



REJOINDER TO JOFFE ON THE COMPATIBILITY OF LIBERTARIANISM AND ZIONISM

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JEL Category: Z0

Abstract

Joffe in "Libertarianism and Zionism Can't Be Squared" maintains an either-or position on Zionism and libertarianism: you must choose one or the other, you cannot support both. If you do, you are illogical. Then he goes on to drive a wedge between the two. He mentions numerous arenas in which they supposedly divide. For example, the Israeli military's harsh response to the atrocities of October 7, 2023, is incompatible with libertarianism. The citizens of that country are Zionists, and they mistreat the Palestinians in numerous ways. But this thesis fails since highly respected libertarians, leaders of this movement, disagree with one another. Both cannot be correct, one of them must necessarily be taking an anti-libertarian position. For example, Ron Paul is pro-life, and Murray Rothbard is pro-choice. Any theory that claims one or the other of them is not a libertarian, such as Joffe's thesis does, is dead upon arrival. The present paper maintains, moreover, that there is no logical contradiction between the two as to the specifics. Namely, this author is in error in his condemnation of the Israeli citizenry and the IDF.

Keywords: Zionism; libertarianism; logical coherence, Israel, contradiction.

1 INTRODUCTION

Joffe (2024) is a very important essay. Its very title clearly explains why. There are many issues upon which libertarians disagree with one another. For the most part, in virtually all cases, they do so without being disagreeable to one another. The

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Israel-Hamas war in particular, and Zionism in general, is a sharp exception to this general rule. I myself am a case in point in this regard. No physical violence has of yet been employed against me, at least not so far. However, I have been brutally treated,¹ and disassociated from people and institutions with whom I have had a long, friendly, productive, and very satisfactory association. Included in this category are the Mises Institute, the Ron Paul Institute, the

¹ Verbally, only, unlike how for example Charles Murray has been dealt with by his intellectual enemies.



Libertarian Institute, and such individuals as Ron Paul, Hans Hoppe, Thomas DiLorenzo, Michael Rectenwald, Daniel McAdams, Scott Horton, Hunter DeRensis, and Ryan McMaken.

Interestingly, the breakups have all been in one direction. Libertarians who favor Hamas have jettisoned relationships with those who have taken sides with Israel. I know of no cancellations in the opposite direction. That is, to the best of my knowledge no libertarian Zionist has broken with any of his opposite numbers. I attribute this phenomenon to Israeli Derangement Syndrome (Futerman & Block, 2024).

It is thus very important that Joffe has written this essay of his. All libertarians owe him a debt of gratitude. I think his views are so important that I take the liberty of quoting, and replying to, every single last word, bar none, that he writes. I do so under the following headings: Section II: Chosen people. III. Impossible task. IV. Zionism. V. Religious establishment. VI. Martial law. VII. Equal rights. VIII. Bottles of urine. IX. Settler violence. X. Just fine treatment. XI. Group punishment. XII. Ancient texts. XIII. Invalid ancestral claims. XIV. Complex rationalizations. XV. Zionism or libertarianism. XVI. Conclusion

2 CHOSEN PEOPLE

Joffe: "Jews are the chosen people. God promised us the land of Israel, the only place we can truly be safe."

Yes, in some ways we are indeed the chosen people. When God, or whoever it was, handed out IQ points, (Ashkenazi) Jews were at the head of the queue, and were given far more than our fair proportionate share of this characteristic. Evidence for this claim is that we Hebrews, on a

basis proportionate to our population, have won more Nobel Prizes, more Fields Medals in mathematics, more chess grand masterships, have been responsible for more patents, more medical breakthroughs, more contributions to STEM fields, than any other group on the planet.² Nor are we too far behindhand when it comes to music, the arts, literature, philosophy, law, academia, computers, and other intellectual pursuits.

As an atheist, I cannot believe that God provided us with anything. Can one be either an atheist or a believer and still enjoy a valid libertarian standing? I do not see why not. I define libertarianism as a belief in and support of, the non-aggression principle (NAP) and in private property rights based upon homesteading. Theism is orthogonal to both.

