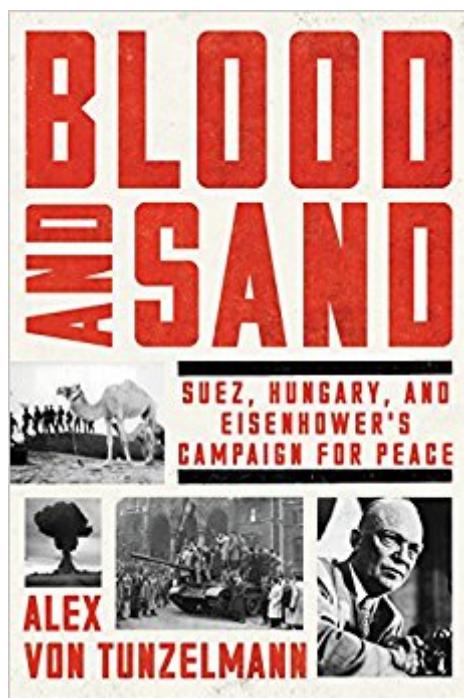


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Blood And Sand: Suez, Hungary, And Eisenhower's Campaign For Peace



Synopsis

A lively, revelatory popular history that tells the story of both the Suez Crisis and the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 – a tale of conspiracy and revolutions, spies and terrorists, kidnappings and assassination plots, the fall of the British Empire and the rise of American hegemony under the heroic leadership of President Dwight D. Eisenhower – which shaped the Middle East and Europe we know today. The year 1956 was a turning point in history. Over sixteen extraordinary days in October and November of that year, the twin crises involving Suez and Hungary pushed the world to the brink of a nuclear conflict and what many at the time were calling World War III. Blood and Sand delivers this story in an hour-by-hour account through a fascinating international cast of characters: Anthony Eden, the British prime minister, caught in a trap of his own making; Gamal Abdel Nasser, the bold young populist leader of Egypt; David Ben-Gurion, the aging Zionist hero of Israel; Guy Mollet, the bellicose French prime minister; and Dwight D. Eisenhower, the American president, torn between an old world order and a new one in the very same week that his own fate as president was to be decided by the American people. This is a revelatory history of these dramatic events and people, for the first time setting both crises in the context of the global Cold War, the Arab-Israeli conflict, and the treacherous power politics of imperialism and oil. Blood and Sand resonates strikingly with the problems of oil control, religious fundamentalism, and international unity that face the world today, and is essential reading for anyone concerned with the state of the modern Middle East and Europe. Blood and Sand includes 25-30 black-and-white photographs.

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Customer Reviews

“Gripping....Von Tunzelmann, an Oxford educated historian with an eye for human detail as well as a sure-handed grasp of the larger picture, does a marvelous job of recreating the tension and bungling that swept up Cairo, London, Moscow, Budapest, Paris and Washington during the harrowing two weeks of Oct. 22 to Nov. 26, 1956.... Not only exciting and satisfying but also timely.” (Evan Thomas, *New York Times Book Review*) “Anchored with fresh documentary evidence, *Blood and Sand* is a riveting re-evaluation of the Cold War crises of 1956: Suez and Hungary. Alex von Tunzelmann has written a definitive history of these crucial events — a real page-turner and monument to first-rate scholarship.” (Douglas Brinkley, Professor of History at Rice University and author of *Rightful Heritage: Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Land of America*) “This thrilling ticktock brings the emotional core of geopolitical maneuvering into dramatic focus, with portraits of leaders variously honorable, pigheaded, irresolute, pusillanimous, and susceptible to mood swings.” (The New Yorker) “This book offers a shrewd, exciting history of the Suez crisis of 1956, and makes a clear case for its relevance today.” (New York Times) “The effect is a cinematic, you-are-there style of history-writing, which plunges the reader into the chaos of events.” (Adam Kirsch, *Tablet*) “A thoroughly well-researched, action-packed, and highly readable account of the two major international crises that shook the world in 1956, *Blood and Sand* is a fascinating tale of plots and conspiracies, of deception and double-dealing, of bullying and blundering.” (Avi Shlaim, author of *The Iron Wall: Israel and the Arab World*) “Von Tunzelmann deftly describes and links these twin struggles and offers excellent profiles of the key players, including Nasser and Eisenhower, shown here as the true hero for his wisdom and restraint. This is an outstanding reexamination of these sad, history-altering events.” (Booklist, starred review) “Gripping.... A timely and insightful must-read for anyone who cares about Middle Eastern history or 20th-century diplomacy.” (Library Journal) “Skillfully and artfully integrates the complex, simultaneous Suez and Hungarian crises of 1956 into a single story of Cold War conflict as no one has before.” (Publishers Weekly) “Von Tunzelmann’s narrative cracks along like an international political thriller as she tracks the action day by day, sometimes hour by hour. A fine new account of an unnecessary crisis.” (Kirkus)

