuck to Yasir Arafat - no bullets, not criticism, not any particular political position, and, most of all not failure. No matter what mistakes he made, no matter how many military defeats he sustained, no matter how long he took to recover Palestine, his people forgave him and he remained atop the PLO" (Chapter 5, p. 107). Arafat is a debonair dashing figure but that is not the secret of his success.

Arafat's secret to success is the PLO, the Palestinian Liberation Organization, and the way it is organized. It is based on four attributes: independence, unity, relevance and theatrics. At this time Arafat and the PLO are based in Beirut. Arafat is born in either Gaza or Egypt in 1929. He grows up in Jerusalem being raised by an uncle and is a civil engineer trained at Cairo University. He works for the Kuwaiti government for a year and then opens his own construction company, which is quite successful.

In 1956, Arafat joins other Palestinians and forms the al-Fatah, an underground guerrilla organization. Since Arafat is the spokesperson for the group, he leaves Kuwait and his construction company and moves to Beirut. The PLO is not formed until 1964 and its purpose is to exert some control over the Palestinians.

The Israeli success in the 1967 war gives Arafat and his colleagues their chance at success since they and others are out from under the control of certain Palestinians. The Arab world is looking for someone they can believe in after their defeat at the hands of the Israelis. Arafat is able to get control of the PLO at that time and turn it into an umbrella organization and Palestinian national movement. The PLO is successful because of the skill of Arafat and because of Arafat's identification with the Palestinian cause. Few Arabs view him as a terrorist and many Arab leaders relish the public relations value of a picture with Arafat. It is the skill of Arafat that brings the many different Palestinian voices together under the umbrella of the PLO.

The mainstay of Arafat's support comes from the refugee camps of Lebanon, Jordan and Syria, where displaced Palestinians lived. The PLO represents unity for them all and it is a relevant voice for them since it tries to deal with relevant issues even though they also engage in terrorist operations in parts of the world which brings them international attention. Arafat keeps the PLO in a strange position. He will not acknowledge the Israelis so there is no way to negotiate with them. He does not have an army so he cannot fight Israelis to reclaim Palestinian land. So all Arafat can do is try to keep the hopes of the Palestinian people alive.



Inside the Kaleidoscope: The Israeli Invasion of Lebanon

Inside the Kaleidoscope: The Israeli Invasion of Lebanon Summary and Analysis

The chapter begins with Friedman comparing and contrasting the Arabs and the Jews. The Israelis come from other countries and look at things in terms of reality. They are not a part of the kaleidoscope of the Middle East since many of them have European backgrounds. People are either enemies or agents. An enemy today is still an enemy tomorrow with the Israelis, unlike with the Lebanese where an enemy today may be a friend tomorrow. The mentality and attitude of the European Zionist is epitomized by Ariel Sharon.

Sharon views Lebanon as a land of compromises. The Beirutis live normal lives in the light of the war. They carry on as normally as they can. They do not view the situation in the same way that the Israelis do. For the Israelis there is no compromise. Sharon and the Israelis do not understand Beirut as Arafat does, which is why they get themselves caught there after invading.

The invasion begins on June 13, 1982. Friedman and others are at the Reuters office when the news comes through. The next morning he departs from the Commodore Hotel and crosses the Green Line, which separates Muslim West Beirut from the Christian East Beirut. He wants to see the Israelis in Beirut for himself. He finally finds an Israeli soldier that can speak English and finds that his family knows a former colleague of Friedman from The New York Times. There is support for the invasion of Lebanon from both Israeli political parties, the Likud Party of Sharon and Prime Minister Menachem Begin and the Labor Party. Arafat is becoming too strong and there is too much shelling of Israel from Southern Lebanon for the Israelis to allow the situation to continue.

The Israelis are well treated by the normal Lebanese population. Many stock up on the goods available in Lebanon. The Israelis do not know much about Lebanon before they invade. They know that there are a series of tribes but they do not know much more about it. The Lebanese are friendly to them once they are there and many Israeli soldiers go souvenir shopping and date Lebanese women. The Israelis recognize the Christian Lebanese but not the significance of the Muslim Lebanese since the country is a blend of both. Backing the Christians and trying to expel Arafat and his PLO is not going to solve Lebanon's problems.

Began views the situation as the Lebanese Christians being slaughtered by the Muslims and wonders why there is outcry in the world. In actuality this is not true. The Christians of Beirut are more like Mafia and they are not being eliminated by the Muslims but by their own turf wars. The Israelis have the Phalangists helping them during their



occupation of Lebanon and their misconception of the Palestinians stem back many years. They do not view the Arab people as having any cultural or historical ties to Palestine.

Not all Jewish leaders are in favor of partition. Ben-Gurion agrees with the plan for creating two states, side by side, one for Jews and one for Arabs. Begin does not. He believes in Israeli sovereignty over the whole area. They all agree on the Palestinian problem, which extends beyond than the Palestinians trying to live in an Arab state next to the Jewish state since it also involves acts of terrorism and murder. Sharon and Begin both blame this on the PLO and feel it would all end if they can get rid of the PLO. Then they can dominate all of Palestine without having to share any power with them.

Sharon is also a little unrealistic with what he thinks Israel can do in the war with Lebanon. Israel is strong but not that strong. "That is precisely what made him so dangerous in Lebanon. He behaved with a decisiveness and unwavering sense of direction, as though he knew exactly where he was going strategically, when in reality he didn't have a clue about the world he was charging into. His strategic design in Lebanon was based entirely on self-delusions, which is why it eventually led Israel into a disaster. His was a classic example of false leadership" (chapter 6, p. 145). The Israelis will not support an action whose purpose is to put Bashir Gemayel into power as President of Lebanon but they will support an action whose purpose is to clear Southern Lebanon of guerrillas and protect Northern Israel from shelling.

Arafat is caught by the invasion in that he loses his hold in the Arab world. Islamic fundamentalism has come into being and is viewed as a more threatening problem than Arafat and his PLO. Most of the Arab powers are walking away from the Palestinian cause. In July 1982, the Lebanese persuade Arafat and his PLO to leave Beirut. Arafat is not happy about leaving Lebanon. Friedman believes that Arafat is stalling for time, hoping things will work out so he can stay in Beirut. It does not turn out that way. The other problem Arafat faces is that the Israelis prove that the PLO is not a military force. Arafat departs from Beirut on August 30, 1982 boards a Greek ship and sails to Athens. Fed up with the Arabs, he does not want to stop in an Arab country. He eventually settles in Tunis at the Salwa Beach Hotel which becomes the new headquarters of the PLO. Friedman goes to visit Arafat there. They all want news of Beirut.



Poker, Beirut-Style

Poker, Beirut-Style Summary and Analysis

After the PLO and Arafat depart from Beirut, the Phalangists and Israelis are left in charge. They persuade the Muslims to accept the Presidency of Bashir Gemayel. Gemayel is elected on August 23, 1982. The Israelis expect Gemayel to consolidate control in the Lebanese army so the Israelis can withdraw from Lebanon. The Israelis expect the Lebanese army to keep the Syrians and the PLO out of Lebanon. The Syrians, not happy with the situation, arrange for the assassination of Gemayel. Gemayel is killed in a bomb blast at an apartment building where he goes to meet with other officials. The Israelis respond by invading West Beirut on September 15, which they promised not to do before the assassination.

The Israelis have two targets in West Beirut. One is the PLO Research Center with their archive center. The other is the Sabra and Shatilia refugee camps which are surrounded. The Israelis do not enter the camps. They leave this to the Phalangists to do and the contents of the archives are returned to the PLO in 1983. Friedman, who is on vacation at this time, has to cut his vacation short when he is ordered back to Beirut. The airport is closed so he has to fly to Damascus and take a taxi. He eventually reaches the Hotel Commodore after having spent a night in the Bekka Valley at the home of his taxi driver.

Friedman catches up on events with other reporters at the Commodore Hotel and they figure that the Israelis are at the Shatilia refugee camp. They find that the Israelis have allowed the Phalangists to roam through the camps for several days, liquidating whoever they want. The Israelis leave the areas so as not to be a part of the events that transpire at the camps, so there is no one to stop the press from entering when they arrive. There is no way of knowing how many people are killed during the massacre although Red Cross estimates are between eight hundred and one thousand. Investigation shows that many Israeli officers know what is happening during the early hours of the massacre but they are interested in cleaning up a terrorist site.

The massacres at Sabra and Shatila present Friedman with a crisis because it showcases a new Israel, not the Israel that he has come to identify with. They are playing by the Hama rules and this is something Friedman has to come to terms with. The Israelis hold an investigation about the massacre with the Kahan Commission. The result is that Sharon is found to be responsible and is forced to resign his position. He is out of office until the formation of the next Israeli government. Whatever punishments they mete out, they are not permanent and do not last for long.

Friedman is angry about the massacre. He is angry at the Israelis and what they have allowed and writes up the events of Sabra and Shatilia in a four page article in The New York Times for which he wins a Pulitzer Prize. He does an interview with an Israeli commander of troops in Lebanon and wants to know how they could not have known



about the massacre. He travels to Amman, Jordan when Arafat travels there to meet the king. Arafat is not through, as many people have predicted. In fact, events will more than solidify Arafat's position with the Palestinian people as he becomes a symbol of the Palestinian problem.