Are Jews "truly safe" in Israel? Not at the present time. Not since 1948. Not before that time anywhere in the Middle East, nor, for that matter, anywhere else on the planet. The nations of the world disagree on many things, but not, it would appear on anti-Semitism; many of them have engaged in pogroms, and in forcibly expelling members of the Chosen People from their territories.

However, Israel is indeed a bolt hole, an insurance policy, for all Jews. If this nation exists, and we get kicked out of yet another country, as is our experience, at least the only Hebrew nation in the world will welcome us. Yes, things look pretty good for Jews in places like the US, Canada, much of Europe, Australia, etc. Apart from a few swastikas painted on synagogues and delicatessens, a few rapes and murders, the congressional Squad³, all is well. But then again Germany looked pretty

² States Pinker (2006): "Does this mean that Jews are a nation of Einsteins? It does not. Their average IQ has been measured at 108 to 115, one-half to one standard deviation above the mean. However, statisticians have long known that a moderate difference in the means of two distributions translates into a large difference at the tails. In the simplest case, if we have two groups of the same size, and the average of Group A exceeds the average of Group B by fifteen IQ points (one standard deviation), then among people with an IQ of 115 or higher the As will outnumber the Bs by a ratio of three to one, but among people with an IQ of 160 or higher the As will outnumber the Bs by a ratio of forty-two to one. Even if Group A was a fraction of the size of Group B, to begin with, it would contribute a substantial

proportion of the people who had the highest scores." See also Murray, 2007; Regenstein, 2012

³ Squad member and ex-congresswoman Cori Bush had this to say about AIPAC, and this is all too descriptive of the left wing of the Democratic Party, of which Kamal Harris is also a member: "now they should be afraid... They're about to see this other Cori, this other side... There is nothing that happens in my life that happens in vain. So, this happened because it was meant to happen. And let me say, it's because of the work that I need to do. And let me say this: AIPAC, I'm coming to tear your kingdom down!" (Robertson, 2024). Remember, this woman held one of the highest offices in the entire country.

good for Jews in 1905, and we all know what happened there after but a few decades. When Hebrews tried to emigrate to Canada, for instance, then, the authorities turned us away with the reply to the question of how many immigrants from this community would be allowed into that gigantic country with few inhabitants: "None is too many."⁴

3 IMPOSSIBLE TASK

Joffe: "These were among the ideas drilled into me at an early age in Hebrew School, a program of afternoon and weekend education operated by many synagogues. I jettisoned this thinking during my teens as I embraced libertarianism. But I seem to be in the minority of Jewish libertarians, most of whom are trying to support Israel within a libertarian framework. I see it as an impossible task."

Do most Jewish libertarians support Israel? Murray Rothbard (1967) certainly did not. He was one of the most outspoken and vociferous critics of this country in all of political economy, let alone in the libertarian movement. Since he was so influential in this community,⁵ many libertarians, Jewish or not, followed his lead on Zionism. Amongst them, I would list David Gordon (Gordon and Njoya, 2024) Marc Joffe (2024), Larry Moss, and Jerry Woloz. No formal survey of this matter has yet been conducted, so I can say no more on this matter.

4 ZIONISM

Joffe: "Zionism is the belief in a Jewish state, so it is clearly at odds with the Rothbardian anarcho-capitalist flavor of libertarianism which rejects any kind of state. But Zionism is also challenged from a minarchist perspective because it implies an established religion, Judaism."

Yes, indeed, Rothbard opposed Israel. He did this with a purple passion. And also, any kind of state is incompatible with pure libertarianism which is the only correct version in my view: the

Rothbardian anarcho-capitalist variety. But Zionism, contrary to Joffe, is not at all equivalent to a belief in, and support of, a Jewish *state*. It is perfectly compatible with this doctrine to *oppose* a Jewish state in that or any other area, but to favor the existence of a Jewish *community* located there, in the total absence of any government. Moreover, although Rothbard as an anarcho-capitalist singled out Israel for blame and criticism, he did not do so as *qua* anarcho-capitalist. Those espousing this political-economic philosophy must view with alarm and hostility *all* states, and equally so, for they are all governments and thus necessarily violate the NAP.⁶

My debating partner is correct, however, in thinking that Israel could possibly⁷ be singled out for special opprobrium from a minarchist or other non-anarcho-capitalist version of libertarianism, such as classical liberalism. This is why I entitled my co-authored book on Israel (Block and Futerman, 2021) in that manner, to oppose any such perspective.

