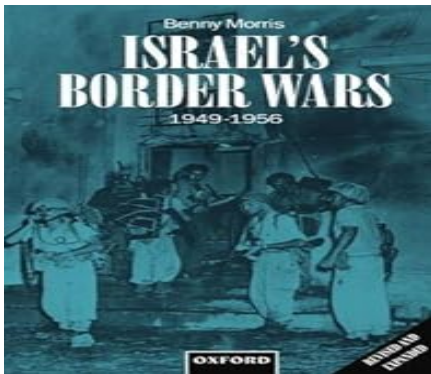


Israel's Border Wars, 1949-1956: Arab Infiltration, Israeli Retaliation, and the Countdown to the Suez War By Benny Morris



When I obtained *Israel's Border Wars 1949-1956: Arab Infiltration Israeli Retaliation and the Countdown to the Suez War* I was expecting a description of specific cross border military operations. This is not a blow by blow description of military operations but an epic survey of the border situation for Israel and its Arab neighbors in the immediate aftermath of Israel's war of independence. The new Israeli government worked to keep these people in place (and thus has to insure their security) in a situation where the former residents were sneaking back to the lands in order to work the fields "steal" things left behind and sometimes commit crimes including murder. Syria and Lebanon were fairly successful at controlling their borders the Egyptians usually managed to insure that only "authorized" infiltrations got through but the Jordanian frontier was far too vast to manage to despite the Jordanians best efforts (which were inconsistent). Morris goes to lengths to explain that approximately 90% of the infiltrations were "economic" which included Arabs returning to lost land recovering (or stealing) lost property and even trying to till fields in their old properties. Israel responded with raids of its own usually against Arab civilians who could not be tied to the original transgressions and systematically claimed that these acts were the work of "settler vigilantes" rather than IDF troops. Palestinian refugee raiding and cross-border attacks by Egyptian-controlled irregulars and commandos were a core phenomenon during this period and one of the chief causes of Israel's invasion of Sinai and the Gaza strip in 1956. He analyzes Israeli decision-making processes including the emergence and ultimate failure of Foreign Minister Moshe Sharett's dissident policy of moderation and describes in detail the history of the Arab infiltration including the terrorist-guerrilla raids by state-organized Fedayeen in 1955-6 and of the IDF raids of Qibya Nahhalin Kinneret and the Sabha. This was a precedent-setting period in the making of Israeli defense policy and this pattern of raiding and counter-raiding served to define Israeli-Arab relations during the subsequent four decades. *Israel's Border Wars 1949-1956: Arab Infiltration Israeli Retaliation and the Countdown to the Suez War* Benny Morris is professor of history in the Middle East Studies department of Ben Gurion University of the Negev in the city of Beer Sheva Israel: Morris relied heavily on data from the archives of: Israel the UN and Britain (which covers a lot of the Jordanian side). He does not pull any punches in regards to tactics used by Israeli's military or Arab terrorists: Morris delves into the precarious state of Israel's borders following the war as it struggles to secure a new country from infiltrators: The Israelis enacted a "shoot to kill" policy against all infiltrators and often placed brand new immigrants who were unfamiliar with region in border villages on the front lines: The Arab nations made frequent efforts to control the infiltrators with some notable successes and failures, As the situation degenerated infiltrators began carrying weapons with them to counter Israeli's "shoot to kill" policy resulting in scores of deaths: Eventually certain groups (primarily Egyptian military intelligence) hired smugglers and former residents to carry out raids on Israeli targets usually civilians: This policy changed after the 1953 raid on Qibya in which over 50 homes in Jordan were demolished: Following Qibya the IDF generally targeted Police and military targets. However this actually escalated the tension between Israel and its neighbors which ultimately lead to the Suez War in 1956. This book is one of best attempts I have

read to get “the whole story” so I highly recommend it: 488 This book looks at the development of Israeli-Arab relations during the formative years 1949 to 1956 focusing on Arab infiltration into Israel and Israeli retaliation, Benny Morris probes the types of Arab infiltration and the attitude of Arab governments towards the phenomenon and traces the evolution of Israel's defensive and offensive responses. In this pioneering study Morris deepens our understanding of the current situation in the Middle East and of the prospects for a lasting peace there: He is a key member of the group of Israeli historians known as the New Historians. Benny Morris is professor of history in the Middle East Studies department of Ben Gurion University of the Negev in the city of Be'er Sheva Israel: He is a key member of the group of Israeli historians known as the New Historians. I got much more than I bargained for. {site_link}.