The events in Lebanon are presented as a PLO victory when the Palestine National Council meets in Algiers in February 1983. These events should be critiqued and the organization should examine its own behavior. If they examine and critique the PLO's behavior, there might be a change in leadership, which is the last thing Arafat wants. The PNC adopts a policy at their Algiers meeting that they maintain for years. This policy is known as "la-am", which is a combination of Arabic for the words yes and no. This is their way of dealing with various issues. They reject things, like Reagan's peace plan, but not so completely that all discussions end. In this way, Arafat maintains his position without having King Hussein or some other Arab leader supplant him as a representative of the Palestinian people.

Friedman feels, at this time, that the PLO is more interested in presenting itself as a victim instead of really doing something about the situation in the West Bank. By playing victim, they can avoid criticizing their own actions in Beirut and other places and they can avoid the issues of what to do in the West Bank and other places. This would mean preparing for either peace or war, neither of which the PLO is prepared for. Instead, Arafat keeps giving hope to the Palestinians—whether the hope is realistic or not, it extends the suffering of the Palestinian people. The PLO continues to reject any plan that does not specifically provide a role for them, even the Reagan peace initiatives.

Arafat's problems begin, since he cannot appease everyone with the position he is taking. He still cannot negotiate with Israel because he will not recognize their country and he cannot fight them because he has no army. There is a mutiny in Arafat's al-Fatah in May 1983. The mutiny is led by Colonel Saed Abu Musa. Arafat manages to use this revolt to his advantage in terms of public relations when he portrays it as being the product of Syrian management. The Palestinians automatically back Arafat because he is basically all that they have at the time.

As far as Lebanon goes, Sharon does not have the strongman he wants in Gemayel. Bashir is assassinated and Amin is weak. Israel is still stuck in Lebanon without any kind of peace treaty. After the death of Begin's wife in November 1983, Begin resigns from government and becomes a recluse in his apartment. The Israelis begin to withdraw from Lebanon in September 1983, but make it clear that they will police the south to protect their northern border and towns. This causes problems with the Shiites in Southern Lebanon and leads to many conflicts between the Israelis and the Shiites.

Lebanon is portrayed as the Israeli Viet Nam and there are a lot of comparisons between the two. It is the invasion that the Israelis want to forget about since it was such a disaster for them.



Betty Crocker in Dante's Inferno

Betty Crocker in Dante's Inferno Summary and Analysis

The U.S. Marines come to Beirut in August 1982 and depart in February 1984. Friedman says the one thing he will never forget is the number of people worried that the Marines are not eating right and sending food. There are hamburgers, burritos, chocolate chip cookies and every kind of cookie being sent. Friedman remembers always munching on the goodies that are sent to the troops. In actuality, the first person who wants U.S. troops in Beirut is Yasir Arafat who wants the Americans to be there with the French and the Italians as the PLO departs from Beirut. Arafat is worried about his own safety along with his PLO group and wants the Americans as protection against an Israeli attack.

The troops arrive on August 25, 1982 and depart on September 10, well ahead of the thirty days limit they have to oversee the PLO departure. As soon as they depart the massacres at Sabra and Shatila camps occur. The troops are returned to Lebanon to support the Lebanese government until they restore order in Beirut. "At first, the American optimism seemed justified. The mere arrival of the Marines convinced many Beirutis that their then seven-year old civil-war nightmare was about to come to an end and that the Lebanon of old would be reconstructed. After all, America, the greatest power in the world, had committed itself to rebuilding Lebanon's central government and army. Things had to get better" (Chapter 8, p. 192). The Americans are around the Beirut Airport while the Italians and French take up positions in West Beirut. Beirut begins to rebuild.

The Americans make the mistake of thinking that they can understand the Lebanese problem and that they can easily solve it. They believe that the problem is the weakness of the government. They already have the required structures for democracy - they have a President, parliament and commander-in-chief. They just have to be made stronger. This is a mistake on the part of the Americans. The Americans are not prepared to be attacked in Beirut. The population is at first friendly to them when they arrive, but this changes as they become known as the stooges of Gemayel.

On April 18, 1983, while Friedman is in his new apartment in West Beirut, the whole area is shaken by a bomb. A suicide bomber has driven a truck into the U.S. embassy. A month later, the U.S. helps negotiate a peace agreement between Lebanon and Israel. The agreement, brokered by Secretary of State George P. Schultz, favors the Israelis and meets most of their demands. Lebanon's Prime Minister Shafik al-Wazzan is not happy with the agreement and lets it be known that it is not popular with the Lebanese people. When the Israelis pull out of the Shouf Mountains in September 1983, that leaves the Americans in Beirut. Many groups come rushing in to fill the Israeli void in the Shouf Mountains.



Gemayel gets the Americans to help him against his own opposition by having the American ships shell their groups in September of 1983. Several weeks later, on October 23, 1983, the Marine barracks are hit by a suicide truck bomb. Ten miles away, Friedman and his wife are awakened by the blast. They get dressed and follow the emergency vehicles to the scene of the barracks where Friedman interviews some of the people. According to Friedman, the Marines do not realize that in their support of Gemayel, they are just another militia group in Beirut to most of the people. Friedman writes this in an article and is not too popular with the Marines after that.

Who is behind the bombing? There are several groups with grudges against the Americans because of the situation in Lebanon. Both Syria and Iran carry grudges. The use of suicide car bombers is a quick and easy way to neutralize U.S. policy and purposes in Lebanon.



The End of Something

The End of Something Summary and Analysis

One month to the day after the Marine barracks bombing, a man kills himself in the parking lot of Friedman's apartment building. Friedman discovers this is not the first individual to kill themselves in the parking lot. To Friedman, this represents the mood in Beirut at the time at the end of 1983. The mood is approaching desperation since the bombing of the Marine barracks has changed everything.

Beirut represents something to Arabs everywhere and this is the idea that the different factions and different Middle Eastern groups could live together and live together successfully. This is the dream that is dying in Beirut. This is what Friedman dubs the Levantine political idea. This is symbolized at the city center in Beirut where the different sects and groups have shops that co-exist next to one another. There are many different forms of dress and accents in the city center. They are all responsible for making Beirut into what it was before the war. The city is as cosmopolitan as New York City.

When the civil war begins, the Green Line runs right through the city center. This just about destroys all of its commerce but does not destroy all of the multiculturalism of the city. There are still places on both sides of the Green Line and people from both sides of the Green feel free to cross it daily for work without any problems. They feel most of their problems are due to outside agitators. This view ends in early 1984, due to fighting for control of the Shouf Mountains. The murder of members of one group brings retaliation by the other group. By February 1984, things are coming to a head. Gemayel's government quits and a curfew is imposed.

Friedman goes and gets Ann and they both make it to the Commodore Hotel just as the fighting begins when the curfew goes into effect. The Lebanese army falls apart as its members joined the various militias for the purpose of driving Gemayel's army out of West Beirut. The Phalangists are being expelled from the various places where fighting is taking place. The Marines finish their withdrawal from Beirut on February 26, 1984 and want a formal ceremony to mark their departure. They round up a few people from the Lebanese army and have their ceremony and then depart.

A man named Nabil Tabbara tries to record as much as he can of the city center on film and with sketchpads, so the Beirut he grew up with can be reconstructed at some point when the fighting ends. He paints watercolors of the city center which he sells. Many people want them. Many Beirutis ask Friedman if he knew Beirut before the war, when it was known as the Switzerland of the Middle East. The pre-war Beirut is built on a falseness that comes apart with the war. The real Beirut becomes known in the radical new organization, Hezbollah, or Party of God, which came into being in 1984. One of them enters the Commodore Hotel bar and smashes liquor bottles, leaving after his tirade.



The Shiites are the foundation of the Hezbollah. They have been a rural sect for years and are strengthened by the Iranian revolution. They watch and see how weak the Phalangists are and take over West Beirut, where they still remain in control. The Beirut of the past is gone, even though many still dream of it. The country is so splintered that peace talks between the various Lebanese factions have to be held in Lausanne, Switzerland. Nothing comes of the talks because none of the factions are willing to give any ground. The one thing Lausanne signals is that Gemayel cannot rule Lebanon alone and has to invite the militia leaders to join him in the Cabinet.

Since all factions are now a part of the government they really have nothing left to fight for, but sporadic fighting continues. There are basically three civil wars going on. The biggest is between the Christians and Muslims for control of the government. The second involves Christians and Muslims sects fighting over which sects should have control of what. The third civil war is the one Friedman describes as the silent one, with those who benefit from the chaos against those who suffer from the chaos. Certain members of various groups make it to the top because of the war and because of the militia they are associated with.

In April 1984, A Beirut woman, Iman Khalife organizes a peace march. She refuses to identify her religion but writes a poem capturing the attitude and frustration toward the war. The march is to have groups from both East Beirut and West Beirut meet at the Beirut National Museum where there is a crossing of the Green Line. The march is set for May 6 and on the night of May 5 heavy fighting breaks out between the different militia. As soon as the march is cancelled, the fighting stops.



Time to Go

Time to Go Summary and Analysis

Friedman decides it is time for him and Ann to leave Beirut in April 1984. He is alone there now since Ann is evacuated by helicopter with other Americans in February during a Shiite uprising. He awakes one night in a thunderstorm to his neighborhood being shelled from East Beirut. This kind of shelling takes place almost every night of his nine year tenure in Beirut. It just happens to be his neighborhood that is being hit on this night. As the shelling continues and he is hiding in the bathroom, he decides that it is time to leave Beirut.

