

The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: A Historiographic Essay

by Melissa Thiel

The path to Israel declaring itself a nation in 1948 was complicated by world war, religious beliefs, and imperialism. The origins and contributing factors of the Palestine/Israel conflict have been the center of debate between Pro-Israel and Pro-Palestine historians. These historians have competing interpretations regarding historical and religious claims to the land, the goal of the Zionist movement, and the impact of British involvement. Pro-Israel and Pro-Palestine historians are deeply divided on every aspect of the conflict which further reiterates the deep divide among the people that live in arguably the most holy place in the world.

The history of the region of Israel is long and complicated. According to biblical scripture, the children of Israel inhabited the holy land from 1400 BCE until the Roman Empire removed them in 136 CE. It was during this time that the name of the region was changed from Israel to Syria Palestina and the Arab people took control. Palestine was ruled by an Arab majority under the Turkish-Ottoman Empire until they were defeated at the end of World War I. It was during this time that the British made multiple promises to both the Palestinian Arabs and the Jewish Israelites that began the war known as the Israel-Palestine conflict. Hitler's war against the Jews further complicated the fight over Palestine due to the Jews fleeing persecution in Europe and their need for a homeland. Arabs were in fear of losing their land to Jews and thus ensued in a battle to control the area.

Both Palestinians and Israelis lay claims to the land based on their religious history. Thomas Suarez discusses the Jewish argument that they are entitled to the land due to promises by God in his 2017 book titled, *State of Terror: How Terrorism Created Modern Israel*. Suarez argues that the Jewish people have legitimate biblical claims to the land even though he disagrees with how Zionist leaders went about gaining control of the area. Suarez argues that the Jews inhabited the land of Israel until the Roman's removed them by force beginning in 136 A.D. The Romans destroyed the Jewish temple and sent the people fleeing for their lives. Suarez explains that the Jewish people never looked at their exile from the holy land in 132 A.D. as losing their rights to the land but as a period when they were removed but knew they would someday retake what was rightfully theirs. Suarez states that, "Zionism restarted Jewish life after being "paused" since the revolt against the Romans in 132 – 136 A.D."¹ The argument that the Jewish control of the land just "paused" and that they never actually lost control of the area gives credence to the Jewish claim that Israel has and always will be their land.

¹ Thomas Suarez, *State of Terror: How Terrorism Created Modern Israel*, (Massachusetts: Olive Branch Press, 2017), 25.

Historian Edward Said disagrees with Thomas Suarez, arguing that the Jewish people lost their land when the Romans took over and removed them in 136 A.D. Said's 1979 book titled, *The Question of Palestine*, argues that the Palestinian Arabs had continuous control of the area from 136 A.D. until the fall of the Ottoman Empire in 1918 thus giving them the rights to the land. Said argues that, "Palestine became a predominantly Arab and Islamic country by the end of the seventh century. Almost immediately thereafter its boundaries and its characteristics – including its names in Arabic, *Filastin* – became known to the entire Islamic world, as much for its fertility and beauty as for its religious significance."² Said furthers his argument by stating that the Arabs were the ethnic majority living in the region and that the Jews were the minority. He states that, "despite the steady arrival in Palestine of Jewish colonist after 1882, it is important to realize that not until the few weeks immediately preceding the establishment of Israel in the spring of 1948 was there ever anything other than a huge Arab majority."³ Said goes on to state that in 1931 the Jewish population totaled 174,606 while the Arab population was 1,033,314.⁴ Said concludes that the Palestinian Arabs are the true owners of the land due to their continuous inhabitation and control of the area leading up to 1948.

