

A Very Short History of the Special Relation between the United States and Israel

Eric Alterman

Ever since the end of World War Two, the United States have forged a “special relation” with Israel. This relation has had its moments of crisis but especially since the 1970’s it has become ironclad. The essay offers a brief overview of its ups and downs, concluding that while public opinion regarding the US’s unwavering support of Israel has changed over the last few years, in the current situation it is difficult to be optimistic. Biden’s refusal to mitigate Netanyahu’s assault on the Palestinians has made the US’s conduct appear deeply hypocritical in the eyes of the rest of the world, precisely at a time when the electorate of the Democratic party has become increasingly critical of its “special” ally in the Middle East.

The Ongoing Nakba: Towards a Juridical Framework for Palestine

Rabea Eghbariah

First solicited and in the end rejected by the Harvard Law Review’s blog, this piece originally appeared in *The Nation* and is printed here for the first time in Italian translation. In this essay, and in a much longer one that has appeared in the *Columbia Law Review* in May 2024, the author proposes to distinguish apartheid, genocide, and Nakba as different, yet overlapping, modalities of crimes against humanity. The essay insists that the Nakba is not an event, but an ongoing process, and the current genocide in Gaza is nothing but a further instantiation of its logic.

A Jewish American Intellectual in front of Gaza: Atrocities, Resistance and Hope. An Interview with Bruce Robbins

Giorgio Mariani

Bruce Robbins, Jewish American Professor of Humanities at Columbia University, discusses his views on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, his new book *Atrocity: A Literary History*, and his activism, including his films *Some of My Best Friends Are Zionists* (2014) and *What Kind of Jew is Shlomo Sand?* (2020), which explore dissent within

Jewish communities. Robbins criticizes Israeli military policies and highlights the suffering of Gaza's population, arguing that violence only fuels future resistance. He emphasizes the need to distinguish between condemning specific atrocities and the justice of a broader cause, so that it should be possible to find the killing of civilians unacceptable and at the same time acknowledge the rights of Palestinians to resist an illegal occupation. Robbins also argues that an increasingly large number of American Jews have now become critical of Israel's modus operandi and the reaction of Zionist organizations like AIPAC to pro-Palestinian demonstrations is not a show of strength but a sign of weakness.

Gaza, the Palestinian Issue, and the 2024 Vote

Mario Del Pero

Mario Del Pero's essay examines the growing role of the Arab-American community in U.S. politics, with a focus on the 2024 election. The new war in Gaza and Israel's response fueled discontent with the Democrats, accused of complicity with Israel. This disillusionment led many Arab-Americans to support alternative candidates, eroding traditional support for Democrats, especially in key states like Michigan. The Palestinian issue thus emerges as a crucial topic for U.S. foreign and domestic policy, marking a shift in the relationship with Israel and in electoral dynamics.

Gaza and the Transformations of War Journalism: A Conversation with Oliviero Bergamini

Stefano Rosso

The conversation with journalist and historian Oliviero Bergamini explores the evolution of war reporting, focusing on the impact of digital technologies and AI. Bergamini highlights the rise of "citizen journalism"; and its risks, like misinformation and manipulation via deepfakes. He discusses Gaza's media coverage, the role of embedded journalists, and the difficulty of verifying sources. The interview also reflects on how media polarization and social media algorithms shape public opinion on conflicts.

Christian Zionism in the United States: a Historical-Religious Perspective to Understand its Contemporary Significance

Chiara Migliori

We can find the earliest references to the colonizing mission as a God-ordained enterprise that would result in the creation of a new Israel in the American wilderness within the sermons that accompanied the first English Puritan settlers leaving for North America. Israel and the Jewish people have always occupied a preeminent spot in the minds of Protestant colonists, resulting in what has been called “an unusual relationship” between North American Christians and Jews. Unusual, perhaps, but enduring and crucial to the evolution of US foreign policy. Against the background of the Israeli onslaught on Gaza and the West Bank since October 2023, the essay looks at the historical evolution of US support for the founding of the State of Israel, by showing that while the political alliance between the US and Zionism is rooted in the past, its numerous political, cultural, religious, and prophetic ramifications have made it over time a cornerstone of the Christian Right.