When Friedman thinks back on his days in Beirut, he does not think of the close calls or of the shelling, he thinks of the people and all that he has learned from them. He cites the days the PLO departed from Beirut. He is supposed to stay in Beirut and postpone his vacation until the end there. On the final day he is there for the send-off and goes back to the Reuters office to write his story. As soon as he finishes writing his story, all communications in Beirut go dead. This is the only time it ever goes dead and he misses his deadline. This moment of covering the news in Beirut sticks out in Friedman's mind.



Crosswinds

Crosswinds Summary and Analysis

Friedman drives from Beirut to Jerusalem on June 1, 1984, taking a taxi and saying good-bye to all of his friends. Friedman has to take a series of taxis which adds time to the trip. He has the most problem with his gold clubs at the Israeli border because the soldiers cannot believe that anyone would try to enter Israel with golf clubs. After clearing customs, he hires another taxi to take him to Jerusalem. He sees a sign along the road that warns the reader to beware of crosswinds. Friedman finds out they are not referring to the weather and finds that the two countries and cities have much more in common than they ever thought. Even though they cannot seem to get along with each other, they still have to solve the same kinds of problems regarding government and power structure. Both countries suffer from political gridlock but for different reasons.

Before partition and after the end of World War II, Jewish leaders have three goals. They want a Jewish state, one that is democratic and that includes the total area of Palestine. The offer from the United Nations includes only half of the land, with the other half going to the Palestinian Arabs. This is not the total territory of ancient Israel but it is the best offer they have and two of their three objectives obtained. After the Six Day War, they again have two of their three objectives. They have the land but have to suppress the Arabs in the occupied areas which detracts from their democracy. If the Arabs are given voting rights, the area will cease to be a Jewish state. The Israelis skirt the issues of the three objectives and this is the Israel that Friedman arrives in 1984.

A national election campaign is in progress when Friedman arrived. He feels the Israelis are avoiding the issues of what to do with the West Bank and Gaza Strip during the campaign. Friedman interviews both candidates, Shimon Peres of the Labor Party and Yitzhak Shamir of the Likud Party. He finds both unwilling to face the real issues regarding the West Bank and Gaza Strip. He also finds Israelis do not accept Arab recognition in exchange for their withdrawal from these territories. "Maybe the most important reason Israeli leaders tended to avoid answering the question about what to do with the West Bank and Gaza was that for years they had Arab neighbors who did not pose the question in a clear-cut manner that might have forced Israelis to answer it. The Arabs never gave Israelis the feeling that they could leave these territories and still maintain their security, hence most Israelis were ready to stay at any price; the Arabs never really encouraged Israelis to come up with any alternative to the status quo" (Chapter 11, p. 257). The Arab states also agree among themselves not to recognize or negotiate with the Israelis. They will not agree to any peace. The only exception to this is the peace with Egypt in exchange for the occupied Sinai Desert.

Friedman claims that the reason why they do not want to face the issue of Gaza Strip and West Bank is because they do not want to give them back. These are the lands of biblical Israel and these are the lands that are the sites of the Jewish settlements under



Levi Eshkol, Golda Meir, Yitzhak Rabin, Shimon Peres and Yigal Allon. In April 1968, a group of Orthodox Jewish families go to Hebron for Passover and refuse to leave the hotel in the military camp. They establish the first settlement in Hebron called Kiryat Arba. This is the beginning of what will become a familiar pattern with a group of settlers going out to a place and gaining government support once they are there. This is how many Jewish settlements come into being.

The 1967 war is a victory for the Israelis and also in many ways a defeat. They lose sight of the fact that the Arab regimes are still there. Even though they are defeated, they do not go away. The Jewish settlements in the lands obtained from the war represent the Israel of biblical times to the Jews. This leads to the Gush Emunim (Bloc of the Faithful) settlers that believe that the hand of God has reunited the Israel of ancient times. Israel is viewed in an all or nothing perspective. The settlers are redemptive people returning to their homeland. An Israel that gives up on one piece of occupied land loses grip on all of the occupied territories.

When Begin is elected in 1977, he wants to annex the West Bank but he is constrained by the Camp David Accords and the Americans. The terms of the peace treaty allow for Palestinian self-rule in Gaza and the West Bank. Begin does not want to face this possibility so he deals with the problem by not dealing with it. They keep building roads and settlements. In this way Begin and Israel do not have to formally annex the areas and can delay anything formal. The Labor Party and the Likud Party do not differ much from each other in their views of the settlements.

When the Lebanon War comes the Israelis think they can force the PLO out and the Arabs in the settled lands will not have a voice to represent them. The Israelis are again confronted with the issues of what kind of society do they want to be. This is the Israel that Friedman comes to in 1984. The resulting election is a tie and that results in the formation of a national unity government which avoids all of the tough questions and maintains the status quo.

The Holocaust is not a subject that is readily discussed in Israel and is barely taught in Israeli schools. This attitude does not change until the Adolf Eichmann trial in 1961. Israelis stop hiding from the holocaust and holocaust survivors become more public and begin speaking engagements. In May 1967, as the possibility of war with their Arab neighbors approaches, the Israelis begin to face the possibility of extinction the Holocaust represents.



Whose Country is This, Anyway?

Whose Country is This, Anyway? Summary and Analysis

Friedman finds that the Israelis have an identity crisis—they do not know what they want to be politically or spiritually. A lot of Jews tell Friedman that they go to Israel to find themselves and he tells them it is probably the most confusing place to do so. If the Jew does not have his Jewish identity firmly established before going to Israel, he will probably be totally lost with all of the confusion and options they offer. Friedman explains that he, like most American Jews, is raised in a Judaism that revolves around the synagogue. Jews are differentiated by whether they are Orthodox, Conservative or Reform. This is not the way it is in Israel. It is not the synagogue affiliation that defines the person but his relationship to Israel and the state.

Friedman defines the options facing Jews as being in four broad categories. The first category includes people like Shimon Peres and Yitzhak Shamir and basically consists of doing away with much of the religious ritual. Since they live in a Jewish land, why do they need synagogues to define their Jewishness? They believe the Orthodox Jew will not last for another generation. The second category is that of the religious Zionists or the Orthodox Jews. They basically want the Jewish state with the synagogues. To them the creation of Israel is a religious event. The third group is religious Zionists who believe in the coming of the Messiah. For this they need a religious state. The last is the Haredim, the ultra-Orthodox, who believe the Messiah will come some day and the state of Israel brings them closer to God, no matter who is in control politically.

Each of these groups believe that the other three will disappear with time. Because of this they never can work out what exactly Israel stands for. A friend of Friedman's returns to Israel after spending two years in Germany. Germany is relaxing he said. In Israel there is always the left fighting with the right for the identity of the Jew and trying to force the individual to decide these issues, whether he is interested in them or not. Friedman examines the views of four of his acquaintances, all of whom have come to Israel from America.

The first is Ze'ev Chafets who grew up in Detroit. He introduces Friedman to the Rimon School of Jazz and Contemporary Music. Chafets feels that the Jews are held together by solidarity. Friedman likes Chafets because he has a sense of humor about being Jewish and in Israel. Chafets likes living in a Jewish state and does not care who is running it because it is Jewish. People do not have to try to distinguish themselves as Jewish when they live in Israel, like they do in the United States. People in Israel do not have to play the role of being Jewish as they do in America.

Another acquaintance of Friedman's is Shimon Tsimhe. Shimon has a newsstand in the Haredim suburb of B'nei B'rak where he makes a very good living until he is run out of the newsstand business in the area by the Haredim. He is selling copies of Israeli



dailies not in favor with the ultra-Orthodox segment of society. Friedman writes a story about the situation with the Haredim for which he is targeted with hate mail from the Orthodox community in both the U.S. and Israel. For his efforts, Friedman becomes the project of Rabbi Nota Schiller, who is born and raised in New York. Schiller specializes in helping Jews back to the Torah and its teachings once they have strayed. He invites Friedman to his yeshiva for a day of talks. Schiller explains to Friedman how the Haredim are viewed. The Orthodox Jews keep the Jewish customs and traditions alive for future generations. Schiller has no problems with Reform or Conservative Jews because they also have their place in Israeli society.

A third group is represented by Israeli terrorists who seek to hasten the arrival of the Messiah. A crime is committed before Friedman's arrival in Israel but he is there for the sentencing. In order to better understand the situation, Friedman goes to talk with Rabbi Eliezer Waldman who is a founder of the West Bank settlement movement. The Rabbi, one of the original settlers at the hotel rented for the Passover vacation, was born in Israel but raised in America. Waldman explains it to Friedman in terms of the need for redemption which he sees as a process, not as a single act. The creation of Israel is a step in the process, just as the claiming of the West Bank and Gaza Strip is a step in the process. The terrorists seek to hasten this process.

The last group is represented by Friedman's cousin Giora, whose bar mitzvah Friedman attends in Ashkelon. After the ceremony the bar mitzvah boy orders pork. Friedman talks to his own rabbi, David Hartman, who, like Schiller, was born, raised and trained in New York. Hartman is known as a radical but is respected as a Talmudist. His view of Judaism is based on tolerance and pluralism. Hartman explains that many Israeli Jews do not want any of the spiritual practices of Judaism. Hartman accepts the fact that there are different views of what it means to be a Jew and that these differences are a part of Israeli society and must be accepted by all. Judaism, to Hartman, is a way of life not a bunch of ritualistic practices that must be followed.