Does Zionism require a state religion? Of course not. Many of the founders of that nation were atheists. It cannot be denied that in the actual state of Israel, Orthodox rabbis define who is Jewish and who is not (Harris, 2015), and that the Reform Jewish community is not exactly happy with this practice. But this is hardly a requirement of Zionism. If tomorrow all Jews converted to atheism, Zionism as such would remain completely untroubled. The essence of this perspective is that Jews be free to reside in peace in a certain portion of the Middle East. That is it, nothing more and nothing less.

5 RELIGIOUS ESTABLISHMENT

Joffe: "Minimal state libertarians often draw inspiration from American founders such as Thomas Jefferson and James Madison, who strongly supported the separation of 'Church' and State. The First Amendment starts by stating that 'Congress shall make no law respecting an

⁴ This phrase is commonly attributed to either Canadian Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King or to Frederick Charles Blair, director of the immigration office under his administration. They were asked in 1945 how many Jews they would allow into Canada as immigrants. See on this Abella and Troper, 1982.

⁵ He was widely and very properly known as "Mr. Libertarian."

⁶ They all tax people who have not agreed to pay such levies and demand a monopoly of initiatory violence in their geographical areas. See on this Spooner, 1870; Rothbard, 1972, 1983.

⁷ But erroneously

establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.”

True enough. Religion and the state are of course not totally severed in Israel. But we are not now discussing whether or not libertarianism and support for Israel are logically compatible. Rather, Joffe is raising the question of whether or not libertarian support for *Zionism* constitutes a logical contradiction. It is vitally important to distinguish between these two very different, but similarly sounding, issues. Joffe blatantly fails to do so. It should be clear that *Zionism* in no way, manner, shape, or form requires a theocracy.

Let us consider a voluntary Jewish theocracy located in some part of Eretz Yisroel. All Jews who participate in this venture voluntarily agree to take part in it. Would this be compatible with *Zionism*? Yes. Would it diverge from libertarianism? No. There is nothing involved in theocracy that is *per se* incompatible with libertarianism, provided, only, that it is unanimously agreed upon by all members. Of course, we are now talking of an ideal Platonic theocracy. Any actual extant one, including the degree to which Israel is guilty of such, is of course incompatible with libertarianism. This goes for the governmental imposition of any idea, let alone that one. But this is not a criticism of *Zionism*. None of its tenets require any such imposition.

6 MARTIAL LAW

Joffe: “Although Israel’s Declaration of Independence called for ‘complete equality of social and political rights for all its citizens irrespective of religion,’ a page on the Knesset website stated that the Declaration ‘is neither a law nor an ordinary legal document’. This may be why Arab Israelis lived under a harsh form of martial law between 1949 and 1966.”

Undeniably true. Religion and the state are of course not at all totally severed from one another in Israel, but we are now discussing whether or not libertarianism and support for Israel are logically compatible. In sharp contrast, Joffe is now raising the question of whether or not support for *Zionism* and libertarianism is a logical contradiction. It is vitally important to distinguish between these very different issues. Our author again fails to do so.

7 EQUAL RIGHTS

Joffe: “Despite controlling the West Bank since 1967, Israel still has not given its Palestinian residents equal rights, not just with respect to voting but also to freedom of movement. Perhaps that could be justified based on the West Bank being occupied territory, but that rationale breaks down when we see that illegal Jewish settlers (some of whom immigrated from overseas and some of whom converted) receive full citizenship. The disparate treatment by religion cements the idea that Israel is closer to a theocracy than an enlightened, classically liberal society.”

