

Resisting the ‘New World Order’ through the Lens of the Zionist-Palestinian Conflict

CONSTANTINOS ALEXIOU¹

Abstract

This short opinion paper explores the intricate connection between the Zionist-Palestinian conflict, the decline of Zionism, and the broader economic and geopolitical landscape. I argue that the rise of corporate power and privatisation has created an imperial force detached from geographical loyalty, subjecting Western populations to neocolonialism and oppression. The increasing pro-Palestinian sentiment in the West is believed to be fueled by this phenomenon, where its residents experience feelings of dispossession and dehumanisation, stemming from neocolonial governance. The narrative outlines the anticipatory measures taken by authorities, manifesting in authoritarian controls, media censorship, and social restrictions. The concluding perspective suggests a historic opportunity for solidarity between the oppressed in the Western, the global South,

¹ Professor of Macroeconomics and Policy, School of Management, Cranfield University.

as well as the Muslim world, hence emphasising a shift in perceptions, as Western populations increasingly feel the impact of imperialism and colonisation.

Keywords

New World Order, Imperialism, Financialisation, Zionism, Palestinian conflict

Introduction

In the context of the paper's analysis, the term 'Zionist-Palestinian conflict' reflects the deeply rooted and multifaceted political and territorial dispute centred on the competing national aspirations of two distinct groups, the Zionist Jews and the Palestinian Arabs, in the historically contested region of Palestine.

In the tumultuous landscape of global geopolitics, the Zionist-Palestinian conflict stands as a poignant microcosm reflecting broader struggles for self-determination, cultural identity, and resistance against what some perceive as the violent intrusion of a 'new world order.'² At the heart of this enduring

² It should be noted that the term 'new world order' used in this paper is distinctly different from the New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO), a set of proposals and initiatives put forth in the 1970s and 1980s by some developing countries, primarily led by the Non-Aligned Movement, to address perceived imbalances in the global flow of information and communication.

confrontation lies a complex interplay of historical narratives, territorial claims, and the clash of opposing national aspirations. This conflict, situated in the heart of the Middle East, serves as a compelling lens through which to explore and critique the dynamics of power, control, and resistance in the face of a rapidly evolving global order.

The term 'new world order' is inextricably linked to the concepts of imperialism and financialisation that emerged at the turn of the 20th century. According to Bichler and Nitzan,³ in the latter part of the 19th century -1800-1900- the leading European powers were looking to expand their influence on non-capitalist regions globally, whilst their own political economies were undergoing a fundamental transformation. The two concurrent developments spawned new theories that were mainly focusing on the extent to which the unravelling developments were associated. Some of the most influential authors who

These countries argued that the existing international communication system, dominated by Western media outlets and agencies, marginalised and misrepresented the perspectives of developing nations. Claudia Padovani, 'New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO)', in Wolfgang Donsbach (ed.), *The International Encyclopedia of Communication*, (Oxford, UK: Malden, MA, Blackwell, 2008), 1-6.

³ Shimshon Bichler and Jonathan Nitzan, J. 'Imperialism and Financialism: A Story of a Nexus' (2012) *Journal of Critical Globalisation Studies*, Vol. 5, 42-78.

attempted to explain the new developments were, among others, Hilferding,⁴ Luxemburg,⁵ Kautsky,⁶ and Lenin.⁷

In gaining an insightful understanding of the 'new world order' that has been unravelling for many years now, it is imperative that we weave together certain threads in the realms of economics and geopolitics, linking them to the Israel-Palestine conflict and the impending decline of Zionism. Notably, when considering the rising pro-Palestinian sentiment in the West, a recollection surfaces that relates to those who, for so many years, have been writing about the emergence of a 'new world order' in the West.⁸ This foresight was premised on the natural trajectory of neoliberalism and global financialised capital that have been looked upon as the panacea to problems associated with economic imperialism. The implied policies promulgated by the advocates of neoliberalism

⁴ Rudolf Hilferding, *Finance Capital. A Study of the Latest Phase of Capitalist Development* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981, first published 1910).

⁵ Rosa Luxemburg, *The Accumulation of Capital*. Trans. A. Schwarzschild (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1951, first published 1913).

⁶ Karl Kautsky, 'Ultra-Imperialism' (1970, original German version published in 1914) *New Left Review*, 59 (Jan/Feb), 41-46.

⁷ Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, 'Imperialism: The Highest State of Capitalism' in *Essential Works of Lenin. What Is to Be Done? and Other Writings* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1987, first published in 1917), 177-270.