The Fault Line

The Fault Line Summary and Analysis

Friedman finds things in Israel are not always as they appear. He mentions the difference one notices at the Lebanon-Israel border. On the Lebanese side, the farm boundaries are irregular. In Israel they are very regular with everything done in straight lines. "For a while after I arrive there, Israel's straight lines fooled me. It took my eyes several months to penetrate the forest of right angles and to discover the jagged and volcanic fault line that lurked just beneath the surface of Israeli society. Whereas Lebanon was built on many different fault lines, separating the seventeen different Christian and Muslim sects that make up the country, Israel and the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip are built over just one, which separates Israeli Jews and Palestinian Arabs. In Lebanon, the government was constantly being shaken by tremors which exploded along its sectarian fault lines. Eventually, a tremor came along in 1975 that was powerful enough to open them all at once and send the whole country crashing into an abyss" (Chapter 13, pp. 322-323).

Israel, unlike Lebanon, is strong enough to absorb all of the shock waves without a crisis like the one in Lebanon. He finds a lot of similarities between Lebanon and Israel even though the Israelis disagree with him. Even he feels that he spent too much time in Lebanon.

There is no clearly marked border with the West Bank. Many people do not know where the border begins and ends. The roads and scenery look the same on both sides. Many Israelis settle in these occupied territories and experience parts of Arab culture such as shopping in the markets or eating in their restaurants. The Palestinians have to be a part of this mixed culture and assimilate in order to survive. A study of the occupied territories shows that they are never a financial burden on Israel. There are three major sources of tax revenues: income and property taxes and value added tax on goods sold. Not many troops are required until 1987 so there is little expense there also.

The Palestinians voluntarily comply with the Israeli rules and regulations without much protest. This makes the use of force unnecessary. There is no way the Palestinians can organize to fight the occupation. They have no economy to fall back on and resistance means economic ruin for them. The Israelis do not allow Palestinian leaders. At this time the PLO is not resident in the West Bank or Gaza Strip and this is the group that claims to represent the Palestinians.

A big fad among the Palestinian youth is to wear clothing or display items in the colors of the Palestinian flag. If they wear tee-shirts, they can be arrested by the Israelis. This is a way of bonding among the Palestinians. This is the result of the Six Day War in which much of the land involved in the British Mandate is now ruled by the Israelis. This causes a revival on the whole issue of Palestine. The older generation grew up under Egyptian or Jordanian rule which did not threaten them in the way Israeli rule does. The



younger generation does not have the option of Egyptian or Jordanian identities as their parents had, so they search for a Palestinian identity.

As a result of the 1967 war, Palestinians in and out of the occupied territories are drawn together as a political force. The Arab regimes are busy recuperating from the war and this leaves the Palestinians and the PLO to their own purposes. This makes them the biggest winners of the war even though nobody realizes it at the time. The Palestinians try harder to become less Israeli and more Palestinian which is difficult for them in a place where many road signs and official signs are in Hebrew or English. Home is not always comfortable for them, especially the young, because it is where the Israelis come to find and arrest them.

Friedman comments that there are always landscape scenes of beaches or the Swiss mountains in Palestinian homes and places of business. They want the scenes to be as pleasant as possible so they can escape the misery of their environment. This is true in the universities also. There is a lot of pent up rage at the situation in the occupied territories. Many laborers travel to a sidewalk area near the Damascus Gate where they wait for passing cars that come to hire day workers. Friedman goes to this area one day to talk with the people there. Many of the young are disgusted at helping to build some of the settlements in the West Bank or Gaza Strip but say what can they do when they need food to survive.

Friedman talks with a group of Palestinian students in 1987 about the rage that is building up in the Palestinians. They basically see themselves as having no future in terms of the Israeli occupation, their careers and their frustrations. They cannot see any escape and express the viewpoint that many of them just want to get back at the Israelis and this is why there is so much unplanned Palestinian violence. A statistician tabulates the acts of violence over the years, distinguishing between planned and unplanned acts and documents the increase. Most of the younger generation sees the solution in terms of violence, no matter which side they are on.

The existence of the occupied territories represents an internal threat to the Israelis. Their threat is no longer from without, it is now from within. This is the difference the Six Day War made to them, without anybody really realizing it at the time. Add to this the PLO and Yasir Arafat. This leads to increasing acts of terror over time. This does not threaten the Israeli existence like the armies of the other Arab states can but it makes their existence less comfortable. Many Israelis say that they feel less safe since the 1967 war and the addition of the occupied lands.

In August 1985, while Friedman and his wife are still in Israel, the government resurrects a carryover from the British Mandate days. This is the practice of administrative detention which allows the Israelis to arrest suspected troublemakers and hold them without charges for up to six months. Lawyers are not allowed to see the evidence against their clients and the cases are held in Israeli military courts.



The Earthquake

The Earthquake Summary and Analysis

Friedman has an interview with Yasir Arafat in November 1987. He relates the story of what happens to a colleague of his, when she goes to interview Arafat two days before Friedman. Instead of waiting while he is on a lengthy phone call, she goes to talk to someone else while waiting for Arafat, who then refuses to talk to her when he finds out. Friedman arrives for his interview after the end of the Arab League summit and just as King Hussein is on television talking about how the PLO might be invited to a summit as part of a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation. When asked about the King's statement, Arafat brushes it off saying that this is not what was decided at the Arab League. When Friedman shows him a copy of the Communiqué, he discovers that it does not refer to the PLO as the sole representative of the Palestinian people. This throws Arafat into such a tizzy that it basically ends the prospect of an interview since he can talk of nothing else.

The Arab leadership is trying to diminish Arafat's role with the Palestinians but he still represents hope to the people in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. "He had no idea that the Palestinians under Israeli occupation - who constitute a little under half of the 4 to 5 million Palestinians in the world - were about to revive his political career and give him back the leadership role and the army he had been searching for from the day he walked up the gangway in Beirut harbor. As always, it wasn't great decisions or actions on Arafat's part that would resurrect him. Instead, it was his role as a symbol, and some unexpected emotional chemistry within the sour of the Palestinian community under Israeli occupation, that would bring him back to political life" (Chapter 14, p. 370).

An auto accident in Gaza Strip is what sets off events. A Jewish shopper is killed in the Arab markets and two days later a Jewish truck driver has an accident on a road to Gaza that results in the death of four Palestinians from the Jabaliya refugee camp. The Palestinians believe that it is retribution for the death of the Jewish shopper. The next day a Jewish sentry truck in the camp is attacked and a seventeen year old boy is killed. This sparks a full-blown uprising that becomes known as the intifada. Friedman spends a day riding with an Israeli patrol through the Jabaliya camp where the people do not know that he is a reporter. He personally witnesses the confrontations between the Palestinian youths and the Israeli soldiers. This is the beginning of what continues for months to come.

Through the intifada the Palestinians express their rage. The cause of the hatred, frustration and rage is the Israeli occupation. There is no Egypt or Jordan for the occupants of the occupied lands to identify with. The Palestinians want to rid themselves of all things Israeli that they have assimilated into their own lifestyle. Many of the Palestinians lose their identity as Palestinians as the differences between the two cultures diminishes. Once the intifada begins, it spreads throughout the Palestinian



people, wherever they live and is totally spontaneous. They appear to react as a nation which surprises the Israelis. Their bitterness at the Israelis bonds them as Palestinians.

The intifada marks the beginning of the Palestinian people beginning to act as one. They are not a group of splinter groups any longer. The Palestinian people find a sense of solidarity through the movement and know the Israelis well enough to understand that as long as they just throw stones, they will not be faced with Israeli tanks. Arafat watches the events on television recognizing the propaganda value of heavily armed Israeli troops attacking Palestinians armed with stones. The stones are symbolic of many things like refusing to work for or collaborate with the Israelis, going on strike and refusing to buy Israeli made products, among other things. They are letting the Israelis know that they are finished cooperating with the Israeli system.

The intifada unites the Palestinian people and gives them a need for a leader. Into this void steps Yasir Arafat who has been looking for a role since he was expelled from Beirut. The Palestinians make it clear that if Arafat wants to represent them, he has to do it their way, which Arafat is willing to do. As for the Palestinians, they let the Israelis know they are mad but they never have announced goals. On December 21, 1987 Arab solidarity is evident in the Peace Day strikes. All of the Israeli Arabs take part in the strike with demonstrations. Once the movement begins, there is no stopping it as many people find out.

At the PNC meetings in November 1988, Arafat is finally forced to recognize Israel. The PNC has accepted various UN resolutions and the 1948 partition plan which implies a recognition of Israel with its boundaries as they were before the 1967 war. The next month, while addressing a special session of the UN General Assembly in Geneva, Arafat basically acknowledges the existence of Israel and says that the PLO renounces terrorism. This is a necessity for negotiation, which is what the U.S. requires. Most Arabs and Israelis are not impressed with Arafat and his speech. For the most part, they do not believe him or that what he says will make any difference for them. They see the actions of Sadat and the peace initiatives as much more important than anything Arafat does.

As stated before, if the Palestinians use firearms instead of stones, they will draw a deadlier response from the Israelis. Instead, the Palestinians more or less engage in a form of civil disobedience and this is something that the Israelis cannot effectively deal with. The number of people engaging in civil disobedience is much more massive than those who might engaged in acts of violence. It also gives the Palestinians time to establish their own economic and social infrastructure. The Israelis refuse to issue new identity papers to Palestinians who do not comply with the system and this cools the civil disobedience. Without an identity card, the Palestinian cannot work or travel or leave the area.

Eventually the Arabs re-assimilate into the Israeli economy. Many of them, both Arabs and Jews, never notice any contradiction in their relationships or actions while the intifada is in progress, like the Arab professor teaching an Arabic class at Hebrew University or the Arabs who study Hebrew. The intifada is a significant event in the

Palestinian movement because it brings them solidarity and makes them use methods of civil disobedience that are the right methods for the situations.

