

Six Days of War – June 1967 and the Making of the Modern Middle East
by Michael B. Oren. OUP, 2002. \$30.

The Body and the Blood – A Reporter's Journey Through the Holy Land
by Charles M. Sennott. Public Affairs Ltd, 2002. £18.99.

Six Days of War is notable for several reasons. One, because it contains in its first chapter as good a description of the circumstances that lead up to the Six Day War as one could read anywhere; second, because its subsequent chapters, especially those dealing with each day of the 1967 conflict, are replete with detail that is both highly informative and eminently readable; and third, because in the final chapter, concerning the aftermath of the war, Oren sets out all the components that have made the Middle East 'situation' so fraught with difficulty and so impossible – to date – to solve. He reveals that Rabin was given the privilege of choosing a name for the war, settling ultimately on the most factual and unostentatious; among other candidates was the 'War of the Sons of Light' – evoking the Dead Sea Scroll community that saw themselves in permanent conflict with the forces of Darkness round about them - and the War of Salvation. The latter title now has an almost mocking ring to it in view of subsequent events, but as Oren makes clear, if both sides had grasped the opportunities with which the end of the war presented them it could have saved them, and the whole world, from enduring grief, hostility and distress.

The Body and the Blood is a faith-full rather than a fact-full travelogue by a journalist and Middle East expert, as he journeys through the lands of the Middle East in the footsteps of Jesus. The journey, undertaken by Charles Sennott in the year 2000, is a balanced and thoughtful travelogue, though the author is particularly fascinated by the steady and continuing eclipse of Christianity in the part of the world where it started, squeezed by Judaism and Islam together. Sennott meets Jews and Moslems, Egyptians, Israelis and Lebanese, and Christians of many nationalities, and some individuals share with him poignant and lasting perceptions of the life they live. The result of his journey is a strengthening of his personal faith, a deep concern for the future of the region, and a hope that Christianity can play a constructive role in preventing Judaism and Islam from following each other to their doom.

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