⁸ Paul Collier and Colin Mayer 'The Assessment: Financial Liberalization, Financial Systems and Economic Growth', (1989) *Oxford Review of Economic Policy*, Vol. 15 (4), 1-12; Manfred Bienefeld 'Financial Deregulation: Disarming the Nation State', (1992) *Studies in Political Economy*, Vol. 37(1), 31-58.

enjoyed strong or convincing empirical support⁹ and, inevitably, were imposed universally.¹⁰

To elucidate further, the core idea behind the term 'new world order' rests on the ascendance of corporate power and the wave of neoliberalism that inevitably paved the way for Western domination and the concomitant socioeconomic tribulations that have plagued the developed world. The precarious nature of the emerging hegemonic global financial liberalisation is also reflected by the warning message of the World Bank that 'market-based financial systems can be unstable and susceptible to fraud'.¹¹

The rest of the paper is organised as follows: Section 2 provides a brief historical context of the ongoing tension, whilst Section 3 touches on the legacy of post-colonialism in relation to its global socioeconomic impact. Section 4, using the analogy between the Zionist-Palestinian conflict and the extant post-colonial era, argues that the 'common people' of the West should align themselves with the global South in resistance to Zionism and Western imperialism if they really want

⁹ Manfred Bienefeld 'The New World Order: Echoes of a New Imperialism', (1994) *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 15 (1), 31-48.

¹⁰ Mohsin D. Khan and Malcolm D. Knight 'Fund Supported Adjustment Programs and Economic Growth', (1985) IMF Occasional Paper No 41, Washington, DC, November 1985.

¹¹ World Bank, *Adjustment Lending: An Evaluation of Ten Years of Experience*, (1988) Washington, DC, p.4.

to break free from the shackles of the brutal and prolonged dominance of Western imperialism. Finally, Section 5 provides some concluding remarks.

1. A Brief Historical Context

The Zionist movement, which emerged in the late 19th century, aimed at establishing a national homeland for the Jewish people.¹² The movement gained momentum against the backdrop of European colonialism. As European powers withdrew from their colonies in the mid-20th century, the State of Israel was established in 1948, leading to a unique form of post-colonial statehood.

The establishment of Israel can be seen as a product of the colonial legacy, as European powers played a significant role in shaping the political landscape of the Middle East through the Sykes-Picot Agreement and the Balfour Declaration. Post-colonial theorists argue that the creation of Israel was another manifestation of Western influence in the region. From a post-colonial perspective, the Zionist project is viewed by some as a form of settler colonialism, displacing the indigenous Palestinian population.¹³ This has led to ongoing conflicts and tensions

¹² Theodor Herzl, *The Jewish State*, Penguin Great Ideas, (UK: Penguin Classics, 2010).

¹³ Ilan Pappé, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2007).

in the region, with the struggle for self-determination and sovereignty being central to the Palestinian narrative.

Post-colonialism emphasises the construction of identity in the aftermath of colonial rule. In the case of Israel, the formation of a national identity is closely tied to the Zionist narrative, which seeks to re-establish a Jewish homeland.¹⁴ This narrative, however, is contested by Palestinian perspectives that emphasise their own historical ties to the land. The clash of cultures and narratives in the post-colonial context is evident in the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Language, religion, and historical narratives play a crucial role in shaping the collective consciousness of both the Israeli and the Palestinian community.

Various post-colonial perspectives also analyse the role of global powers in shaping the geopolitical landscape. Israel's relationship with Western powers, particularly the United States, is often scrutinised in this context, as it highlights power dynamics and neocolonial influences in the region. The issues surrounding post-colonialism and Zionism continue to be relevant in contemporary discussions on human rights, self-determination, and global politics. Resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict remains a significant challenge, with implications not only for

¹⁴ Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997).

the Middle East but also for broader discussions on post-colonialism and nation-building.

2. Post-Colonialism, Zionism and the 'Third World State'

In the extant literature there is a wealth of studies on the legacy of colonialism and, most importantly, on the post-colonial era. The preponderance of these studies appears to share the same convergence message, i.e., colonialism has had a heterogeneous socioeconomic impact on many countries around the world.¹⁵ The discovery of the Americas, in conjunction with mass colonial projects tailored and effectively implemented across countries in both the Asian and African continents, enabled Europeans to enjoy institutional and economic development that led to what is known as the industrial revolution.¹⁶

The existing institutional differences however, meant that in countries, such as Britain, where an early struggle against the monarchy conferred parliament and society a more important role to play, achieved better economic outcomes vis-

¹⁵ Daron Acemoglu, 'The Economic Impact of Colonialism', (2017) VOX, CEPR, available at <https://cepr.org/voxeu/columns/economic-impact-colonialism> (last accessed 17 November 2023).