While Suarez and Said take different sides on the issue of land ownership based on biblical and historical information, Alan Dershowitz disagrees with both men. Dershowitz's 2003 book, *The Case for Israel*, argues that neither the Arabs nor the Jews can lay stakes to the land due to biblical or historical records. Dershowitz argues that there must be a statute of limitations for ancient grievances. He explains that, "just as the case for Israel can no longer rely exclusively on the expulsion of the Jews from the land of Israel in the first century, so too the Arab case must move beyond a reliance on events that allegedly occurred more than a century ago."⁵ In short, Dershowitz is arguing that the Jews can't lay claims to the land based on biblical text and Arabs can't claim the land based on them having the ethnic majority and they also should not be able to make claims that Palestine would still be an Arab nation if it had not been for the fall of the Turkish-Ottoman Empire and the eventual take over by the British government at the end of World War I. Dershowitz explains that his main argument for the statutes of limitations is based on the inability to reconstruct the past. He states that, "as time passes it becomes increasingly difficult to reconstruct the past with any degree of precision, and political memories harden and replace the facts."⁶ It is Dershowitz's opinion that both Suarez and Said are incorrect on their assessment that the Palestinians or the Israelis should be able to claim rights to the land based on historical events that

² Edward Said, *The Question of Palestine*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 10.

³ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Alan Dershowitz, *The Case for Israel*, (Hoboken, New Jersey: Wiley, 2003), 5.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 5.

happened hundreds or even thousands of years ago but expresses that there must be a statute of limitations regarding rights to the holy land.

Both Pro-Israel and Pro-Palestine historians agree that the Zionist movement that began in the late 1800s enabled the Jews to claim Israel as their homeland in 1948. What these historians disagree on is as to why the Zionist movement was established and what their ultimate goal was. Pro-Palestine historians claim that the Zionist goal from the beginning was to take over Palestine and displace the Arabs already living there, while Pro-Israel historians argue that the persecution of Jews made the need for a Jewish homeland imperative to the survival of the Jewish people thus justifying the actions of the Zionist leaders.

Benny Morris is a Pro-Israel historian who justifies the actions of the Zionist movement by describing the persecution of Jewish people in the 19th century. In his 1999 Book, *Righteous Victims*, Morris explains that the founder of Zionism, Theodor Herzl, was not motivated by greed but was striving to solve the problem of Jewish persecution happening all over Europe. Morris argues that the major catalyst that invoked Herzl to act was the Dreyfus Affair that took place from 1894 to 1895. Alfred Dreyfus was a French Jewish military officer accused of communicating French military secrets to Germany. It came to light that Dreyfus was innocent but instead of setting him free, he was exiled to Devil's Island in French Guiana. Morris argues that "the trial triggered a wave of anti-Semitism in the cradle and bastion of Western European liberal democracy."⁷ After Dreyfus was wrongfully convicted of treason, Herzl became obsessed with finding his people a permanent place to settle. Morris states that the only place where Jews could be safe was in their own homeland. Morris further argues that "assimilation would not solve the problem because the gentile world would not allow it."⁸ If the Jews of the world were going to obtain any honor and respect it would be in the holy land. Morris argues that the Jews had no choice but to return to their biblical homeland to escape the persecution that was happening in Europe.

Yaacov Lozowick echoes the ideas of Benny Morris in his book *Right to Exist*, written in 2003. Lozowick, also Pro-Israel, states that the Jewish people were growing weary of the persecution that was taking place all over the world. He explains that the Jewish religion teaches that God will lead the Jews back to their homeland and the Messiah would reveal himself but the Jews were growing in-patient. Lozowick argues that "Zionism thus began as an intertwining of revolutionary hope and deep cultural pessimism."⁹ Lozowick goes on to explain that the Enlightenment had disconnected Jewish leaders from the ideas of miraculous messianic redemption once believed by

⁷ Benny Morris, *Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict 1881 – 2001*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1999), 20.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 21.

