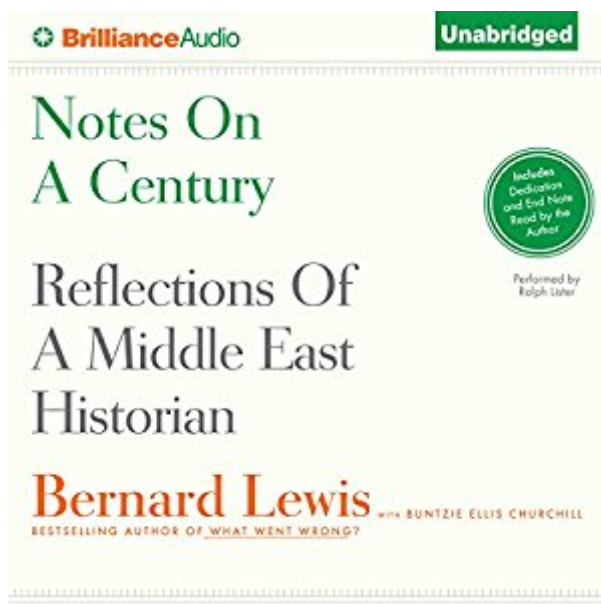


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Notes On A Century: Reflections Of A Middle East Historian



Synopsis

Few historians end up as historical actors in their own right, but Bernard Lewis has both witnessed and participated in some of the key events of the last century. When we think of the Middle East, we see it in terms that he defined and articulated. In this exceptional memoir he shares stories of his wartime service in London and Cairo, decrypting intercepts for MI6, with sometimes unexpected consequences. After the war, he was the first Western scholar ever invited into the Ottoman archives in Istanbul. He coined the term "clash of civilizations" in the 1950s, when no one imagined that political Islam would one day eclipse communism. A brilliant raconteur with an extraordinary gift for languages (he mastered 13), he regales us with tales of memorable encounters with Edward Kennedy, the Shah of Iran, Golda Meir, and Pope John Paul II, among many others. September 11 catapulted him onto the world stage as his seminal books *What Went Wrong?* and *Crisis of Islam* leaped onto bestseller lists. In his first major book since the second Iraq war, Lewis describes how - contrary to popular fiction - he opposed the war and reveals his exchanges with the Bush administration outlining his far greater concerns about Iran. For more than half a century, Bernard Lewis has taken influential and controversial positions on contemporary politics and on the politics of academe. A man of towering intellect and erudition, he writes with the flair of Toynbee or Gibbon, only he has seen more and is much funnier.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is an excellent read about how we got into this mess of the Middle East spoken/written by an acclaimed professor of Arabic Studies. All politicians should read this so they have a better

understanding of the actual history of each country in the Middle East and how the Western World played them for their oil, their position in the world and alliances with or against other world powers to be. There is incite from the Shah of Iran. There is incite from when the colonies of N Africa becoming their own countries. There are certain round table discussions of years ago that no one seems to want to know about for today's negotiations, if that is what you call it. There is a history lesson of the Middle East from the centuries back, that no one seems to know or has distorted for their own rants and demands. Bernard Lewis has learned multiple languages so that he can be respected as a person on the "inside". He mentions about the "liberal" attitudes of the liberal college professors that push their agenda on their immature, maybe intelligent, but not so knowledgable impressionable students and we wonder why there are these protests on the campuses today? The author lays the ground work for all that is happening today is what has been cultivated and honed over the last 40 years. Very insightful, full of history that we all need to be enlightened. Reading this book makes me think that some of the behaviors and statements made by our leaders are really showing their ignorance. Certainly the behavior of the students at the universities, like Yale and Princeton and the positions they are standing for, well they need to wake up and stop following some idea because it is popular but to stand up for what is the truth! Extremely well written, interesting and frustrating knowing what we all should know but don't.

It was one of the best books I have ever read, I really really enjoyed reading this book. Bernard Lewis is a really good writer and he sets us out on a good journey throughout the 20th century(mostly). But one thing has bothered me while reading this book that the author is literally an orientalist. he almost justifies European colonialism and I almost vomited reading those lines.

a very well written and insightful book into the life of the American's best Middle East Historian and the events which molded his career. Not meant to be a history of the Middle East but rather a collection of the footnotes to history that often illuminate the real stories. Particularly his battles with the EDward Said view of the Middle East were of great interest in that so many centers of learning rely on the political orientation approach of Said, which has been detrimental to the students actually understanding what shapes the Arab world. A drawback is the inclusion of some rather irrelevant materiel, but it all readable and instructive

Pages full of wisdom of an old scholar. Lavish language, profound insights, brilliant analyses.

Notes On A Century is a wonderful record of Prof. Lewis' remarkable life. It includes history on every page along with his personal impressions. Best of all, it is warmly readable. I recommend it HIGHLY.

This book was totally engaging and a thrill to read. I found the book to be a great insight as to how as a historian approaches the world. As an academic, I found his analysis of why he did things (learn languages, approach history, revise books) to be very enlightening and helpful to my own personal development. As a student of Turkey, I found his insights into the thinking of the Turks and particularly the late President Ozal to be profound. Overall, his personal assessments of contemporary world leaders with a historian's eye were intriguing and shall provide much for historians to analyze in the future. Those looking for a dry analytical text may be disappointed because the book is written in a conversational style, telling of his successes yet not boisterously, but also admitting his faults (such as his failed relationships) with a bit of humor. The final chapter is priceless regarding how the West fails to understand and be effective in promoting democracy in the Middle East. I heartily recommend this book.

Very easy for a non academic to read and gain great insight into Lewis' experiences and knowledge of the middle east. I first checked it out of the library and after reading half way through, decided I needed my own copy to make margin notes and to have for reference.

A must-read if you love history. Personal reminiscences and deep insights of a formidable thinker. To appreciate it, better read first at least two history books by Bernard Lewis.

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