A revelatory popular history that tells the story of the Suez Crisis and the Hungarian Revolution of 1956—a tale of conspiracy and revolutions, spies and terrorists, kidnappings and assassination plots, the fall of the British Empire and rise of American hegemony under the heroic leadership of President Dwight D. Eisenhower—which shaped the Middle East and Europe we know today. The year 1956 was a turning point in history. Over sixteen extraordinary days in October and November, the twin crises of Suez and Hungary pushed the world to the brink of a nuclear conflict and what many at the time were calling World War III. *Blood and Sand* relates this story hour-by-hour, through an international cast of characters: Anthony Eden, the British prime minister, caught in a trap of his own making; Gamal Abdel Nasser, the bold young populist leader of Egypt; David Ben-Gurion, the strong-willed founding prime minister of Israel; Guy Mollet, the bellicose French prime minister; and Dwight D. Eisenhower, the American president, torn between an old world order and a new one in the very same week that his own fate as president was to be decided by the American people. This is a fresh new account of these dramatic events and people, one that for the first time sets both crises in the context of the global Cold War, the Arab-Israeli conflict, and the treacherous power politics of imperialism and oil. *Blood and Sand* resonates strikingly with the problems of oil control, religious fundamentalism, and international unity that face the world today, and is essential reading for anyone concerned with the state of the modern Middle East and Europe.

I bought this based on a brief review in *The New Yorker* that described it as "exciting" and "an hour-by-hour" account of the events of late October and early November 1956, when the USSR invaded Hungary (twice) to crush a popular uprising against Communism, and in Egypt, when Great Britain, France and Israel collaborated on an invasion intended to enable the West to re-take the recently nationalized Suez Canal and depose the leader, Nasser, who had sponsored the nationalization. I found it informative, especially because I had never read about Suez. I was familiar with the Hungarian side of the story and in fact had studied under the Hungarian exile, Charles Gati, who is quoted several times in here. But it wasn't any more exciting than any other history book. This is mainly because the author necessarily devotes the first 200 pages to explaining what had given rise to the parties' interests and positions. For example, the inter-relation among the interests of Israel, France and Great Britain are explained by reaching as far back as the Balfour Declaration and the Sykes-Picot Agreement. One also learns about the Algerian situation (France) and the Baghdad Pact (G. Br.). So it takes a long time to get to a portion of the narrative that is truly hour-by-hour. A related structural issue is that, while the events in Hungary and Egypt occurred