Under the Spotlight

Under the Spotlight Summary and Analysis

Friedman points out an interesting fact about Israel and Palestine. They occupy news time out of proportion to their size. They have more news time devoted to them than the Soviet Union. Many people are more familiar with the geography of Israel than they are of their own area. Events in Israel are very newsworthy in certain parts of the world. Many people view Israel in terms of a three thousand year biblical drama have the same expectations of modern day Israel as they have of the Jews more than three thousand years ago. It is the Jews who form the basis for Judeo-Christian morality and ethics, according to Friedman. This is the function of the Ten Commandments. The ancient Jews are also a symbol of hope as they overcame the shackles of slavery. Because of these two things, the world is always interested in Israel.

Israel represents hope and a dream for many people. The problems in the Middle East, then, in many ways, represent a dream that is dying. Many people, especially Americans, feel that Israel's success is their success so they want Israel to succeed. Part of this is that Israel has religious significance for Judaism, Islam and Christianity and many cultures are drawn together there. Therefore, some Jews claim Israel is judged by different standard than other countries.

When it becomes known that Friedman is leaving Israel in 1988, people begin asking him how he liked his stay in the country. Israelis are always concerned with people approving of their country. They are also concerned with how they are portrayed in the media. This almost has to be because they are constantly in the spotlight. It seems most Westerners are concerned with events in Israel in the 1980s. This also affects how Israelis and Palestinians think about themselves. Events are magnified out of proportion. Friedman points out that the news cameras report on the events of the intifada but not on the millions of Arabs and Israelis whose lives go on as normal.



Israel and American Jews: Who is Dreaming about Whom?

Israel and American Jews: Who is Dreaming about Whom? Summary and Analysis

Friedman remembers when Israel first becomes important to him. It is on June 6, 1967 when he is watching Walter Cronkite report on the Six Day War. Israel has not meant much to him before this day. He spends summers at a kibbutz throughout high school. A lot of people think that he will immigrate to Israel but he never believes that this will be the best move for him. When Friedman finally returns to Israel in 1984, he finds it to be very different from the Israel he remembers from his kibbutz days. Instead of asking him when he is going to immigrate, the Israelis are asking how to get green cards or what is life like in New York City.

Before the Six Day War there is a fear that Israel will be eradicated. Many people are prepared for the worst and reassure themselves that the Jews have faced disasters before and always recovered. Things changed after the Six Day War when American Jews cannot identify enough with Israel. Israel is a way to be Jewish and have a Jewish identity without having to go to synagogue. The big way to raise money is through the United Jewish Appeal, not through the synagogue and the big issue facing lobbyist groups is Soviet Jewry. "Ironically, as American Jews were spurred by Israel to become a more politically active and powerful community, they developed an even deeper sense of being at home in America. American Jewish leaders had real influence, they had real dignity, they felt part of their society, there was no occupation closed to them. There were Jewish senators and congressmen and a Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, whose members could see the American President virtually any time they requested. So with all of that going for them, many American Jews started to ask themselves, 'Why move to Israel? I have everything I could ever want as a Jew right here in the U.S.A. If Scarsdale exists, who needs Tel Aviv?'" (Chapter 16, p. 458)

The Six Day War changes Israel also. Before the war there is no television. Television appears in 1968 and Israelis become more Americanized, going in for consumerism and credit cards and currency speculation. They stand out if they do not adopt American ways. Many Americans who have immigrated begin complaining that Israel is turning into everything that they left behind them in America. The Jewish leaders are too late in considering the effect America has on Jews. It draws them like a magnet. In the late 1980s almost half a million Israeli Jews immigrate to America and Israel has to try to discourage immigration from Israel.

American Jews begin to learn about the "real" Israel in 1973. The Israeli troops cannot hold the Egyptian troops at the Suez Canal. There are scandals caused by corruption in the government and in 1977, Menachem Begin comes to power. Begin is unlike the



other Israeli leaders. He wants to settle the West Bank. Also, the only synagogues in Israel are Orthodox. There are no Reform or Conservative temples so Rabbi Levi Weiman-Kelman decides to begin one in the Baka neighborhood of Jerusalem. He attracts a respectable sized crowd for his first service from those immigrants who are not comfortable with the Orthodox service. The Chief Rabbinate is responsible for handling religious matters and it is Orthodox, so the only rules that prevail are Orthodox.

Kelman's group is attacked by a government-sponsored Orthodox group who want the Reform group to move out of the neighborhood. An Orthodox rabbi bursts in on their service and the Reform group begins to dance in order to ignore him. The incident makes national news in Israel and shows the different ways in which Israeli and American Jews relate to Judaism. The synagogue, in America, is a place where Jews build solidarity with other Jews. Whether the synagogue they join is Reform, Conservative or Orthodox depends on many things like location and amenities offered. In Israel, most Jews do not observe the religious rituals and do not need to join a synagogue to express their identity.

The exclusion of Reform and Conservative Judaism alienates many American Jews, which is something that the Israelis do not understand. The American Jews draw their Jewish identifies from the synagogue and telling them that the Conservative and Reform rabbis are not legitimate is to alienate them. How can they support an Israel that alienates them? Israel at this time is considering passing a bill stating that an individual is Jewish if his mother is Jewish. Many feel this will destroy American Judaism, along with the invasion of Lebanon, the Pollard espionage affair and the intifada. Israel then becomes a source of confusion for American Jews instead of being a method of identification.

During the years of the Reagan administration, the Begin government makes no attempts to reach peace with the Arabs. They stay behind the strong shield of the Reagan administration. They also learn that not many American Jews will migrate to Israel. They prefer life in the U.S.



Conclusion: From Beirut to Jerusalem to Washington

Conclusion: From Beirut to Jerusalem to Washington Summary and Analysis

Friedman spends almost ten years in Lebanon and Israel. In 1987 he is asked by The New York Times if he wants to cover the State Department in Washington D.C. Friedman says yes. Before leaving, Friedman, his wife and two small daughters go out for lunch at the Inter-Continental Hotel. While driving there, they are attacked by two Palestinian youths who throw stones at the windshield. None of the Friedman family is hurt but his young daughter remember the incident. Friedman has seen violence during his tenure in the Middle East.

Friedman finds that, when he is back in the United States, many people in Washington share his view of the Middle East, basically that the future is burdened by the past. As the intifada goes on, the world sees the Israeli soldiers hitting the Palestinians back. Then the United States becomes the target of terrorism. However, the Middle East is a strategic part of the world and cannot be ignored by the United States. Also, the United States and other countries cannot dictate to the countries of the Middle East. They have their own goals and agendas. America has to learn how to deal with the participants.

Secretary of State George P. Shultz travels to the Middle East three times in early 1988, trying to work out a peace between Israel, Jordan and the Palestinians. They each want him to come but for different reasons, since they each have their own reasons. Israel wants it to appear that they are trying to end the intifada: Arafat wants an agreement without concessions by the Palestinians and Jordan wants someone to blame for the situation. They are not really serious about wanting a settlement. And, as Friedman points out, one must learn how to negotiate with Middle Easterners. He goes through different examples of negotiations with Hezbollah and the Iranians and Qaddafi. They all have their own way of doing things. Such as Qaddafi buying an American hostage being held by the Lebanese Shiites and killing him in retaliation for the U.S. attack on Libya. Diplomacy in the Middle East has its own rules.



Epilogue

Epilogue Summary and Analysis

Friedman believes that there will be no serious negotiations in the Middle East until the involved parties are ready to negotiate a settlement. The Israelis, according to Friedman, hold all of the cards in holding the West Bank and Gaza Strip. This means that the relevant question is what does it take to get the Israelis to trade all or part of these territories? He does not believe that a Palestinian state will come into existence or that Israeli withdrawal will be easily accomplished unless it is with the assent of the majority of the Israeli population. But the population is confused about what it wants and the intifada tells them that the longer it goes on, the worse it will be. At this point in time the situation is deadlocked.

There has to be a strong Israeli leadership that can show the majority of the population that they do not want to stay in Gaza and the West Bank forever and that there are viable alternatives to the current situation. The leader will need plans for withdrawal from the territories, or most of them, that are acceptable and provide a means for safety for the population. The citizens have to be aware there will be incidents along any border they designate. There must be a re-arrangement of security more in line with the kind of society they want. This leader must also let the Palestinians know they can have whatever kind of state they want but it will not be too big or too powerful. They can accept these terms or they can go on throwing stones.

"That is a tribal solution for a tribal war. It is a solution that Sasson can intuitively understand, because it grows right out of his gut. It is a solution that assumes the worst about both sides - which is exactly what most Palestinians and Israelis assume about each other - and then attempts to draw from that assumption a workable formula that would break the status quo. As solutions go it is not pretty" (Epilogue, p. 518). This is the kind of arrangement which can be understood by most people on both sides and these are the people who need to be reached in order for an agreement to take place. The solution must be tribal, not diplomatic, according to Friedman.

The Sadat initiative is a diplomatic solution that works for several reasons. First, it is done in a way acceptable to most Israelis and Palestinians. It overcomes the issue of legitimate rights, the hang-up in most Arab-Israeli negotiations. These rights are always based on the past and result in little room for compromise on either side. Secondly, the Israelis are very sensitive to the rhetoric of the Arabs. Someone is always calling for their elimination and the man in the street remembers this. Thirdly, Israelis are suspicious of any negotiations with those who call for the destruction of Israel. The struggle has gone on for too long to be overlooked by either side. This is something the Sadat initiatives overcome.