These words on a piece of paper might possibly account for the fact that Arab Israelis lived under martial law. This does not sound likely, though. A more reasonable explanation, however, is that the Arabs just plain old do not much like Jews and feel obliged to kill them. Nor did this phenomenon occur only after the state of Israel was born in 1948. The Arabs, along with anti-Semites of many other nationalities, have been from time immemorial engaged in pogroms against people of the Hebrew persuasion. There have not been any mass murders of Jews in Judea or Samaria of late. Instead, the Arabs have confined themselves to picking off Jews in their twos and threes. Just a few at a time. Nothing to see here. Please move along. Why is this? Have the Arabs lost their desire to see Jewish blood on the floor? Not a bit of it. Rather, it is due to the “harsh” martial law about which Joffe bitterly complains. Are Jews not supposed to defend themselves from these micro-murders, in Joffe’s view?

Israel has not given Palestinians equal rights? Yet, there are in Israel Arab judges, policemen, firemen, members of the Knesset, professors, lawyers, doctors, businessmen, etc. How, in contrast, have Jewish minorities been treated in Egypt, Lebanon, Iraq, Iran, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia? Not quite as well by any means.

Joffe compares the actions of the Israeli government with a supposed ideal situation and finds this institution wanting. Good for him. This is very insightful of him. This scholar has uncovered something very important. Who would have known any such thing, but for him?

This type of “reasoning” occurs in economics in the finding that real-world capitalism is at variance

with “perfect competition” a concoction that can only exist on a blackboard. Then, these interventionistic “economists” label this as a “market failure”⁸ and call upon the government to rectify matters.

No, the real test in economics is between real-world capitalism and actual socialism. The former always wins, hands down. Similarly, the real contest in the Middle East is not between actual Israel and some idealized scenario of Joffe’s, but between how each of the countries in that corner of the world treats its minorities. And again, Israel wins by a country mile. No, by a million miles. For the small number of Jews in Arab countries are not at all sworn to overthrow the governments of their hosts, and to kill as many of them as possible, while the far larger minority of Palestinians in Israel not only hold these views but acts upon them. Israel is saintly in its treatment of the Arabs residing in the only Jewish country on earth.⁹

“Disparate treatment by religion” in a pig’s eye. There is no such thing. Non-Arab residents have as much “freedom of movement” as anyone else in that country. This harsh treatment accorded to the Palestinians stems from a very different source than religion. It is a result of fear of murderers and rapists. If anything, there has been far too much “freedom of movement” accorded to this segment of the population. Israel, to its great regret, issued numerous work permits to the Gazans; this “freedom” of theirs was then implicated in the events of October 7, 2023.

8 BOTTLES OF URINE

Joffe: “Most American Jewish libertarians do not make the trip to the West Bank, so you’ll have to take my word for it: what I saw there in 2018 cannot be confused with libertarianism. When I visited, I could not get over the number of plastic bottles filled with urine soldiers drop from the border wall in Bethlehem and settlers drop from

their apartments onto the Palestinian market in Hebron.”

This is an anecdotal report issued by a person who has a strong hatred for Israel. His bias against this nation can be seen in every word he writes, including “and,” “is,” and “but.” Why should we believe this report of his? However, let us stipulate, *arguendo*, that this claim of his is true. Other victims, such as Jews in their own country would not engage in any such silly and relatively harmless retaliation. Rather, they would not only carry but also use, the proverbial “big stick.” The fact that there are so few such episodes, given the dire provocation posed by the Palestinians, is a credit not a debit to the all too patient Israelis. In no other country, the inhabitants of which have suffered so much at the hands of a criminal minority, would such slaps on the wrist be found. Elsewhere, instead of urine, it would have been bullets. If liquid were somehow required, it would have been acid.

9 SETTLER VIOLENCE

Joffe: “And that’s just one highly visible abuse: the travel restrictions, property seizures, and exposure to periodic settler violence are undoubtedly more impactful on West Bank Palestinians’ daily lives.”

“Settler violence” on the part of the Jews? First of all, there are no Jewish settlers or colonists,¹⁰ anywhere in Judea or Samaria. The People of the Book are the original and thus rightful owners (Block and Futerman, 2021) of that real estate, not the Arabs.

