**Zionism: Where do we go from Here?**

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The purpose of this trilogy of articles was to find out why antisemitism is a misnomer and anti-Zionism would be the right substitute for it. It is because the demand for a country called Israel, in the place Palestine where Arabs have been living for centuries, is a part of the Jewish mythology formed over centuries. Mainly, Israel is a place where Jews wish to be because there is safety for them–a wish that is kept by most people in the world. There used to be a short-lived Israel some two thousand years ago, but where would the world end up if all and everybody demanded to go back to the place where they might have lived two thousand years ago? If Mongols said they once conquered Baghdad so people get out, we are coming back? What about a Kurdish state? Saladin was Kurdish. He led the Muslim military campaign against the Crusader states in the Levant. At the height of his power, his sultanate spanned Egypt, Syria, the Jazira (Upper Mesopotamia), the Hejaz (western Arabia), Yemen, parts of western North Africa, and Nubia. Could Kurds claim that as the territory for their state?

Zionism and the demand for a Jewish state has no moral or legal ground in international law. It is an outcome of the rise of nationalism that has no real basis. It is an outcome of wicked British colonial politics and machinations. The reality of fascism resulted in the holocaust, which cost the lives of thousands of Jewish people and cost the homelands of European Jews, which had to flee and look for asylum elsewhere. Some of them found a new home in Israel, which has changed the situation. Because of that, today, the fact of the existence of Israel cannot be undone. Still, the conflict that the presence of the Israeli state is creating has to be resolved to bring peace to the Arabs and Jews living in Israel, to the region and the world. It is a matter of fact that longstanding unresolved conflicts and injustices promote terrorism when the wronged while feeling helpless and left alone, start helping themselves.

The demand for a Jewish state is an outcome of the rise of nationalism that has no real basis

So where is the way forward? Ideally, there should be no problem with one state in Palestine. Arabs and Jews have lived together over the centuries as has been shown by history. So the problem is not the presence of Jews despite them being present in a much larger number than at any other time before. The problem is the Jewish character of the state that makes Arabs second-rate citizens. And then there is the numbers’ game. The Jewish character of the state is based on the fact that today 74 per cent of the nine million Israelis are Jews while only 21 per cent are Arabs, according to official statistics. That is the reason that Arabs are killed and driven out. The Jewish character of the state needs a majority of Jews! But Palestine has always been an Arab-majority territory. So the ethnic cleansing that has been carried out since the Balfour Declaration in 1917 has changed that condition. Wars and expulsions have diminished the number of Arab Palestinians–not counting the number killed by Israelis. As per official statistics, the number of Palestinians living in the diaspora is more than six million. Many of them would like to come back to their homeland if and when the conditions are right.

And there is another aspect as well. While Palestinians in Israel are mostly poor, uneducated and stuck in traditional occupations, Palestinians abroad are well-educated and even, well-to-do. So you see the problem: If Palestinians are allowed to come back, the nice Jewish population majority is gone with the wind and a Jewish state has no basis to exist anymore. In addition, the social composition of the society would change; Arabs would be no more the underdogs. That is why Israel is determined to further cementing the Jewish majority by killing and expelling Arabs and by encouraging Jews to have more children (which is not very successful). It has even been claimed that worldwide, the Jews are on the road to extinction. Jews live in just two places in larger numbers: Israel (43 per cent) and the US (40 per cent). A Pew study concluded that American Jewry is well on the way to extinction. One reason is the Jews’ high intermarriage rate. It’s up to 58 per cent, far from the incorrect stereotype that Jews are insular. The same is true for Europe. And even in Israel, demographic chance points to a higher growth rate among Palestinians. Europe, the other major pocket of the Jewish population (nine per cent,) is seeing a level of anti-Jewish unthinkable given the lessons of the holocaust just 70 years ago. The reason is certainly a left-over, anti-Jewish feeling among Europeans but mainly the injustice meted out to Arabs and Muslims at large that is highly noted there.

There is another fact as well. Given the horrible crimes the Israeli state is committing against its Arab population many Jews have become embarrassed to support Israel, admit openly they’re Jewish and raise their children Jewish at least outside Israel. But even in Israel, we find a growing number of Jews who join protests against Israeli atrocities. So where does that leave us? As we have shown it is the Jewish character of the state that prevents conflict resolution. Given the strong standing support that Israel has from the US (40 per cent Jews with many in high political positions including hold over media) and US veto power in the UNSC seems that for the time being Israel is allowed to proceed with its war against Palestinians, grabbing of land and making Arabs second-rate citizens. The two-state solution devised in the Oslo agreement 1993 or – even better – the solution envisaged by UN resolution 181 in 1947 that included “Independent Arab and Jewish States and the Special International Regime for the City of Jerusalem, set forth in Part III of this Plan, shall come into existence in Palestine” would be best. A central demand, which has to be acknowledged in any peace plan, is the right of Palestinians to return to their ancestral home. But given the reality of today, conflict resolution and peace are a far cry.

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