

1967 - Israel, the War and the Year that Transformed the Middle East by Tom Segev.
Little, Brown 2007.

There are few writers in Israel today with the weight and credibility of Tom Segev, author of such profound works as *The Seventh Million* and *One Palestine, Complete*, and this background means that anything he produces must be treated with the utmost seriousness and accorded maximum credibility.

In 1967, Tom Segev brings his formidable skills as an investigative reporter to the events leading up to the Six Day War, the fortieth anniversary of which occurs this year, and those immediately thereafter. But Segev does not just rehearse the facts of the war that may be found in many other books, he conducts a scrupulous analysis of Israeli society on every level, the popular mood, the political and military tensions and more besides that informed the State of Israel in the years leading up to 1967: that he does so is vital because it is only with an understanding of all these dimensions that a full appreciation may be gained of the circumstances which led inexorably to war.

Recalling the fear for Israel that permeated Diaspora Jewry before the events of June 1967, and the euphoria that followed, makes reading Segev's latest book very hard, for it shatters some major myths, as so many other books about Israel in recent years have done. The true picture, as is often the way with world-shaking events, is far more complex than any outsider ever realises, and the debt that is owed to writers like Tom Segev for shining a bright light on dark and secluded places is huge.

1967 is by far the best of all the books written so far about that year and its 6 Day War, and is eloquent testimony to its author's integrity, literary acumen and impeccable research.

Rabbi Dr Charles H Middleburgh