Second, Joffe misunderstands the libertarian position on “violence.” This philosophical position is not at all opposed to the use of force. Libertarianism is not a branch of pacificism. Followers of this perspective make a sharp distinction between initiatory and defensive violence, eschewing the former but embracing the latter. It is the Arabs in these areas¹¹ who are guilty

⁸ For a critique of this doctrine see Anderson, 1998; Barnett, et. al, 2005; Block, 2002; Callahan, 2000; Cowen, 1988; DiLorenzo, 2011; Guillory, 2005; Higgs, 1995; Hoppe, 2003; MacKenzie, 2002; Rothbard, 1985; Simpson, 2005; Tucker, 1989; Westley, 2002; Woods, 2009A, 2009B

⁹ No. A correction: not saintly: rather, foolish and masochistic. The Israeli police and the IDF should stop treating these murderers and kidnappers with kid gloves.

¹⁰ See; Gilley (2018), a very controversial essay was withdrawn from its initial publication

¹¹ Not the so-called “West Bank.”

of initiating aggression. It is the Jews, there, who are merely defending themselves and/or retaliating against these deadly incursions. No truer words in this context were ever said than these: "If the Arabs put down their weapons today, there would be no more violence. If the Jews put down their weapons today, there would be no more Israel (Netanyahu)." This goes for both internally and externally located Arabs.

The problem with "settler violence" is that it has not been thorough enough. If it were, the Palestinians in Judea and Samaria would not be as enthusiastic as they now are in attacking innocent Jews.

10 JUST FINE TREATMENT

Joffe: "But aren't they all a bunch of terrorists who deserve to be treated harshly? The Palestinians I met treated me just fine despite knowing that I was Jewish. And, of course, there were all the young children and babies, who have had no chance to commit acts of terrorism during their short lives."

Again, with the personal, anecdotal reports. This is not the kosher manner of arguing in a scholarly context. As for the children, they are of course innocent. But they have been used as shields (Block, 2011, 2019, 2024) by Hamas. This terrorist organization has embedded itself into the civilian population, placing military weapons and rocket and missile launchers in hospitals, schools, playgrounds, Mosques, and residential areas, all frequented by, among other innocents, children. Who then, is guilty of their injuries and deaths? Obviously, to any fair-minded person, of whom, unfortunately, we cannot count Joffe, this is due to Hamas, not the IDF, even though it is the bullets and bombs of the latter that actually cause the fatalities.

Here is a scholar (Mearsheimer, 2024) who sees this point, clearly, but only in the context of a very different war:

"The alternative argument, which I identify with, and which is clearly the minority view in the West,

is that the United States and its allies provoked the [Russian war with Ukraine] war. This is not to deny, of course, that Russia invaded Ukraine and started the war. But the principal cause of the conflict is the NATO decision to bring Ukraine into the alliance, which virtually all Russian leaders see as an existential threat that must be eliminated." He can clearly see that just because Russian armament is killing Ukrainians, it does not at all logically follow that this country is to blame for these deaths. Yet, he and many others totally and adamantly reject even the possibility that the exact same phenomenon is occurring in the Middle East."¹²

11 GROUP PUNISHMENT

Joffe: "Penalizing individuals that have not acted aggressively because of their group identity is not a practice I recognize as libertarian. Nor is the mass killing of non-combatants in Gaza. Even Israeli sources admit 16,000 civilian deaths in Gaza, more than a dozen times the number Hamas killed on October 7."

Israel is not "penalizing" any innocent people. Au contraire, the IDF is doing everything humanly possible to save the lives of innocents. It is doing more, exceedingly much more than any other army has done in the entire history of warfare, Joffe to the contrary notwithstanding. Before bombing a given target, the Israeli army distributes leaflets, warning of the forthcoming incursion, and urging civilians to retreat to safer areas.

Why, then, have so many blameless Gazans nevertheless perished? This is due to three reasons. One, Hamas will often not allow these noncombatants to depart. It wants to rack up their deaths, the better to blame Israel as a "mass killer," which claims Joffe has accepted holus-bolus. Two, Hamas places armaments and rocket launchers in, around and under hospitals, Mosques, schools, playgrounds, and residences.

ultimately responsible for, guilty of, these episodes? No. A thousand-time no. Which organization, then, properly takes on this role. In a word, Hamas. If it did not perpetrate the atrocities of October 7, none of these deaths would now be occurring.