⁹ Yaacov Lozowick, *Right to Exist: A Moral Defense of Israel's Wars*. (New York: Doubleday, A Division of Random House, 2003), 45.

their forefathers. Lozowick states that, “their solution was to revive the traditional Jewish hope of redemption, this time with tools of modern rationalist.”¹⁰ Zionist leader, Theodor Herzl, had laid the ideological groundwork of the movement by the time of his death in 1904. His predecessor, David Ben-Gurion, understood that the Jewish people could only live in peace if they re-captured the land of Israel. Lozowick explains that the Zionist leaders began to create political parties, national institutions, armies, and banks that would enable them to achieve self-determination in the land that they believed was rightfully theirs.

Alan Dershowitz agrees with Lozowick and Morris that Jewish persecution was the reason for the formation of Zionism. Dershowitz argues that the reason Jewish people immigrated to Palestine during what is referred to as the “second Aliyah” (1904 – 1914) was based solely on the need to seek asylum from persecution. Dershowitz further states that the Russian pogroms of 1903 were a major contributing factor to the Jewish refugee problem. The Passover of 1903 in the city of Kishinev resulted in the deaths of 49 Jews, the injury of hundreds more, and the destructions of 1,500 Jewish homes, businesses, and institutions.¹¹ Dershowitz argues that this wave of violence was just as vicious as other pogroms of the 1880s. He states that, “hundreds of pogroms followed throughout the Pale of Settlement, killing and injuring thousands of Jewish men, women, and children. Jews could not defend themselves without inviting even more retribution.”¹² Dershowitz paints a picture of Jewish victims fleeing from all over Europe in search of asylum in their homeland. He also reiterates the idea that Theodor Herzl and David Ben-Gurion never wanted to displace the Palestinians already living in Israel but wanted to “establish good relations with their Arab neighbors.”¹³ Dershowitz supports his argument by showing evidence in a book titled *The Hidden Question* that was written by an early Zionist immigrant to Israel. In this book, Jewish settlers purposed allowing Arabs access to Jewish schools, hospital and libraries. Dershowitz argues that it was not the Jews who did not want to live along said Arabs but the other way around.

Pro-Palestine historians tell a very different story regarding the founding of Zionism and what the goal was. Ilan Pappé argues that the reason for establishing a Jewish nation in Palestine had nothing to do with persecution but with the desire to take over all the area and to remove any individuals who were not Jewish. In his 2006 book titled *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*, Pappé states that the Zionist movement was motivated by their greed for land and by the idea of an all Jewish state. Pappé argues that the Zionist movement could not be based on their religious beliefs because “Jewish tradition and religion clearly instructs Jews to await the coming of the promised

¹⁰ Ibid., 45.

¹¹ Alan Dershowitz, *The Case for Israel*, (Hoboken, New Jersey: Wiley, 2003), 30.

¹² Ibid., 30.

¹³ Ibid.

Messiah at 'the end of times' before they can return to Israel as a sovereign people in a Jewish theocracy, that is, as the obedient servants of God."¹⁴ Pappé believes that the Zionist claimed biblical territory to justify their actions and described the land of Israel as being occupied by strangers and that the land must be repossessed by the rightful owners.

Not only does Pappé believe that the Zionist had no religious reasons to occupy Palestine but he also believes that the Zionist had no regard for the people already living in the region. Pappé states that 'strangers' meant anyone not Jewish living in Palestine and further argues that "for many Zionist Palestine was not even an 'occupied' land when they first arrived there in 1882, but rather an 'empty' one: the native Palestinians who lived there were largely invisible to them or, if not, were part of nature's hardship and as such were to be conquered and removed."¹⁵ Pappé argues that in 1911, seven years before the fall of the Ottoman Empire, Palestinians were beginning to take notice of the Jewish migration happening in their land. Pappé references the remarks of Said al-Huysayni, a Palestinian member of the Ottoman Parliament, when he stated "the Jews intend to create a state in the area that will include Palestine, Syria, and Iraq."¹⁶ To further his argument that the Zionist movement fully intended to take control of Palestine and remove the Arab population, Pappé turns to the actions taken by the Zionist. He argues that the Zionist bought up land in Palestine from absentee landowners and then kicked out the Arab farmers that occupied the land. Furthermore, the Zionist formed a military unit called the Hagana to enforce their will upon the Arabs. Pappé argues that if the Jewish immigrants wanted to live alongside the Palestinians there would have been no need to buy up all their land and there certainly would not have been a need to create a Jewish military. Pappé argues that the Zionist movement was never about Jewish persecution but the desire to reclaim the land they felt entitled to and to create a nation comprised only of Jews, even at the expense of the Palestinian Arabs that already lived there.

