

Book Review

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Quest for Peace: United Nations and Palestine By Faisal Odeh Matlag at Rfouh, Published by National Book Organization, New Delhi, India, 1986, pp. 197.

The Book is a pioneering work in the field of crisis management in international relations. It presents an indepth analysis of the role of the United Nations in resolving the knotty tangle of the Palestinian problem. It earnestly traces the circumstances leading to the emergence of the problem of Palestine in its historical and geopolitical contexts.

The book comprises six chapters, preceded by foreword, preface, introduction and followed by six appendices, a well classified bibliography and an Index. The author is an Arab Scholar from Jordan. He is a political Scientist with expertise in International Affairs. He has been himself a witness to the epoch shaking developments in West Asia and has very objectively penned his scholarly analysis within the rigours of his academic discipline. It seems paradoxical that the United Nations, which came into being in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War to free the "succeeding generations from scourge of war" and ensure the international peace and security, had been instrumental in the partitioning of Palestine which led to the establishment of the Zionist state and the original inhabitants – the Arab Palestinians, were rendered homeless.

This book deals with the role of the UN, its organs and the specialised agencies in resolving the problem of Palestine. It also chronicles the problems faced by the Arab Palestinian refugees

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and the relief measures undertaken by the United Nations Relief and Works for Palestine in the Near East.

The author has very aptly presented a dispassionate analysis of Israeli military expedition on the Arab territories. He also provides a critical appraisal of the inability of the UN General Assembly and Security Council in getting Arab territories occupied by the Israel forcibly. The recognition of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) as the legitimate organisation representing the aspirations of the Arab Palestinians and PLO'S induction into the UN in 1974 which provided a new impetus to the Palestinian struggle, has been given a detailed treatment in this book.

The role of the UN in tackling the Palestine problem has been subject to severe criticism. The author contends that since the UN played key role in creating the Palestinian problem, hence it devolves on the UN to remedy its own blunder. Infact, the entire World has in one voice expressed its solidarity with the Arab Palestinians.

The book specifically deals in detail with the role played by the Arab countries in promoting and championing the cause of Arab Palestinians. It accounts the latest Israeli armed incursions into Lebanon and ongoing peace negotiations at the UN and other international fora.

The author's first hand account of the developments, exhaustive use of Arabic and English language sources blended with objective analysis have added to the academic credence of the book. It also provides the possible alternate proposals for resolving the six decade old problem.