¹² Unfortunately, he (Mearsheimer & Walt, 2008), like Joffe, does not at all see this identical point in the case of Israel. Just because the IDF is the proximate cause of these deaths does not mean it is the ultimate cause. Yes, it is Israeli bullets and bombs that are the immediate cause of these unfortunate incidences of collateral injuries and deaths. But is that country

Three, these terrorists use their own people as shields.¹³

What is the IDF supposed to do? Not bomb these places since guiltless people will perish as a result? Consider the implication of Joffe's stance on this matter. Murderers will hence grab up innocent people, and use them as shields, and the cops will have to let them get away with their heinous crimes. Sharpshooters will not be able to ply their expertise lest one of these victims were killed. Murders would literally get away with murder. No, these people are not perishing "because of their group identity." They are dying because of the vicious depravity of their leaders, the group they put into office in a democratic vote. Not satisfied with the atrocities they perpetrated upon Israelis on October 7, Hamas is now engaged in sacrificing its own people as a public relations ploy.

Here is a multiple-choice exam question coming up, so please pay attention: Who is responsible for the "16,000 civilian deaths¹⁴ in Gaza"; Hamas or the IDF? A point is scored if you answered with the former. Yes, it was IDF bullets and bombs that decapitated and killed Gazans who were undeserving of such a dire fate. But paradoxically, it is not that army that is guilty of these deaths! Rather, it is those, Hamas in this case, who use these civilians as shields.

And what is with this business of these demises being "more than a dozen times the number Hamas killed on October 7, 2023?" This war is not a tit-for-tat exercise. This is a battle to preserve the very existence of Israel. If the terrorists can remain in power and get away with the despicable act they perpetrated on that infamous day, this country cannot survive.¹⁵

All Hamas needs to do to ensure that not a single solitary innocent Gazan be killed in the future is release all their hostages and surrender to the IDF. They have not done anything of the sort. The blame for these 16,000 deaths¹⁶ lies squarely in the bloody hands of Hamas. There is no correct proportion between the number of Israelis who were killed on October 7 and the number of Gazans who met this horrid fate subsequently. The ratio is entirely in the hands of the evil perpetrators; as soon as they are vanquished, the slaughter of Gazans for which they are and continue to be responsible, will come to an abrupt halt.

12 ANCIENT TEXTS

Joffe: "And, no, I do not believe a semi-accurate set of ancient texts that said God promised 'Judea and Samaria' to the Jews. Indeed, as an Ashkenazi Jew, I have no idea whether my lineage traces back to ancient Israel even if it could be traced."

First, a minor point: why the scare quotes around "Judea and Samaria?" Must we always use the description beloved of Israel's enemies, "West Bank"? More importantly, again Joffe is guilty of unfairly applying a criterion to Israel he would never even think of employing elsewhere. He is finding Israeli claims to land in Israel imperfect, and not even considering those on the other side. The Second Temple is built *below* an Arab Mosque, which appears *above*. This indicates the Jews were there first, not the other way around. A key point of the libertarian theory of justice in homesteading¹⁷ is that the *first* to arrive and mix his labor with the land is the rightful owner of it, not the second. Another indication that the Jews beat the Arabs in this particular horse race is that the former was in existence some four or five

¹³ See on this Alexander, 1993; Block, 2010, 2011, 2019; Clark, 2000; Otsuka, 1994, 2003; Rothbard, 1984; Statman, 2006; Thomson, 1991; Wasserman, 1987

¹⁴ Most claim about 40,000, at the time of this writing, August 2024.

¹⁵ According to the Hamas Covenant, which they have not renounced, but rather continue to support: "The Day of Judgement will not come about until Moslems fight the Jews (killing the Jews), when the Jew will hide behind stones and trees. The stones and trees will say O Moslems, 'O Abdulla, there is a Jew behind me, come and kill him...' The Qur'an is clear: 'And fight them until

persecution is no more, and religion is all for Allah.' (8:39) This amounts to an open-ended declaration of war against those whose religion is not 'for Allah.'"