John Rose, author of the 2004 book *The Myths of Zionism*, agrees with Pappé that Zionist leaders ignored the fact that the land they so desired was already occupied by Arabs. Rose argues that the phrase that Zionist often repeated to defend the takeover of Palestine "a land without people for a people without land" was completely made up by David Ben-Gurion. Rose further states that the Jewish people were never a people without land because they occupied parts of the United States, France, and Russia in which they were major players in economic activities. Rose points out that the majority of Jewish people that wished to leave Europe chose to immigrate to the United States and not the Middle East. Rose argues that Zionist leaders began to panic when they

¹⁴ Ilan Pappé, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*. (London: Oneworld, 2006), 10.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 11.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

realized that Jews were not following the Zion protocol of going to Palestine. Rose states, "here was the Zionist theory of Jewish history being overturned before the eyes of the world."¹⁷ The Zionist could not claim that the Jewish people could not assimilate and live among Gentiles if they were moving to the United States in large numbers. Rose explains that Zionist leaders met with Ronald Reagan to discuss a deal: "help us redirect the Jewish migrants to Israel and we will be even more your friend and pursue your policies in the Middle East with even greater vigor."¹⁸ Rose concludes that the Americans decided to play the Zionist game to serve their own interest and keep their access to the oil rich land.

Rose continues his argument by addressing the Zionist claim that Palestine was "a land without people." According to Rose, in public the Zionist reported that the land was sparsely populated by Arab peasants and that they neglected to care for the land. Rose explains that in private the Zionist leaders told a different story. At the Zionist Congress in 1898 the Jewish leaders stated that "there were 650,000 Arabs living on the most fertile parts of our land."¹⁹ Rose argues that the statements made at the Zionist Congress proves that the Jews plan was to downplay the existence of Arabs in Palestine while at the same time taking steps to buy land and remove Arab farmers. Rose also points out that clashes between Jews and Arabs began as early as 1886 during the battle at Petach-Tiva. Palestinian farmers were angry that their land was sold without their knowledge. Rose states, "the peasants were aggrieved because land they had considered their own had been sold to the settlers after they had forfeited it to Jaffa moneylenders and local authorities."²⁰ Rose argues that these battles between Jews and Arabs could not have taken place if the land of Palestine was not occupied.

The British government played a vital role in the Palestine/Israel conflict. When the Ottoman Empire fell in 1918, the British had promised the Palestinian Arabs that they would be free from imperial rule since they agreed to side with the British and help to overthrow the Ottoman Empire. The problem arose once the British realized that the Middle East was rich with oil. The imperialistic desire to control Palestine for their oil was stronger than the British desire to keep their word. Instead of giving the Palestinians the right to self-determination, the British put them under a mandate which allowed the British to control Palestine. It was also during this time that the British Foreign Secretary Arthur James Balfour declared that Palestine could become the Jewish national homeland. The British would come to find out that they would not be able to keep the promises made to both Jews and Arabs.

¹⁷ John Rose, *The Myths of Zionism*, (Ann Arbor, MI: Pluto Press, 2004), 116.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 116.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 80.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 95.

