

Book Review: *Return to Zion* by Eric Gartman

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It can often be difficult to understand how precarious Jewish life was in a world without a Jewish state. Focusing on the strong personalities involved in Israel's history, Gartman, a U.S. Department of Defense intelligence analyst, draws on many eyewitness accounts. He explains the drive for a Jewish homeland as a response to anti-Semitism in Europe in the late 1800s, followed by pogroms in Russia and Nazism in Europe in the early 1900s.

The book's quotations from Israeli leaders and citizens lend a fly-on-the-wall perspective to seminal events in Israeli history. Recently declassified U.S. documents contribute a dimension of military and political intrigue.

Modern Israel's evolution from an impoverished and under armed group of stateless war refugees to a technologically and culturally advanced nation unfolds; threats against Israel's existence change from being overwhelmed by large enemy armies on her borders to Iran's nuclear capabilities and the problematic relations between Israel and the Palestinians.

*Colin Shindler's *A History of Modern Israel* covers much the same time period but with more political detail.*

VERDICT: readers interested in a concise history of Israel, especially those who believe in her right to exist, will appreciate this book.

—Laurie Unger Skinner, Coll. of Lake Cty., Waukegan, IL