At the same time there are differences in the situation between the Israelis and Egyptians and the Israelis and Palestinians. There is a natural boundary between Egypt



and Israel. No such natural boundary exists between Israel and Palestine. There are too many dual claims to land based on history and too many different Palestinian groups claiming to represent the Palestinians even within the PLO. The Israelis must recognize Palestine's right to exist as a state just as the Palestinians must recognize Israel's right to exist as a state. The problem with the Palestinians is they have nothing to lose in their fight against Israel. If they have a state and something to lose, it will be a different matter. Friedman goes on to say that the Palestinian state will have to be demilitarized and Israel will have to provide for the Palestinian security. This plan will have to be put into effect over several years in order to give people a chance to adjust to the changes.



Characters

Thomas Friedman

Friedman is the author of the book. He is a Middle East correspondent who grows up in Minneapolis, Minnesota, the son of a Jewish family. He first goes to the Middle East as a teenager when his family travels to Tel Aviv to visit his sister in 1968. She is a student at Tel Aviv University. On his return to Minneapolis he works for the Jewish Agency which arranges for him to spend his high school summers at the Kibbutz Hahotrim outside of Haifa. He studies a semester at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and spends a summer studying Arabic at the American University in Cairo. He graduates from Brandeis in 1975, goes on to earn a graduate degree in Middle Eastern studies at Oxford University in 1978 and takes a job at the London bureau of United Press International. He becomes the Beirut correspondent in 1979 and goes to work for The New York Times in 1982. After Beirut, he works in Jerusalem until late 1987.

Yasir Arafat

Arafat is born in 1929 in either Egypt or Gaza. He tells people both so nobody ever knows for sure which one. He is named Mohammed but known as Yasir. When his mother dies, he is four and is sent to live with a relative in Jerusalem, where he grows up. He is educated at Cairo University and trained as a civil engineer and is always interested and active in Palestinian nationalist causes. After the end of the 1967 war, Arafat gains control of the PLO and turns it into an umbrella organization for different Palestinian groups. He is successful at holding it together over the years. He becomes identified with the Palestinian cause even though he has no way of claiming the Palestinian land. He cannot negotiate with the Israelis because he will not recognize Israel and he cannot fight them for the land because he has no army.

Ze'ev Chafets

Chafets is a friend of Friedman who is born in Detroit and immigrates to Israel. He introduces Friedman to the Rimon School of Jazz. He is one of the four people Friedman talks to for views of Israel. His view is that solidarity is what holds together the Jewish people. The nice thing about living in a Jewish state, according to Chafets, is that people do not have to try to act Jewish as they do in America.

Rabbi Nota Schiller

Rabbi Nota Schiller is another person representative of views in Israel. He is born and raised in New York and believes the Orthodox Jews are the keepers of the Jewish traditions and customs. Without them, the younger generations will lose most of their



heritage but he believes there is a place in Jewish society for Reform and Conservative Jews, just as there is for Orthodox Jews.

Rabbi Eliezer Waldman

Rabbi Waldman, who is born in Israel but raised in New York, represents a third view of Israel. He is one of the original vacationers at the Arab Hotel in the West Bank that becomes one of the original West Bank settlements. Waldman sees the need for redemption and that redemption is a process with different steps. The creation of the state of Israel is one step, just as the taking of the West Bank and Gaza Strip are another step. Terrorists try to hasten this process.

Rabbi David Hartman

Hartman, who is born and raised in New York, represents the fourth group with a view of Israel. He views Israel as a land of pluralism and tolerance. There are different views of what it means to be Jewish or to have a Jewish state and all of these differences are part of Jewish society and must be accepted by all. Being Jewish is a way of life, not a procedure for following rituals and this is what must be captured in Israel.

Ann Friedman

Ann Friedman, nee Bucksman, is the wife of Thomas Friedman. She helps him publish his first articles when he is in graduate school and accompanies him to Beirut when he is named the bureau correspondent there. She finds a job at a local bank in Beirut.

Amnon Shahak

Shahak is an Israeli major general when he first meets Friedman. He later becomes the Chief of Military Intelligence. Shahak is the commander of the Israeli division that is stationed in the Shouf Mountains when he first meets Friedman in 1982.

Mohammed

Mohammed is Friedman's driver and assistant. He is very helpful to Friedman and loses his wife and two daughters trying to help Friedman protect his apartment building. Mohammed is always a help to Friedman since he knows the Arab ways. He functions as a fixer for Friedman.



Mahmoud Labadi

Labadi is a PLO official close to Arafat at the time both Arafat and Friedman are in Beirut. Labadi knows that Friedman is Jewish but does not hold it against him as long as Friedman is fair to them in his reporting.

David Zucchini

Zucchini is a journalist and a friend of Friedman's in Beirut.

Ariel Sharon

Sharon is a former Israeli General and the Defense Minister at the time of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon.

Menachem Begin

Begin is born in 1913 in Poland, where he grows up facing anti-Semitism. He has a need to right some of the wrongs the Jews faced in Europe and he sees some of this in his battle with Arafat.

Bashir Gemayel

Gemayel is a Lebanese Christian and head of the Phalangist Party that helps Israel during the invasion. Sharon and others want Gemayel to be President of Lebanon and after the departure of the PLO and Arafat, Gemayel is elected President of Lebanon.

Amin Gemayel

Amin Gemayel becomes President of Lebanon after the assassination of Bashir. He always believes that he is stronger than he actually is.

Shimon Peres

Friedman is required to interview Shimon Peres when he first arrives in Israel. He is a Labor Party representative. Peres is the Labor Party candidate in the July 1984 national elections.

Yitzhak Shamir

Shamir is the Likud Party Prime Minister and candidate in the July 1984 national elections. He is also interviewed by Friedman soon after Friedman's arrival in Israel. Shamir, whose family died in the Holocaust, becomes Prime Minister in October 1986, when Friedman goes to interview him.



Objects/Places

Minneapolis, Minnesota

Minneapolis is the birthplace of Thomas Friedman, who is the son in an American Jewish family.

Kibbutz Hahotrim

This is a kibbutz located south of Haifa where Friedman spends his summers while he is in high school. This is part of his reward for working for the Jewish Agency.

Oxford University

Friedman does his graduate work in Middle Eastern Studies at St. Antony's College at Oxford. While there he has several Op Ed articles published which helps begin his career in journalism.

London, England

London is the home of the London bureau of the UPI which is Friedman's first job in journalism. The Iranian Revolution begins soon after he starts working there.

Beirut, Lebanon

Friedman becomes the UPI Beirut correspondent in 1979. Beirut has been the site of a civil war for four years at the time. Before the war it is known as the jewel of the Middle East.

The Commodore Hotel

The Commodore Hotel is the meeting place for journalists in Beirut. It is the hotel where they all congregate during the fighting. No matter what happens, the Commodore staff manage to keep the communications equipment functioning, which is why the journalists keep going there.

Hama, Syria

Hama is a city in Syria that is the site of a Syrian government massacre of between ten and twenty-five thousand citizens in February 1982.



The Green Line

The Green Line separates Muslim West Beirut from Christian East Beirut.

Sabra and Shatila Refugee Camps

The Sabra and Shatila Refugee camps are in West Beirut and the site of a three day massacre in September 1982. It is estimated by the Red Cross that between eight hundred and one thousand people are killed there although there is no way of knowing how many.

Tunis, Tunisia

Tunis becomes the home of Arafat and the PLO when they leave Beirut.



Themes

Adjustment and Survival

The terms adjustment and survival can be applied to the Lebanese situation and how they live their lives. They constantly adjust to different situations and this allows them to survive the long years of the civil war and the fighting. The Lebanese are a people used to compromise because there are seventeen different groups that comprise the population of Lebanon and they all have to compromise and make adjustments in order to survive in one country.

The people develop various ways of coping with all of the years of fighting. Some do it with mind games that they play. Others say they come to know their neighbors very well because of all of the hours they have to spend together during the fighting. Others survive by not looking or by looking the other way. Friedman himself says he does this when confronted with kidnappings and acts of violence in the immediate area. As soon as the fighting stops, the shopkeepers open up their shops and the shoppers crowd the area. They survive by acting normal when they can and by taking shelter when they have to.

What Does it Mean to Be Jewish

Friedman seems surprised at the confused nature of life in Israel when he first arrives. This confusing nature has to do with what does it mean to be Jewish. In the United States and most other countries, the Jews find solidarity in the synagogue and find their Jewish identity in the rituals of the synagogue. This is pretty much missing in Israel. Being Jewish does not revolve around the synagogue or anything spiritual or ritualistic. People do not need the religious aspect to find their identities as Jews in Israel. They are surrounded by everything Jewish: people, state, language. They do not have to worry about losing themselves in somebody else's customs and culture. This is pretty much what happens to the Palestinians.

The only form of Judaism recognized in Israel is Orthodox Judaism. The state does not recognize the Reform or Conservative forms of Judaism. The state supplies rabbis for weddings and bar mitzvahs and they are orthodox and for many it is the only time they spend in a synagogue. The Israelis are not bothered by the problem of religious rituals because they do not need them to be Jewish. There is no other culture for them to be assimilated into that will make them lose their Jewishness. They are more concerned with what kind of country do they want Israel to be, given the fact that they are Jewish. This is why many Israelis do not really care who is running the country.