Pro-Palestine and Pro-Israel historian's opinions differ greatly as to what implications the Balfour Declaration had on enabling the Zionist movement to establish a home in Palestine. These historians generally fall into two categories: that the British should never have had a mandate over Palestine or that the Balfour Declaration was needed to protect the Jews from persecution. The Pro-Israel author Alan Dershowitz falls on the latter. Dershowitz argues that the British never made Palestine a colonial state. Instead he states that "Israel is a state comprising primarily of refugees and their descendants exercising their right of self-determination."²¹ Dershowitz likens the Jewish refugees fleeing Europe to the American colonist who left England. He argues that both groups were fleeing religious oppression and that Jews should have the same right to self-determination as the Americans. Dershowitz also argues that the Balfour Declaration issued in 1917 did not create a Jewish homeland but just recognized it under international law. He states that, "a de facto Jewish homeland already existed in parts of Palestine, and its recognition by the Balfour Declaration became a matter of binding international law when the League of Nations made it part of its mandate."²² Dershowitz furthers his arguments by expressing his belief that Jewish refugees had established a home in Israel prior to any assistance from colonial powers. He goes on to state that President Woodrow Wilson declared that the principle of self-determination would guide the rebuilding of the war-torn countries during the post-World War I period. Dershowitz argues that this is exactly what the Jewish refugees were doing when they established their homeland in Palestine.

Chaim Gans agrees with Dershowitz in his 2008 book titled *A Just Zionism*. Gans also argues that self-determination was the primary goal of the Zionist movement and that the Balfour Declaration only recognized that right. Gans claimed that the early Zionist leaders never intended to take over all of Palestine but only wanted a safe place for the Jewish people to live. He argues that at the 1898 First Zionist Congress the official goal was "an establishment of a home for the Jewish people secured under public law in Palestine."²³ Gans argues that the Balfour Declaration never created an all Jewish state but just recognized their right to exist. He also argues that the Jews were forced to be more extreme beginning in the 1930s due to ongoing Jewish persecution taking place in Germany. Gans states that, "It was only in the 1930s with the rise of fascism in Germany, anti-Semitism in Poland, and the Arab Rebellion in Palestine (1936 – 1939) that establishing a state became a preemptory Zionist demand."²⁴ In short, Gans argues that the Zionist would have been content with the Balfour Declaration and not a Jewish state if the persecution had ended after the Declaration.

²¹ Dershowitz, *The Case for Israel*, 13.

²² *Ibid.*, 33.

²³ Chaim Gans, *A Just Zionism: On the Morality of the Jewish State*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 53.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 55.

Pro-Israel historian Efraim Karsh also believes that the Balfour Declaration did not create a Jewish state. In his 2002 Book, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict: The Palestine War 1948*, Karsh argues that British involvement could not have helped the Zionist movement take Palestine from the Arabs because Palestine never existed after the Turkish-Ottoman Empire fell in 1918. Karsh states that, "Palestine at the time did not exist as a unified geopolitical entity; rather, it was divided between the Ottoman province of Beirut in the North and the district of Jerusalem in the South."²⁵ Karsh also states that the Jewish population was growing in the region during the outbreak of World War I. He states that "the Jewish community in Palestine had grown to some 85,000 to 100,000 people, nearly 15 per cent of the total population."²⁶ Karsh uses this evidence to support his argument that the Jewish population started to rise in Palestine long before the area fell under the British Mandate.

Bernard Avishai falls into the Pro-Palestine camp and strongly disagrees with both Gans and Dershowitz. Avishai's 2002 Book, *The Tragedy of Zionism: How its Revolutionary Past Haunts Israeli Democracy*, argues that the Balfour Declaration played a pivotal role in the Zionist movement gaining political world wide support. Avishai believes that the British decided to side with the Zionist to have an excuse to position British troops in the region to fight the Turkish-Ottoman Empire. He states that, "The Balfour Declaration committed the British government to stationing forces in Palestine, to further its own interest in the region, but also to help secure Zionist aims."²⁷ Avishai goes on to state that while the Balfour Declaration was a victory for the Zionist, it was not welcomed by all. He argues that the Arab leaders in Palestine looked at the Balfour Declaration as a betrayal. Avishai explains that just 2 years prior to the Declaration, the British promised the Arabs the territory of Palestine if they would help to overthrow the Ottoman Empire. The Arabs lived up to their end of the bargain but the British did not. The Zionist leader, David Ben-Gurion, looked at the Balfour Declaration as the British approving the "Zionist claims to the existence of a Jewish nation and has acknowledged the Zionist right to settle in the whole of Palestine."²⁸ According to Avishai, The Arabs of Palestine were lied to by the British while at the same time their land was given away to outsiders.