¹⁶ Let us stipulate, arguendo, that this is the correct statistic

¹⁷ Block, 1990, 2002A, 2002B; Block and Edelstein, 2012; Block and Nelson, 2015; Block and Yeatts, 1999-2000; Block vs Epstein, 2005; Bylund, 2005, 2012; Gordon, 2019A, 2019B; Grotius, 1625; Hoppe, 1993, 2011; Kinsella, 2003, 2006A, 2006B, 2007, 2009A, 2009B, 2009C; Locke, 1948; McMaken, 2016; Paul, 1987; Pufendorf, 1673; Rothbard, 1969, 1973; Rozeff, 2005; Watner, 1982.

thousand years ago, while the latter are Johnnies-come-lately. The Islamic religion came into existence with the advent of Mohammad, and his time on the planet is dated only some 1400 years ago.¹⁸

13 INVALID ANCESTRAL CLAIMS

Joffe: "We have no right to take land based on our religion or our wholly unverifiable ancestral claims. Instead, it is the refugees in Gaza who still have the keys to their family homes in 'Israel proper' that have a clearer right to reclaim stolen land."

Again with the scare quotes. Is it Joffe's view that Israel is not "proper?" Or that there is no land that is properly Israeli? Yes, Jewish ancestral claims to modern-day land are weak, but they are not "wholly unverifiable." More to the point, they are *better* than such claims on the part of the Arabs, *since the latter do not exist at all*. And there is a good reason for this absence: those people were not even in existence anywhere near the contested lands. So, once again this libertarian author is comparing the Israeli case with perfection, and of course, finding it wanting, and not even considering subjecting those of the other side to any such test.

It cannot be denied that some Palestinians still "still have the keys to their family homes" they abandoned in 1948. What happened during that fateful year? Some Arabs were absent from their home and gardens for fear of the soon-to-be-conducted Arab war against the fledgling Jewish state. Others, for all we know, innocently went on vacation at that time. However, during those months, the five Arab armies that were soon to invade baby Israel sent out a message to all Palestinians: leave the area immediately. In that way, it will be easier for us to kill all the Jews. If you stay, you will just get in our way. Depart now; we will wipe up these vermin in a few weeks and then you can come back home. The Jews pleaded with them to remain, but about a million of the Palestinians departed. In the event, as in the affairs of mice and men, these Arab army expectations went seriously astray. These Palestinians then wanted their "right of return."

The Israeli government regarded them as traitors and would have none of it.

During the same epoch, also roughly one million Jews were kicked out of Egypt, Lebanon, Iraq, Syria, and Iran. They had done no wrong whatsoever. Israel welcomed them with open arms. The Arabs moved the displaced Palestinians into refugee camps, the better to display to the world the perfidy of the Israelis. Joffe claims that they "have a clearer right to reclaim stolen land." Again, his analysis is totally one-sided. He looks only at the displaced Arabs and ignores the in some ways similar experience of the displaced Jews. Perhaps a better plan might have been to give to the Palestinians the land in the Arab countries stolen from the Jews, instead of compelling them to live in those refugee camps.

14 COMPLEX RATIONALIZATIONS

Joffe: "As the war drags on, the pro-Israel libertarian must indulge in increasingly complex rationalizations or simply ignore facts. Why were the World Central Kitchen workers killed? Why were Israelis blocking aid trucks going into Gaza? Why is there no ceasefire even after the IDF has invaded every section of Gaza?"

The Kitchen workers killed was a mistake on the part of the Israeli military. In the view of some commentators, it is at least in the top four of national armies. Are they perfect? Of course not. Errors occur in the heat of battle. But they were not "on purpose" as were the execrable acts of October 7. Since when does an army worry about feeding enemy populations? Did the Allies in World War II support or oppose "aid trucks going into" Germany, Italy, and Japan? Should they have, before the surrender of the latter? Has any army in our entire history acted in any such manner? Why is there no ceasefire? That is because at the time of this writing, Hamas has not yet surrendered nor released its civilian hostages, some of them mere children.