Middle East Life

A third theme we can distinguish is Middle East life. Life in this part of the world is in many ways different for Americans. There is a different way of doing things, such as using fixers in Beirut. Fixers are people who know how to get things done and they are used by most of the foreigners in the country. They can do most anything like arranging for receipts to reservations. The fixer makes life much easier for the foreigners in Beirut. There are even fixers at the Commodore Hotel, which is the gathering spot for the press.

Another part of life in the Middle East is dealing with the violence. Friedman claims that the fighting is something people get used to. After a bang, they wait to see if there are sirens before deciding if they should get out of bed or not. Life in the Middle East means looking the other way in many respects, such as at checkpoints where kidnappings are taking place. Coping is a part of life in the Middle East since there is violence in both Lebanon and Israel and behavior that is hard for Americans to understand. The Palestinians have been so assimilated into the Israeli system, that many do not even realize it after the beginning of the intifada, although many have to make a choice between making a living and working within the Israeli system. People are more accepting of acts of violence, acts they would question in other parts of the world.

Style

Perspective

Friedman is certainly qualified to write this book. He becomes interested in the Middle East when he is a child and spends his high school summers working on a kibbutz south of Haifa. He studies Arabic in Cairo as an undergrad and spends a semester studying in Israel. He then takes a masters degree in Middle Eastern Studies from Oxford. While in graduate school, he writes several articles that are published in various newspapers. This is enough to help land him a job with United Press International when he finishes his studies. After a few months, he is offered a job as UPI's Beirut correspondent. He jumps at the chance, even though he will be a Jewish correspondent in Lebanon. After two year, he goes to work for The New York Times and after several more years, he is transferred to Jerusalem. He covers the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and the intifada, among other things.

Friedman writes of his experiences as a news correspondent in this part of the world. It is a very interesting book for the reader since the author is writing from his own experiences as a news reporter. It gives more credibility to Friedman to have lived through the experiences he writes about and for the reader to learn how stories come into being and what the reporter has to do, especially in places like Beirut.

Tone

The book is written in the first person since the author is one of the main characters of the book. He is telling of his own experiences in the Middle East and in many cases the reader feels he is at Friedman's side during some of the stories. Friedman seems to bend over backwards to be objective when he is in Lebanon and he is known for his objectivity, even by the PLO. He describes what life is like in Beirut and how one copes with it. Friedman seems to be a little more critical of Israel than he is of Lebanon. It may be because he has lived in Israel before or it may be because his expectations of living and working in Israel as a correspondent were not met totally.

The author presents his own views on and off throughout the book about various situations that arise. He presents his own proposal for what it takes to bring peace to the Middle East in the Epilogue. He does this by having a fictional Israeli leader who gives a speech which covers what is required for an Israeli-Palestinian peace. Even though Friedman's views and opinions come through at various points in the book, the book is not emotional. It is still presented in a more or less objective manner. There are no tirades but there are questions and comments about various events since the book is written in the same objective manner, for the most part, that a news report would be. The reader has to appreciate the objective manner and the style of writing. Friedman is obvious when he expresses his own views but he is not emotional about it. Events and occurrences are discussed in an intellectual manner and this will likely impress a reader.



Structure

The structure of the book is relatively simple. There are seventeen chapters, an Epilogue, Acknowledgments and an Index. There is a Chronology of events in the Middle East which gives the highlights of what has happened from the late eighteenth hundreds until the end of 1988. The first chapter is the Prelude where Friedman tells about himself and sets the stage for his news reporting career. This chapter is basically background and gives historical information about the situation in the Middle East. Chapters Two through Ten cover his time in Beirut and chapters Eleven through Seventeen are basically the time spent in Israel, although the distinction is not quite that clear cut.

For the most part the book is arranged in chronological order but not completely. There is some backtracking, especially when Friedman writes of his years in Israel. He talks of the events which occur during his tenure in each place and also looks at the causes of the problems or events, like the intifada. The conclusion is the Epilogue, in which Friedman talks about his proposal for peace, again giving reasons for his proposals and discussing why things do and do not work in the Middle East. The book is very interesting reading and will be enjoyed by all readers.

Quotes

"Lastly, it is a book about the people in Beirut and Jerusalem themselves, who, I discovered, were going through remarkably similar identity crises. Each was caught in a struggle between the new ideas, the new relationships, the new nations they were trying to build for the futures, and the ancient memories, ancient passions, and the feuds that kept dragging them back into the past." (Chapter 1, p. 10).

"Despite the initial reluctance of the Sunnis and Shiites to be drawn into the Maronites' Greater Lebanon, their leaders eventually reached a political understanding with the Christians in 1943 that enabled the Lebanese republic to become independent of France. The Muslims agreed to abandon their demands for unity with Syria, while the Maronites agreed to sever their ties with France and accept the notion that Lebanon would be an "Arab" country. This unwritten agreement, known as the National Pact, also stipulated that the Lebanese President would always be a Maronite and that the parliament would always have a 6:5 ratio of Christians to Muslims—to ensure Christian predominance—while the Prime Minister would always be a Sunni Muslim and the Speaker of the Parliament always a Shiite—to ensure the country's Arab-Muslim character." (Chapter 1, pp. 12-13).

"When car bombs came into vogue in the late 1970s, life on the Beirut streets became even more terrifying, since you never knew whether the car you were about to walk past, lean on, or park behind was going to burst into a fireball from two hundred pounds on dynamite packed under its hood by some crazed militiaman." (Chapter 2, p. 28).

"It was from incidents such as this that I derived by first rule of Beirut reporting: If you can't take a joke, you shouldn't have come. A reporter must never lose his sense of humor in a place such as Beirut - not only because he will go crazy if he does, but, more important, because he will miss something essential about the Lebanese themselves. Even in their darkest moments, and maybe because of them, the Lebanese never forget how to laugh." (Chapter 3, p. 50).

"Every reporter in Beirut was fully aware that for \$1.98 and ten Green Stamps anyone could have you killed. Your newspaper would name a scholarship after you, and that would be the end of it. Any reporter who tells you he wasn't intimidated or affected by this environment is either crazy or a liar. As my colleague John Kifner once wrote, reporters in Beirut carried fear with them just like their note books and pens." (Chapter 3, p. 70).

"I wanted to try to understand whether Hama's destruction was an aberration, a one-time-only affair, or whether it could be traced to some more permanent features in the political landscape. I was to learn many useful lessons in Hama—lessons that would



come in very handy in helping me navigate the road from Beirut to Jerusalem." (Chapter 4, p. 77).

"That is why, on a third level, the Hama massacre has to be seen as the natural reaction of a modernizing politician in a relatively new national-state trying to stave off retrogressive—in this case, Islamic fundamentalist—elements aiming to undermine everything he has achieved in the way of building Syria into a twentieth-century secular republic." (Chapter 4, pp. 100-101).

"After the 1948 Middle East war, when Israel was created, and Jordan and Egypt swallowed most of the land that the United Nations had designated for a Palestinian state, the Palestinians almost disappeared as a people. They were either subsumed into Israel as Israeli Arabs or melted into Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt, and Syria, as refugees. As Arafat himself liked to say, the Palestinians were being treated like 'the American Red Indians,' confined to their reservations—shafted by the Arabs, defeated by the Jews, and forgotten by the world. Arafat brought this people back from the dead, galvanized them into a coherent and internationally recognized national liberation movement, and transformed them in the eyes of the world from refugees in need of tents to a nation in need of sovereignty" (Chapter 5, p. 108).

"I saw them come and I saw them go, and a strange group of invaders they were indeed. They arrived in Beirut like innocents abroad and they left three years later like angry tourists who had been mugged, cheated, and had all their luggage stolen with their traveler's checks inside." (Chapter 6, p. 128).

"Because Begin fundamentally rejected the notion of a legitimate Palestinian nation, with a legitimate claim to Palestine, anything done politically or militarily on behalf of this 'bogus' Palestinian nationalism was viewed by him as illegitimate and potentially criminal. But the PLO did not just pose a physical threat in Begin's eyes. It also posed a deeply troubling existential threat to the Zionist enterprise. The PLO officially embodied the Palestinian national claim to Palestine, which was the negation of the Zionist-Jewish claim to Palestine. Wherever the Israelis went, the PLO followed, holding up the deed to Palestine and telling whoever would listen that the land did not belong to the Jews." (Chapter 6, pp. 142-143).

"So, instead of presenting an accurate picture of Israel's reality and framing immediate political choices from it, Arafat did what he always did. He gave meaning to the suffering of the Palestinian refugees he represented by indulging them with hopes and slogans. To formally recognize Israel would be to say to the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, Jordan, and Syria, whose homes were in Jaffa, Haifa, and the Galilee, that their forty years of suffering, and their dying in Beirut, were in vain. By refusing to do this, by holding out for the whole myth, Arafat was telling them that as long as they remained displaced, their suffering might eventually bring liberation. It was always easier to give significance to suffering than to compel people to face a reality that offers only two choices: bad and worse - either a tiny Palestinian state in part of the West Bank and



Gaza, possibly independent, possibly federated with Jordan, or nothing at all." (Chapter 7, p. 170).

"Little did I know when I last saw him in Tripoli that five years later I would be on hand to watch him land a new part on a new stage. That part would be delivered to him by a different Palestinian cast from the one Arafat led in Lebanon. It would come from the West Bankers and Gazans under Israeli occupation, who would rise up against Israel one morning in December 1987 and find themselves in need of someone to speak their lines to the world. Arafat would be offered the starring role, but under one condition: he had to read the lines which the West Bankers and Gazans wrote, and those were different, much more difficult, lines than any he had been asked to speak in Beirut. But speak them he would, and they would pave the way for his comeback on the world stage." (Chapter 7, p. 175).