simultaneously, there is not much obvious connection between the two. There is an obvious strategic fact, that the existence of a Western power invasion of Egypt made it difficult for the West to take the moral high ground re Hungary. I compliment the author on also divining another strategic relation, namely that the Hungary occupation diverted USSR attention from the Middle East and thus may have kept the latter situation from expanding into a wider WWIII-type conflagration. But there is no real narrative reason to tell these two stories in the same book. The book draws mainly on US, UK, Egyptian and Soviet sources. Some Israeli and not much at all from French sources. I do not understand why there was little French insight. Candidly, I was stunned at the callous aggressiveness of the French government, which had no moral qualms about either the invasion or the false pretext that launched it and it would have been interesting to see how the French people and opposition dealt with that. On the topic of callousness, there were numerous massacres of civilians by the invaders of Egypt, and they are recounted here. The predominant theme is one of British unpreparedness, incompetence and failure to anticipate secondary consequences. A secondary theme is the astonishing mendacity of the invaders' governments. Eisenhower is credited with maintaining a moral high ground and also bringing the conflict to an end through, of all things, financial pressure on the UK, the first successful use of financial sanctions in history, as one British leader notes. (Actually, throughout the book, I felt Eisenhower's big-picture views reminded me very much of those of the Obama Administration -- deeply wary of committing US Forces; highly focused on the moral high ground; and supportive of financial sanctions). It was also interesting to see how everyone outside of the Soviets took the UN very, very seriously. Times have changed. On the whole, I found the book informative, if not as exciting as its publicity would make it seem. I hope I have conveyed both aspects of my reaction effectively in this review.

Suez was a watershed of epic proportions on its own and coupled with the Hungarian revolution created an unprecedented world crisis. The drama at the time was excruciating. Eisenhower's skillful leadership defanged the immediate threat of more serious world conflict but the events now sixty years ago resonate in current Middle East conflict. This book provides the dramatic narrative but interrupts itself so often to veer off into historical asides that the reader is left to fend for him/herself. It's too bad because the tale is one of astounding diplomatic and military miscalculation and duplicity that nearly boggles the mind. It seemed lunatic sixty years ago and more so today. Somehow the vast upheavals of that time simply faded away, overshadowed by the greater dramas of The Cuban missile crisis, the Vietnam war and other crises. But the confluence of Suez and Hungary was an explosive moment. It warranted a better book. Lots of riveting detail and

attention to larger issues but a flawed organization of narrative and background that made this a slog even for a reader for whom this episode has always resonated. Four stars because the subject matter is endlessly absorbing.

This is an exceptionally well written and insightful examination of the two World crises that transpired during the autumn of 1956. The author successfully presents the perspectives of the various players involved in the Suez fiasco and the failed Hungarian Revolution. President Eisenhower and Canadian Prime Minister Lester Pearson emerge as the two genuine heroes of the Suez conflagration. A great read

A pretty amazing story. Political stupidity doesn't get much stupider than the stupidity stupidly practiced here by the British and the French. Oh, did I mention stupidity?

excellent - amazing, ike & tricky dick did america's first coup 1953 in iran followed by central american countries - no wonder nixon was such a crook - ike taught him well - ike too knew that israel colluded with UK FR to invade egypt taking control too the canal with israel gaining gaza and negev sinai - ben gurion militarized israel -

Item arrived as expected and was delivered on time.

A dull chronological description of the events leading up to the efforts by Britain, France and Israel to recover control of the Suez Canal from Nasser, and the reaction and actions of the Eisenhower administration that effectively prevented the Anglo-French-Israeli forces from proceeding with their plans. But if one is looking for a full description of US policies and actions leading up to and during the crisis created by the Anglo-French-Israeli actions, and of Eisenhower's subsequent regrets re those policies and actions, read Doran, "Ike's Gamble: America's Rise to Dominance in the Middle East" (2016) (which rates 5 stars).

Very well researched and un biased book on very complex events, which shaped the world. The Suez crisis was arguably marked the end the British Empire, and affirmed the USA as the new superpower. Simultaneously, the events in Hungary also made it clear the USA would prefer to fight each other through proxy wars, and avoid frontal confrontation, thus avoiding a nuclear holocaust. It takes historical honesty to dare to write something like this, just as von Tunzelmann did in Red

Heat. It's quite understandable it will be uncomfortable reading for many, even more than 60 years as these events happened. It's a "page-turner", very easy and enjoyable to read. I look forward to read her next book.

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