15 ZIONISM OR LIBERTARIANISM

Joffe: "You can make all the claims you want but they don't stand the tests of fact, logic, and principle. Israel is an aggressive theocratic state

¹⁸ See Yalman (2001)

that is inconsistent with libertarian principles. For Zionist libertarians the time has come to choose: you can be one or the other, but not both.”

Let us stipulate, arguendo, that everything Joffe says in criticism of Israel, and in support of Hamas, is absolutely true. It then logically follows that any libertarian who disagrees with his analysis is wrong. But suppose that such a person still, irrationally, insists upon retaining his Zionist credentials. Does it then logically follow that he can no longer be a libertarian? This is Joffe’s position, but he is in error here. Consider the following.

On abortion: Ron Paul is pro-life, and Murray Rothbard is pro-choice; both cannot be correct. One of them must of necessity be taking a position incompatible with libertarianism.¹⁹ On immigration: Hoppe supports regulated borders, and Hornberger, open borders. Again, both cannot be correct. One of them must of necessity be taking a position incompatible with libertarianism.

Any theory that maintains that either Paul or Rothbard is not a libertarian,²⁰ or that either Hoppe or Hornberger no longer are members of this philosophical movement, is in dire error. These

four are undoubtedly leaders of this community. Joffe’s thesis necessarily implies that at least one of each pair “will have to choose.” That is, he is not a libertarian. Therefore, his viewpoint must be rejected, QED.

16 CONCLUSION

What is going on here? What is going on is that we libertarians are dealing with highly complex issues. Were this not so, we would all be in agreement with them since we are without question very intelligent. But we all suffer from human intellectual limitations. That is what is going on here.

Murray Rothbard said it best: “Every dog gets one bite.”²¹ I see Murray, and I raise him at least a half dozen times: Every libertarian gets at least six bites, at least on highly complex issues. Yes, it is difficult to see a person as a libertarian who favors the minimum wage law or rent control; or the prohibition of marijuana or alcohol; prostitution, or pornography. But I am a big tent libertarian. I would have to look askance at a libertarian who deviated on even one of these issues. But I would be loathe to condemn him as a non-libertarian if he agreed with this doctrine on all other issues²².

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¹⁹ As it happens, neither position is compatible with libertarianism. For the correct view, see Block (2021).

²⁰ Or both, if evictionism (Block, 2021) is valid, then neither pro-life nor pro-choice can be the correct libertarian position

²¹ Personal communication with the present author.

²² As per impossible, given that libertarians are vociferously divided on so many macro-libertarian (McMaken, 2024) topics.

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Received for publication: 14.08.2024

Revision received: 17.08.2024

Accepted for publication: 08.07.2025.

How to cite this article?

Style – APA Sixth Edition:

Block, W. E. (2025, 07 15). Rejoinder to Joffe on the Compatibility of Libertarianism and Zionism. (Z. Cekerevac, Ed.) *MEST Journal*, 13(2), 37-49. doi:10.12709/mest.13.13.02.03

Style – Chicago Sixteenth Edition:

Block, Walter E. "Rejoinder to Joffe on the Compatibility of Libertarianism and Zionism." Edited by Zoran Cekerevac. *MEST Journal* (MESTE) 13, no. 2 (07 2025): 37-49.

Style – GOST Name Sort:

Block Walter E. Rejoinder to Joffe on the Compatibility of Libertarianism and Zionism [Journal] // MEST Journal / ed. Cekerevac Zoran. - Belgrade – Toronto : MESTE, 07 15, 2025. - 2 : Vol. 13. - pp. 37-49.

Style – Harvard Anglia:

Block, W. E., 2025. Rejoinder to Joffe on the Compatibility of Libertarianism and Zionism. *MEST Journal*, 15 07, 13(2), pp. 37-49.

Style – ISO 690 Numerical Reference:

Rejoinder to Joffe on the Compatibility of Libertarianism and Zionism. **Block, Walter E.** [ed.] Zoran Cekerevac. 2, Belgrade – Toronto : MESTE, 07 15, 2025, MEST Journal, Vol. 13, pp. 37-49.