Michael Neumann sides with Avishai in his 2005 book, *The Case Against Israel*. Neumann argues that the Balfour Declaration was just a stepping stone in the Zionist cause to take all of Palestine. He states that, "A mere community within Palestine was not going to be enough. In Tom Segev's words, the final draft of the Balfour Declaration did not give the Zionist everything they wanted: the British Government stopped short

²⁵ Efraim Karsh, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict: The Palestine War 1948*. (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2002), 14.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 14.

²⁷ Bernard Avishai, *The Tragedy of Zionism: How Its Revolutionary Past Haunts Israeli Democracy*. (New York: All Worth Communication, 2002), 102.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 104.

of designating Palestine a Jewish state. But the Zionist never lost sight of their goal.”²⁹ Neumann accuses both the British and the Zionist of trying to word the Balfour Declaration to appear that the Jews only wanted a homeland but in reality both parties were aware that a Jewish state was the end goal. Neumann goes on to state that, “The world – and the Palestinian – knew what was contemplated.”³⁰ He argues that Zionist leader, Chaim Weismann, bluntly told a London audience in 1919 that “I trust to God that a Jewish State will come about; but it will come about not through political declarations but by the sweat and blood of the Jewish people.”³¹ Neumann uses the words of Chaim Weismann to prove that the Balfour Declaration was just the beginning of the Jewish takeover of Palestine and that the ultimate goal was not to live alongside the Arabs but to establish an exclusively Jewish state.

Edward Said agrees with Neumann that the wording of the Balfour Declaration and the correspondence between British officials and the Zionist leaders points to a Jewish state in Palestine and not just a homeland. Said argues that, “from the beginning of the Zionist planning for Palestine (that is, roughly, from the period during and after World War I), one can note the increasing prevalence of the idea that Israel was to be built on the ruins of this Arab Palestine.”³² Said notes that Theodor Herzl wrote in his diary that the Palestinians would have to be moved to transit countries and employment in Israel would be denied and states that “both the process of expropriation and the removal of the poor must be carried out discreetly and circumspectly.”³³ Said also accuses the British of being complicit in the removing of the Arab Palestinians. He states that Lord Rothschild wrote a memorandum on July 18, 1917 that states “the principle that Palestine should be re-constituted as the National Home for the Jewish People.”³⁴ Said explains that by using the word “re-constituted” the British are clear that Palestine would be re-established as a Jewish state. He also argues that the style of the declarations issued by the British and the Zionist leave out any doubt that Palestine was to be rebuilt, reconstructed, and reestablished as a Jewish nation.³⁵

Thomas Suarez also sides with the Pro-Palestine historians and argues that the Zionist needed the British for protection against any backlash by the Palestinians. Suarez references the words of Yitzhak Epstein, a delegate to the 1905 Zionist Congress. Epstein states that “Will those who are disposed of remain silent and accept what is

²⁹ Michael Neumann, *The Case Against Israel*. (Oakland, California: CounterPunch and AK Press, 2005), 24.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 26.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² Said, *The Question of Palestine*, 12.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*

being done to them? In the end, they will wake up and return to us in blows what we have looted from them with our gold!"³⁶ Epstein was referring to the fact that the Zionist were buying up Palestinian land from absentee land lords and then removing the peasant farmers. Suarez argues that the British were the perfect solution to prevent any retaliation from the Arabs. In the end, the Zionist were able to use the British military forces to put down the Arab revolt that occurred in 1936. Suarez believes that without the help from the British, the Arab military would have been able to stop Jewish immigration to Palestine and prevent Israel from becoming a nation.