¹⁶ Daron Acemoglu, Simon Johnson and James A. Robinson, 'The Rise of Europe: Atlantic Trade, Institutional Change and Economic Growth' (2005) *American Economic Review*, Vol. 95 (3), 546-579.

à-vis countries, such as Spain, where the initial political institutions and balance of power was dominated by the monarchy, hence inheriting weaker political institutions and economic decline.¹⁷ As Marx and Engels eloquently put it, 'The discovery of America, the rounding of the Cape, opened up fresh ground for the rising bourgeoisie'.

Despite the institutionally driven heterogeneous effects of colonialism,¹⁸ the post-colonial era ushered in a period of poverty, hunger, unemployment, disease, violence, crime, general decay in the quality of life, and a dearth of amenities and services for the public. The realised implications extended to collapsing infrastructure, de-industrialisation, social upheaval, and a surge in authoritarian control, oppressive law enforcement, and curtailment of civil liberties. This trajectory exacerbated wealth and power disparities, concentrating control in fewer hands with diminished accountability.

In view of this unfolding trajectory, I argue that the Western world has transitioned from a stereotypical 'first-world' status to a more stereotypical 'third-

¹⁷ Acemoglu (no 15).

¹⁸ Daron Acemoglu, Simon Johnson and James A. Robinson, 'The Colonial Origins of Comparative Development: An Empirical Investigation' (2001) *American Economic Review*, Vol. 91 (5), 1369-1401.

Daron Acemoglu, Simon Johnson and James A. Robinson, 'Reversal of Fortune: Geography and Institutions in the Making of the Modern World Income Distribution' (2002) *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Vol. 117 (4), 1231-1294.

world' state. The manifestation of this nascent state is evident in the way the owners and controllers of global financial capital established an unprecedented power dynamic, transferring authority to the private sector. In turn, this has effectively created an imperial power detached from any geographically defined centre, capable of subjecting Western populations to the same predatory dominance that has been historically imposed on the global South.

This transformation has induced a shift in the mindset of Western populations, moulding them into neocolonised, oppressed entities, akin to the experiences of the global South. As a result, the people in the West are developing a worldview reminiscent of the oppressed, exploited, and colonised, much like the pro-Palestinian sentiments pervasive currently in the global South.

'Zionism as a modern political creed arose as a reaction to three interacting challenges or problems facing Europe in the nineteenth century, the heyday of Western imperialism'.¹⁹ It was recognised by many worldwide as a thinly veiled form of Western imperialism and colonisation and is increasingly viewed through the lens of shared experiences of colonisation and imperialism.²⁰

¹⁹ Abdul-Wahab Kayyali, 'Zionism and Imperialism: The Historical Origins' (1977) *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 6 (3), 98- 112.

²⁰ Ran Ukashi, 'Zionism, Imperialism, and Indigeneity in Israel/Palestine: A Critical Analysis' (2018) *Peace and Conflict Studies*, Vol. 25 (1).

The masses in the West are beginning to comprehend and relate to the Palestinian plight, finding common ground with the global South's masses. This alignment poses a significant challenge for the dominant forces at play, which they indeed foresaw and anticipated when this 'new world order' framework of world dominance was put in place. The leaders of the Western world have implemented authoritative dominance over societies, leading to an escalating militarisation of law enforcement. Stricter regulations and constraints on public gatherings, demonstrations, and an increased level of censorship in both traditional media and social platforms, have become more pronounced. The imposition of lockdowns during the COVID-19 pandemic has created conditions akin to martial law, including the prohibition of protests and dissenting voices in the West.²¹

3. Breaking away from the Shackles? A Discussion

What unfolds in the Western nations, in terms of the growing authoritarian measures, can be deciphered as a pre-emptive counter-revolution to the existing status quo. Authorities aim to quell potential insurgencies before they manifest, acknowledging the inevitability of such uprisings if not suppressed proactively. A

²¹ Constantinos Alexiou, 'Covid-19, Capitalism and Political Elites: The Real Threat to Humanity' (2021) *Human Geography*, Vol. 14 (2), 284-287.

pro-Palestinian demonstration, viewed by authorities as a precursor to insurgency, symbolises a challenge to neocolonialism in the West. The Palestinian cause is seen as a vivid expression of anti-imperialism and solidarity with the spirit of anti-colonialism globally.

Significantly, the pro-Palestinian movement in the West specifically targets Western corporations, aligning itself against the institutions representing and embodying modern imperialism. The expectation from those in control was for protests to be directed against governments and the state, serving as a mere facade of power, rather than targeting the genuine entities of power held by private sectors. This strategic redirection of grievances challenges the established order, defying efforts to maintain the illusion of democratic processes and state authority.

