

Review of: "[Commentary] Israel: A Problem the World Created (And Now Appears Unable to Solve)"

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This is an interesting article that applies a historical perspective to analyse the deep causes of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the recent manifestation of which was Israel's War on Gaza, following Hamas's attack in southern Israel on 7 October 2023. It contends that at the core of the conflict lies a Great Britain-led project to create a national Jewish home in Palestine, which in the early 20th century had been under its mandate, followed by the creation in May 1948 of the state of Israel on Palestinian-majority land. An outcome of this project, which is viewed as a historical mistake, was the USA-backed establishment of an over-militarised apartheid regime, where Palestinians subsequently became divided into three unconnected enclaves, subjected to mass killings and various forms of intimidation and discrimination, and thus increasingly deprived of any viable perspective on creating their national state. The article argues that the possible solution to the spiralling Israeli-Palestinian conflict, culminating in the genocide of Palestinians by the Netanyahu government, alongside Israel's military security failures and growing international condemnation, could be either along the lines of the revised two-state plan or the creation of a confederative Jewish-Palestinian state under UN supervision with US participation.

The article offers a thoroughly convincing and refreshing analysis of the historical roots and political dynamics of the current conflict. It is not, however, entirely free from flaws in terms of its sources, structure, argument, and general content. Its scholarly credibility is weakened by its heavy reliance on Wikipedia and its non-engagement with some seminal works on the subject, including by Noam Chomsky & Ilan Pappé (*Gaza in Crisis: Reflections on Israel's War against the Palestinians*); Rashid Khalidi (*The Hundred Years' War on Palestine and Sowing Crisis*), and Yaacov Ro'i & Boris Morozov (*The Soviet Union and the June 1967 Six Day War*). The references to data from the US State Department Archive are not juxtaposed with references to the relevant data from the USSR Foreign Ministry's Archive, which would have shed light on the impact on Israeli-Palestinian relations of international bipolarity during the Cold War period, which arguably acted as a restraining factor for Israel's expansionist policies in Palestine. Along similar lines, the article's use of Jewish sources is not matched by the employment of relevant Palestinian sources.

Structurally, there are several overlaps in terms of titles of sections and their contents that need to be rectified. For example, on p.18, there is a section entitled '2002 to 2021: Separation Barriers'. This section is then followed by one

entitled 'Period 2003 to 2023' (p.19). It might be more appropriate to have a section on 'Period 2002 to 2023' and, within this section, to place subsections on 'Separation Barriers' and other topics related to this timeframe. As noted above, there is no section on the Cold War and the role of the close collaboration and political and military support of the USSR to Gamal Abdel Nasser's Egypt, Hafez al-Assad's Syria, and Yasser Arafat's PLO, in particular. Most importantly, the article's conclusion about the plausibility of either a revised two-state solution or a confederative Israeli-Palestinian state under UN auspices with the USA's endorsement lacks crucial details and generally does not hold water; it also seems to contradict what has been said in the main text. There are no crucial details on borders and other parameters of the Palestinian state, or the Palestinian part of the envisaged confederative state. If, as rightly pointed out by the author, there are now three disconnected Palestinian enclaves, then the creation of a territorially homogenous Palestinian polity would require Israel to give up a significant part of the occupied territories and to demolish the 'security barriers' and a considerable number of Jewish settlements. This is a highly unlikely scenario as it would negate the very nature of the Jewish state, as was shown in the article. Furthermore, the assumption about the supremacy of the UN in the Middle East, or any other part of the world, is unfounded, given the USA's disregard of the UN in situations which threaten its global hegemony, as evidenced by the USA's invasion of Iraq in 2003 and its unconditional backing of Israel as its key strategic ally in the Middle East. The article could at least consider the possibility of other international co-guarantors (individual states or non-USA-controlled international blocs and alliances) for a solution that would counterbalance the USA-Israel alliance, which arguably presents the major obstacle to any tangible break-through in the Israeli-Palestinian impasse.

There are also some factual mistakes, e.g., on p.4, the article misleadingly refers to a rather short list of new nation-states that emerged during the period between 1860 and 2020. In fact, it primarily deals with the post-1990 period, as until then there were no such states as Russia, Montenegro, or Czechia, as these entities were part of the USSR, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia, respectively. The article requires thorough proofreading as there are numerous spelling errors, capitalisation inconsistencies, and unexplained abbreviations. For example, on pp. 4, 24, and 25, 'Hanas' (rather than 'Hamas'); on p.5, 'jews' (rather than 'Jews'); on p.6, 'the Arthur James Balfour' (rather than 'Arthur James Balfour'); on p.7, 'the World War 1', followed by 'the World War I'; on p.18, 'religious settler' (rather than 'religious settlers'); on p.27, 'the position if' (rather than 'the position of'); on p.32, Said Saddiki's *World with Walls* (rather than *World of Walls*).