

## War and Peace Part II: Azerbaijan and Palestine

Written by Eric Walberg, Эрик Вальберг/ Уолберг □□□□□ □□□□  
Tuesday, 19 July 2016 06:12

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**Part I** considered the remarkable similarities between Armenians and Jews. They both were socialist, then capitalist, adapting as the need arose. Both suffered genocides and achieved independence as fallouts from the upheavals of the 20th century.

### Teflon imperialists

Which brings us to their remarkable 'achievement': to (almost) single-handedly occupy their neighbour's territory, against all odds--and hold on to it--against international opinion, Armenia for close to 25 yrs, Israel close to 70 years. Armenia taking 20% of Azerbaijan, Israel 100% of Palestine. They both insist history bequeathed them those lands, and their tragic 'holocausts' justify their violation of international law to ensure their safety.

Both countries have lived this occupier lifestyle on a war footing ever since, and yet prosper even as their nemeses wallow in poverty and suffering.

**The world mostly admires these plucky aggressors and has little time for either the Azerbaijanis or the Palestinians. It seems there is little solidarity in the Muslim world, or at least little effective solidarity.**

**True, there is a Boycott, Disinvestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement against Israel, but, so far, it is more just an irritating buzzword than anything with real bite. Trade with Arab neighbours is minimal, but not with other Muslim countries.**

**This is sad, as Israel's founders argued Jewish settlers could live peacefully with the Muslim inhabitants, and would bring western high tech investment and education, providing a win-win situation for Arabs and Jews.**

**The Armenians made no such empty promises. But the result in both cases has been very much win-lose. The prospects for peace in both conflicts without a radical rethink is zero.**

### **Israeli crocodile tears**

**Israel and Armenia have minimal diplomatic and economic relations, despite the fact that Armenians have almost as much claim to Jerusalem as Jews, dating their heritage in Jerusalem back a thousand years. Devout Armenian Christian Israelis will be there until the second coming.**

**During her visit to Armenia in 2012, the Israeli Minister of Agriculture Orit Noked stated, "We are like each other with our history, character, with our small number of population**

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**and having communities abroad." But no mention of the main similarities: their common genocidal histories and their common bizarre way to make sure they are not repeated.**

**Israeli interests have meant cozying up not to their Armenian brothers, but to Armenia's Palestinians. Although Azerbaijan has not opened an embassy in Israel, Azerbaijan is one of the few Muslim countries besides Turkey, Egypt, and Jordan to develop bilateral strategic and economic relations with Israel.**

**Economics trumps religion. Along with Russia, Israel is Azerbaijan's main source of military hardware, supplying Azerbaijan with battlefield aviation, artillery, anti-tank, anti-infantry weaponry, and military training.**

**In 2016, current Israeli Defense**

**Minister Avigdor Lieberman supported the position of Azerbaijan in the 2016 Armenian–Azerbaijani clashes by calling it "absolutely justified".**

**Only Israelis and Turks can come to Azerbaijan visa-free. According to a 2009 US diplomatic memo made public through Wikileaks, Azerbaijan president Ilham Aliyev once compared his country's relationship with Israel to an iceberg: "Nine-tenths of it is below the surface."**

**Economic secret: no oil**

**With the collapse of the Soviet Union, Armenia's GDP fell nearly 60%. Most major enterprises – chemicals, electronics, machinery, processed food, synthetic rubber, and textile – were bankrupted. To make matters worse, the 1988 Spitak earthquake killed more than 25,000 people and made 500,000 homeless.**

**But the diaspora kicked in, and intelligent leadership (a functioning democracy, unlike**

neighbouring Azerbaijan) initiated reforms and the development of new sectors, such as precious-stone processing and jewellery making, information and communication technology, and tourism. [One study](#) ranks Armenia as the 41st most economically free nation in the world, out of 170 (Israel is 35th and Azerbaijan 91st).

Most import was the rediscovery of agriculture, which went from 20% of the labour force to 40%. Israel, too, prides itself on its kibbutzim and its claim to 'make the desert bloom'. Apart from grain, Israel is mostly self-sufficient, though only 2.6% are employed in agricultural production, and Israel has destroyed more farms than it has created.

Neither Armenia nor Israel have ever been coveted for their raw materials. Armenia has lots of mountains, and therefore minerals, but the vast majority of energy is produced with fuel imported from Russia, including gas and nuclear fuel (for its one (Soviet) nuclear power plant); the main domestic energy source is hydroelectric.

Its lack of oil is a hidden blessing, yet another parallel with Israel.\* Azerbaijan has been blessed/ cursed with oil, one of the world's largest reserves, for centuries, developed by Sweden's Rockefeller, Ludwig Nobel, in the early 20th century.

Back then, it was owned by Nobel and financed by the Rothschilds, with no benefit to Azeris. Stalin came to organize the workers in 1902, and wrote, "I'm working for the Rothschilds!" The workers won their demands of a 9-hour day and a 6-day week, but only after 13 were gunned down. Stalin was sent to Siberia to cool his heels. 15 years later his vow to "overthrow the Tsar, Rothscilds and the Nobels" came true.

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**Azerbaijanis benefited from the oil in Soviet times, but no more and no less than all other Soviets. Their standard of living rose as the Soviet Union prospered, as did that of Nagorno-Karabakh, Armenia and Nakhchivan. They all got gas for heating and cooking from the Baku fields, and with open borders and a planned economy, there was no awareness of artificial borders, no serious ethnic problem.**

**1991 witnessed an eerie return to the pre-Soviet days of foreign exploitation and brutality. Azerbaijan has wallowed in corruption and a brutal dictatorship ever since, supported by scheming US politicians and greedy oil companies (British Petroleum the worst).**

**Even worse than the oil itself, is BP's new pipeline slicing Azerbaijan in two, just as much a loss of genuine sovereignty as the loss of Nagoro-Karabakh, but done using “soft power” and in the “national interest”. BP stole much more of Azerbaijan's land than Armenia did, and Aliyev thanked them.**

**In Oil Road: Journeys from the Caspian Sea to the City of London (2012), James Marriott documents his trip along the pipeline route from Baku to Tbilisi, Ceyhan and Europe. His courageous Azeri guide, Green Party chairman Mayis Gulaliyev, deflected an attempt to arrest them for their interest in the pipeline. Similar stand offs took place in all the pipeline 'host' countries.**

**Marriott discovered that most villagers, who have 800 barrels of oil/ gas hurtling under them on their way to Germany *every second*, have no gas for**

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