"The American officials who dispatched the Marines to Beirut seemed to believe not only that the Lebanese problem, like all problems, had a relatively easy solution, but that the solution could be understood in American terms. The Americans looked at Lebanon, saw that the country had a 'President', a 'Parliament', and a 'commander in chief' (sound familiar?) and said to themselves, in effect, 'Look they have all the right institutions. The only problem is that these institutions are too weak. So let's just rebuild the central government and army and they can be like us.'" (Chapter 8, p. 193).

"By 1984 the Shiites of Lebanon were tired of waiting for the city's gates to open. The Israeli invasion and the Shouf war had shown them how weak the Lebanese state was and the Iranian Islamic revolution had shown them the power which Shiites could exert in the world. Emboldened by the distant whistle of a pied piper name Khomeini, the Shiite of Lebanon decided that their days of violation and silence were over. It was time for a cleansing, time for a people who had always been denied to claim Beirut for themselves. And so they did. West Beirut has been dominated by the Shiites ever since" (Chapter 9, p. 226).

"This class of nouveau thieves, militia merchants, and gangsters hiding machine guns under political manifestos formed what my Lebanese banker friend Elias Saba liked to describe as 'the war society,' and although they were constantly fighting each other, the Christian and Muslim members of this way society understood intuitively that for all their political differences they shared a common interest in making sure that Lebanese government, army, and police never came back to life." (Chapter 9, p. 234).

"But while this scene may explain to some degree why Israeli politics became paralyzed over the question of what to do with the occupied territories, it is by no means the whole story. The truth is that as much as Israelis expected and even hoped that the Arabs would come forward and negotiate land for peace in June 1967, few Israelis were really



in a hurry to give the West Bank and Gaza back, and Israel did not exactly go out of its way to encourage Palestinians, or the PLO, to pop the question." (Chapter 11, p. 258).

"The settlers worked out the increasingly bourgeois Israeli's repressed yearnings to once again be a pioneer. Because the Labor Party leaders got caught up in the intensity of what the settlers were doing, and because they had no real ideological vision strong enough to stand up against them, they never really stopped and examined the long-term consequences and never noticed that the passion of so many of the settlers was a subsidized passion—a passion that began by living in tents and caravan homes but would insist on swimming pools, paved roads, army protection, tax breaks, and ranch-style suburban homes before they were through." (Chapter 11, pp. 261-262).

"Since he could not annex the West Bank, but had no intention of giving it back or even allowing the Palestinians the real autonomy promised them under Camp David, Begin simply continued Labor's functional pragmatic approach of leaving the final status of the West Bank formally open, while building a whole new reality on the ground: more roads connecting the territories to Israel, more land expropriations, more Jewish settlements. Both Labor and Likud found this pragmatic policy a convenient way to avoid having to face the existential and moral questions posed by the occupation. Labor officials could point to the de jure legal status of the West Bank and tell themselves that all options were still open, while at the same time enjoying cheap shopping on weekends in the West Bank marketplaces, low-cost housing in the new West Bank suburbs of Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, the security provided by all this extra land, and the psychic pleasures of walking the hills where Joshua once trod. At the same time, Likud officials could point to the de facto situation in the occupied territories and tell themselves that all options were being closed and that this land was effectively being annexed. But by not annexing it formally, they could have all the Jewish settlements they wanted without ever having to pay a real political price, either domestically or internationally. They could always tell the world that everything was just 'temporary,' until there was a final settlement; then they would add under their breath, 'That would make it all permanent.'" (Chapter 11, pp. 266-67).

"In order to get a better understanding of the four main visions competing for Israel's Jewish soul I asked four Israeli acquaintances of mine—a lot them Americans, all of them drawn to Israel for totally different Jewish reasons—just whose country is this, anyway?" (Chapter 12, p. 290).

"For me Judaism should be a way of life not just for the individual, but should offer some deeper value guidelines for politics, economics, and social policy, and in all the issues that surface in the collective life of a nations. What does that mean? It means I have to interpret my tradition in a way which can flourish in a political sovereign state." (Chapter 13, p. 318).



"The Palestinians felt they had no choice: either they learned to ride the Egged buses and did business with the Israelis on Israeli terms or they resisted and didn't eat. Israel controlled all the means for importing raw materials and exporting finished products and would not allow them to develop their own industrial infrastructure that might compete with the Israeli economy or serve as the basis for an independent state. The Israelis did however, encourage Palestinians to work as laborers in Israel, to trade with the Israeli economy, and to export their surplus agriculture to Jordan. In this way, Israel hoped that the Palestinians would prosper as individuals but remain impoverished as a community. The Palestinians chose to play the game by Israel's rules, while all the time denouncing the Israeli occupation." (Chapter 13, p. 325).

"The West Bank and Gaza Palestinians were never the most brutalized Arabs in the Middle East—the Israeli occupation was mild compared to some other regimes in the area. They were, however, the most humiliated." (Chapter 13, p. 342).

"Ever since Arafat had been driven from Beirut by the Israelis in 1982, he and the Palestinian cause which he symbolized had been drifting aimlessly. With his headquarters in the backwater of Tunis, his guerrilla army spread out to the four corners of the Arab world, and the Jordanians and Israelis keeping him away from the West Bank, Arafat seems to be in danger of becoming irrelevant, and the petulance he demonstrated in Amman suggested that he knew it. When the substance of power vanishes for a leader, all the symbols, the trappings, and the insults take on mammoth proportions—because that is all there is." (Chapter 14, p. 369).

"The symbol of the intifada has become a Palestinian throwing a stone. That is fine for the cover of Newsweek. But if the intifada is ever to achieve anything tangible for the Palestinians, it will never be through either stones or guns. The Israelis will always use their vastly superior force to smother both before they ever become truly threatening. The only way the Palestinians can really put meaningful pressure on the Israelis is by concentrating on their original tactic of civil disobedience." (Chapter 14, pp. 411-412).

"This is why I believe that people, and particularly Americans, can get an emotional high from news about Israel that they can't get from reading about Singapore. This helps to explain why Israel is over reported in America, not only when it behaves negatively but when it performs positively as well - whether it is Israel 'turning the desert green' (which many other countries have done without similar publicity) or rescuing hostages in Entebbe or vanquishing three Arab armies at once in the 1967 war." (Chapter 15, p. 436).

"Although Israelis and American Jews began dating and fell in love after 1967, they never got married; they never made that total commitment to each other. Theirs was a romantic fling—an affair. As with any love affair, it was only skin deep; the two parties didn't really know that much about each other. In many ways, American Jews like Israel for her body and Israelis liked American Jews for their money. Theirs was not a love



based on true understanding, mutual respect, and mutual commitment. The relationship worked as long as the two parties dealt with each other in a facile, superficial manner—as long as not too many Israelis moved to America and saw how attractive life there really was compared to life in Israel, and as long as those American Jews who went to Israel never got off the tour bus or, if they did, met only heroes and dead people and then got right back on again." (Chapter 16, p. 460).

"That is why when people ask me, 'So, Friedman, where do you come out on Israel after this journey from Beirut to Jerusalem?' My answer is that I have learned to identify with and feel affection toward an imperfect Israel. Mine is the story of a young man who fell in love with the Jewish state back in the post 1967 era, experienced a period of disillusionment in Lebanon, and finally came out of Jerusalem saying, 'Well, she ain't perfect. I'll always want her to be the country I imagined in my youth. But what the hell, she's mine, and for a forty-year old, she ain't too shabby.'" (Chapter 16, p. 488).

"When I got back to the United States, I was surprised to discover how many of my new neighbors in Washington had come to share this perception that in the Middle East the past had buried the futures, and possibly always will. American's missionary zeal for peacemaking in this part of the world had vanished in the decade I was gone." (Chapter 17, p. 495).

"American, in effect, has to say to both Israelis and Palestinians, 'You are two people with nothing in common - not language, not history, not culture, and not religion. I am not asking you to love each other. I don't expect you to love each other. The sooner you live apart, the better off you will both be. But the only way you can hope to live apart and at peace is by first coming together to produce a settlement that guarantees Israelis their security and Palestinians their right to self-determination in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Nothing short of that will every bring peace.'" (Chapter 17. p. 500).

"It may be that America just doesn't have the energy anymore for liberating Arabs and Israelis from the chains of their past. If so, that is unfortunate, not only for us, but for the peoples of the Middle East as well. I have met my share of scoundrels in that part of the world, but I have met even more—many more—Arabs, Israelis, Palestinians, and Lebanese, who are desperate for what America has to offer their region. They are men and women who are starved for alternatives and who cry out for sources of optimism. America can be the bridge builder between them. Even when America doesn't have all the answers, it can keep asking the right questions. It can keep hope alive; it can keep the discussion alive; it can keep reminding people what the Good Lord tried to tell Moses: how exciting it is to know that tomorrow can be different from yesterday." (Chapter 17, p. 509).

Topics for Discussion

How did Thomas Friedman become interested in the Middle East?

According to Friedman, how do the Lebanese cope with the situation in Beirut? How does Friedman cope?

What is a fixer? Why was it necessary for news correspondents to use fixers?

What is the significance of Hama and the massacre? What important lessons does Friedman learn from it?

What was the PLO's policy of la'am? What did it mean and how did it function to keep Arafat in power?

In what ways does Israel make it difficult to have a Jewish identity or to define what it means to be a Jew?

Friedman states several times throughout the book that the Palestinians were the real winners of the 1967 war. Why?

What is the intifada? What events sparked its beginning?