The revelation of information about influential entities such as, for instance, BlackRock, disrupts the preferred narrative of those in power. The strategy of boycotting and publicly putting pressure on Western corporations supporting or perceived to be affiliated with Zionism is altering the way people globally, especially in the West, perceive power; hence, establishing a realisation that true power lies within the private sector.

This paradigm shift offers a historic opportunity for genuine solidarity between the people of the West and the global South. Despite the significant

destruction and suffering inflicted by the West on the Muslim world, there has been a historical distinction between the 'common people' of the West and those in power. Optimistic as it might sound, I do feel that the growing sense of living under imperialism and colonisation, to a certain extent fosters a shared sentiment among average citizens in the West, potentially creating a common ground for global solidarity.

During various periods of history, issues such as labour exploitation, class struggles, and economic disparities were prevalent in Western countries. The Industrial Revolution, for instance, brought about significant social and economic changes, leading to -among other things- harsh employment conditions for many working-class people. Similarly, discussions around the impact of colonialism and imperialism shed light on the exploitation of resources and populations, in the name of Western powers' expansion. The effects of these historical events have left lasting imprints on societies, contributing to ongoing discussions about power dynamics and social justice.

This historical reality reveals that most of the Westerner spanning generations, were the ones that were exploited and the powerless in their societies. Their so-called civilisation has not respected them in the past, nor does it respect them now. It is therefore imperative that an alignment with the global South, and

the oppressed worldwide, is advocated, hence forming a united front against the imperialism perpetrated by those who own and control global financialised capital.

The changing of the course of the global economic and political order, orchestrated by entities like the owners and controllers of financial capital presents a delicate state. The determining factor lies in the actions of the masses, the populations, and their response to the current moment. At this critical juncture, with the spotlight on the Palestinian cause, symbolic of a broader global resistance to Western imperial domination, there is a palpable transformation.

This opposition is transforming the dynamics of conflicts by emphasising diplomacy and international collaboration, particularly within BRICS nations and Muslim countries. Moreover, it is expediting the liberation of global trade from the supremacy of the US dollar, unveiling evident flaws in institutions like the United Nations and the International Court of Justice, and challenging narratives propagated by mainstream media.

The worldwide resistance movement is seizing command of public opinion away from mainstream media, delivering a potent message to the custodians of global financial capital. It declares that unbridled power in the private sector can and should be held answerable, underscoring the supremacy and significance of the global populace over corporate shareholders. We are presently witnessing a

pivotal moment, a transformative era that challenges the enduring dominance of greed, oppression, violence, and a profit-oriented mentality.

In my perspective, Western civilisation has not lived up to its claim of civilising; if the people of the West were to align themselves with the global South in resistance to Zionism and Western imperialism, there would be hope for the West to truly become civilised. Solidarity is the key word that defines any civilised human being and only such a trait can put an end to a prolonged era of brutal dominance, characterised by a mindset of prioritising profit over people, lack of morality, prejudice and injustice. Is this the opportunity to break free from the shackles? Time will tell!

4. Concluding Remarks

The Zionist-Palestinian conflict stands as a testament to the enduring struggle for autonomy, justice, and cultural identity in a world navigating the complexities of a 'new world order.' The examination of this conflict through the lens of resistance unveils a narrative of resilience against forces perceived as architects of global hegemony. The historical backdrop of Zionism, the establishment of the State of Israel, and the ongoing Palestinian struggle, all converge to offer profound insights into the challenges faced by communities grappling with the forces of change.

As the global geopolitical landscape continues to evolve, the lessons drawn from the Zionist-Palestinian conflict resonate far beyond the borders of the Middle East. The narratives of resistance, whether expressed through grassroots movements, political activism or cultural resurgence, contribute to a broader discourse challenging the assumptions and power structures underpinning the 'new world order.' The stories of those resisting within this conflict become threads in the rich tapestry of global dissent, reminding us that the quest for self-determination and justice is a universal aspiration.

In contemplating the complexities of this conflict, it becomes evident that resistance is not merely a reaction, but a proactive engagement with the intricate forces shaping our world. The Zionist-Palestinian conflict underscores the ongoing struggle for a more just, equitable, and inclusive global order. As we reflect on the stories of resistance emerging from this contentious terrain, we are compelled to consider how these narratives challenge dominant narratives and foster a collective vision of a world guided by the principles of fairness, equality, and respect for diverse identities. In doing so, we acknowledge the power of individual and collective resistance to shape, not only the trajectory of the Zionist-Palestinian conflict, but also the broader perspective of a world grappling with the complexities of its own transformation.

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