Resistance and Return in Palestinian-American Literature

Andrea Carosso

Arguably the most prolific sub-genre of Arab American literature, Palestinian-American literature is the product of post-Nabka and post-Naksa diasporas and sets itself apart from the larger tradition of Arab American writing in its “continual (and ardent) emphasis on the motherland” (Salaita). Emerging after the Arab-Israeli war of 1967, mostly among first-generation intellectual expatriates, and flourishing immediately before and after the events of 9/11, Palestinian-American literature has provided over the last five decades incisive counternarratives to the dominant pro-Israel and Islamophobic rhetoric of American public discourse. Focusing on texts by Edward Said, Susan Abulhawa, Naomi Shihab Nye and Lisa Suhair Majaj, among others, this essay discusses the globalization of the Palestinian text, by tracing a double trajectory emphasizing both resistance to the Zionist design of territorial occupation and expropriation as well as vindication of a Palestinian Right of Return to the lost homeland.

P like Palestine, Q like al-Quds. The New Alphabet of Mosab Abu Toha in Things You May Find Hidden in My Ear

Lisa Marchi

Taking inspiration from Mosab Abu Toha's recent poetry collection *Things You May Find Hidden in My Ear* (2022), this essay reads his poetry as an attempt to describe what it actually means to live in Gaza and to see one's existence regularly besieged, denied or amputated with incredible zeal. The essay argues that the author uses poetry not only to oppose the abstraction that targets Palestinians but also and particularly to counter the physical annihilation and sensorial obfuscation produced by the occupation. The main task of poetry is, consequently, to stimulate an acute perception of things (seen, heard, smelled, savored, and touched) and to facilitate a sharp recognition of people, so that the overwhelming fear and "lethargy" together with the impending death cannot obscure them. Poetry in the hands of Abu Toha becomes a tool, enabling those who have been violently cut off from their city and land to rebuild a relationship of love with it; it is a way to make sure that even those who have never been physically to Gaza end up loving it. Since even love, as Abu Toha suggests, can be an act of resistance.

Staging the Conflict: Palestine, Israel and the United States in Arab-American Theater

Cinzia Schiavini

The essay explores the representation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and of the role played by the US in terms of soft and hard power, in the work of Arab-American playwrights of Middle-Eastern origins. After a brief outline of the transnational connections and exchanges in the theatre network linking the Middle East and the United States, the essay explores how works by Ishmail Khalidi, Mona Mansour, Lameece Issaq and Jacob Kader articulate the dichotomies the war relies on in terms of Otherness as double(ness), thereby affecting identities, geographies and individual paths, in a ceaseless struggle between belonging and displacement.

Upward to the Stars: F. Scott Fitzgerald and *The Great Gatsby*

Sara Antonelli

The essay argues that *The Great Gatsby* was born from a series of travel essays F. Scott Fitzgerald wrote between 1924 and 1925 that focused on the problematic relationship between making money and making art. The essay also highlights the transformation of Fitzgerald's literary style and his concurrent reinvention of an original composition method.

Portrait of an Artist with Exit Holes: *Night Sky with Exit Wounds* di Ocean Vuong

Emanuele Battiniello

This essay focuses on the poetry collection *Night Sky With Exit Wounds* (2016), published by the Vietnamese American author Ocean Vuong, and endeavors to challenge previous readings of Vuong's oeuvre that centered on his exceptional life, overlooking the formal quality of his poetry in favor of a reductionist and biographically focused reading, informed by essentializing notions of identity and a crystallized idea of what ethnic literature should be. By offering close readings of the poems "Threshold", "Telemachus", "Trojan", "Odysseus Redux", "Logophobia", and "Self-Portrait as Exit Wounds" through the lenses of Memory Studies and Asian American critique, it attempts to show how Vuong adapts the idea of myth and employs postmodern textual strategies in order to deconstruct current notions of ethnic autobiography and rebuild his own version, which explicitly addresses issues of epistemic violence, the ventriloquizing and appropriation of the Other, and the relationship between author and ethnic community.

Representing Italianness: Presidential Rhetoric and Identity Construction

Anna Romagnuolo

The aim of this study is to investigate the discursive construction of Italian identity in presidential rhetoric, focusing particularly on the representations of Italian immigrants and second- and third-

generation Italian Americans. The analysis examines a corpus of presidential speeches selected for the significance of their communicative context and uses the approach of Critical Discourse Analysis, integrated with Corpus Linguistics methodology to illustrate how the image of a composite yet unified American national identity seems to reflect a gradual reassessment of the value of minority immigrant groups.