Efraim Karsh argues, contrary to the received wisdom, that there was nothing inevitable about the Palestinian-Jewish confrontation. Throughout the Mandate era (1920-48), he contends, the periods of peaceful coexistence far exceeded those of violent eruptions and the latter were the work of a small fraction of Palestinian Arabs, most of whom would rather coexist with their Jewish neighbors. The breakdown of this coexistence was the result of a triple betrayal of Palestinian Arabs (and Jews): by the Palestinian-Arab leadership, by the Arab states, and by the British mandatory authorities. A similar betrayal would take place some five decades later when Yasser Arafat and his PLO colleagues would use the Oslo Process as a platform for implementing their “phased strategy” for Israel’s destruction, rather than leading their people to the two-state solution, as many in the West Bank and Gaza would have preferred.

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