The historiography of the Israel/Palestine conflict has some significant areas in which the scholarship is lacking. First, almost all the information written about the conflict is extremely one sided. The authors normally have a personal connection to the ongoing war which creates a bias. For example, Alan Dershowitz is Jewish and is the son of Harry and Clair Dershowitz who are an Orthodox Jewish couple. Dershowitz's book, *The Case for Israel*, supports the Zionist movement and is extremely biased. Dershowitz is quick to point out that the British restricted immigration from Europe to Palestine during the Holocaust but does not give any credit to the British for helping the Zionist gain access to Palestine through the Balfour Declaration. Dershowitz also does not acknowledge that there were Arabs already living in the land but states that "the Palestine to which European Jews of the First Aliyah immigrated was vastly unpopulated."³⁷ Pro-Israel historians routinely ignore primary sources that were declassified by the Israeli government 30 years after the conflict. This material is very damning because it gives insight to the Zionist movement's true intentions to displace the Palestinians and gain control of the region.

Pro-Israel historians are not the only ones guilty of cherry picking their arguments to support their agenda. For example, John Rose down plays the Jewish persecution that was happening in Europe and portrays the Jewish people as using persecution to get what they wanted. Rose's reasoning as to why Jewish people were unable to get work is questionable to say the least. Rose explains, "Why were Jews not hired in the more mechanized factories? Anti-Semitism played a part, of course, but the main reason is quite astonishing: Most employers (Jewish and non-Jewish) preferred Christians to Jewish workers because the former were more reliable."³⁸ Rose supports his idea by stating that Jewish workers were prone to strike which made employers leery of hiring them. Rose feels the need to down play the anti-Semitism that was running rampant across Europe to portray the Zionist as stealing land from Palestine with no reason except greed. Also, Pro-Palestine historians do not acknowledge the fact that Israel released its classified documents for the world to see but Palestine has not

³⁶ Suarez, Thomas. *State of Terror: How Terrorism Created Modern Israel*, 35.

³⁷ Dershowitz, *The Case for Israel*, 23.

³⁸ Rose, *The Myths of Zionism*, 105.

done the same. When and if Palestine decides to release their primary sources, the historiography will change drastically.

Lastly, the historiography is lacking scholarship from historians in the Western world. Numerous books have been written about the conflict by historians from the Middle East but rarely does anyone not from that area take the time to discuss the subject. The most famous book regarding the Israel/Palestine conflict in the United States was not written by a historian but by a politician. President Jimmy Carter discusses the conflict in his 2006 book, *Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid*. While President Carter does go into the history, his primary focus is what is enabling the conflict to continue and how it can be remedied. It is imperative for historians from other parts of the world to address the fighting between Palestine and Israel to write a more complete historiography that is less biased. Until that happens, Pro-Palestine and Pro-Israel historians will continue pointing the finger at each other without an intermediary.

Although the Zionist movement was successful in enabling the Jewish people to create a national homeland in Israel and declare itself a state in 1948, it was not successful in removing the Palestinian Arabs that inhabited the land. The fighting continues to this day because the Palestinians refuse to recognize the State of Israel and refuse to leave their country. Pro-Israel and Pro-Palestine historians disagree on many aspects of the Israel/Palestine conflict and have opposing views regarding historical and religious rights to the land, the goals of the Zionist movement, and how big of a role the British played in allowing the Jews to immigrate to Palestine. These historians are just as divided as the people living in the region. The lack of compromise and understanding has made the historiography divided on the lines of Pro-Israel and Pro-Palestine.